



Oliva Martin – Martin Golec – Radim Kratochvíl – Petr Kostrhun: **Býčí skála ve svých dějích a pradějích. Býčí skála Cave: History and Prehistory.** Anthropos – Studies in Anthropology, Palaeoethnology, Palaeontology and Quaternary Geology Vol. 39 (N. S. 31), MZM, Brno. 2015. 212 pp. ISBN: 978-80-7028-461-2.

At the turn of the year 2015–2016, an edition of Anthropos, Studies in Anthropology, Palaeoethnology, Palaeontology and Quaternary was published, another monograph dedicated, somewhat surprisingly, to Býčí skála Cave. When I use the word surprisingly in this context, there are two ways of looking at it: firstly, there is a surfeit of publications on the topic of Býčí skála Cave and each new publication could be accused of "bringing owls to Athen". Secondly, there is the fact that we owe the Czech and international community a solid interpretation of the Pleistocene finds from the cave, i.e. a definitive answer to the question of whether there are two different palaeolithic layers, (Aurignacian and Magdalenian) or just one (Magdalenian) in the cave. But let's leave the answer to this question, til the end of this review.

The book is divided into 11 chapters whose sequence reader would expect to be somewhat different, but the book is the result of long discussion between the authors: I. Býčí skála as part of Baroque thinking about the underground (M. Golec, pp. 13–25); II. Romanticism. The transformation of thinking at the end of the 18th and during the 19th centuries (M. Golec, pp. 26–39); III. The beginnings of scientific research – Archaeology at Býčí skála (M. Oliva, pp. 40–48); IV. German speleology in Býčí skála in the first half of the 20th century (M. Golec, pp. 49–60); V. In difficult times (M. Golec, pp. 61–72); VI. The postwar wave of Czech speleologists (M. Golec, pp. 73–81); VII. Settlement from the upper stone age (M. Oliva, pp. 82–114); VIII. Prehistory and history of Býčí skála and the surrounding

area from the Neolithic to the present (M. Golec, pp. 115–153); IX. Overview of the development of mapping work of Býčí skála in the mid-20th century (R. Kratochvíl, pp. 154–184); X. Significant Moravian scientific personalities and Býčí skála (P. Kostrhun, pp. 185–199). XI. References.

As the reviewer, allow me to ignore the chronological order of the chapters and judge the text as a whole, in a way that seems logical to me.

The chapters by Martin Golec by and large look at the cave and it's environment from a literary-historical perspective. The author uses various sources, thanks to which he has captured not only the origins of interest in the cave itself, but it's use in the wider context of the given time. It is interesting how the cave was used to carry the spirit of Romanticism at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. The landscaping of the time became the basis for the later turistic interest not only in the Křtiny valley, but the whole of the Moravian Karst. Hand in hand with the Baroque and then Romantic discoveries of the cave came the first scientific explorations, not just speleological but archeological. After the world famous archaeological discoveries there came a darkness in the form the second world war and the caves were use by the research organisation, Ahnenerbe, later the caves were rebuilt into an underground factory. Before this the caves were researched in the area of the "HALL" (1937–1943). Up til today this research has been gradually published, nevertheless it shows that there was a rich settlements here, prehistoric, protohistoric and historic (p. 61).

There is a summary of information about imaging the cave in Chapter IX. by Author R. Kratochvíl. As he himself admits, from a cartographic and geodesic point of view the plans of the caves are maybe not as high quality or as old as those of other caves. Having said that the plans of the cave are an eloquent document of the gradual discovery of the caves, and their speleological,

cartographic and the naming of the local areas. (p. 160–161).

The book also has an alphabetically ordered important chapter by Petr Kostrhun (X.) dedicated to personalities connected with Býčí skála, starting with Absolon and ending with Jindřich Wankel. More detail about Karel Valoch, reminiscing about his "secret" research on the caves, carried out with his brother and brother-in-law in the 1930s, is in chapter III (p. 44 and others.).

Even though all the chapters are full of information, personally I find the most important chapters to be the those by Martin Oliva about his own research in the cave (Chapter III) and the older stone age (Chapter VII). Part of the chapter is devoted to detailed reports, analysis and interpretation on the so-called "Great-Aurignacian bottom layer". As is shown, it suited the period of the time for there to exist a lower, older layer with rough (quartz) industry so much so, that explorers of the time wrote about it whether or not they found any evidence of it in their digs (ref. p. 85). However the controversy in the literature persisted until relatively recently. One of the last proponents of an earlier layer was alone Valoch K., who revised his opinion only on the basis of interpretation M. Bobak-Poltowicz that this bottom layer characterized as an atelier, but Magdalenian, and only a little older than the upper layer Magdalenian (p. 89 with citations).

An important chapter is the general overview of the settlements of the Býčí skála Cave, from the Palaeolithic to the Middle ages, to the present (Chapter VIII.) Although I'm talking about Martin Golec here in the last place, I would in fact put him in first place in terms of the book. Most interesting is the overview of all the theories of the funeral the so-called, "Princes", with which once upon a time, Professor Podborský would torture his students.

Book contains rich color and monochrome images and is printed on high-quality glossy paper. Even though the contents of the chapter may appear a touch one-sided,

the passage by Martin Golec doesn't read the best and the reader may get lost in the arguments dedicated to the existence of a lower, older palaeolithic layer in the cave, all the published information is completely relevant and readers can be furnished with entirely different – not a historical overview of the archaeological location, but a "genus loci" that people have been drawn to for thousands of years. Although the book was published in a Moravian Museum edition, its format and focus fits perfectly into the concept of monographs on the Moravian Karst caves, as published by the Karst Cave Administration of the Czech Republic.

The most important thing almost did not make publication of the book and therefore had to be inserted in the introduction: radiocarbon dating obtained from a human thigh bone, which had come from the Paleolithic layer after calibration date corresponding to the findings of the Hallstatt period (p. 11).

Zdeňka Nerudová

Lenka Varadinová: From Aswan to Khartoum. Czech Archaeological explorations between the Nile cataracts. Charles University in Prague. Prague 2016. ISBN: 978-80-7308-672-5. 55 pp. Paperback.

The author of the book, Lenka Varadinová, in recent years, has focused on the area of Northeastern Egypt, where she has been working on research into rock art (Upper Egypt and Western Desert, Libya, Jebel Uweinat), landscape and archaeological survey in in Egypt, Bahriya Oasis, and in the recent past was the Sabaloka Project Director (exploration of the prehistoric occupation on the west bank of the Nile in the Sabaloka Dam Region). Besides many special publications that arose from this activity (see <https://cuni.academia.edu/LenkaSukov%C3%A11>) she released last year, a slim book summarizing her research of the Czech Institute of Egyptology in the Nile cataracts.

Concisely but clearly informing us about the geomorphology of the River Nile and the historical importance of the cataracts (the Nile is interrupted by stretches of rapids =

cataracts), which in the past have significantly affected the lives of inhabitants and also defines the boundaries between Upper and Lower Nubia and Central Sudan. There is a table with a timeline running from -30,000 to +2,000 comparing key events in the three areas, from the start of the Mesolithic, the first rock carvings and paintings until the construction of the first temples or the rule of North Africa by the Romans and then the Arabs. The first wider interest of Europeans in the Nile Valley is connected with Napoleon's campaign in Egypt; until the development of historical study; first Archaeological Survey of Nubia was between 1907 and 1911, after it, between the wars there was a second Archaeological Survey of Nubia. In the 1950s in the area of the 5th Nile Cataract there started construction of the Aswan Dam, and with the patronage of UNESCO, there was the rescue of the sites here. At the end of the 1950s, the Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology was founded at Charles University in Prague and they immediately got involved in the rescue work in Egypt, during which time they discovered significant finds (243) rock inscriptions with important historical texts, picture "galleries" in Lower Nubia – in total there were 1,200 new sites with more than 6,000 pictures and there was an archaeological excavation of a tumulus cemetery at Wadi Qitna.

Czech Egyptologists went back to Nubia in 2009, when they started new research in Sudan in the area of Jebel Sabaloka and Usli. Jebel Sabaloka was at the time an unexplored place; the first explorations here uncovered numerous evidence of settlements from the palaeolithic until the middle ages (16th century). Czech Egyptologists here in collaboration with scientists studied sedimentation processes and transformations of the landscape and its use in historical eras. Geological mapping has uncovered temples and palaces in an unknown town in the area of Usli.

This brochure is not a scientific text, nevertheless, it is, with its many quality colour pictures, a documentary work on Czech (Czechoslovak) Egyptologists and thanks to its publication in English it is available to a wider audience.

Zdeňka Nerudová

Martin Oliva. **Umění moravského paleolitu.** Atlas sbírky Ústavu Anthropos Moravského zemského muzea. Palaeolithic Art of Moravia. The Anthropos Collection of the Moravian Museum. Anthropos – Studies in Anthropology, Palaeoethnology, Palaeontology and Quaternary Geology Vol. 38 (N. S. 30), MZM, Brno. 2015. 172 pp.

This publication is another contribution to the comprehensive topic of Paleolithic art, which worldwide has garnered lots of attention, as evidenced by the extensive bibliography. Martin Oliva's book, with a contribution from Martina Lázníčková Galetová (Chapter VII) is some respects different. As the title implies, the main focus of the book is to catalogue *almost every* art object and decoration from Moravia (in the Czech Republic), which are stored in the collection at the Anthropos Institute of the Moravian Museum in Brno. It's maybe a shame that the author didn't do an wholly complete catalogue, nonetheless there is a note in the introduction which explains why (only in Czech, unfortunately). With the disputed pieces (e.g. the controversial female figures from the Mammoth metapod in Předmostí where there is only one representative exemplar), these were not put in also several less important items or ornaments. In the catalogue section of the book there are very high quality pictures, with good contrast and faithful colour and more cases the various patterns are visible on the objects. Each item carries a legend which gives all the important data, location, dimensions and any important bibliographical information. All the available information has been critically evaluated by the author and corrections have been made to some misinformation and interpretation, which could be very beneficial. Unfortunately the legend to individual subjects is not strictly bilingual, only at the end of the catalog are translated some terms so that foreign readers will access certain information.

The book is not only a catalogue, it's filled with thematic chapters, in which the author has capitalised on his extensive knowledge of contemporary literature. The first of these, (Chapter II, "The History of