



**Jiří Svoboda: Dolní Věstonice – Pavlov. Explaining Paleolithic Settlements in Central Europe.** Texas A&M University Press. College Station 2020. 334 Pp. ISBN 9781623498115 (hardcover).

In twelve chapters, this narrative publication describes two world-famous Moravian localities – everything about the Gravettian / Pavlovian industries: its people, nature, climate, environment, everyday needs, and also art, healing, and shamanism. The book is clearly structured from more general introductory chapters to the final chapter which deals with the, suddenly very apposite, topic of the extinction and collapse of civilisation and global climate change.

1. The Expansion of Homo sapiens: The Paleoanthropological Context (Pp. 3–12); 2. The Discovery of Dolní Věstonice: Research History (Pp. 13–34); 3. A Calendar of the Ages: Chronology (Pp. 35–51); 4. The Face of the Landscape: Paleocology (Pp. 52–92); 5. Hunters in the Landscape: Settlement Archeology (Pp. 93–144); 6. Everyday Life: Paleoethnology (Pp. 145–169); 7. Take but Do Not Exhaust: Subsistence (Pp. 170–197); 8. Materials and Artifacts: technology (Pp. 198–229); 9. Before the Neolithic: technological Innovation (Pp. 230–245); 10. The Domestication of Features: Rituals and Symbols (Pp. 246–270); 11. And Then Comes death: Anthropology and Genetics (Pp. 271–301); 12. Collapse, Survival, and regeneration (Pp. 302–306).

The author was very thorough: from the first finds of the bones of extinct "giants", through Absolon's "diluvial Pompeii" to modern aDNA analyzes. The natural sciences are an important tool for studying and, at least partially, understanding the Stone Age. However, while the unraveling of the mystery of the triple grave at Dolní Věstonice in 1986 (somewhat popularly interpreted by Bohuslav Klíma; Klíma 1987: 251–252) has recently been solved by modern genetics (Fu *et al.* 2013), in the case of domestication

of the wolf, scientific teams are not yet unanimous.

But one thing at a time. The first chapter briefly introduces the reader to the origins of modern sapiens and the waves of their expansion from Africa through the Near East to Europe. One of these peoples were the Gravettian people, who inhabited and transformed Europe. In this context, the key area is the Danube area with localities on the Austrian (Willendorf, Krems) and Moravian (Dolní Věstonice, Pavlov, Milovice) side. In the second chapter, Jiří Svoboda acquaints us with both the already mentioned "bones of giants" and the entire history of discoveries, despite the unfortunate destruction of a large part of the finds at the end of World War II. Renewed research after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War gradually transformed into the modernly conceived interdisciplinary and international research we know now. (Chapter 2). The calendar of ages (Chapter 3) indicates a roughly 12 meter high profile in the brickyards in Dolní Věstonice II, in which the period of the last 100,000 years (approximately) is captured in individual horizons. What the natural environment of Gravettian hunters looked like, what the climate was like and what their livelihoods were is presented in chapter 4. In the next chapter, the reader is acquainted with how hunters used the environment, in what places they built their settlements and how these settlements were structured. All the known settlements in the Pavlov hills, which form the settlement structure, are presented.

In addition to archaeological finds, we deduce what the daily life (Chapter 6) of hunter-gatherers was like by means of analogies or parallels with the current inhabitants of the cold Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. It helps us to understand Gravettian / Pavlovian hunters and their needs, requirements and what opportunities they had. Although they lived in a predominantly cold period with difficult living conditions, they were able to adapt to them, resist them and use them to their advantage. Many

contemporary notions of their lives are now obsolete thanks to modern research. The title of the seventh chapter should be a lesson for our modern consumer society. Knowledge of nature and its cycles, planning, cooperation allowed the Gravettians / Pavlovians to use various resources without actually exhausting them. The paradox is the mammoth bone dumps, known from many Gravettian / Pavlovian sites not only in Europe. This phenomenon, still not convincingly explained, is evidenced by the accumulation of a huge number of mammoth bodies (or bones) in many settlements.

A separate chapter (8) is devoted to the extraction of stone raw materials and the production of stone artifacts, necessary for everyday life. Although stone was the most important raw material, bones, mammoth tusks, antlers, shells, but also grass, leather or textiles were also used.

Pavlovian hunters are the first people to discover and use several innovations that are characteristic of farmers (Chapter 9). It was the production of ceramics – in the form of figurines of various animals. Unique in this respect is the figure of the Venus of Věstonice, textile production, stone smoothing and probably the first domestication of animals. The purpose of various objects, what they might represent as symbols and how they might serve various ritual purposes, is described in chapter 10. Everyone's life cycle must eventually come to a close, so logically one of the chapters is devoted to death (Chapter 11). The stations under the Pavlov hills gradually provided not only a large number of differently dislocated human bones, but also complex finds of buried individuals. Thanks to these findings, we can better reconstruct the physical appearance of the Pavlovian people, their health status and, last but not least, genetics thanks to aDNA analysis. The title of the last chapter suggests that although after a certain time there will be a collapse and extinction of civilization (not only the Pavlovian one), after a certain time there is always a phase of regeneration and transformation.

After a series of narrative publications by Jiří Svoboda, published by Academia (Dolní Věstonice – Pavlov 2016, *Ancestors. Human Evolution / Předkové. Evoluce člověka*, 2017, *The Beginnings of Art / Počátky umění* 2020), or in the edition of Dolní Věstonice Study, this latest publication represents a kind of culmination of lifelong research by the author and his predecessors. The publication is designed to serve not only the expert in the field but also the general public, including an international audience. Especially for non-European readers, the book contains passages explaining the realities of the situation. If someone is more interested in a narrative publication rather than detailed papers on individual localities and phenomena, this book serves them very well.

The book contains a number of quality photographs and illustrations and the necessary index.

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**Michaela Polanská: Questionnement sur la diversité du Pavlovien par l'étude technologique des gisements moraves.** Spisy archeologického ústavu AV ČR Brno 66. 446 Pp. ISBN: 978-80-7524-041-5. Brno 2020.

The book version of the successfully defended dissertation at the Sorbonne in Paris (in 2018) analyzes selected collections of the Moravian Pavlovian in detail. The author is working on the premise that the earlier periodization of Pavlovian, indicated by Bohuslav Klíma and unfortunately not completed, or the definitions of other authors use incompatible elements. If, for example, the bone and antler industry should be used for the periodization of the Pavlovian, it is logically absent in many localities, especially surface ones, and these localities cannot therefore be divided in detail chronologically. The author therefore focused on the stone chipped industry with the help of which, with a detailed analysis of homogeneous sets, she tried to define the individual groups of the Pavlovian. The first defined group is a group of localities with the micro-saw industry, the second group are localities with geometric microliths and the third group of localities with the Milovice points. According to the author, Pavlov VI and Dolní Věstonice II belong to the first group – west-facing slopes. The second group included the localities Předmostí Ib and Předmostí III (and perhaps also the palimpsest localities Pavlov I, Předmostí Ia and Milovice IV). The last, third group was found in the locality Milovice I sector G and H. According to the author, only the first two groups belong to the Pavlovian in the "*sensu stricto*".

The use of one particular type of stone tool for definition or periodization is a very correct idea. The obtained results look very convincing, but as the author herself is well aware – they must be verified in other Pavlovian localities, preferably in the context of absolute dating and ideally also on a wider geographical scale. In order for the definition to have a truly wider scope, functionally identical sites should be compared. The types defined by the author (micro-saw, geometric microliths, points of the Milovice-type) indicate functionally differently oriented localities. In order for the author's conclusions to be used, it is necessary that in addition to the technical methods of microlith production, the microliths themselves be monitored in detail. The question is which of the professional archaeologists has the time to observe the individual characteristics defined by the author on microlithic instruments (eg Figs. 120, 264).

The work is published in French, which may limit the number of readers who would otherwise like to read the English version. The pictorial appendices contain brief trilingual descriptions, unfortunately the most important technological descriptions are only in French. The book also contains a brief English and Slovak summary. On the other hand, the book could become an illustrative example to some doctoral students of how the dissertation should look not only in terms of the quality of graphic appendices and author's drawings of the stone chipped industry, but also the scope of their own work. It is understandable that such a work cannot be written in a few days, but it takes several years of effort.

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