and chin, smoother, more pliable skin, and a higher pitch of voice. These are visual, tactile, and auditory cues that originally identified the human infant to an adult observer, who would respond by feeling less aggressive and more willing to provide care and nurturance. The infant's lighter skin is especially noticeable in societies where the adult is much darker. A new Kenyan mother may tell her neighbors to come and see her *mzungu*, i.e., "European." When Zambian girls were asked to describe how Africans look, some wrote: "At birth African children are born like Europeans, but after a few months the color changes to the color of an African."

Whether we are talking about the whitening of the skin or the diversification of hair and eye colors, the changes to the European phenotype occurred during a limited span of time, specifically during the last ice age some ten to twenty thousand years ago. They also occurred within a limited geographic context, essentially the plains stretching from the Baltic to central Siberia.

Those plains were at that time a vast expanse of steppe-tundra. Despite their high bioproductivity, they provided humans with only one food source: meat from wandering herds of reindeer and other game. Dependence on that food source had two consequences:

- *A high male death rate*. Men had to hunt over long distances of cold, unstable terrain that offered no alternative sources of food. There was thus a high risk of death from starvation and other hazards of hunting.
- *A low polygyny rate*. Only the ablest hunters could provide for more than one woman and her children, since the latter could not provide for themselves. Women had no food autonomy.

The result: a glut of women on the mate market; intense rivalry among them for male attention; and strong selection for eye-catching female features. Such features became more frequent with succeeding generations, eventually forming the current European phenotype.

Robert G. Bednarik: Gudenus Cave The Earliest Humans of Austria. Archaeopress Archaeology, 2023. 174 Pp.
ISBN 978-1-80327-384-6
ISBN 978-1-80327-385-3 (e-Pdf)

This text only saw the light of day this year, even though it might have been expected to be published somewhere after 1963 to 1966 – albeit in a considerably more meager form – when its author conducted minor rescue research here. The first excavations, which unfortunately affected almost the entire area of the cave, were carried out here in 1883–1884 by Father Leopold Hacker from the nearby monastery in Göttweig, of course without any documentation. The first chapter is devoted to the history of the research, in which we also read that a decisive step towards the recognition of cultural stratigraphy was made by Obermaier and Breuil in their article from 1908, when they identified an ancient component with hand axes in the findings, assigned to the Acheulian (Obermaier 1912), and then younger finds (antler spear points, perforated reindeer antler, eyed needles, pierced animal teeth, a reindeer engraving on a supposed needle case and stone tools). In 1922, Josef Bayer excavated the remains of sediments in a rock niche, where he confirmed the existence of the Middle Palaeolithic, while some of the finds dated to the Magdalenian were questioned by R. Pittioni (1954) in his classic compendium of Austrian prehistory. In Chapter 1, we find all the important illustrations from older publications.

The second chapter is devoted to the geography and the natural environment. A pseudokarst flat cave with three entrances is formed in an amphibolite cliff above the Kleine Krems stream below Hartenstein Castle in the region called Waldviertel in Lower Austria. Sediments, the sequence of which was not recorded by the main excavation, were periodically stirred up by water. The site's geology, hydrology, temperature, and drafts were subjected to a thorough analysis, which is certainly commendable, but somewhat redundant for such a sparsely populated and carelessly explored area. The 3rd chapter is devoted to the author's rescue research, during which he discovered inconspicuous artifacts (initial cores and flakes) in several hard-to-date positions and apparently in secondary positions. Artifacts made from quartzite, coarse local rocks, and crystal belong to older periods of occupation of the settlement.

I could only comment on the relevance of the stratigraphic observations only after a detailed study. The mentioned research from the 1960s, although elaborated on in Chapter 4 both sedimentologically and palynologically, did not address the question of the cultural affiliation of the older finds – although these considerations make up almost the entirety of Chapter 5, accompanied with colour photographs of the artifacts. Based on these findings and the reevaluation of old finds, in the last chapter, the author arrives at a picture of settlement occupation in at least five periods:

1. Lower Palaeolithic (Middle Acheulian) with altered hand axes, falling into the Rissian at the latest, 2. older phase of Middle Palaeolithic with non-altered bifaces, dated to Eemian, 3. Middle phase of Middle Palaeolithic with pronounced side scrapers, 4. traces of Early Upper Palaeolithic in the Middle Wurmian (Szeletian, Olschewian, "Alpine Palaeolithic"), 5. Late Magdalenian.

In my opinion, the creation of this model suffers from a number of shortcomings. The objects are not properly depicted (e.g. in the form of new drawings with cross-sections), sometimes we can only imagine the ventral sides, which is especially important in the case of hand axes. Among them, only the objects in Fig. 88–89 and 97, long known, can be included, while the hypothetically assigned artifact in Fig. 90 and on the cover only remotely resembles a biface and its other side is unknown – isn't it a fragment of a flake after all? Dimensions and raw materials are listed only selectively and there is no overall table of findings.

In the end, the author does not hesitate to integrate the created model into the Central European and even the world framework, which is helped by the Australian perspective (R. Bednarik has been living in Melbourne for decades). However, the finds are too poor for such far-reaching considerations and their

stratigraphic position, or affiliation is uncertain. It operates with obsolete terms such as Alpine Palaeolithic or Olschewian. The Acheulian is understood more as a chronological unit, otherwise even Stránská skála near Brno could not be listed as an Acheulian locality. It would be possible to claim that the Acheulian from the Gudenus cave is the oldest settlement in Austria only after a qualified rejection of the pebble industries from the NE part of the country (Valoch 1996). In Fig. 106, we see the Gudenus cave at the very SE border of the Acheulian settlement of Europe, which should probably be considered one of the main contributions of the monograph.

The presentation of the results of 60-year-old research is certainly to be welcomed. It is obvious that the author's memories of digging in the cave occupied him for a long time, he felt them as debts from his youth, and before the end of his research career, he decided to show them to the world. However, he did so in a rather exaggerated form, which does not correspond to their meaning.

REFERENCES

OBERMAIER H., 1912: *Der Mensch der Vorzeit*. Berlin–Munich–Vienna: Allgemeine Verlagsgesellschaft.

OBERMAIER H., BREUIL H., 1908: Die Gudenushöhle in Niederösterreich. *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 38: 277–294.

PITTIONI R., 1954: *Urgeschichte des österreichischen Raumes*. Vienna: F. Deuticke.

VALOCH K., 1996: Altpaläolithische Geröllgeräte in Niederösterreich. *Wiss. Mitteilungen des Niederösterreichischen Landesmuseum* 9: 231–245.

Martin Oliva