*BRIEF COMMUNICATION * KURZBERICHT * COMMUNICATION CONCISE*

ANTHROPOLOGIE LXII/3 • 2024

JIŘÍ SVOBODA

ON BOHUNICIAN IMPACT IN BOHEMIA

ABSTRACT: As a part of discussion about geographic distribution of the Levallois-leptolithic (Bohunician) technological entities and its paleoanthropological meaning, this paper presents two potential sites from Bohemia.

KEY WORDS: Bohunician – Bohemia – Holedeč – Hradsko

INTRODUCTION

For almost half a century since Karel Valoch (1976) presented the Bohunice site in south Moravia, we have witnessed vivid discussions about the Bohunician concept (combining Levallois and leptolithic technological principles), as well as massiv input of additional sites, lithic materials, stratigraphic and chronological data (ranging between 50 and 35 ky bp). In addition, it was challenging to search for distant parallels to the east, as far as Central and Northern Asia. However possible parallels in western direction remain unexplored or restricted (*Figure 1*). Here we present two potential sites in Bohemia (western Czech Republic).

HOLEDEČ (DISTRICT LOUNY)

The first site under discussion was discovered during loess exploitation as early as 1912, and the contextual evidence is therefore unsecure. It lies in a valley location at the left bank of Blšanka river, on slopes of the Chlum hill, in 235 m a.s.l. (actual situation at the right bank is shown on *Figure 2*). After Fridrich (1973 with earlier references), the lithic artefacts were found in two or more locations in loess, sometimes in association with an „ashy“ layer, together with stone boulders and scarce faunal remains (mammoth, rhinoceros, horse; one of the bones possibly bears an artificial engraving).

The industry (about 100 items), made of erratic silicites, cherts, and porcelanites, is partly produced by Levallois technology (a typical Levallois point, two flakes and blades with facetted striking platforms, *Figure 3* below), partly by currrent blade and microblade technologies. However the typology is predominantly Aurignacian, as demonstrated by a group of typical thick endscrapers. This association evokes the possibility of mixing two separate components.

Received 27 September 2024; Accepted 30 September 2024. Available online 30 October 2024.

DOI: https://doi.org.10.26720/anthro.24.09.30.1

HRADSKO (SEDLEC U MŠENA, DISTRICT MĚLNÍK)

The second site is located on the upper plateau of a large sandstone block, at 333 m a.s.l. and 100 m above the steep Kokořínský důl canyon below, thus in a different geomorphological position compared to the other sites. The eluvial coverage on the hilltop was cut by an irregular network of erosional or frost channels. Part of the artefacts entered into the depression fillings, togeteher with some fragments of conifer charcoal and mineral ochre, obviously in secondary position (Vencl 1977). As I visited the excavation as a student in 1972, Slavomil Vencl showed me a series of shallow stratigraphic sections formed by eluvial sandy or clayish-sandy sediments of various coloration. A horizon of sandstone boulders within the sandy deposits clearly suggested one of the redeposition events.

The industry (about 1890 items) was mostly made of erratic silicite, tephrite, and quartzite, with lower ratio of reddish jasper, porcelanite, and quartz (Vencl 1977; followed by analytical studies by Neruda, Nerudová 2000 and Škrdla *et al*. 2013). In contrast to Bohunician sites located directly at abundant lithic material sources in Moravia, the cores of Hradsko were made of imported silicites, were more intensively exploited and thus logically smaller; nevertheless their flat, cubical and crested shapes are comparable to the Moravian assemblages. The tephrite cores are more voluminous and less differentiated morphologically. The Levallois technique predominates in the silicite and jasper components; it predetermines the morphology of typical points, flakes and blades, including preparation (facetting) of their striking platforms (*Figure 3* above). Share of the current blades is lower.

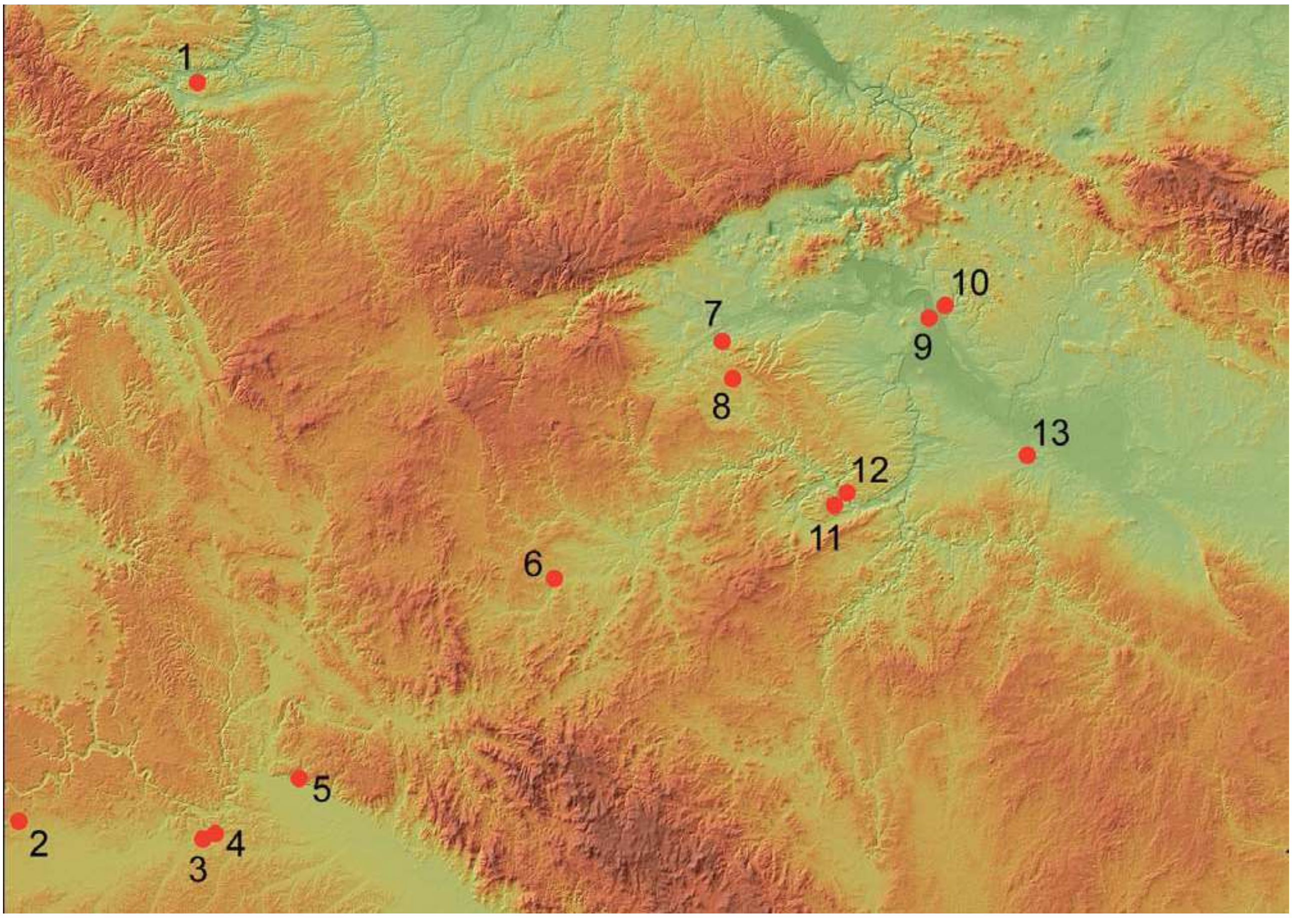

FIGURE 1: Initial Upper Paleolithic (IUP) sites in Bohemia and adjacent parts of Germany. Sites with Bohunician component: Holedeč (7), Hradsko (10). Human fossil sites of similar age: Ranis – Ilsenhöhle (1), Zlatý kůň – Koněprusy Caves (11). Other IUP sites (2–6, 8–9, 12–13). Background: ESRI.

FIGURE 2: Holedeč. Loessic and clayish deposits as exposed actually (2021) along the right bank of the Blšanka river valley.

A series of thick and short endscrapers and burins, on the other hand, are typically Aurignacian or even Epigravettian.

Vencl (1977) compared this industrial complex to surface collections from Podstránská site below the Stránská skála hill. My later experience from excavating MIS3 deposits at Stránská skála hilltop revealed distinct Bohunician and Aurignacian layers over each other, in accord with the continual loess deposition and with two major pedogenetical events. Therefore, I suggested that under less favourable sedimentary conditions, as at Hradsko, the two lithic components could easily be mixed (Svoboda 2001).

DISCUSSION

The geographic distribution of the specific Levallois-leptolithic technology plais a role in creating hypotheses on early Anatomically Modern Human (AMH) dispersal. It coincides surprisingly well with the expected inflow of human population from the Mediterranean into northern Eurasia. To support such migrational hypothesis, one may consider the fragmentary AMH fossils from related technological contexts in northwest Africa (Aterian of Marocco) and southwest Asia (Emiran of the Levant).

For taphonomic reasons, the open-air sites in south and central Moravia could hardly preserve human fossils in association. Evidence from related caves, as places more favourable for organic preservation, attest at least that AMH were present in Central Europe by that time (Ilsenhöhle at Ranis and Koněprusy Caves at Zlatý kůň), albeit in other techno-typological contexts.

The two open-air sites presented here are probably affected by cultural contamination. Thus, although their locations may help to precise the western boundaries of the Bohunician, we still lack a direct AMH – Bohunician association.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank Jan Eigner for access to collections deposited in the National Museum – Historical Museum.

Note: This short paper is dedicated to Lubomíra Kaminská as a late addition to her Anniversary volume, 2024.

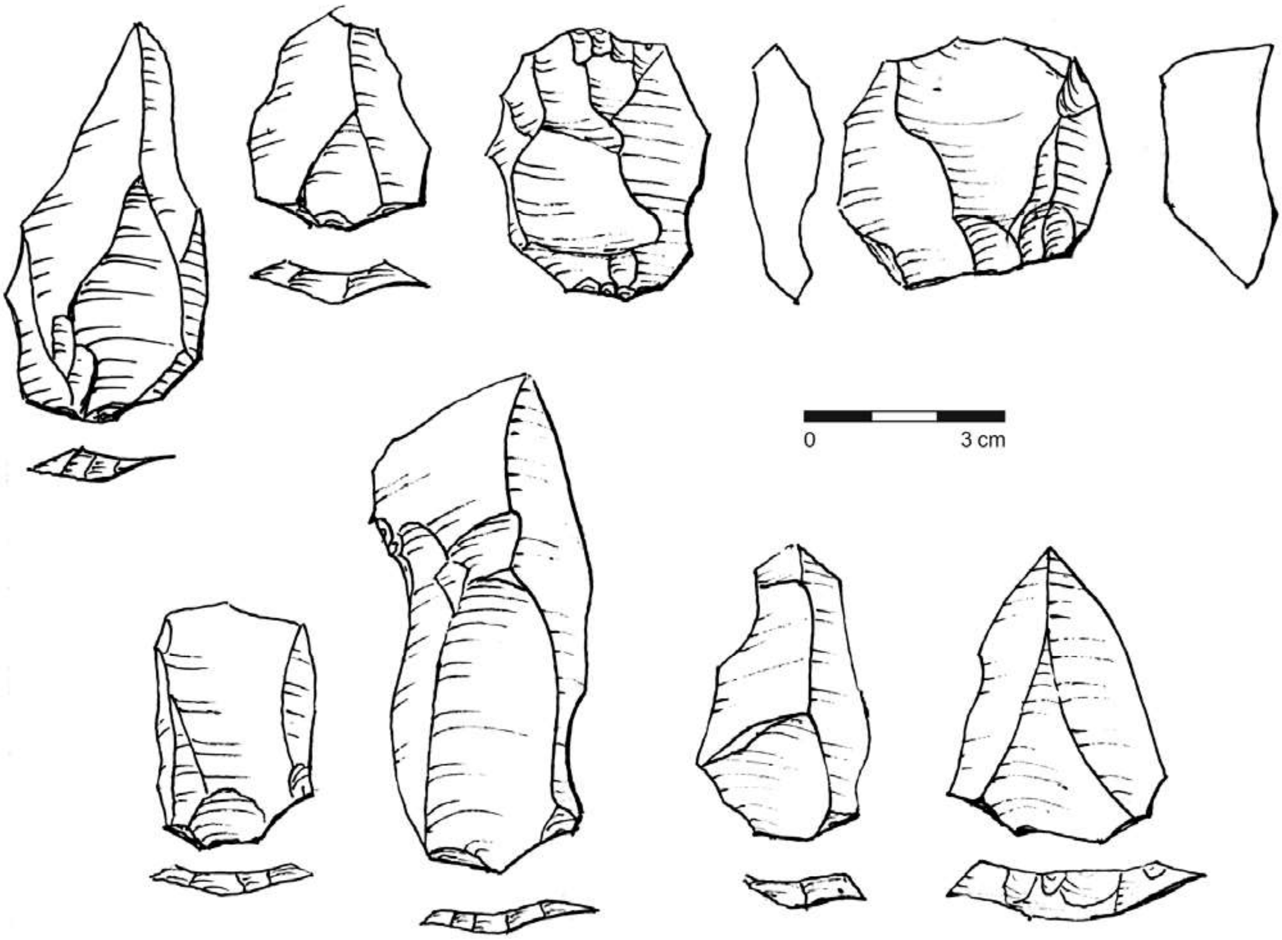

FIGURE 3: Levallois elements in the lithic assemblages from Holedeč (below) and Hradsko (above). Collections of the National Museum – Historical Museum.

REFERENCES

FRIDRICH J., 1973: Počátky mladopaleolitického osídlení Čech. *Archeologické rozhledy* 25: 392–442.

NERUDA P., NERUDOVÁ Z., 2000: The Upper Paleolithic Levallois industry from Hradsko (Dep. Mělník, Czech Republic). *Anthropologie* 38: 271–282.

SVOBODA J., 2001: Paleolit Českolipska a přilehlých území severních Čech. *Bezděz* 10: 11–37.

ŠKRDLA P., ADAMOVIČ J., RYCHTAŘÍKOVÁ T., 2013: Hradsko u Mšena – nejzápadněji položená lokalita bohunicienu. *Archeologické rozhledy* 65: 895–905.

VALOCH K., 1976: *Die altsteinzeitliche Fundstelle in Brno-Bohunice*. Studie AÚ ČSAV Brno, Praha.

VENCL S., 1977: Aurignacké osídlení v Hradsku, okr. Mělník. *Archeologické rozhledy* 29: 3–44.

Jiří Svoboda*
Professor emeritus,
Brno,
e-mail: svoboda@arub.cz

*Corresponding author.