

PALEOENVIRONMENT. THE STONE AGE

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THE BOHUNICIAN IN MORAVIA AND ADJOINING REGIONS

The Middle to Upper Paleolithic transition in the Middle Danube area is characterized by the presence of two transitional technocomplexes, the Bohunician and the Szeletian, together with the early appearance of the Aurignacian. The Bohunician lacks a local predecessor and seems to be intrusive to the area. Both the Bohunician typology and technology combine Middle and the Upper Paleolithic components. Although the Bohunician sites are mostly concentrated within the Brno basin, collections with characteristic traces of Bohunician technology have been documented during the same interval in surrounding areas, as well as far to the south and east. A preliminary comparison of the sites indicates a high degree of similarity among assemblages and may represent the same expansion event hypothetically associated with anatomically modern humans.

Keywords: Bohunician, Bohunician technology, Levallois technology, Middle Danube, Moravia.

Introduction

The term ‘Bohunician’ is derived from the word Bohunice, the name of a suburb in the western part of the city of Brno, where this specific industry was first discovered (Valoch, 1976; Oliva, 1981; Svoboda, 1990). The Bohunician industry is characterized by the utilization of a specific technology described as a fusion of the Levallois and Upper Paleolithic crested core techniques (Svoboda, Škrdla, 1995; Škrdla, 2003b). While the former has a Middle Paleolithic origin, the latter is characteristic of lithic reduction in Eurasian Upper Paleolithic assemblages. The Bohunician technology is more volumetric than the classical Levallois technology and its aim is the serial production of Levallois points with blades as secondary products (Škrdla, 2003b; Škrdla, Rychtaříková, 2012).

The Bohunician occupation is concentrated in a 100 sq. km area within the Brno Basin (Moravia), where two clusters of stratified sites (Bohunice and Stránská skála), several other stratified sites (Líšeň, Podolí, Tvarožná) and a series of surface artifact clusters have been documented (Svoboda, Ložek, Vlček, 1996). There are three other surface artifact clusters in Moravia, including the Bobrava area (Škrdla et al., 2011), Prostějov area (Svoboda, 1980), and Mohelno area (Škrdla et al., 2012). Isolated sites with evolved Levallois industries have also been reported from adjoining regions including Hradsko in Bohemia (Neruda, Nerudová, 2000), Nižný Hrabovec in Eastern Slovakia (Kaminská et al., 2009), and Dzierzysław I in Poland (Foltyn, Kozłowski, 2003) (Fig. 1).

On a broader scale, the Bohunician fits into a complex of similar industries described as Emiran-Bohunician (Svoboda, 2001: 35) recorded in the Near East (Boker

Fig. 1. Location of the Moravian site cluster and occurrences of similar industries in neighboring regions.

1 – Brno basin: Bohunice, Stránská skála, Líšeň, Podolí, and Tvarožná; 2 – Bobrava area: Ořeřchov, Želešice, and Dolní Kounice; 3 – Mohelno area: Mohelno and Lhánice; 4 – Ondratice/Želeč area; 5 – Popovice; 6 – Diváky; 7 – Hradsko; 8 – Dzierzysław; 9 – Piekary; 10 – Stajnia; 11 – Nižný Hrabovec; 12 – Kulychivka.

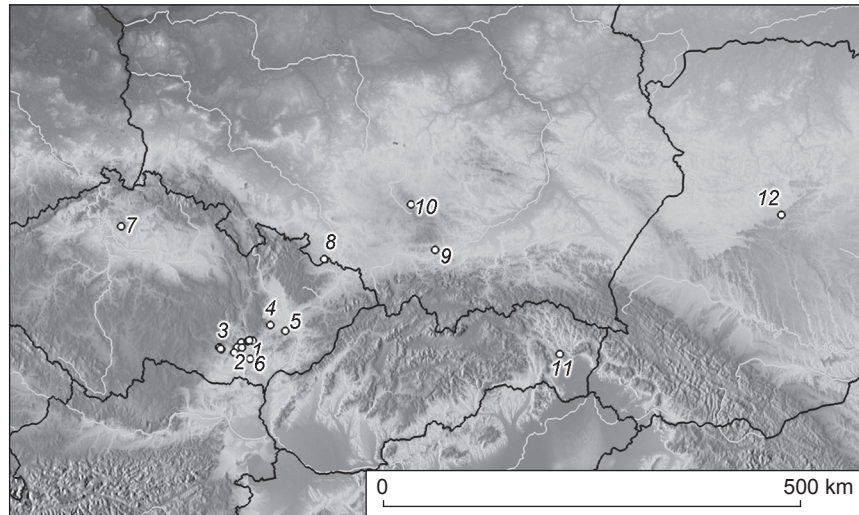


Fig. 2. Map of Eurasia with location of sites discussed in text.

M – Moravian site cluster (see Fig. 1 for details); L – Levantine sites (Boker Tachtit, Ksar Akil, Uçağızli); 1 – Hradsko; 2 – Stajnia; 3 – Piekary; 4 – Nižný Hrabovec; 5 – Temnata; 6 – Kulychivka; 7 – Kara Bom; 8 – Shuidonggou.

Tachtit in Israel, Ksar Akil in Lebanon, Uçağızli Cave in Turkey), the Balkan Peninsula (Temnata), Ukraine (Kulychivka), and further to the east (e.g., Kara Bom in the Altai, Shuidonggou in Northern China) (Derevianko, Petrin, Rybin, 2000; Svoboda, 2001, 2004; Bar-Yosef, Svoboda, 2003) (Fig. 2).

Moravia geographically represents a nodal point – a junction of routes connecting the south and the north as well as the east and the west of Europe (cf. (Schwabedissen, 1943)). In fact, it represents a possible “zone of contact” between the last Neanderthals and incoming anatomically modern humans during Greenland Interstadials 10–13 (cf. (Hoffecker, 2009; Müller et al., 2011; Brandtmöller et al., 2012)).

Studying the technological affinities between the industries mentioned above is therefore a way of

understanding the distribution of technological markers probably connected with the first anatomically modern humans in those areas.

Technological definition of Bohunician industries in Moravia

Patterns of raw material use at Bohunician sites were based on the use of local raw materials supplemented by infrequent imports (10 % maximum, but the percentage differs from site to site) (Přichystal et al., 2003). The Stránská skála-type chert comes from a solitary limestone cliff on the eastern margin of the Brno Basin and is the main raw material used in the Brno Basin sites. The proportion of Stránská skála-type chert in the assemblages

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