Παλαιολιθικό Σεμινάριο

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The Middle/Upper Paleolithic transition in the Northern Balkans and the Middle Danubian Basin

Η μετάβαση από τη Μέση στην Ανώτερη Παλαιολιθική στη βόρεια Βαλκανική και στη λεκάνη του Μέσου Δούναβη

The aim of this presentation is to describe cultural changes at the boundary between the Middle and the Upper Palaeolithic in the Northern Balkans and the Middle Danube basin in the perspective of the evolution of ways of life, production technology and morphology of lithic artefacts. In these processes an essential role played the differences in man’s physical types (Neanderthals vs Anatomically Modern Humans). The emergent different cultural traditions were the effect of adaptation to novel ecological conditions. In the Late Middle Palaeolithic in the Middle Danube basin and in the Carpathian basin we can distinguish three units: a/Mousterian (Levallois and non-Levallois), b/Charentian/Tayacian, c/Micoquian. In the Northern Balkans the Micoquian does not occur; the technique of bifacial treatment is restricted to the Moustero-Levalloisian with leaf points. On the other hand, we can distinguish the following Middle Palaeolithic units that did not use bifacial technique: a/south-eastern Charentian, b/typical Mousterian with Levallois technology, c/typical Mousterian without Levallois technology, d/denticulate Mousterian.

The transition from the Middle to Upper Palaeolithic is connected with the biological and cultural evolution of Neanderthal groups and, on the other hand, with consecutive waves of migration of Anatomically Modern Humans from the Near East to Europe via Anatolia and the Balkans. The contacts between both groups played also some role, particularly in the sphere of cultural evolution. The earliest unit associated with Homo sapiens in the Northern Balkans is the Bachokirian represented in layer 11 in the Bacho Kiro Cave and in layer VI TD2 in the Temnata Cave in Bulgaria. To the Bachokirian in the Balkans corresponds, in the Middlde Danube basin, the Bohunician. Both units, characterized by Levallois and blade technology, are derived from the Emirian in the Near East. Noteworthy is the spatial organization of camps and the presence of symbolic objects in the Bachokirian. The local development of Late Neanderthals is represented by the industries with backed points (Chatelperronian, Uluzzian) and leaf points (Szeletian, Jerzmanovician, Sungirian). Szeletian sites are registered in the Middle Danube (Moravia, Slovakia and Hungary). It is possible that the Szeletian interacted with the second migration of Anatomically Modern Humans, playing some role in the formation of local centers of the Aurignacian complex in Central Europe. This second wave of migration from the Near East is represented by the Proto-Aurignacian (Fumanian) embracing the northern coast of the Mediterranean Sea and also known in the Northern Balkans (e.g. Kozarnika Cave) and, possibly, also in the Middle Danube basin. The huge volcanic eruption (C1) in the Flegrean Fields in central Italy (about 39 500 cal BP) caused the isolation of groups associated with the second expansion of Homo sapiens and cut them off from the Near East. The consequence of this natural disaster was impact on local development of the Aurignacian rooted in the primary centers in Central and Western Europe.

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