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ABSTRACT BOOK



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Carnivores from two Gravettian open-air sites in Slovakia

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Several Palaeolithic localities with numerous findings of hunted game is situated in Slovakia. An inseparable element in the structure of hunted game of Palaeolithic people is represented by carnivores. Their remains have been analysed from localities Trenčianske Bohuslavice – Pod Tureckom and Moravany – Lopata II, two Gravettian open-air sites in the western Slovakia, in the middle course of the Váh River. Both belongs to the younger Gravettian – Willendorf–Kostenkian (shouldered points horizon) and are characterised by great amount of good preserved remains of hunted game. The material from Trenčianske Bohuslavice was obtained during the research of J. Bárta in the years 1981 – 1986 (BÁRTA, 1988) and from the trench we made in 2008 (VLAČIKY et al., 2008). Material from the locality Moravany – Lopata II was acquired during the investigations of Slovak – Polish team in 1993 – 1996, led by J. K. Kozłowski (KOZŁOWSKI, 1998).

The hunted game from the Gravettian site in Trenčianske Bohuslavice belongs to the following taxa: *Rangifer tarandus* (reindeer), *Equus germanicus* (horse), *Mammuthus primigenius* (mammoth), *Vulpes lagopus* (polar fox), *Bos/Bison* sp. (aurochs/steppe wisent), *Ursus arctos* (brown bear), *Canis lupus* (wolf), *Castor fiber* (beaver), *Coelodonta antiquitatis* (woolly rhinoceros), *Lepus* sp. (hare), and *Cervus elaphus* (red deer). Based on the number of founded bones and teeth, the reindeer's ones dominate, followed by the horse's and those of the mammoth. Other mammalian species are rare. The spectrum of hunted game from the site Moravany – Lopata II is different. Reindeers highly dominate; other species – brown bear, woolly mammoth, polar fox, hare, wolf, wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), and horse are represented only by one or two individuals.

However, interesting findings have been discovered during the analysis of 23 elements of foxes (mandibles, teeth, long bones and one nearly complete tarsus with metatarsal bones), 7 bones from a brown bear (metapodials a phalanges) and 4 from a wolf (caninus, calcaneus, phalanx and rib) from the site Trenčianske Bohuslavice and 18 elements of foxes (mandible, isolated teeth, long bones, and pelvis), 14 from a wolf (mandibles, isolated teeth, metapodials), 11 from brown bears (radius, metapodials, teeth) and 7 from a wolverine (metapodials, phalanx) from the site Moravany – Lopata II.

No direct traces of intentional activity (like cut marks) were found on the material from both localities, but the animals had been clearly a prey of Gravettian hunters. A considerable part of the skeletons of foxes has been identified. It seems that hunters used to take the whole carcasses of foxes to their dwellings and skin them there. There is a notable difference in the treatment of other carnivores, such as brown bears, wolves and wolverines. With the greatest probability, these animals were skinned right on the killing site and only furs and special parts of skeletons, such as skulls and teeth were brought to the hunter's camps, probably for ritual or decorative purposes. The presence of animal's furs in that time is indicated by the high occurrence of autopodial bones (notably if they were found in anatomical position).

Detailed analysis of the site Moravany – Lopata II led to even more interesting finding. A kind of special human activity was noticed with the remains of a wolf, an old brown bear and a wolverine from this site. Whole skulls with mandibles (one from the wolf and one from the old brown bear) and furs of all these three animals were concentrated on one



place, in so called “storage pit” proposed by Kozłowski, and its neighbourhood. After further investigation, it is now clear that the proposed “storage pit” served a different purpose. Most likely this place had some ritual character and it was probably a part of some dwelling.

Based on the obtained results we can assume that carnivores were in Gravettian culture in Slovakia mainly hunted for fur for clothing or, to a lesser extent, for meat during hard times. But they probably also played an important role in a hunting magic as ritual animals and their pierced teeth were used for decoration.

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