

Abstract:

This dissertation is a contribution to the understanding of animal history and the relationship between man and animal during the Eneolithic, i.e. spanning the period ca 4500 - 2200 BC. The Eneolithic period differs from the Neolithic in more respects. Traditionally the development of metallurgy (copper) is considered as the primary cause of social economic changes; however Sherratt's theory of a "secondary products revolution" points at the fundamental relevance of a rapid change from the use of primary animal products (meat, skin etc.) to the use of secondary products (milk, wool, labour, mainly yoke) precisely in the period corresponding with the Bohemian Eneolithic. Nevertheless this theory is still being discussed and criticised and, considering possible mosaic nature of the palaeoeconomic situation, it should first be verified at local and regional levels.

The author of this thesis analysed in detail ca. 49 500 osteological finds from archaeological settlements in Bohemia, from which ca 13 500 could be zoologically closely determined. Further data were adopted from publications of Czech and Moravian sites (ca. 22 000 finds, from which 11 000 were determinable). This material was subjected to detailed archaeozoological analysis with a unified methodology and techniques covering taphonomy, quantification of zoological species and anatomical elements, evaluation of slaughtering age distribution and gender rate, morphological evaluation and pathologies. Quantity of studied sites (138 osteological assemblages from 102 settlement sites in the Czech Republic and 27 other sites with ritual osteological finds), range of the material, classification of data, complexity of the approaches, and detail of this study makes the territory of Czech Republic one of the most intensively studied regions in Europe if the archaeozoology of the respective period is concerned. Many of the relevant questions and current interpretation hypotheses have been so far subjects of speculation and general characteristics frequently adopted from circumstances in other regions only. Collected data and the results of the thesis enable possibility of objective queries of some of them.

The data file and its analysis enabled significant specification of palaeoeconomic and palaeoecologic relationships within the studied period and of phenotype trends of individual domestic animal species, which show essential changes precisely in this period. Part of the study was the evaluation of differences among Eneolithic cultures and periodical trends in the animal use economy. Shifts in the hunt rate, in the representation of individual domestic species and in the form of primary and secondary use of the animals were observed. In this direction the results clearly give precision to the conception of the above mentioned "secondary products revolution". Among others the specific character of the local Řivnáč culture and non linear dynamics of palaeoeconomic development are suggested. The results of biometric analysis brings a new point of view concerning the currently discussed question of the cross-breeding of domestic and wild ox, and domestic and wild pigs, which according to the results of this thesis probably came about precisely in the given region and period. This study also brings new data to the horse status, which presumably was domesticated in the Eneolithic period. In ecological conclusions, due to its high abundance, a strong influence of beaver is suggested for the formation of nature of local ecosystems. Special attention is given to the evidence of ritual practises on animals, which point at their non-economical, symbolic status.

The thesis also includes special studies analysing sporadic evidence for frog consumption in prehistoric Central Europe, on a worldwide scale in an archaeological context a unique find of cattle loose horns and a revision of the earliest evidence for domestic fowl in the Czech Republic.