

Transition between the Stone and Bronze Ages accounts to the most important transformations in human history. However, appearance of the new raw material was only one element of this transformation. Throughout a long period of time (*ca.* the 1st half of the 2nd millennium BC) stone tools still held their predominant position. They were not only cheaper and more available than metal artifacts, but in most cases more effective than their metal counterparts. Also metal arms (e.g. daggers) did not match simple and reliable stone weaponry. They were also too precious for risking to get them damaged or lost. It is understandable therefore, that first artifacts dominated by metal (copper, bronze, but also silver or gold) were decorations and prestigious-symbolic objects.

From what has been said one may get to the conclusion that at the turn of Stone and Bronze Ages metal artifacts played the role rather insignificant. If it can be partially true from *stricte* economic point of view, it is entirely false in relation to socio-cultural transformations of the time.

During the Young Stone Age on vast territories of the Old World there were developed vast and stable communities, in many ways egalitarian ones. In such communities welfare of individuals was closely linked with welfare of the whole group and nobody could get rich on expense of another. It was like that until metal appeared. The sole possession of an artifact made of a new raw material placed its owner in a privileged and at the same time difficult position, demanding awareness and readiness to protect his possession. It is always like that when high value goods can be accumulated in one place and when they can be easily transferred from one place to another. In consequence, a gradual disintegration of Neolithic-born structures commenced. In East-Central Europe first signs of that process can be observed as early as in the 1st half of the 3rd millennium BC. However, to build and consolidate the new structures, those of the Bronze Age, another thousand years were needed.

The limestone hill of *Stránska skála* in the eastern suburb of Brno is the well known place of extraction of rocks described as cherts of the *Stránska skála* type. The beginning of it goes back to the Upper Paleolithic. During the periods of Neolithic and Early Eneolithic extraction activities reached their peak. They were systematic and organized, based on the knowledge of local geological conditions. However, around the mid 3rd millennium BC, when transformations described above became better and better visible, demand for the *Stránska skála* raw material became to decline.

Lithic chipped industries, *i.e.* production and distribution of artifacts made of cleavable rocks, continued to play the key role in economic life of inhabitants of East-Central Europe. Nevertheless, their character had been changed, in comparison with the proceeding periods. From a specialized and controlled activities they transformed into a kind of domestic routine, performed according to actual needs by possibly simplest ways. It does not mean that specialized lithic workshops disappeared. In several places in Europe (but not in Moravia), abundant with high quality lithic raw materials, there was developing the production of specific artifacts – daggers, sickle knives, arrowheads of a special shape, or long blades. However, there were not just tools of everyday use but rather artifacts of specific functions, symbols of prestige and authority, indispensable attributes of transformation periods. Besides, they often imitated their metal archetypes.

Among characteristic elements of lithic industries from the turn of Stone and Bronze Ages there is an increasing tendency to optimize production and use of common tools. The process followed the general optimization rule – to get most by least cost. Therefore, easily available rocks, even of lower quality, began to replace much better raw materials, possibly from distant sources (exceptions are objects of prestige, often imported from long distances). An extreme example of it is an intentional re-use of artifacts from earlier periods, including the Paleolithic.

On the *Stránska skála* hill local cherts had been exploited at least till the end of the Stone Age. It is testified by lithic assemblages of that time. An open question is the form of this exploitation. An overall knowledge of the period in question suggests rather an "optimized" used of already existing mining structures. However, discoveries of recent years (geophysical survey and soundings) indicate possibility of organized chert digging and processing during the Late Eneolithic, performed by people of the Moravian group of the Bell Beaker culture. To solve this question, systematic excavations on the provisionally recognized place and specialized analyses (including radiocarbon dating) are indispensable. With confirmation of chronological position and function of the Late Eneolithic structure on *Stránska skála* our knowledge on lithic raw material/tool economy of the period in question (and economy altogether) would be considerably augmented.

At the turn of Stone and Bronze Ages, Moravia was one of the most important centers of epochal transformations in East-Central Europe, strongly influencing adjacent territories. Therefore, examining the Moravian transformations is extremely important for understanding similar processes in southwest Poland and elsewhere. Implementation of the project opens a chance to make a real progress in research on this issue.