
Kožený Zámek: Archaeological and Paleoecological Insight from a Late Paleolithic site in Kokořínsko, Central Bohemia

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Abstract

Understandings of landscape use and environmental practice during the Late Paleolithic and Mesolithic of Central Europe are complicated by several geographical gaps in knowledge. One under-studied area is the regions adjacent to the Elbe corridor that would have connected Bohemia to a dynamic and changing world during the post-glacial transformation of Europe. Since 2017, we have been conducting systematic survey, which has identified several important sites in Kokořínsko – a landscape which drains into the Elbe river near to its confluence with the Vltava. In this paper, we present results from the excavation of Kožený zámek, a key site that we identified during this work, and analyzed through collaborative archaeological and paleoecological perspectives. The site is a well stratified rock shelter located in an enclosed valley and has occupations that span the Modern period to the Late Upper Paleolithic. In our presentation, we focus on stratigraphic interpretations and C14 dating of a series of superimposed hearth features that date from about 9800-10,800 cal BC. Analysis of lithic, malacozoological and archaeozoological collections from these layers at Kožený zámek offer a rare glimpse into local practice and environmental changes during the Pleistocene/Holocene transition. Late Paleolithic contexts are quite rare in Bohemia. From a regional perspective, we consider the insight that Kožený zámek offers for questions of continuity between Late Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic in Central Europe.

Keywords: central Europe, rockshelter, hearths, C14 dating, environmental data, stratigraphy

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