

PREHISTORIC MARBLE QUARRIES AT THE BÍLÝ KÁMEN NEAR SÁZAVA (BOHEMIA, CZECH REPUBLIC)

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A study of mining and distribution of silicite raw materials has traditionally received much attention from European research. On the other hand, non-siliceous rocks has largely been excluded from research interest. The main reason has been difficult methodology of accurate petrographic study of these materials. Yet the potential of these raw materials is great, and the results obtained by their studies can have a major impact on the assessment of intercultural interactions of prehistoric populations. Marble, as a raw material of prehistoric jewellery, appears in greater extent in the Central European Neolithic. Its findings belong to LBK but especially to younger cultures in the western part of Central Europe. These are the Stroked Pottery culture and Rössen culture. Only little attention has been paid to the provenance of the marble. An important role is played by evidence of its prehistoric mining in the Sázava region (Central Bohemia; Czech Republic). The quarries were discovered in the period between the world wars, thereby they most likely represent the longest known prehistoric mining of non-silicite raw material throughout Europe. At the time of its discovery, the finding was published only locally, and the further development of the subject was overshadowed by post-war development. The paper presents the results of a new research, focusing on a key locality with mining evidence. It also summarizes the results of geochemical analysis which proves that the marble used in prehistory had its origin in different localities in the Central European area.

Keywords

marble, prehistoric mining, Neolithic, Bílý Kámen, Bohemia, petroarcheology

Note/comment