

## Gravettian art of Pavlov I and VI: an aggregation site and an episodic site compared

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### Structure of Pavlovian art

The Gravettian (Pavlovian) mobile art of south Moravia (Czech Republic) shows a considerable variability in terms of materials, techniques, forms, and functions. In the broad outlines, however, a majority of these symbolic objects may be classified along predetermined dichotomies: ivory carvings versus clay plastics, truly mobile art that has been attached and carried around versus static art that fulfilled its role at a place and remained there, and long-term art versus short-term art.

In central and eastern Europe, ivory carvings are typical representatives of long-term art. In south Moravia, they display a variety of forms as zoomorphs, anthropomorphs, and geometric. At Dolní Věstonice I, the anthropomorphic symbolic and individual anatomical elements reached a sophisticated level of abstraction. Some of these carvings are clearly objects of body decoration: the so-called “diadems”, pendants, and decorative attachments. But purely zoomorphic shapes, such as the Pavlov I “contours découpés” of a mammoth and a lion, possess notches for attachment, suggesting that the objects could have been carried around as well. In this manner, attached ivory carvings were associated either with moving humans or made part of interior scenes, and so became part of everyday life. Given the carefulness of the production and the worn surfaces, ivory carvings served their purpose for a longer time.

Clay plastics represent a typical phenomenon of south Moravian mobiliary art. Their discovery at a number of southern Moravia sites dates back to the 1920s. Subsequently, imprints of organic materials were noticed on the pellets, and these provided important information on dermatoglyphics and textile and cordage. The modelled shapes depict a variety of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic shapes, as well as their fragments. Anthropomorphs are predominantly females, whereas the animals are mostly imposing and dominant species such as mammoths, lions, bear, rhinoceros, and horses –but also owls. In contrast to ivory carvings, one must assume a short-term or episodic meaning for objects modelled in clay, most likely limited to a single event– play or ritual. And, still in contrast to ivory, they seem to have been left discarded at the hearths where they were produced. Because they did not move too much, one may ask if they are deserve the name of “mobile art”.

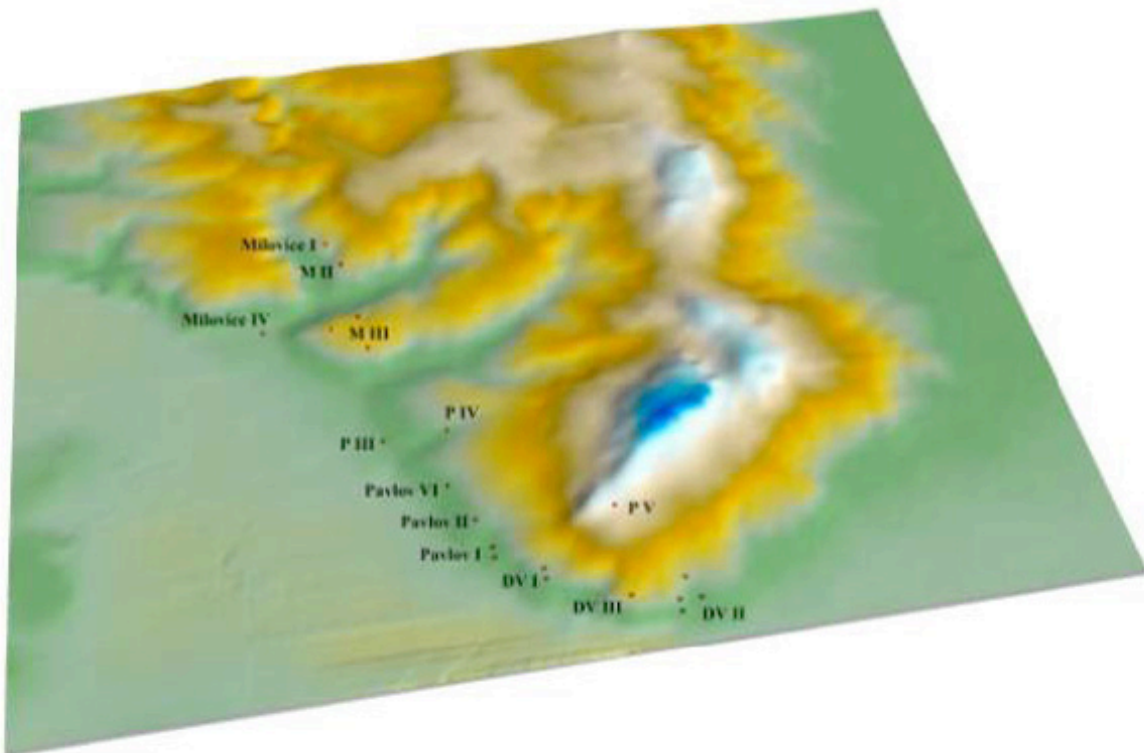
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## Context of Pavlovian art

Sites in the Dolní Věstonice–Pavlov–Milovice area form a typical and best explored example of a densely settled Gravettian hunters' area. The individual sites show a certain hierarchy in terms of importance and size. Until now, the occurrence of art objects was limited to large aggregation sites that have resulted from repeated human activities at one place, and, as such, they represent palimpsests of intensive occupations (Pavlov I, Dolní Věstonice I).

Recently, archaeological control of earthworks in the eastern vicinity of the village of Pavlov revealed new evidence. As a part of these works, a separate single-occupation site was discovered about 1km east of Pavlov I and named Pavlov VI. The site yielded a clear stratigraphy, with radiocarbon dates, several pits, faunal and floral remains, transported rocks and Tertiary shells, stone and bone artefacts, decorative items, ochre, and a number of ceramic pieces, including some of zoomorphic forms (lion, owl) and some with the impressions of human epidermal ridges, animal hair and textile structures. In fact, Pavlov VI represents a case of separate settlement unit, while the larger sites consist of several such units.



**Fig. 1.** The Dolní Věstonice–Pavlov–Milovice area, showing the location of the individual Upper Paleolithic sites.

Site	Sample no.	Material	Result (BP)	Deviation	Result (cal BC)	Deviation	
Dolní Věstonice I	GrN-6859	Charcoal	27790	370	30442	381	
	GrN-10524	Charcoal	26430	190	29266	369	
	GrN-18189	Charcoal	25950	+630/-580	28897	578	
	GrN-1286	Charcoal	25820	170	28909	360	
	GrN-6857	Charcoal	25790	320	28880	424	
	OxA-8292	Femur	22840	200	25527	430	
Dolní Věstonice II	GrN-13962	Charcoal	27660	80	30246	218	
	GrN-15327	Charcoal	27080	170	29861	147	
	GrN-15278	Charcoal	27070	300	29839	221	
	GrN-15324	Charcoal	27070	170	29855	147	
	GrN-15326	Charcoal	26970	160	29797	148	
	GrN-21122	Charcoal	26970	200	29788	167	
	GrN-15279	Charcoal	26920	250	29725	215	
	GrN-14831	Charcoal	26640	110	29477	279	
	GrN-15325	Charcoal	26550	160	29357	346	
	GrN-21123	Charcoal	26100	200	29072	356	
	GrN-15132	Charcoal	26190	390	29108	423	
	GrN-14830	Charcoal	26100	100	29073	332	
	GrN-15147		25890	370	28940	433	
	GrN-15134		25870	370	28927	436	
	GrN-15277	Charcoal	25740	210	28854	381	
	GrN-15276	Charcoal	25570	280	28623	495	
	GrN-11003	Charcoal	24470	190	27290	485	
	ISGS-1744	Charcoal	26390	270	29228	386	
	ISGS-1617	Charcoal	24970	920	27816	1045	
	GrN-11003	Charcoal	24470	190	27290	485	
	GrN-19498		23540	180	26533	389	
	Dolní Věstonice III	GrN-22306	Charcoal	26200	1100	28911	988
		GrN-22307	Charcoal	26160	770	28988	667
		GrN-20392	Charcoal	24560	+660/-610	27419	765
	Pavlov I	GrN-4812	Charcoal	26730	250	29478	346
GrN-19539		Charcoal	26650	230	29412	360	
GrN-1272		Charcoal	26620	230	29387	366	
KN-1286		Charcoal	26580	460	29313	466	
GrN-22303		Charcoal	26400	310	29228	400	
GrN-20391		Charcoal	26170	450	29089	450	
GIN-104		Charcoal	26000	350	29010	412	
GrN-22305		Charcoal	25840	290	28919	402	
GrA-192		Charcoal	25530	110	28501	305	
GrN-22304		Charcoal	25160	170	28122	257	
GrN-1325		Charcoal	25020	150	28032	268	
Pavlov II		GrA-44392	Charcoal	27020	140	29828	138
		GrA-44290	Charcoal	27190	140	29920	141
Pavlov VI		GrA-37627	Charcoal	25950	110	28985	337
		GrA-37628	Charcoal	26110	130	29078	339
	OxA-18306	Charcoal	26660	140	29482	288	

Table 1. Dolní Věstonice–Pavlov area, review of <sup>14</sup>C datings.

## Pavlov I

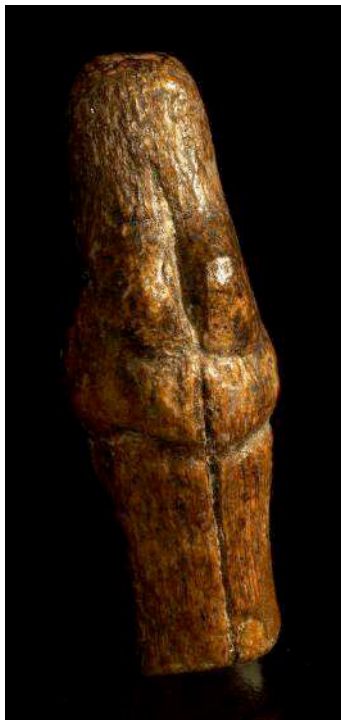
Pavlov I was excavated by Bohuslav Klíma between 1952 and 1972. Almost all categories of mobiliary art at Pavlov are concentrated in the SE part of the site where their spatial distribution is the same as an accumulation of settlement units, hearths, and lithic industries. A separate accumulation of baked clay pieces and ochre occurred inside one settlement unit in the NW. The remarkable mammoth tusk with geometric engravings, interpreted as a “map”, originates from the transitory zone in the centre of the site.

The Pavlov I ceramic assemblage comprises about 10 anthropomorphs: 4 female figures, 2 males (?), and 4 anthropomorphic heads and about 20 zoomorphs: 4 mammoths, 2 rhinos, 2 reindeer (?), 4 larger herbivores, 1 caprid, 6 lions and 1 bear. Both assemblages are accompanied by a large assemblage of separate “trunks”, “legs”, fragments, and unshaped pellets.

The ivory art inventory comprises flat zoomorphic carvings of a lion and a mammoth, 2 pendants shaped as owls, one three-dimensional female carving, and a number of decorative carvings (more than 10 pendants and more than 50 ecorated ovals and bands of ivory, the most typical of them interpreted as “diadems”).

Specific objects are decorated mammoth tusks. Based on formal analogies from other Gravettian and Epigravettian sites (Předmostí, Eliseevichi, Mezhirich), the tusk interpreted as a “map” by Klíma may be a kind of spatial representation of the site’s vicinity, possibly coding qualities of the surrounding terrain for hunting.

In addition, there is a large assemblage of perforated pendants of carnivore teeth (including a human tooth), Tertiary shells collected in the vicinity of the site, lumps of ochre as well as grindstones for ochre processing.



**Fig. 2 (left).** Pavlov I: female figurine, ivory; height= 45mm.  
(© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 3 (above).** Pavlov I: mammoth, ivory contour carving; length= 69mm. (© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



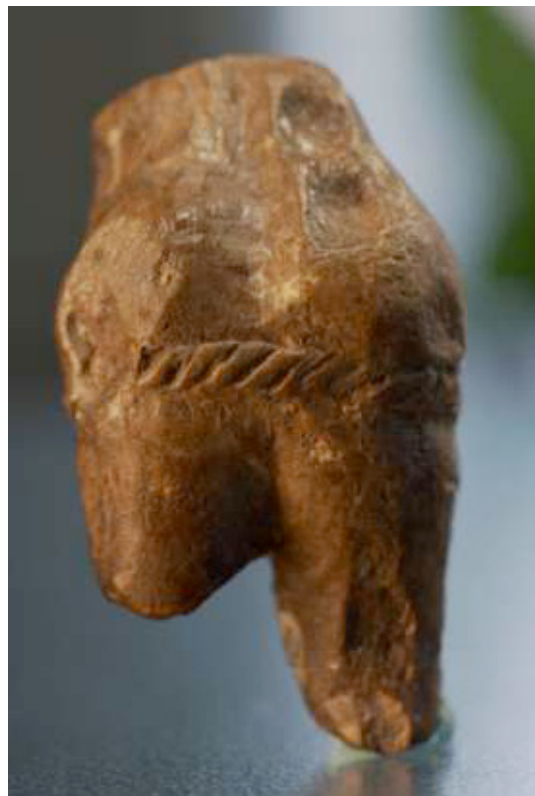
**Fig. 4 (above).** Pavlov I: lion, ivory contour carving; length= 215mm.  
(© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 5 (right).** Pavlov I: stylized owl, ivory pendant; height= 43mm.  
(© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 6.** Pavlov I: carved and decorated “headbands”, ivory. (© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 7.** Pavlov I: female torso with a cord as a belt, clay miniature; height= 35mm. (© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 8.** Pavlov I: mammoth, damaged clay, due to temperature shocks.  
(© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 9.** Pavlov I: lion's head, clay miniature; length= 23mm. (© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 10.** Pavlov I: head of a herbivore, clay miniature; length= 45mm. (© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)

## Pavlov VI

Pavlov VI was almost completely excavated in the summer of 2007. Given the small size of this settlement unit, the art inventory is small. Among the modelled shapes of clay, the most typical piece depicts the head and neck of a carnivore (P11, 23x15x8mm, square D-2). Based on comparison with the other zoomorphic shapes from Dolní Věstonice–Pavlov, the head probably represents a lion.

However the animal's facial details are not engraved clearly and are preserved only on one face. We observe a mouth, an unclear eye, and four short, parallel incisions on the neck. The other face was completely destroyed by a deep frontal incision, produced by a sharp object directed against the animal's mouth while the clay was still wet. Incising the animal's head is a practice previously recorded in several other ceramic fragments from the Dolní Věstonice–Pavlov area and, typically, in all these cases the wounded species was a lion. This practice also recalls the situation in the Lion's Chapel at Trois-Frères where a complete lion engraving was subjected to destructive, heavy blows, mostly directed against its face. Given these repeated occurrences in the European Upper Paleolithic, it is likely that this behaviour was of symbolic significance.

The owl figurine (N° 729, 28x15x11mm, square B-1) renders the silhouette of the animal's body by separating its head but without providing any anatomical or facial details. Instead, we observe several short incisions on the surface. Among the birds, the owl received special attention in parietal and mobile art, but in contrast to other zoomorphs, it is usually depicted *en face*. Dolní Věstonice I provided three additional ceramic figurines of owl, which however differ from Pavlov VI by a more slim stature and facial details and represent probably another owl species. At Pavlov I, the owl was also stylized and carved in ivory.

Four flat clay pieces are rather amorphous, but some recall animals' "trunks". There is a fragment of a large part of an animal's body (N° 821, 30x18x9mm, square C-3) showing the typical curvature of the back, one leg and three short incisions on the surface; a flat plaque with numerous short incisions on both faces, some crosscutting (P12, 30x22x8mm, square D-3); an oval-shaped fragment (P10, 20x14x10mm) bearing two short and deep incisions on the surface; an oval-shaped fragment (P3, 28x20x12mm, square B-1) showing long horizontal incisions. Finally, there are four conical fragments (P5, 12x8x6mm; P6, 13x8x6mm; P7, 17x12x7mm; 19x14x8mm; squares B-1, C-1, D-1, central pit). Usually these were interpreted as "legs", which however does not mean that they are fragments of complete figures – some were evidently produced as partial representations.

Decorative items are represented by four perforated flat pebbles, a perforated tooth of an Arctic fox, and by perforated shells of Tertiary molluscs. In all these cases, perforation was produced by direct drilling. Thus the Pavlov VI pebbles differ from otherwise analogical decorative objects from Pavlov I and II, where the area was first partially cut from one or both faces, and afterwards perforated at the thinnest spot. One pebble bears a series of short incisions of the same type as on some of the ceramic objects. In addition, there were 135 complete specimens and 48 fragments of molluscs, dominated by scaphopods (species *Dentalium badense*) and gastropods (*Pirenella*, *Melanopsis*, *Turritella*, *Conus*, and *Terebralia*) and two fragments of bivalves are represented by two small fragments only. As at the other sites in the Dolní Věstonice–Pavlov area, these species originate from the Miocene sediments of the Carpathian Foredeep and of the Vienna Basin, available near the

site. Human modification included artificial perforations, cutmarks, and traces of red coloration or black charcoal.

Obviously, the shells could have been painted for decorative purposes during the Upper Paleolithic. However the suggestion that the concavities of various shells could have been directly used for processing ochre, including personal cosmetics, seems probable as well. Traces of ochre are also visible on some of the other artefacts recovered (a stone plaque, the back of a bladelet, a pierced pebble, etc.). Ochre occurs at this site as sharp-edged, grey-to-violet fragments of hematite with steel-like polish and as earthy, red-to-orange pellets.



**Fig. 11.** Pavlov VI: lion's head. A deep incision damaged the object from the reverse side, clay; length= 23mm. (© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 12.** Pavlov VI: trunk of an animal, clay miniature; length= 30mm. (© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 13.** Pavlov VI: stylized owl, clay miniature; height= 28mm. (© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)



**Fig. 14.** Pavlov VI: decorative pierced pebbles. (© Martin Frouz and Institute of Archaeology, AS CR, Brno.)

## Conclusion

Until recently, mobile Pavlovian art was associated to the semi-permanent “mega-sites”, with evidence of long-term occupation, accumulation of settlement features, and a variety of profane and symbolic activities. The 2007 excavations at the small site of Pavlov VI demonstrate that symbolic behaviour may also have been practiced at episodic sites.

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