

Archaeology Night on Czech TV

Two hour composite archaeological programme on the craftsmanship of prehistoric people.

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For more than two years ČT 2 (a national TV channel, dedicated to culture and minority programmes) has broadcast every Sunday specialised 2 hour 'nights'. Within the Czech archaeological environment it is a success that one of these 'nights' was dedicated to archaeology and on top of that it did not, as is traditional, bring in foreign documents (especially from the BBC production) but a domestic programme produced by Brno Studio. The two hour programme was constructed on what the wide public usually understand as 'experimental archaeology' and therefore the subtitle 'craftsmanship of our ancestors' seems poignant.

One more note at the beginning. The Czech Republic

consists of Bohemia and Moravia. Each of these countries has a certain degree of autonomy. In this programme the Moravian autonomy (Brno is the capitol of Moravia) showed in that the chosen topics were mostly Moravian and older projects. Some activities such as the ten year old open-air museum Villa Nova Uhřínov or the Centre of Experimental Archaeology Všešary (Both Eastern Bohemia) and the interest group of experimental archaeology Mamuti (Prague) were therefore missed out.

The programme was prepared by five directors and was a mix of relatively new interviews with archaeologists showing their assistants - experimenters in the background, documents from the 1994 'Živá minulost (Live Past)', also 1997 'Keltský šperk (Celtic Jewel)' and some old black and white documents from 1967 'Pokušení Hefaistovo (Hephaestus' Temptation) and 1968 'Vzkříšení šperku (Resurrection of a Jewel).

Programme framework

In the introduction Professor Jaroslav Malina (head of the department of anthropology at Brno University) explained what archaeological experiment means and reminded the viewers of some well known foreign experimental programmes. The part called 'Technology' started with stone. Well known specialists in the Palaeolithic from the department 'Anthropos' of the Moravian National Museum explained, while a handy student of archaeology knapped some simple tools from flint. Next a lecturer from the department of archaeology at Brno University showed Neolithic sickles with composite blades and painting on Neolithic (Lengyel) pottery. The programme visited the faculty's base of field archaeology in Těšetice-Kyjovice with its construction of a small Lengyel house where in the foreground students baked bread. Another archaeologist spoke about the firing of Neolithic pottery and showed a kiln of the Lengyel culture.

The programme returned to stone with Palaeolithic knapping 'puzzles' in the hands of specialists from the Moravian National Museum. A Palaeolithic specialist from the Moravian Archaeological Institute talked about stone knapping, which continued well into later prehistory, and presented his research of deep shafts, upto 8 m, in the Krumlov woods. For the first time a representative for archaeology from Bohemia then appeared, an already legendary experimenter, Ivana Pleinerová, spoke about the archaeological open-air museum in Březno u Loun which presents building experiments from various prehistoric periods. Then the programme returned back to Moravia to an archaeopark – the early medieval site in Modrá near Velehrad where we were guided round by Luděk Galuška. The programme stayed in the Middle Ages and returned to Březno where Radomír Pleiner spoke about the firing of early medieval pottery. Another contributor from Southern Bohemia then introduced pottery of the High Middle

Ages while an experimenter was shown firing a kiln. A black and white documentary from 1968 presented jewellery from Great Moravia (9th to 10th century principality) at the time when the modern Moravian jewellers managed to rediscover the technology of granulation and filigree and new information was afterwards presented by Luděk Galuška. The programme thus shifted to gold and archaeologists in southern Bohemia showed gold washing with the help of a fleece, gold panning and the crushing of ore. A black and white document from 1967 then showed iron working. This was followed by new pictures from the famous Early Iron Age site of Býčí skála in the Moravian Karst. Archaeologists from the Museum of Technology in Brno then showed experimental iron smelting in a replica of a kiln from the 9th century. The programme then moved to the Iron Age and after showing the documenta-

ry ‚Celtic Jewel‘ from 1997 an archaeologist presented Celtic jewellery while a metal chiseller showed his craft. The whole programme was then closed by Professor Malina.

Within the environment of Czech Television the production the Archaeology night was an outstanding attempt to popularise archaeology but the format seemed outdated. The main method was interviews with archaeologists and the presentation of artefacts (especially the parts on the Iron Age, which did not use any other means, felt very long). The visual reconstructions were presented only by constructions of experimental features (without any regard to their quality) so that the spectators were not introduced to larger sites such as Celtic Oppida, prehistoric hill forts or tumulus cemeteries. In addition the structure was based mostly on technology and the authors did not bother with a time line so that the

Middle Ages were presented before the Iron Age.

This format was caused by the script being based on the rotation of the various documentaries. It is a shame that they did not use programmes such as for example the very successful ‚Římané za humny‘ (Romans in the backyard) on the discovery of the Roman marching camp near Olomouc, Moravia, long way from Danube, in which more means were found to present the subject other than ‚talking heads‘.

Summary

Nacht der Archäologie im tschechischen Fernsehen

Im Jahr 2005 sendete das tschechische Fernsehen eine besondere „Nacht der Archäologie“, die vom Studio Brno produziert wurde. Das zweistündige Programm bestand aus Themen, die in der Öffentlichkeit mit experimenteller Archäologie in Verbindung gebracht werden und wurde deshalb auch im Untertitel als „Handwerk

unserer Vorfahren“ bezeichnet. Das Programm wurde von fünf verschiedenen Direktoren gestaltet und bestand aus einer Mischung von neueren Interviews und verschiedenen älteren Dokumenten. Das Sendeformat basierte auf dem Wechsel der verschiedenen Dokumentationen, was dazu führte, dass die Sequenzen nicht in chronologischer Folge gezeigt wurden und dadurch etwas „gekünstelt“ wirkten.

Soirée archéologique à la télévision tchèque

En 2005, la télévision tchèque a émis un programme spécial - „soirée archéologique“, préparé dans le studio de Brno. La conception de cette émission de 2 heures a reflété une compréhension générale de „l'archéologie expérimentale“ auprès du grand public tchèque. Aussi le sous-titre du programme indiquait-il „Métiers de nos ancêtres“. 5 réalisateurs y ont collaboré et ont créé une mélange de nouvelles interview et divers documentaires moins récents. En raison du format adopté, fondé sur la succession de documentaires, le programme n'a pas respecté la chronologie et il paraissait rigide.