our way through a maze of enormous crevasses. At one stage I began to wonder whether it might not be our fate to spend yet another night out but eventually we hit off some tracks and returned to the hut just after 14.00 having spent the past 34 with scarcely a bite to eat. Here we learnt that the Frenchmen had reversed the entire Forbes ridge by night arriving back at the hut at 05.00. The entry in the hut book had referred to 9 climbers 'totalment de-routé' but ours was the dubious satisfaction of completing our route. The voices from the Argentière glacier had been those of a Chasseurs Alpines detachment looking for us at the bottom of the mountain. What damage might have been done to the Entente was repaired by our presentation to the hut warden of a bottle of whisky. It was now raining and our time had run out so we retreated to 'Le Dahu' at Argentière for our last night in the Alps.

The Chardonnet escapade was our climax and in the way of uncomfortable experiences left its mark. But when time has blurred the edges it will be the sunlit days amongst the ibex, chamois and marmots in the former hunting grounds of Kings that will best be remembered and in particular that brilliant morning on the soaring ice-ridge spanning the Mountains of Paradise when we made our puny bid to walk with the Gods.

Climbers' playgrounds—Europe

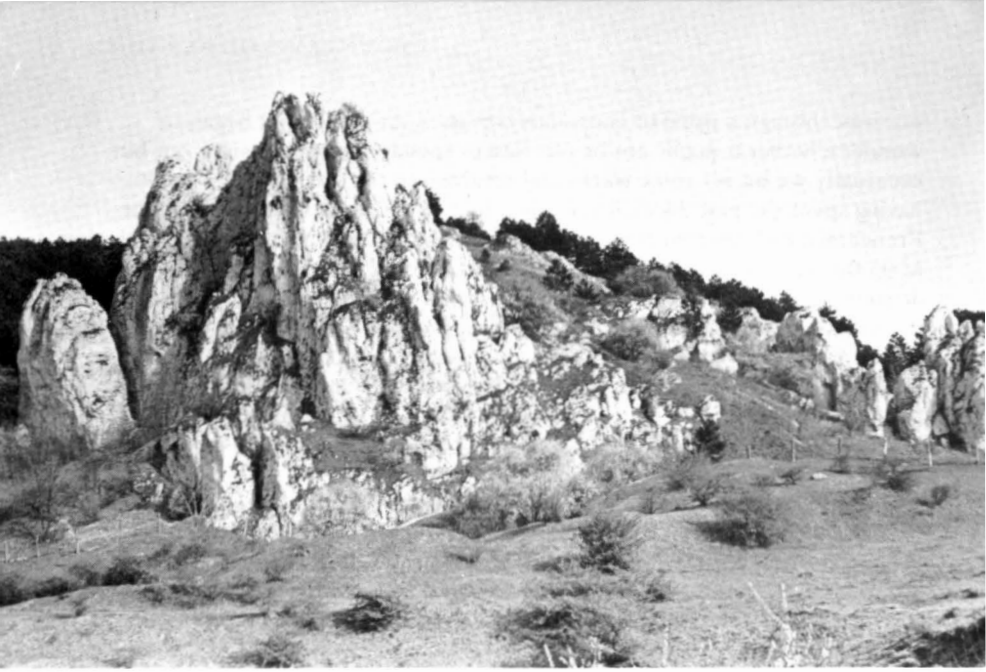
21 The Pálava Rocks

Josef Jurak
Translation: Jaroslav Sovinsky

Pálava is the popular name for some limestone rocks in the Pavlosvské Vrchy (Pavlov Hills). These are situated in the S of Moravia about 40km from Brno. The well broken-up rocks, located in fine natural surroundings, are the favourite training area for Moravian climbers. The whole region is a nature reserve.

The Pavlov Hills consist of a ridge with 3 summits. The NE peak rises sheer from the lowlands of the river Dyje. The middle peak Děvín which is the highest (550m) falls in vertical rock cliffs to a wide saddle Soutěska (Strait). This saddle separates the above mentioned part of the ridge from the second part, on which is the next peak Obora (Preserve). South of these peaks is an outstanding broad hill Stolová Hora (Table Mt.). Further to the S the ridge slowly slopes down.

The geological structure and the origin of the Pavlov Hills were obscure for a long time. In the middle of mildly undulating low-lands, the range of seemingly high hills suddenly rises. It is interesting that Jurassic minerals in the topmost layer do not reach very far down. They lie on the younger Tertiary era layers. This configuration came into existence at the time of the Carpathian folding. In the middle of the Tertiary era the outside sediments of the Carpathians were folded so deeply, that the folds were shifted one over the other. The limestone cliffs lay quite high up. They were torn off from the Jurassic base and carried for many kilometres by the upper layer. The soft parts of the upper layer were later eroded off and the resistant limestones appeared. These were



58 The Palava Rocks—the Throne (Photo: J. Jurak)

then broken up by cracks which have been extended in chimneys and gorges. Sporadically rock blocks and towers came into existence.

The rocks the climbers are interested in are concentrated in 3 groups:

Děvín falls down to the N in impressive faces Severní Stěny (North Walls), Koruna (Crown) and Stěna Nad Soutěskou (The Wall Above Strait). Together they are several hundred metres long.

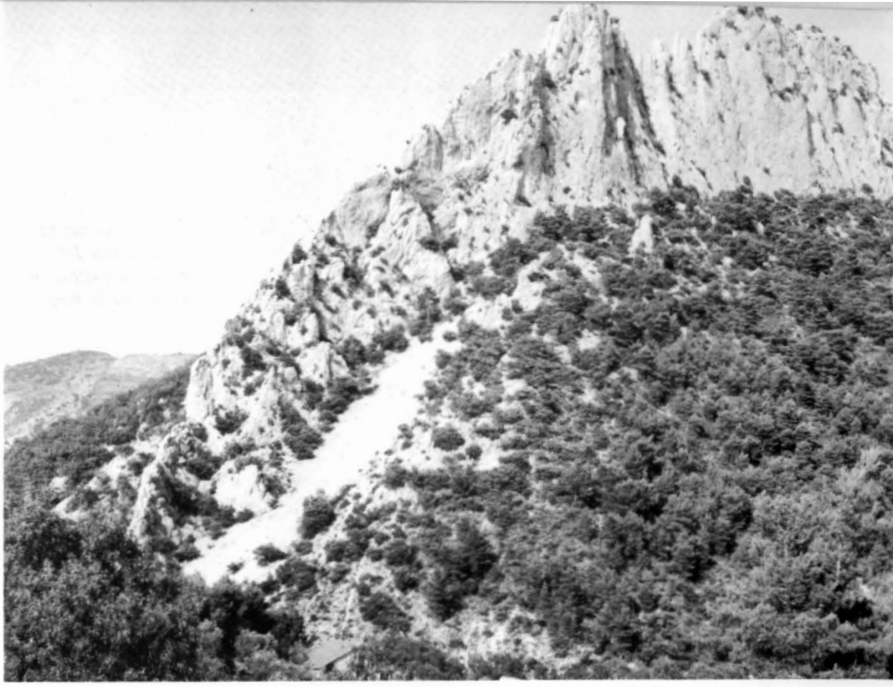
The Obora rocks offer many climbs of all grades of difficulty, which is why they are the most visited. In this part is the highest face of Pálava called Martinka. It is vertical and in part also overhanging; the wall is roughly 70m high. An impressive rock tower Obří Kámen (Giant Stone) is separated from Martinka by a deep gorge. Obří Kámen and Martinka are connected in the upper part by a huge chock-stone Špunt (Cork). The next group is a group of towers called Trun (Throne).

The Stolová hora rocks are lower and are less often visited.

The climbing in the Pálava area is of long standing. The first climbs were done at the end of the last century by German climbers from Brno. Now the sunny rocks of Pálava are in great favour and often visited, because the nearby Austrian Alps are still inaccessible for most Czechoslovak climbers.

22 The Rocher Saint-Julien — Michael Craig

This crag, closely SE of Buis-les-Baronnies in Provence, bears a close resemblance to the Dentelles de Montmirail (*AJ* 79 307). Each is a steep-sided knife-edge ridge of limestone, having fairly easy access to the highest points, a long traversable ridge top and a face of climbing rocks on one side below. Here the way up is a little more obvious since it is marked by red flashes on rocks and trees



59 The Rocher St Julien (Photo: M. Craig)

all the way from the town. The last 100ft are a scramble.

The S face is a magnificent crag offering routes up to 120m. There appear to be some scars of recent rock-fall. However, the Rocher Saint-Julien, picturesquely described as 'la colonne vertebrale d'un gigantesque diplodocus', offers a much superior traverse along the top of its prehistoric back. Indeed the complete traverse was only accomplished as late as 1946 after considerable exploration.

There is an excellent CAF refuge at Buis-les-Baronnies, very handy to the crags. The sun always shines and it is a notable vine-growing area. Curiously the guide-book does not say where the rocks are situated, but when you get there it is obvious. From some aspects it would be no exaggeration to call it the 'Matterhorn' of Provence.

Reference

Escalades du Rocher de Saint-Julien—Buis-les-Baronnies François Rubin & Lionel Soleymieu (CAF, Section Lyonnaise, 1970).

23 La Pedriza del Manzanares (The Climbing School of Madrid)

Mariano Redondo de la Paz
(Translation: Luis Costa Benach & Edward Pyatt)

The practice rocks used by climbers from Madrid are in the area known as La Pedriza del Manzanares, some 50km to the NW. Geographically it is part of the range of the Sierra de Guadarrama, but its characteristic geology and morphology make it seem like another world with its own distinctive personality. It is unique among the mountains of the Iberian Peninsula and for this reason was constituted a 'Nature Site of National Interest' as long ago as 1927. The



60 Two views in La Pedriza del Manzares (Photos: M. R. de la Paz)



area is divided into two—Pedriza Anterior reaches 1714m at Macizo del Yelmo: Pedriza Posterior rises to over 1800m. The great rose-granite rocks, clean and compact, form in places a labyrinth of pinnacles and overhanging walls. These features give a wide variety of climbing problems and make this a first-class practice area.

The Pedriza was formed in comparatively recent geological times when a series of granite masses welled to the surface due to folding during the first half of the Tertiary. Erosion of these masses produced joints in NE–SW and NW–SE directions, as well as others horizontal, thus originating the chaotic confusions of rocks such as that of Hoces Cimeras. As the vegetation became more prolific, water erosion produced the fantastic forms we see today.

Noteworthy in the extensive range of the local flora are rock-rose, lavender and arbutus. There are extensive areas of reafforestation with pine trees and in higher places juniper.

Manzanares El Real is the best place to make for; from here 2 forestry roads go to Tranco ($2\frac{1}{2}$km) and Canto Cochino ($6\frac{1}{2}$km), both with parking, services, restaurants, etc. There is a hut—the José del Prado belonging to the RSEA—above Canto Cochino.

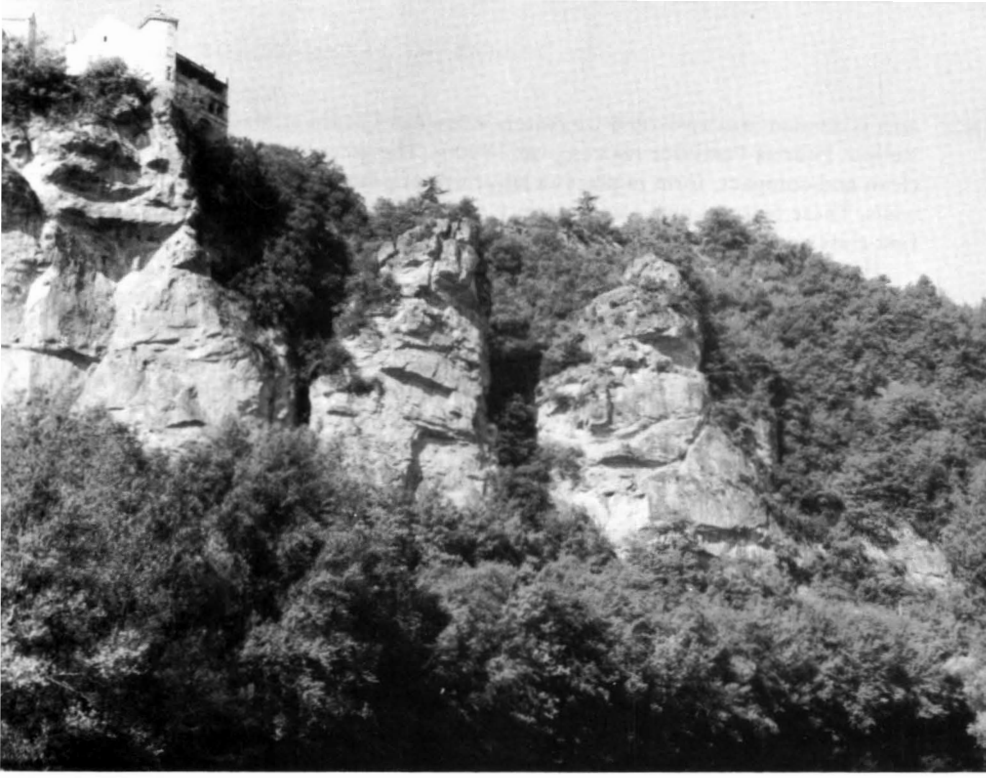
The principal crags are Peña del Yelmo, la Maza, el Pajaro, las Buitreras, el Cocodrilo, Nieves, Pared de Santillana, el Hueso, Cancho Amarillo, dos Torres, Tres Cestos and Cancho de los Muertos.

There are a number of mountaineering clubs centred on Madrid; a list of addresses is available in a leaflet on the Sierra de Guadarrama available from the Spanish National Tourist Office in London. General information on Spanish climbing can be obtained from the Servicio General de Informacion de Montana, Apartado Correos 2291, Barcelona, Spain.

24 The Rocks of the Aveyron Gorge — Tom Connor

The Aveyron river lies between the Dordogne to the N and the Tarn to the S, and drains the limestone uplands of the Rouergue. For a considerable part of its length it flows through gorges which contain any number of rocks which could provide good climbing, although in many places the gorge is un-roaded and therefore inaccessible. However, the lower and most westerly section, which starts where the river leaves the causse a few miles E of Montauban (see Michelin Sheet No 79, fold 19) contains a number of outcrops which are easy of access and which are used as practice grounds by local climbers.

Starting at the W at Montricoux there are Les Rocs de Montricoux which are 100m high and are suitable for beginners. Continuing up the gorge, we come to Les Trois Piliers de Bruniquel which provide sustained climbs of high standard up to 100m in length. One of the pillars is crowned by the 700-year-old ruins of Bruniquel castle as shown in the accompanying photograph. Further to the E as one continues up the gorge are Le Toit de la Madeleine, l'Ensemble de Penne (with routes of medium difficulty) and l'Eperon and Face du Capucin, where there are long and very difficult routes often involving artificial climbing. However, the best climbing in this section of the gorge is to be found on Les Rochers d'Anglars which are SE of St Antonin—the derivation of the name is not clear, but is presumably not due to the activities of English climbers!



61 Les Trois Piliers de Bruniquel (Photo: T. Connor)

This outcrop is 100 to 120m high and provides routes of all difficulties. Visitors may have the luck to be entertained by the Montauban hang-gliding club which operates nearby.

The rock in the gorge is good in general, but will not withstand frequent driving in and removal of pitons.

Reference

Leaflet *Escalade* issued by Office Departemental du Tourisme de Tarn et Garonne, Rue de l'Hotel de Ville, 82000 Montauban. Further information from M. Patrick Puel, 10 rue Winston Churchill, 8200. Montauban.

The protection game

George Steele

Historical introduction

Except in the case of aid moves or artifical climbs, all that a climber needs IN ORDER TO CLIMB is his personal equipment (ie clothing, footwear, etc.). Over the century or so that men have been climbing rocks as a part of mountaineering they have additionally developed equipment and techniques for the *protection* of the leader and other members of his party. For many years the leader had to drag behind him a very heavy rope, mainly to protect those following him, because he himself could not rely on it in the event of a fall.