

PALEOENVIRONMENT. THE STONE AGE

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THE PLEISTOCENE PEOPLING OF THE NORTH: PALEOLITHIC MILESTONES AND THRESHOLDS HORIZONS IN NORTHERN EURASIA

PART II: THE MIDDLE PALEOLITHIC HUMAN BIOGEOGRAPHIC REALM

The Middle Paleolithic record for the “peopling of the North” is presented with tables, a distribution map, chronology, bioclimatic circumstances, and toolmaking repertoires. Salient aspects identify time-series, patterns of adaptive strategies, dispersal “frontlines”, and strategies for procurement of food-animals. They support empirically a model of the human biogeographic “cold space” realm; its bearing on the adaptive horizons of the historical zonation of the Paleolithic culture; debates about the Middle to Upper Paleolithic transition in Eurasia; and antecedents for trends in intensification of Holocene culture in circumpolar habitats, with reference to the Canadian Arctic.

Keywords: Middle Paleolithic milestones, human biogeography, social morphology, occupation “frontlines”, culture historical time series.

Introduction

In Part I of the article, devoted to the peopling of North in Paleolithic, the issues of peopling of Northern Eurasia in the Early Pleistocene were discussed. Despite the scarcity of archaeological records of this period and debatable contexts of some Early Paleolithic sites, we can trace the cyclical human expansions into north Eurasian middle and high latitudes. All these localities were correlated chronoclimatically with milder/temperate episodes. Already in the Early Paleolithic, human occurrences overlapped in space with the Mammoth-Steppe Biome distribution. At the same time, adaptive skills necessary for colonizing high latitudes were gradually developed. In the Middle and Upper Paleolithic, humans obtained most

successful adaptation strategies, including some instances of settlements during stadial advances. These processes, which provided the possibility of peopling the sub-polar high-latitude habitats of Eurasia, are discussed in Part II.

Middle Paleolithic colonization milestones

In this part of the study, I present an updated 79 numbered-list of Middle Paleolithic occurrences identified across North Eurasia (mostly 50°N to 64°N), from Western/Northwestern, Central, Northeast Europe, Urals, up to Western and Eastern Siberia (Fig. 1, Table 1). Relevant information covers bioclimatic settings, exact/approximate latitudes, geochronology 300 to 30 ka BP.



Fig. 1. Middle Paleolithic occurrences. Distribution map superimposes sites over the Mammoth-Steppe Biome. Figures 1–3 materials gathered and prepared by author; map format, design, Jacques Cinq-Mars; editing, Alexander Rolland.

1 – individual sites; 2 – site series or clusters; 3 – Ural Mountains; 4 – Mammoth-Steppe Biome.

Criteria for Table 1 number-coded sites diagnostic of a Middle Paleolithic “cold space” *Human Biogeographic Realm* are: *Geochronology* from lithostratigraphy, chronoclimatology, biochronology (flora, Mammoth-Steppe Biome fauna); *Correlations* with isotopic stages (OIS); *Bioclimatic variables*, like boreality (north-south latitude gradients), continentality, hypercontinentality (west to east of the 40° meridian gradients); *Pleistocene fluctuation cycles*, such as stadials, cold oscillations, periglacial features (cryoturbation, deflation, ice-wedges, tills, proglacial lakes), interglacials, and interstadials. Mapped coded sites below are enlarged to facilitate reading:

Western Europe: 1 – Mont-Dol; 1a – Combe-Grenal 61–59; 1b – La Chaise; 1c – Aquitaine Basin, Quina Horizon; 2 – Cotte St-Brelade L, 6, 13, B; 2a – Cotte St-Brelade 11; 3 – Crayford; 4 – Lynford; 4a – Hénin-sur-Cojeul F, G; 5 – Beauvais-la-Justice C1, C2; 5a – Pucheuill; 5b – Vergisson IV; 5c – Sainte-Anne J1, J2; 6 – Savy N2; 7 – Mesvin IV; 7a – Veldwezelt-Hezerwater VLL, VLB; 8 – Scladina 5; 9 – Achenheim III “sol 74”; 9a – Mutzig I 3, 4, II.

Central Europe: 10 – Wannan 1, 2, 3; 11 – Tönchesberg 1; 12 – Schweinskopf 1, 2, 3; 13a, b – Ariendorf III 1, 2; 14 – Karstein; 15a, b – Rheindahlen B1, B2-3; 16 – Salzgitter-Lebenstedt; 17 – Lichtenberg; 17a – Ochtmissen; 18 – Königsau A, B; 19 – Markkleeberg.

Eastern/Northeastern Europe: 19a – Tata; 20 – Dzierzslaw; 20a – Rozumice 3; 20b – Trzebca; 20c –

Tomaszów; 20d – Biśnik 19, 19 a, b, c; 21 – Ray; 22 – Okiennik; 22a – Racibórz-Ocice; 23 – Wylotne; 24 – Zwoleń; 25 – Chulatovo III; 25a – Molodova-5; 26 – Rikhtta; 27 – Khotelëvo; 28 – Betovo; 29 – Khavlynsk; 30 – Dubovka; 31 – Sukhaiia Mechetka; 32 – El’niki II; 33 – Garchi I; 33a – Byzovaiia; 34 – Peshchernyi Log; 35 – Bol’shaiia Glukhaiia; 36 – Ganichata; 37 – Susiluola.

Western Siberia: 38 – Bogdanovka; 38a – Baigara; 39 – Bol’shoi Kemchug; 40 – Aryshevskoe-2; 41 – Okladnikov Cave; 42 – Denisova Cave-14, -13, -12.3; 43 – Ust’-Karakol-1; 44 – Ust’-Kanskaiia Cave; 45 – Kara-Bom; 46 – Kaminaiia Cave; 46a – Anui-3; 47 – Tiimechin; 47a – Chagyrskaiia Cave; 48 – Mokhovo II.

Central Siberia: 49 – Ust’-Izhul’; 50 – Gora Igetei; 50a – Makarovo IV; 50b – Sosnovyi Bor; 51 – Kurtak IV; 52 – Grot Dvuglazka-5–7.

Eastern Siberia: 53 – Khotyk-4, -5; 54 – Diring Iuriiakh; 55 – Mungkharyma; 55a – Ust’-Chirkuo; 55b – Kyzyl-Syr.

Russian Far East: 56 – Osinovka-4.

The evidence, unavoidably, constitutes a weighted availability sample. Middle Paleolithic sites distribution shows a west-to-east decreasing density slope from Europe to eastern Siberia reflecting a provisional state of knowledge, instead of actual past human occupation densities, while concentrated in Southern Siberia (Derevianko, Markin, 2011: 40). Some documents appear

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