
Symposium: The Palaeolithic: Modernity, Anatomy and Behaviour

Marcell Otte

European Upper Palaeolithic origins

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The coming of Modern Man into Europe appears a fast movement from Central Asia. Technological devices were adapted to open landscapes, with little or no wood. This explains the clear change towards bone technology. These people also brought a stone blade technology, which was a better adaptation than flakes to their movements and their bones and antlers techniques. No relation at all with the African continent is indicated by any means. The creation of art objects at the very west of the continent looks like an acculturation effect of very deep and complex nature.

Wild Caprid economies and use of the hinterland during the Upper Palaeolithic in southern Europe

Nellie Phoca-Cosmetatou

This paper aims to consider the nature of movement into, and systematic exploitation of, the rugged mountainous hinterland, its correlation with environmental conditions, how it relates to the changes in subsistence and landscape use perceived during the Late Glacial, as well as the features of 'specialised', narrow-range activity sites.

Hunting methods and attributes (based on mortality profiles, anatomical representation etc.) of the ibex will be evaluated, in order to assess not only the function and role of the sites, but also claims on the implications of such faunas on human strategies, behaviour and organisation of activities. Assumptions prevalent in the archaeological literature regarding the ecological and habitat implications of ibex presence in the faunas, as well as the demands made on human groups to hunt the animal, will be critically reviewed. By placing the ibex sites in their wider context, I shall assess the timing, nature and significance of movement into, and use of mountainous areas and resources, and evaluate the similarities and differences observed, in regard as well to the phenomenon of Late Glacial 'diversification' and 'intensification'.

Russian Paleolithic archaeology: Retrospect and prospects

Sergey A. Vasil'ev

The report presents a review of the history and current situation of the Palaeolithic studies in Russia. After brief characteristics of organisational structure, major field discoveries and publications, multidisciplinary environmental studies are examined. Main methodological issues of Palaeolithic archaeology are discussed, as are problems of lithic classification and taxonomy and identification of culture entities followed by more general problems of the analysis of Palaeolithic culture patterns in global scale. An evaluation of theoretical underpinnings, discussions around basic aims and goals of prehistoric research are given. In conclusion one can find general characteristics of the development of Palaeolithic research in Russia against the background of biases prevailed in worldwide prehistory. Despite the appearance of some intriguing lines of inquiry in recent years, Russian prehistorians in general tend to gravitate toward the "mainstream" culture-historical archaeology with some reservations and modifications. Meanwhile Russian school of prehistory has a lot of real achievements, especially in wide-scale studies of Palaeolithic cultures. Taking into account the high-quality data produced by leading academic research centres it makes our contributions useful for wide circles of prehistorians, especially to those who tended to see our domain in a broad anthropological framework.

Cultural dynamics of the late Middle - early Upper Pleistocene and the problem of the Middle/Upper Palaeolithic transition

L. Vishnyatsky

The problem of the Middle/Upper Palaeolithic transition has traditionally been perceived as the spreading in the Mediterranean zone of Europe and Asia about 40k years ago of the complex of new traits. These traits include: 1) technologies aimed at the mass production of blades and the predominance of these tools, 2) the appearance of numerous bone tools fashioned by techniques not easily applicable to rocks, 3) the appearance of non-utilitarian features (adornments, pictorial art). As a result of the Eurocentric approach to the problem, what has traditionally been discussed was not the question of *why* the mentioned innovations had appeared, but rather *how* they had appeared. This is why for decades the discussion rotated around the replacement-continuity dilemma and despite the appearance of a considerable amount of new data the set of proposed solutions has not undergone any noticeable change. In the present paper I shall try to consider the transition problem not cause of the appearance of these traits, but rather as a part of a broader problem of cultural dynamics at this time. The major questions to be discussed are: 1) do these dynamics demonstrate any chronological and/or geographical patterning? 2) if so, what do the observable patterns look like? 3) what could shaped these patterns and determined the character of the observed cultural dynamics?