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# The new data on variability of Middle Paleolithic in Central Asia: the Sel'Ungurian industry

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## Abstract

Since the beginning of 21 century a new stage in investigation of human cultures existed in western Central Asia in the Stone Age has begun. The main concern to re-study regional key-sites was to apply a complex of modern excavation techniques and up-to-date laboratory methods (namely absolute dating) in order to clarify the rationale and chronology of local cultural sequences. As a result of this research some crucial corrections dealing with chronological and cultural interpretations of "classical" for western Central Asia lithic industries were made. This paper presents the first results obtained after re-excavations of presumably one of the oldest in Central Asia Paleolithic site classified in late 80th of the XX century by investigators as belonging to early Acheulian technocomplex - Sel'Ungur cave. Among other described as to be Early Paleolithic sites of western Central Asia Sel'Ungur cave is considered to be the most informative one to study the Pleistocene inhabitants of Central Asia due to the fact that it yielded not only rich lithic collection found in a reliable stratigraphic context but numerous fauna and representative hominin remains as well. Re-started at 2014 excavations at the site have provided evidences to refuse an Acheulian interpretation of site's cultural complexes. Based on detailed technological and typological analyses of the new lithic collection it was assumed that Sel'ungurian complexes could be better fitted into the early stages of regional Middle Paleolithic cultural variability. The only available absolute date in about 126 kyr (albeit without a reliable stratigraphic and spatial context), paleontological analyses of newly obtained material as well as a result of re-examination of available information on macro- and microfauna remains dug out in course of earlier excavations, and re-study of anthropological finds likely support this new assessment

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