
New data on Initial Upper Paleolithic in Central Asia: Ushbulak 1 site (Kazakhstan)

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Résumé

Initial Upper Paleolithic assemblages were initially identified on the basis of the archaeological materials from the sites of Boker Tachtit and Ksar Akil in the Levant. Nowadays, such assemblages have been reported from many regions of Eurasia including Central Asia, the Near East, the Altai Mountains, Trans-Baikal, Mongolia, and North China. A typical IUP assemblage has been recently found in Kazakhstan (Ushbulak-1). Ushbulak-1 (the north-eastern part of the Shilikty Valley) is a stratified site (8 layers). According to the recovered lithics and their features, as well as the stratigraphic position, and associated faunal remains, three major cultural and chronological units have been tentatively established, including the Holocene assemblage (layer 1), the UP assemblage (layers 2–4), and the IUP assemblage (layers 6–7). The assemblage from the lowermost layers 6 and 7 (8000 objects) contains blade cores with the opposite semi-tourné platforms, numerous core trimming elements, end scrapers on large blades, including those with ventral hewing of the base, truncated-faceted tools, truncated blades, burins and a tanged point. Core trimming elements correspond well to the available cores. The majority of core trimming elements (crested and semi-crested, plunging, and marginal laminar spalls) illustrate laminar volumetric and semi-volumetric reduction. Based on the composition of the lithic industry, layers 6 and 7 can be defined as a lithic workshop at the outcrops of raw material. In terms of tool types, the Ushbulak lithic industry is similar to the stratified assemblages attributed to the IUP in Southern Siberia (the Kara-Bom site and others) and Northern Mongolia (the Tolbor-4 site and others).

Mots-Clés: Kazakhstan, Initial Upper Palaeolithic, blades, endscrapers

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