
The first European peopling along the North Black sea passageway: interdisciplinary studies of Oldowan sites in Crimea and Caucasus

Andrey Chepalyga*¹

¹Institute of Geography of RAS – 119017, Staromonetnyi pereulok 29, Moscow, Russia, Russie

Résumé

New Oldowan sites with stone tools was recovered and studied (2014-2017) in Crimea last years. Culture-bearing layers relate to the Black Sea terrace sediments. 18 terrace levels (VI) grouped on 3 terrace tiers (6 terraces in each tier): Lower (I-V terraces, 0 - +65 m asl), Middle (VII-XII terraces, +75 - +200 m asl), Upper (XIII-XVIII terraces, +225 - +450 m asl). Oldowan-type artefacts are associated with terraces sediments of Middle terrace tier: VII Alchak terrace +75 m., VIII Manjil terrace +100 m asl, IX Gorchakov terrace +125 m; X St. George terrace +150 m asl, Trapadja XI terrace- +175 m and possible XII Andrussov terrace +200 m.

These terrace sediments associated with marine basin stages: Gourean (Black Sea) and Apsheronian (Caspian) = Calabrean. Lithological studies recovered two main facies with thickness 10-20 meters for each terrace: coarse pebble littoral facies with Oldowan artefacts and fine-grain clayi silt of lagoon facies without artefacts.

Age of cultural layers based on paleomagnetic studies (Matujama chrone, Jaramillo and Olduway subchrons) ranged between 0,8-1,8 Ma (mln years).

Archaeology represents by several hundred tools, belonging to heavy duty, light duty and microtools, including cores, choppers, chopping tools, picks, scrapers, bill-hooks, protoknives, borers, etc. This stone industry belongs to developed Oldowan culture Mode I. Some tools were fire treated. A stone pavement made from prepared limestone plates, accompanied by chart tools (choppers, bill-hooks, scrapers) were recovered in site Bayraki (Dniester valley). Possible it was a location of animal skin preparation. Mammal remains *Archidiscodon meridionalis* and *Equus sussenbornensis* are typical for Tamanean complex (=Epivillafranchian).

Now it's possible to reconstruct routes of the first migrants from Africa to the Europe. Initial stage of migrations after leaving of Africa (2,0 Ma) and appearance in South Arabia moved northward, later they reach Israel (1,7-1,8 Ma) and South Caucasus (Dmanisi – 1,7-1,8 Ma). North Caucasus began settled not late 1,8 Ma. That time Oldowan migrations sharply changed to the West direction along the latitude N45°, this is a half way between Equator and North Pole. On this way the first European region, settled by Oldowanian, was Crimea were they can arrive near 1,8 Ma, after crossing recent Kerch strait. That time here was Taman-Kerch terrestrial bridge between Caucasus and Crimea, dividing Gourean basin (Black Sea) on the South and Apsheronian basin (Caspian) on the North.

Later 1,2-0,8 Ma next migration (or dispersion) northward to the Dniester valley (Bayraki site, 1,1-1,10 Ma) took place.

*Intervenant

Mots-Clés: Oldowan, Bayraki, Crimea, first peopling