
The revision of the Gravettian sequence in the Kostenki-Borshchevo locality in the river Don basin (Russia)

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Résumé

Almost half of the multilayer Upper Palaeolithic sites in the Kostenki-Borshchevo locality (KBL) comprise cultural layers of the Gravettian. Most of the Gravettian sites were settlements with thick cultural layers and planographic features rich in osseous and ivory artifacts and also in art objects.

Previously published reviews of the KBL Gravettian were mainly focused on the most exciting assemblages such as Kostenki-Avdeyevo culture sites (the Eastern Gravettian *sensu stricto*: Kostenki 1/I, Kostenki 13, Kostenki 14/I and Kostenki 18). These became main objects of comparison with the other Gravettian sites within the framework of chronology and typology. Therefore the pattern of the KBL Gravettian yielded a two-phase periodization. The elder phase was thought to be presented by Kostenki 8/II (Telmanskaya site) containing the microlithic inventory dated back to 27 kyr BP uncal. The recent phase comprised the above mentioned Eastern Gravettian sites and the relatively synchronous but typologically particular assemblages Kostenki 4, Kostenki 9, Kostenki 11/II and Kostenki 21/III with the dates 14C 23-21 kyr BP uncal. altogether being in accordance with the late Gravettian.

New data on the archaeology and absolute chronology obtained from the recent investigations of the sites Kostenki 4, Kostenki 8, Kostenki 9, Kostenki 21, Borshchevo 5 enabled to detail the Gravettian sequence and also to integrate the local cultures into general European taxonomy. The main advance was achieved in defining of the middle Gravettian phase newly dated 25-24 kyr BP uncal. (sites Kostenki 4, Kostenki 9 and Borshchevo 5). This cultural complex was associated with the Pavlovian being determined by tools typology and in particular by the series of stone items treated with polishing.

It was proposed that along with Kostenki-Avdeyevo culture the latest phase comprised Gmelin assemblage (site Kostenki 21/III) as the local final Gravettian formerly conjoined together with Anosovka assemblage (Kostenki 11/II). The latter has been attributed to the non-Gravettian and more likely to the 'Proto-Magdalenian'. Thus, the Gravettian technocomplex in the KBL acquired a three-part sequence of the early (27-25 kyr BP uncal.), middle (25-24 kyr BP uncal.) and late (23-21 kyr BP uncal.) phases becoming in accordance with the coincident periodization in Central Europe.

Mots-Clés: The Upper Palaeolithic, the Gravettian, periodization, chronology

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