

PREFACE

In 1940, G. A. Bonch-Osmolowski published the first volume in the three-volume series, *Палеолит Крыма* (*The Crimean Paleolithic*). All three volumes were devoted to the description of his outstanding investigations at the eastern Crimean Middle Paleolithic site of Kiik-Koba. Bonch-Osmolowski's volumes were unusual for the time; his series covered not just the description of cultural material, but also incorporated extensive geological, environmental, and physical anthropological research. The new series *The Paleolithic of Crimea*, in which this is the second volume, is a continuation of the multi-disciplinary studies begun by G. A. Bonch-Osmolowski. The volumes in this series present the results of recent field investigations of the Middle and Upper Paleolithic of Crimea and how they impact our understanding of prehistoric processes, in both regional and chronological aspects. While there is a vast literature published in Russian on the subject, this series is unique in providing the non-Russian-speaking audience a comprehensive survey of the history, excavations, and multi-disciplinary investigations of the Crimean Paleolithic.

This volume supplements the artifactual, geological, and chronological studies presented in Volume 1 for three Middle Paleolithic sites of western Crimea: Starosele, Kabazi II, and Kabazi V. The chapters of Part I focus on the substantial faunal remains recovered from these three sites, while those of Part II provide a reconstruction of the paleoenvironment based on microfaunal, malacological, and palynological analyses. The results of use-wear and residue studies presented in Part III offer unique insight into stone tool use and paleoeconomy over and above that available by traditional means of artifact analysis. Part IV concludes the book with a synthesis of the preceding chapters and addresses the problems of climatic dynamics, environmental evolution, subsistence, and landscape use over nearly 100,000 years of Late Pleistocene Crimean prehistory.

Given the exceptional complexity of the Crimean Middle Paleolithic, the two volumes of *The Middle Paleolithic of Western Crimea* obviously cannot provide a conclusive statement on this period or area. Furthermore, the field investigations of Kabazi II and Kabazi V are ongoing, so the chapters dealing with these two sites should be viewed as the first step in their multi-disciplinary analysis. Although the field investigations of Starosele are complete and the fauna, malacofauna, microfauna, micro-wear, and residue studies could be viewed as the final reports, we do not deceive ourselves in thinking that our interpretations of these will not change as new data for other sites become available.

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