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LEAF-SHAPED IMPLEMENTS IN „EASTERN MICOQUIAN" OF THE EUROPEAN PART OF USRR

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In the diversity of the European Mousterian a special place is occupied by the so-called Micoquian. The question of this group has been taken up by such scholars as Bosinski (1967), Chmielewski (1969, Valoch (1988) and others. They proposed the criteria for the territorial, chronological and cultural grouping of Micoquian industries, and discussed the problem of the origin and historical development of this phenomenon. There exist a variety of terms covering these industries viz.: the Micoquian, the French Micoquian, the Micoquian of Central Europe, and the Eastern Micoquian. In the last group, assemblages have been reported representing non-Levalloisian technology, mainly with mousterian (discoidal) cores and proto-prismatic cores, middle value of IF index, low blade index. Besides, there are frequent bifacially worked tools, usually with specific treatment of particular parts of the tool viz.: thinning of the distal end, blunting of the back, special thinning of the base (proximal part). From the typological point of view, these assemblages are dominated by side-scrapers and knives, usually bifacial. Also present are true bifaces, simple and leaf-points.

To this group of assemblages in the European part of the USSR should be ascribed: Korolevo, layer IIa (Transcarpathian region of the Ukrainian SSR), Rikhta in the Zhytomir region of Polesie, Khotylevo on the Don, Antonovka I and II in the Donbass, Sukhaya Mechetka near Volgograd, Starosiele in the Crimea (Gladilin 1985).

In this paper the author has used the classification of the Mousterian proposed by V.N. Gladilin (1976, 1985).

The notion of the Eastern Micoquian should be made more precise and concrete. This concerns particularly the cultural determination of Eastern Micoquian assemblages. Obviously, under this denomination, have been grouped assemblages with common general features (technological and typological) and with specific certain characteristics (e.g. presence and/or quantity of particular types in the assemblages) which concerns especially the role of leaf points in the assemblages.

Introducing in his typological list the notion of leaf-points, F.Bordes understood by the term real spear-points. Subsequently, however, the conceptual range of the term broadened and its sense became less precise. This tool-class gradually come to cover implements with leaf-shape regardless their morphological features. In this way a new term appeared: leaf-shaped tools, a group in which the primary position is still occupied by leaf-points.

For these reasons the term leaf-points needs to be made more precise.

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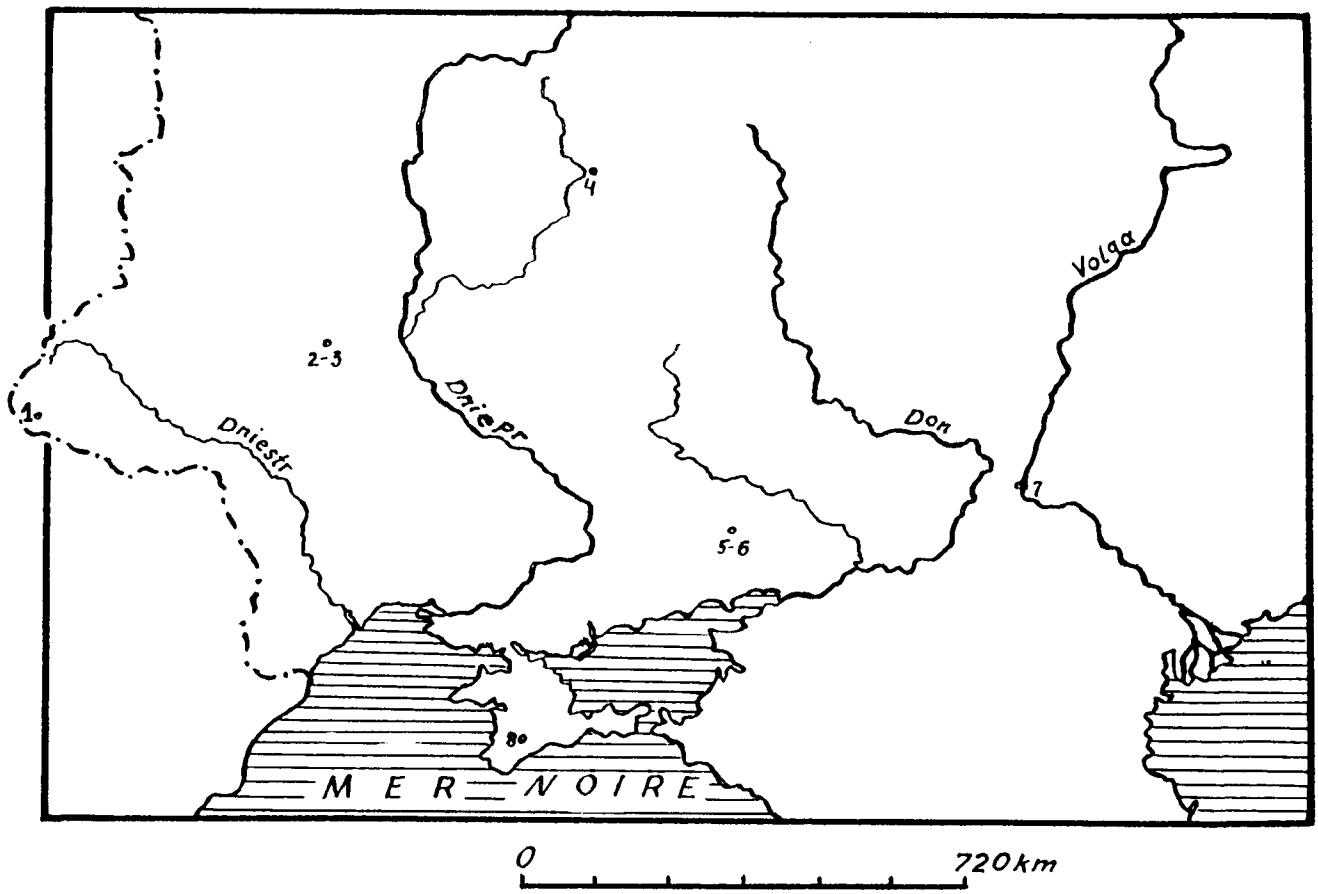

Fig. 1. Map of the Eastern Micoquian sites in the European part of the USRR
1 – Korolevo, 2,3 – Zhitomir, Rikhta, 4 – Khotylevo, 5,6 – Antonovka I and II, 7 – Sukhaya Mechetka, 8 – Starosiele.

In our opinion to leaf-points should be ascribed tools characterized by the following features:
– leaf-shaped (laurel, willow, and poplar leaf)
– straight and symmetrical in the cross-section and the profile,
– symmetry of the shape corresponding to the axis of the tool,
– bifacial working of the working edge,
– special treatment of the proximal part (presence of base thinning or formation of the tang),
– gracility of profile (slender profile),
The working part could be pointed or rounded.

A distinction has to be made between leaf-points and leaf-shaped scrapers and knives. The latter tools approach leaf-points only by their shape. But other features set them apart viz.: they are more massive, more assymetrical in profile; their leaf-shaped form is obtained primarily by special treatment of the side opposite to the working edge.

Leaf-shaped forms appear also in other groups of tools for example among denticulated tools.

In the "Eastern European Micoquian" of the European part of the USSR leaf-points, leaf-shaped scrapers and knives are present representing various quality and quantity in assemblages.

K o r o l e v o, layer IIa. Bifacially worked or partially bifacial tools make up 13% of all tools. Leaf-points are absent; there are no leaf-shaped scrapers, knives or denticulates.

R i k h t a. Index of bifaciality – 16.6%. Leaf-points (laurel and willow leaf points) make up only 3% of the total (Kukharchuk 1984), but this frequency is, possibly, exaggerated. Only one leaf-shaped knife (0.4%) is found in this assemblage (Kukharchuk 1989).

Z h i t o m i r. Bifacial index is relatively high probably due to the admixture of Late-Acheulean tools. Leaf-points account for approximately 2% of all tools (Praslov 1984).

K h o t y l e v o. Typical willow and laurel leaf-shaped points are present analogous to those from Zhitomir and those from Starosiele. Numerical data is not provided.

A n t o n o v k a I. Bifacial index – 0.4%, leaf-shaped scrapers and knives are more frequent – 4.2% (Gladilin 1976).

A n t o n o v k a II. Bifacially worked tools are 21%, laurel leaf-shaped points – 0.3%, leaf-shaped scrapers and knives – 1.6% (Gladilin, 1976).

S u k h a y a M e c h e t k a – bifacial index nearly 10% (Praslov, 1984). There are no leaf-points (although L. Kuznetsova – 1985 – has distinguished one specimen). Leaf-shaped scrapers and knives are very rare.

S t a r o s e l e. Bifacial index – 10% (Gladilin 1976). Leaf points are relatively abundant.

On all sites of the Eastern Micoquian leaf-points are relatively rare and their highest frequency does not exceed 2.5%. They are mainly laurel- or willow leaf-shaped. Poplar leaf-shaped forms are absent. Leaf-shaped forms are more numerous and typical in Zhitomir, Khotylevo and Starosele.

The presence of leaf-points in the Eastern Micoquian cannot be explained by the functional type of assemblages. They are found both in caves as well in open-air sites such as Khotylevo.

The occurrence of these tools is, in all likelihood, due to the techno-morphological traditions of these assemblages.

The Eastern Micoquian of the Russian Plain is not a single phenomenon, but it is related to other traditions of the European Middle-Palaeolithic, especially to Central European traditions such as Königsaue (complex A and C), Kul-

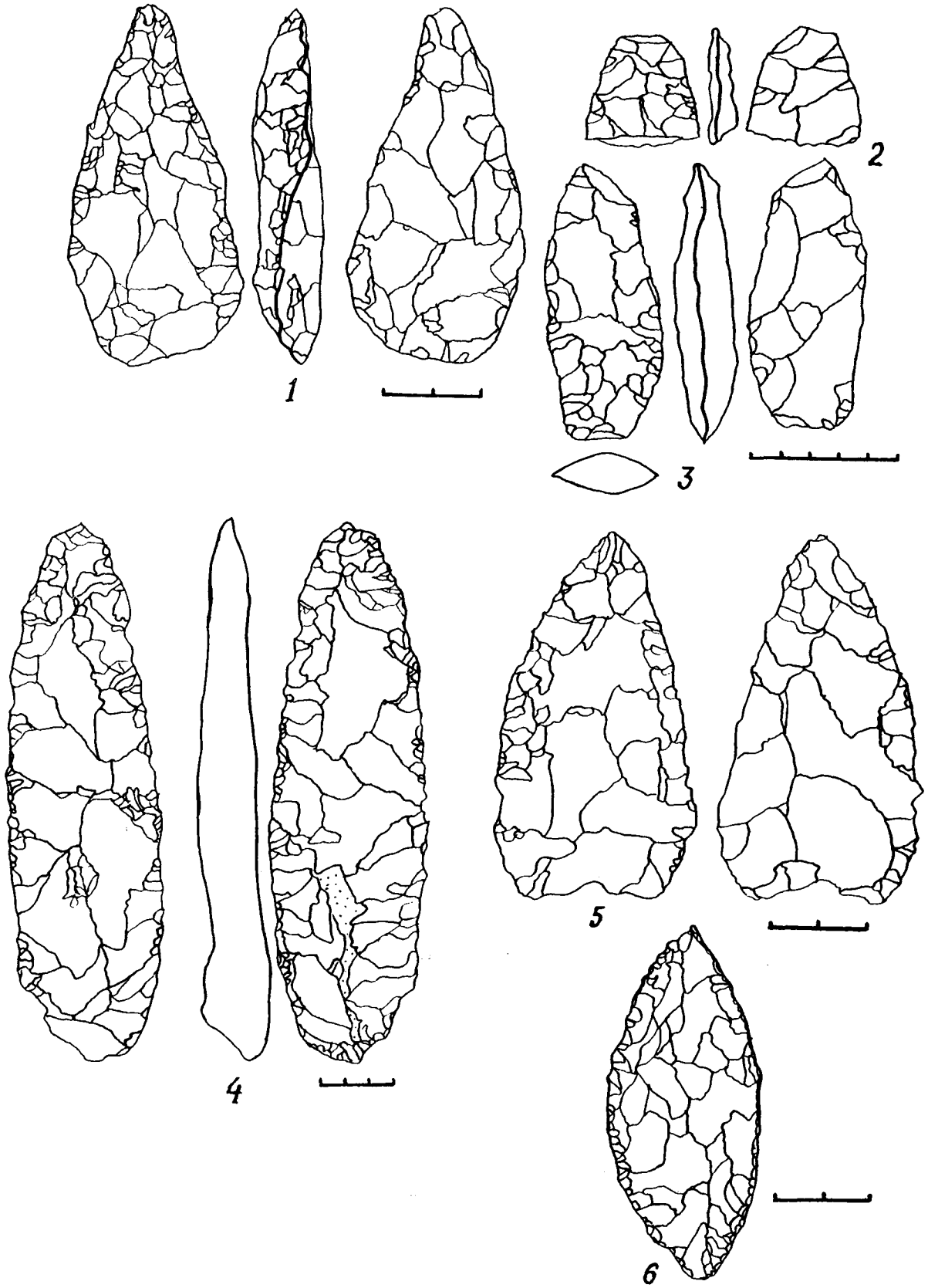

Fig. 2. Leaf points

1 – Rikhta (according to Y. Kukharchuk), 2,3 – Zhitomir (according to N. Praslov), 4 – Khotylevo (according to F. Zaverniayev), 5,6 – Starosiele (according to A. Formozov).

na (Micoquian series of layers), the Micoquo-Prondnician of Poland, Zamarovce in Slovakia, some components of the industries of Ripiceni-Izvoare in Romania. Clearly, these assemblages are not grouped on the basis of the presence of leaf-points (which are rare in Central European sites), but the most common feature of the assemblages in question are non-levalloisian technology, high index of bifaciality, some types of special treatment of tips and the base notably of scrapers and knives of segmentoidal or semilunar form. There are also some other types of tools but their frequency varies according to intersite and facial variability. The presence of knives of the Prondnik-Königsaue- and Volgograd – types is the most common feature of these assemblages regardless the fact that the criteria for the definitions of these types are insufficient.

One of the most important problems concerning the Eastern Micoquian is the origin of this industry. Another problem is the subsequent development of this complex. The most popular conception that the Eastern Micoquian evolved into the Szeletian cannot be accepted without reservations. It is difficult to see the transformation of the Central European Micoquian into leaf-point industries of the Rörshain and Kösten type and to explain the essential role of these industries in the origin of the Szeletian (Valoch 1988). It is equally difficult to prove the transitional character of the industries of Jezerany I and II and the Babony type (Kozlowski 1988). Still greater difficulties are encountered if we try to find the EUP industries in the Russian Plain which would contain the Eastern Micoquian traditions.

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