

SUNGIR

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The materials from Sungir offer a number of advantages over remains from other coeval sites. The collection is both large and comes from a relict soil. Although this soil shows evidence of post-depositional disturbance, I suggest that the materials do come from a single cultural layer. Thus at Sungir we are confronted with a semi-closed complex. Remains from the burials, on the other hand, form a closed complex. They consist of worked bone and ivory and, to the best of my knowledge, a singular worked stone, and are insignificant in comparison to materials from the cultural layer.

Prismatic cores are all but absent at Sungir, most of the cores being flat and hard to distinguish from those of the Mousterian period. The prominence of their striking platforms serves as the criterion for distinguishing Mousterian from Upper Palaeolithic prismatic cores (criterion of Suleimanov). The Sungir inventory contains secondary cores. The Sungir cores lack negative scars indicating their use to produce narrow blades. Their dorsal surfaces contain scars indicating removal of wide blades.

Another archaic feature of this inventory is the presence of a Mousterian variety of scrapers (steep retouch types). The Sungir inventory contains complex forms, uncharacteristic for the majority of Upper Palaeolithic sites, such as scrapers dejeté. The collection also includes double scrapers, scrapers with alternate retouch, with bifacial retouch, as well as transverse scrapers. This variety of scrapers is rarely encountered at Upper Palaeolithic sites but is characteristic of some variants of the Mousterian. The presence of side scrapers in the Sungir inventory should be seen as continuation of a category of tools characteristic to the Mousterian. Such types as convex scrapers made on a cortical flake do also occur in some Upper Palaeolithic inventories in European USSR (at Kostenki in the Markina Gora type inventories).

While points are absent at Sungir, the inventory does contain Aurignacian blades — bifacially retouched blades which in plan view show the presence of one, sometimes two notches. These blades are always found with blades retouched only on one side. The edges of these blades are sometimes pointed, sometimes oval, and sometimes ogival.

Sungir end scrapers are similar to Aurignacian end scrapers. They include truncated end scrapers typical for the Aurignacian, as well as examples of end scrapers with alternate working edges. Double end scrapers are also represented as are both long and short end scrapers, as well as abruptly retouched end scrapers. Sungir tools also contain ogi-

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val end scrapers but lack those with either narrowing or pointed bases. The inventory contain numerous diverse burins found at all sites (with retouched edge, broken, double sided burins). Sungir wedge-shaped tools with truncated edges are just like those found at other sites.

Burins with transverse retouch are absent — a feature indicating the archaic nature of the site. The flat spall is widely used — a trait prevalent in Mousterian inventories.

Sungir also contains leaf and triangular points which have brought the site as much fame as have the burials. We still do not know the exact form of the leaf points here, although we can say that they had rounded bases, elongated shapes, either straight or slightly convex sides, and came in varying sizes.

The Sungir inventory has been assigned to various groupings including the Streletskaya and the Szeletian cultures. In reality, Sungir is a unique site unlike any other previously found. This is a typical situation for sites in Eastern Europe. Here, while we can separate out chronological stages of development, we cannot delimit synchronic groupings of like inventories which would cover regions analogous to the Solutrean or some Feddermesser groupings. The Sungir inventory is not like the Streletskaya ones which it is usually compared (e.g. from Kostenki I, layer 5) for a number of reasons including that the Kostenki I, layer 5, inventory contains no Aurignacian traits. Suggestions about the similarity of Sungir to other sites is usually based on the presence of bifacial points. We now know that leaf shaped points are very widespread, often found in very dissimilar inventories, and at sites widely separated from each other. Thus their presence in inventories overrides real culturally distinctions.

The presence of a good number of Aurignacian forms at Sungir allows us, following the example of Czech colleagues, to assign it to the Aurignacian with leaf points. Aurignacian forms present at Sungir include Aurignacian blades, carinated scrapers, and a variety of end scrapers. Side scrapers, like wedge shaped tools, are found at most Aurignacian sites. Thus it is only the triangular and leaf points which distinguish Sungir from Aurignacian sites.

What does such a characterization of the Sungir inventory indicate? First, it assigns the site to the first half of the Upper Palaeolithic, a specific stage of development within the Upper Palaeolithic. In Central and Eastern Europe we cannot separate out discrete regional groupings within the Aurignacian.

Classifying the Sungir inventory as Aurignacian with triangular points poses a number of general questions. Why is Sungir an Aurignacian and not a Szeletian site, for example? What role does the presence of leaf and triangular points play in the classification of Palaeolithic industries?

The assignment of an inventory to the Aurignacian is based on the presence/absence of a number of categories of tools. They include the presence of Aurignacian blades, carinated scrapers, blades with alternating retouch, less often backed blades or points. Aurignacian inventories contain a specific collection of end scrapers. Sites with bifacially retouched points, on the other hand, are separated and distinguished from the Aurignacian merely on the sole presence of such points. The question if these non-Aurignacian inventories can be sorted out into early and late phases has not been raised. A consideration of data on hand indicates that there are a number of sites where leaf points coexist with Aurignacian retouched blades and end scrapers, and sites which lack any Aurignacian tool types. For example, there are no Aurignacian types at Kostenki I, layer 5, Bryndzeny, or at Gordyneshty.

What then does the presence of bifacial points tell us about archaeological cultures? In Central and Eastern Europe, east of the Rhine, the presence of bifacial points signals an early phase of the Upper Palaeolithic. In Western Europe, west of the Rhine, they signal a middle phase of the Upper Palaeolithic. Thus bifacial points play yet another role in Europe: they separate out two different zones of development. A. Breuil, in distinguishing the archaeological

record of Italy from the rest of Europe, assigned an analogous role to bifacially worked points.

Thus, it turns out, that we do indeed have on hand the concepts necessary to separate out the different archaeological monads. The concept of "type" (*sensu stricto*) (e.g. Noailles burins, busked burin) is suitable for distinguishing archaeological cultures. Since the actual number of types (*sensu stricto*) is very finite, and using them we cannot characterize an archaeological culture, we are forced to use more general concepts belonging to lower taxonomic levels.

We cannot delimit large zones of development during the Upper Palaeolithic using tool types. This can be only done if we utilize such concepts as "the structure of the archaeological material". Thus there are a number of archaeological cultures in France each of which is sub-divided into a number of chronological phases. This scheme is a long-standing one which has been only modified in minor details.

We cannot delimit archaeological cultures in Eastern Europe. All the cultures reported previously contain no more than one or two sites, they lack a regional spread, and it is impossible to trace their development through time. And it is this difference (in one case a number of cultures while in the other a multitude of sites) which mandates a distinction between the Palaeolithic east and west of the Rhine.

The concept of the "Palaeolithic with leaf points" is descriptive. It subsumes a number of far flung sites which bear little resemblance to each other.

There are different typological units of analysis suitable for delimiting different archaeological taxonomic units. The concept of the type (*sensu stricto*) (e.g. Noailles burin, busked burin) are suitable for delimiting archaeological cultures. The number of these two types which strictly speaking are suitable for classification is so small that the delimitation of archaeological cultures is done both using types as well as wider analytic units belonging to a lower taxonomic order.

We cannot delimit large zones of development during the Upper Palaeolithic using tool categories. To do so we must turn to the concept of: the structure of the Palaeolithic in the region. Thus we can outline the Palaeolithic of France on the basis of a number of archaeological cultures. Each of these cultures is divisible into a number of chronological stages. The different levels of development are delimited by changes in tool types (as well as units of analysis belonging to lower taxonomic levels).

By contrast, in Eastern Europe we cannot delimit specific archaeological cultures. Previously defined ones turned out to be represented at singular sites, or two or three sites at best, and hopes of finding more sites belonging to these cultures were not fulfilled. These proposed cultures neither have territorial spread nor chronologic development.

Thus the difference between Europe west and east of the Rhine does not lie in the presence or this or that category of tools but rather in that the former shows archaeological cultures while the later does not.