

PREFACE

Study of the Crimean Paleolithic has a long history, replete with distinguished scholars. From the pioneering work of C. S. Merejkowski, in the late 19th Century, through G. A. Bonch-Osmolowski in the 1930s, to Yu. Kolosov in the 1960s through 1980s, the area has been intensively and ably investigated. That Crimea still has the potential for additional studies is certainly a reflection of its seemingly endless, rich, and complex prehistory. This recent work, presented in this and subsequent volumes of *The Paleolithic of Crimea*, results from this richness and, although we have made numerous new discoveries, as well as reinterpreting a few old ideas, it seems to us that we have just begun to scratch the surface in our quest to understand, not only to describe, the variability in adaptations and technological/typological developments which took place during the Middle and Early Upper Paleolithic in Crimea. While these studies began as the Joint Ukrainian/American Middle Paleolithic Project, they soon became truly multi-national with scholars from Ukraine, the United States, Canada, Belgium, Moldova, France, and Russia all making important contributions.

The genesis of this current research, like Crimean prehistory itself, is complex. For the Ukrainian team, it began as a natural continuation of the work of Yu. Kolosov in the 1980s by V. Chabai and A. Yevtushenko, both of whom had worked as students with Yu. Kolosov and both of whom wrote dissertations on the Crimean Middle Paleolithic. Neither ever doubted that they would continue this work or that there was still much to do.

For the American team, it began when A. Marks received two very insightful letters from two young Ukrainian scholars, Drs. Yuri Demidenko and Vitaliy Usik, asking for reflections on his work at Boker Tachtit in the Negev of Israel. These letters asked difficult but interesting questions, sufficient answers to which would have taken much work. It seemed easier to bring these young scholars to America so that discussions could be held at length and interaction made more direct and effective. With the considerable help of Dr. Don Henry, University of Tulsa, as well as others, a one month visit was arranged. During this visit, Drs. Demidenko and Usik opened a whole new world of Paleolithic studies to A. Marks, whose knowledge of ex-Soviet Middle Paleolithic studies was limited to a very few publications in English and French. By the end of the visit, there was discussion of possible joint American/Ukrainian work, but few concrete ideas were put forth.

Upon their return to Ukraine, Drs. Demidenko and Usik discussed the possibilities of cooperative work with V. Chabai. Of all the ongoing and planned projects in Ukrainian Paleolithic archeology, the projected work into the Crimean Middle Paleolithic seemed most promising. Discussions with a number of scholars working in Crimea suggested that such cooperation might be possible and, given the Middle Paleolithic focus of that work, A. Marks found the idea irresistible.

An invitation from V. Bidzilia and V. Chabai of the Archeolog contract company to A. Marks to visit Crimea was accepted and, with financial help from his university, he spent ten days in Crimea in October of 1992 with Drs. Yu. Kolosov, V. Chabai, V. Stepanchuk, A. Yevtushenko, and N. Gerasimenko, as well as with Drs. Demidenko and Usik. Much discussion took place about what was of interest to each, how cooperation might be achieved, and how all could become part of a truly international and multidisciplinary project. It was important that any such project really be joint in planning, in field work, in analyses, and in the process of bringing all the data into meaningful understanding. No one wanted "cooperation" where the Americans supplied the funds, arranged for specialist studies, and the Ukrainians tolerated their presence in the field. In retrospect, both sides were conscious that

to achieve true cooperation and meaningful joint studies, there had to be mutual respect and a willingness to engage in intensive and occasionally difficult interaction.

While October is not the best time to live in a tent in Crimea, being a bit cold, to put it mildly, the weather did encourage a good deal of conversation over warming food and drink. By the end of the ten days, A. Marks and V. Chabai both felt that they not only could work with each other but that they would like to do so. The discussions had defined in what ways the American side could enhance the range of needed studies, while it also clarified what we could do together. Because V. Chabai and A. Yevtushenko were planning to excavate two known sites, close to the existing camp and because at that time gasoline and fuel were very hard to obtain in Crimea, it was decided that initial emphasis should be placed on the Middle Paleolithic of western Crimea. Three major goals were proposed: the absolute dating of as many western Crimean Middle Paleolithic sites as possible; the definition of the technotypological variability of as many assemblages as possible; and, the study of faunal materials to elucidate the adaptive range during the Middle Paleolithic, as well as the relationships between raw material economy and faunal exploitation.

With the support of US National Science Foundation, Southern Methodist University, and the Crimean Branch of the Institute of Archeology, Simferopol, sufficient funds were made available so that a first field season took place in the summer of 1993. Excavations at Kabazi II and V had been long planned, but it was not initially obvious where the American team would excavate. Since our goals included absolute dating, as well as technological studies of all the recognized industries, additional stratigraphically controlled samples from Starosele, the type site of the Staroselian industry, were required. Because Formozov had so well sealed the remaining Pleistocene sediments at Starosele, the site was an obvious and necessary choice.

Our plans to carry out absolute dating coincided with a small project of P. Allsworth-Jones, McDonald Institute, Cambridge, UK, and J. Rink, McMaster University, who were collecting bones and teeth from old excavations in Eastern Europe for AMS and ESR dating. An invitation was extended to them to join us in the field, where J. Rink carried out gamma spectrometry, collected additional samples, and placed dosimeters into Kabazi II, Kabazi V, and Starosele. This work, beyond the original scope of their project, added significantly to ours and the results started by that initial effort are clearly obvious in this volume. In addition, Curtis McKinney, who specializes in U-series dating, also joined the project so that two independent systems could be applied to datable materials.

While one of the major goals of the project was to elucidate faunal exploitation, at first, it was impossible to estimate just how much work that would entail. Previous excavations at Kabazi II had produced a huge amount of faunal material, but it was not possible to predict how much would come from Kabazi V and Starosele, so funds were not requested initially for that work.

In spite of the absence of funds for faunal studies, contacts were made to find an appropriate person to do the work, when and if funded. It was with considerable luck that A. Marks was put in touch with A. Burke, who was not only enthusiastic about the possibilities of joining the project but also was willing to propose, successfully as it turned out, to the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada that they fund her participation for a period of three years. This not only made possible her work with us, but also made it possible for her to bring students into Crimea, so that even more work could be done. In spite of this, the amount of animal bone being excavated at the three sites was staggering, and there was an additional three years of unstudied bone from Kabazi II, recovered prior to our project. To meet the deadlines imposed, A. Burke convinced M. Patou-Mathis, Institut de Paléontologie Humaine, Paris, to join the project and to take responsibility for the Kabazi II materials. In

addition, she arranged for our microfauna to be studied by A. Markova, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, and our snails by C. Mihailescu, Academy of Sciences, Moldova, both of whom joined us in the field to collect samples in 1995. We were truly fortunate to attract such distinguished scholars and their contributions, presented in the next volume, add significantly to the overall value of this work.

The incredibly good preservation of both artifacts and organic materials and the presence of clear morphological patterning of the retouched tools suggested that we could go beyond the techno-typological studies traditional in Middle Paleolithic systematics. At about this time, we came into contact with Marvin Kay, an expert on use wear and, somewhat later, with Bruce Hardy, who had just completed a dissertation on residue analysis of Middle Paleolithic artifacts. Both joined our group, with Marvin Kay working in the field with us at Starosele, as well as studying many of the artifacts for use wear. The results of these studies, both use wear and residue analyses, have been remarkable—well beyond our grandest expectations. They take the analysis of Crimean Middle Paleolithic artifacts to another level and make it very clear that there is little positive correlation between traditional typological nomenclature and the actual function of many tools. Perhaps, most important of all of this work has been the overwhelming evidence that a significant number of these Middle Paleolithic retouched tools were hafted and that, in many cases, the hafts were wooden. Detailed reports of this work will be presented in the next volume and will add important information for reconstructing specific site usage, as well as examining the relationship between form and function in retouched tools.

While the original plan was to limit excavations to the three wholly Middle Paleolithic sites of Kabazi II, Kabazi V, and Starosele, the western Crimean site of Siuren I had been reported to contain a very late Middle to Upper Paleolithic transitional industry. Since the end of the Middle Paleolithic was one of our concerns, and the dates suggested for Siuren I (ca. 20,000 BP) were unusual, to say the least, it was decided to add Siuren I to our field schedule. Siuren I posed a problem, however. Artifact bearing sediments were still present under a huge limestone block, but the archeological levels, as reported, also contained some quite clear Upper Paleolithic materials, mainly Aurignacian. The Upper Paleolithic fell outside our primary interests but, fortunately, Marcel Otte, University of Liège, was not only focused on the broad question of the earliest Upper Paleolithic, but also came to visit us in the field. Agreements were reached between him and our group to expand our efforts to include the Early Upper Paleolithic and its possible transition from the Middle Paleolithic. With a generous grant from INTAS, covering work at Siuren I and some additional excavations at Kabazi II and Kabazi V, the Belgian team joined us and we expanded from The Middle Paleolithic of Crimea Project to The Paleolithic of Crimea Project.

By the end of three field seasons, it was clear that the traditional dichotomy between western and eastern Crimea with their different industries was probably in need of serious revision. This made it necessary to continue work into the eastern Crimea, since the dating of the western Crimean sites had to be correlated with the eastern industries, such as the Kiik-Koba, which is still unknown in western Crimea. In addition, Siuren I was the single early Upper Paleolithic site in western Crimea, but there were indications of other possible early Upper Paleolithic sites to the East. Yet, the first three years of work did constitute, by itself, a reasonably coherent body of investigations and it was decided to publish our results before taking on the Middle Paleolithic and Early Upper Paleolithic of the eastern Crimea. This volume and the next represent the final reports from these three years of work. It would be a mistake, however, to view this work as complete: Crimea must be viewed and understood in its totality, rather than as two separate and distinct areas.

In spite of our decision to publish our results from western Crimea before formally moving eastward, in 1996 we made an agreement with A. Yanevich to excavate and study the Middle Paleolithic materials from the rock shelter of Buran Kaya III in eastern Crimea. The agreement also included the cooperative study and absolute dating of the overlying early Upper Paleolithic levels by A. Yanevich and the Belgian team. The site turned out to be highly stratified with in situ prehistoric occupations from Neolithic through Middle Paleolithic, for the first time providing an abundant sequence of assemblages just at the apparent boundary between the Middle and Upper Paleolithic. Because of the numerous absolute dates gotten and the rather surprising assemblages recovered, these excavations will be included in a separate volume as part of this series. The complexity of the assemblages at both Siuren I and Buran-Kaya III clearly showed that our work in western Crimea had only begun to touch on the questions of Middle Paleolithic variability, adaptations, development, and disappearance: many more years of work will be needed before a true understanding of the Middle and Early Upper Paleolithic of Crimea, as a whole, will be achieved. We all look forward to that day and are working toward it.

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