

CENTRAL ASIA - ANATOLIA, ZAGROS - LEVANT: SIMILARITIES AND DISSIMILARITIES IN MOUSTERIAN INDUSTRIES

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1. Similarities of Central Asian and Near Eastern industries were first pointed out by A.P. Okladnikov after his Teshik-Tash excavation. He emphasized the similar character of a ventral surface retouch of typical Mousterian blades in the two regions.

2. This idea has been published in some articles by Okladnikov and his students. Later, V.A. Ranov proposed a hypothesis of migration from Near Eastern Neandertal groups to the east (up to the Altai and to Mongolia) as an explanation for the appearance of Mousterian assemblages in Central Asia.

3. But until today there were no detailed analyses of techno-typological features which might verify this idea with statistical analyses. Therefore, 50 years later, the interesting idea of A.P. Okladnikov remains an idea, still waiting for an explorer.

4. We can state that there really are some similarities between Mousterian industries for the regions mentioned above: a) a general absence of bifacial tools, b) development of blade industries - Levallois-Mousterian or Levantinian-Mousterian, c) the only marginal retouch on tools, d) feeble appearance of retouched tools, especially Charentian scrapers. These aspects are visible in similarities of cumulative diagrams (Bordes system).

5. Dissimilarities first include raw materials: flint in the Near East and metamorphic rock in Central Asia. In comparison to the Levant, in Central Asia there is: a) a development of "proto-prismatic blades" (term by V.A. Ranov), b) a low percentage of Levallois points, c) a higher percentage of non-Mousterian, Upper Paleolithic elements, d) an existence of bipolar cores for "prismatic blade" production.

6. After looking for similarities between the Levant and Central Asia, we have to focus on the intermediate area, Anatolia and Zagros. Besides general analogies with Mousterian cultures, we would like to discuss the question - why do similarities between Central Asia and the Levant seem more reasonable than to the intermediate regions of Zagros and Anatolia.