

**O-0053**

## **The most ancient UP of the Eastern Europe: IUP stratum versus Protoaurignacian.**

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### **Abstract**

New archaeological materials obtained from the excavation at Kostenki during two last decades led to significant changes in the traditional interpretation of the structure, cultural affiliation, and chronology of the most ancient Upper Paleolithic of the Eastern Europe. The ancient chronological group has been subdivided into two groups: (1) Early Upper Paleolithic (EUP) in the temporal range of 32-36 ka (cal.~36-40 ka) with a typical European bi-modal structure comprising an Aurignacian of pan-European distribution and a local 'transitional' cultural unity - the Streletskian; and (2) a more ancient 'Initial Upper Paleolithic stratum' (IUP stratum) dating to 36-42 ka (cal.~ 41-45 ka) represented by layers both at and below the level of the Laschamp magnetic excursion (cal.~ 41 ka).

Reasons for distinguish IUP-stratum appeared to be followings:

- more ancient stratigraphic /= chronological/ position than EUP in local sequences;
- non-Aurignacian and non-"transitional" affiliation;
- lack of diagnostic mousterian features in the lithic assemblages;
- relatively short period of existence
- lack of visible predecessors and evolution
- high degree of the variability of archaeological materials included lithics, bone and artistic /decorative/ assemblages.

Two cultural unities were included in the IUP-stratum according to these criteria: Spitsyean (cultural layer II of Kostenki 17 or Spitsyn' site) and new early unknown cultural tradition (cultural layers IVb and IVw of Kostenki 14). The most probable appears to be inclusion in IUP entity of Zaozerie site at the Middle Urals.

Three aspects of the problem are the matter of discussion

- (1) Critics of using the notion of IUP for Eastern European materials (Kuhn, Zwyns, Hublin). According to techno-typological features the most close to Middle-East IUP (where this notion come from) are Levallois-derived "transitional" industries of the Central Europe (Kozłowski)
- (2) Possibility for both Spitsyean and assemblages of IVb-IVw cultural layers at Kostenki 14 to be identified as Proto-aurignacian (Hoffecker, Zwyns, Demidenko, Bataille, Dinnis, Bessudnov);
- (3) Increased number of the IUP assemblages in northern Asia owing to which it become to be a global phenomenon, in some measure comparable with East European materials.

The concept of IUP-stratum seems to be useful for the most ancient East European Upper

Palaeolithic as a chronological context for the very variable assemblages represented for the moment by single sites.

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