Rozhok-1 open-air Middle Paleolithic site in the Azov Sea coast region, Russia: the new data from museum collections

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Résumé

The north-eastern Sea of Azov region has an intermediate geographical location between the Caucasus Mountains and the vast Russian plain. Several sources of high-quality cretaceous flint that was widely exploited in the Middle Paleolithic (MP) are known in the region. Also, flint from these sources was defined in the Eastern Micoquian industry in Mezmaiskaya and Matuzka caves in the North-Western Caucasus, that are located about 300 km from the sources (Doronicheva et al., 2016).
Our current study is based on materials from the open-air site of Rozhok-1. The site is a multilayered stratified site, located in the north-eastern Sea of Azov region. It was excavated by N. Praslov (1968) in 1961-1962 over a total area of about 100 m2. Six cultural horizons with numerous animal bones and flint artefacts, associated with several hearths were identified by the excavator within one lithological stratum. The largest number of faunal remains from Rozhok-1 were attributed by V. Gromov to Bison priscus cf. longicornis, Bos sp., Megaloceros sp., Equus caballus, Equus (Asinus) hidruntinus, and Canis lupus (Praslov 1968: 71). Also, a human molar was found in horizon 4. This tooth bears traits of the European Neanderthals (Khaldeeva et al., 2020).

Today, the archaeological collection from the Rozhok-1 site is stored in the Taganrog state literary and historic-architectural museum-reserve in Taganrog (Rostov region, Russia; museum ID TLIAMZ KP-8993/-4245). We analysed in total 1299 lithic artefacts from 6 cultural horizons excavated on the site, including 42 flint artefacts selected for petrographic and geochemical analyses (Doronicheva et al., 2017). Electronic database was created for all tudied materials. Our research allowed to gather new data about hominid mobility and adaptations in the north-eastern Sea of Azov region during the Middle Paleolithic.

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Mots-Clés: Middle Paleolithic, Rozhok, 1 site, Lithic industies, Museum collections.