

## Marcel Otte

<sup>1</sup>Honorary Professor of Prehistory at the University of Liege, Belgium,  
Corresponding Member of the Institute of Human Paleontology, Paris,  
President of the Commission «Upper Paleolithic of Eurasia»

### **MOBILE PALEOLITHIC ARTS: LONG DISTANCES WITNESSES**

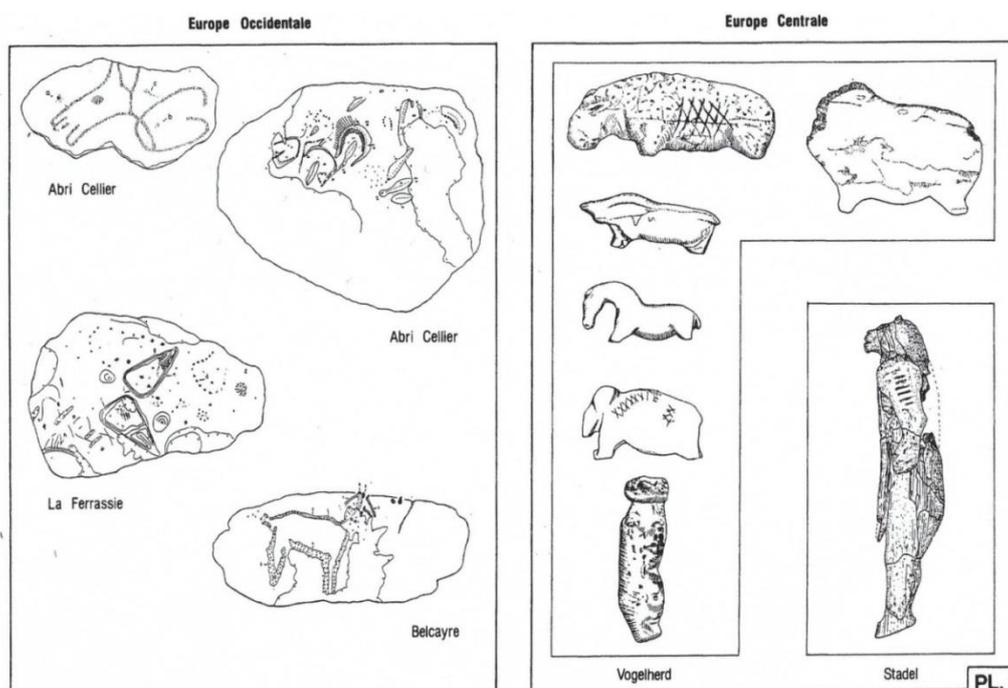
**Abstract.** *The meaning of statuettes appearance across Paleolithic Europe has changed a lot. Different processes can explain their variations. The «creation» from nothing apparently but imitating certain aspects of the natural world (animals). The «transfer» process from one tradition to the other inside early Upper Paleolithic people. The «movement» of both statuettes and people when recolonizing the northern plains. The «drift» process, when different cores are following the same stylistic variations. The «diffusion» process, where we can see the movements affecting Central and Eastern Europe, from the west to the East. All these processes require specific ways of treatment and of understanding. They should not be confused, nor forgotten in any Paleolithic art study.*

**Keywords:** *statuettes, processes, upper Paleolithic, Europe.*

Usually, Paleolithic traditions are defined by the lithic or bony compounds used as tools or weapons. The rock art is difficult to attribute because of rare connections with stratified deposits. The mobile arts are both associated with cultural sediment and are portable on long journeys. Also, they show examples of aesthetics and religious behaviors by the rituals to which they are connected: burials, dwelling places or open-air temples. These art objects show clear connections all across the European continent as well as trends in evolutions, either by space or by time. Any Paleolithic culture has created these kinds of objects, running all along their expansion movements. The fact that they stay alike inside their moves is due to their religious meaning: this was too much dangerous to change the sacred expressions, protected by holy laws in their shapes.

#### *Creation process*

During Aurignacian times (30-35 ky BP), images appeared, shifting from reality to analogous shapes and showing the symbolic importance of both the models and the images themselves. In Central Europe these pictures are made on tridimensional forms, easy to be transported (Pl. 1). They seem to be the very first of the whole continent. They are limited to some animals and rare humans. The exaggeration of some parts of the images gives them a style which is imposed to any thematic. The high artistic quality of all of them demonstrate a long tradition before, that we can't reach since they may have been either in clay, wood or skin. In the center, this thematic is restricted to dangerous animals like felids, bears, bison's or mammoths (Pl. 1, right). In the same time, in the West, the mobile art is made on limestone slabs (Pl.1, left). And they depict either vulvas or crude animal profiles, although they are in the same cultural context, Aurignacian.

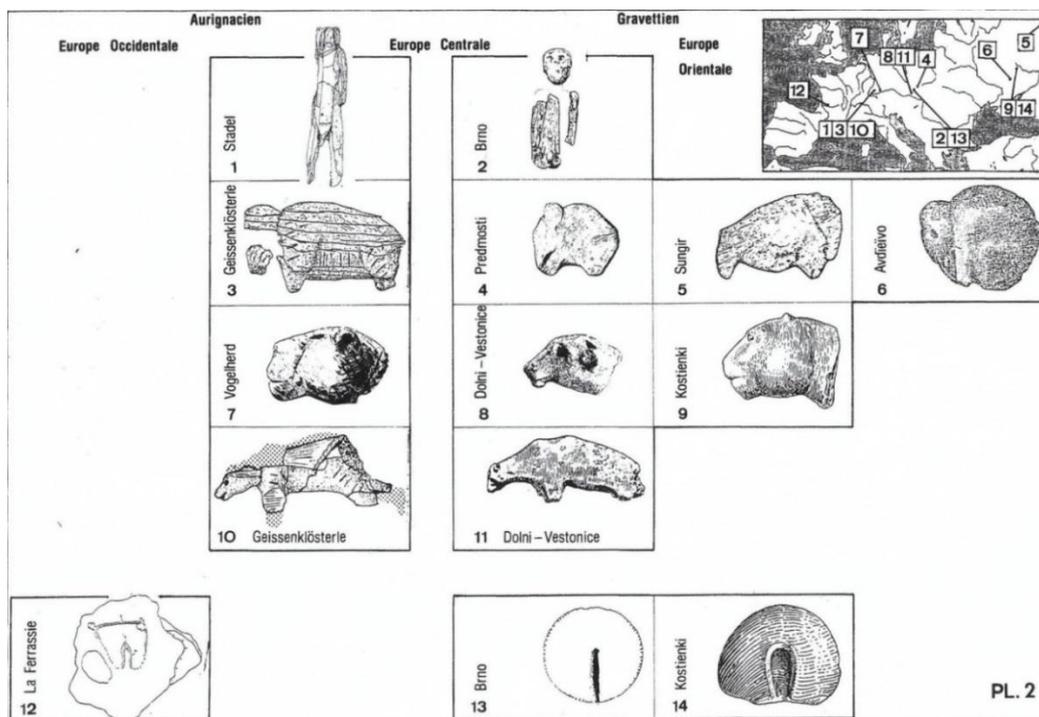


Pl. 1 – Aurignacian culture: mobile art is represented as animal pictures or lion-man in Central Europe (right). In the West, in the same culture, we have either symbolic signs (vulvas?) or crude animal profiles (left).

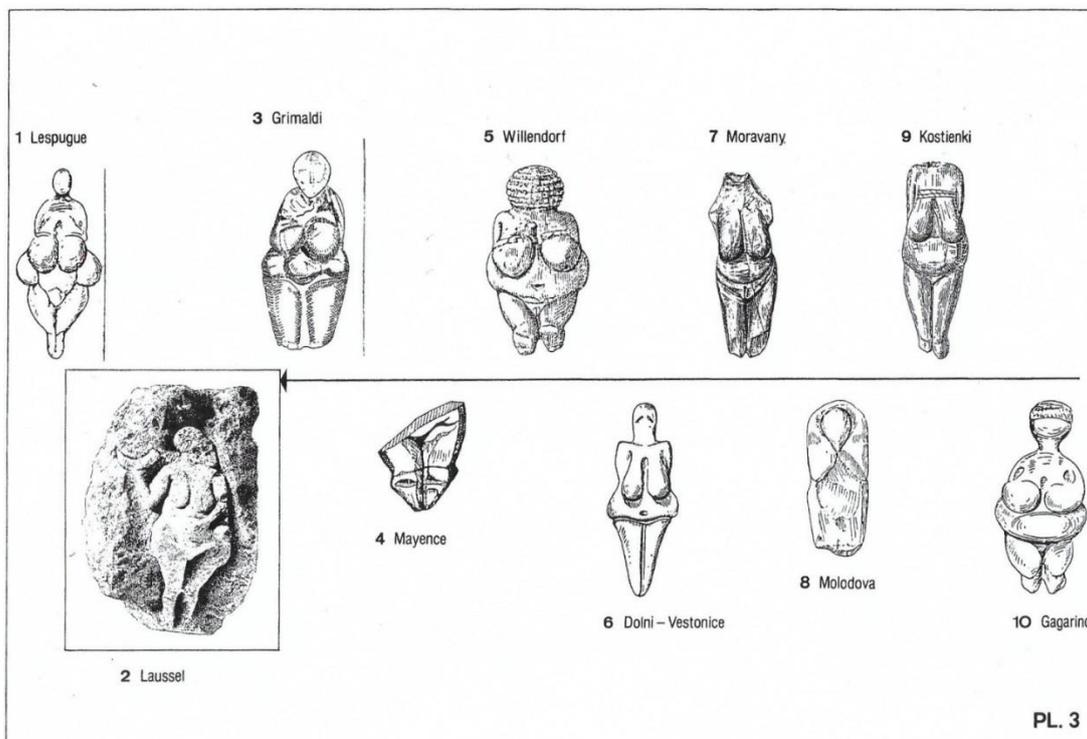
In the west, we can see tendencies already oriented towards bi-dimensional figures, already like on the walls of caves, proper to this western part of the continent. We also observe schematic patterns and symbolic ways of expressions, in full contrast with what has appeared earlier in the central part of Europe. In the same cultural tradition, we observe totally different ways of treating portable arts. However, since the discovery of the Chauvet cave, we can observe exactly the same thematic both on western painted walls and on central arts objects: styles and animals are the same but in a two dimensions process, proper to the West. Animals and humans are in both situations also the same reflecting homogeneity in their religious believes. In both cases, we can observe a tendency towards realistic manner, either by the sculpture itself or by the painted style in Chauvet, tending to the three dimensions and perspective.

#### *Transfer process*

In the very center of Europe, the Gravettian culture created new artistic figurines (Pl. 2). The statuettes are mainly made on ivory or baked clay. The style is very close to the Aurignacian and the animal thematic is identical but not for the female statuettes which take the main part of the figures (Pl. 3). Clearly, there has been a transfer process from Aurignacian to Gravettian inside the same European central region, and then a diffusion process of the same statuettes to Western Europe. Some thematic have a short diffusion area (man and bear), others have long diffusions areas (mammoth, felid, vulvas). And the same differences also appear in time: the longest are the ones which stay for a longer period.



Pl. 2 – A transfer process appeared between Aurignacian and Gravettian pictures, both in Central and Eastern Europe. It seems that the rituals and religious concepts went from one tradition to the other. Man figurines and the same animal species went on both ways, even to France where the Chauvet cave art reproduce the same species.



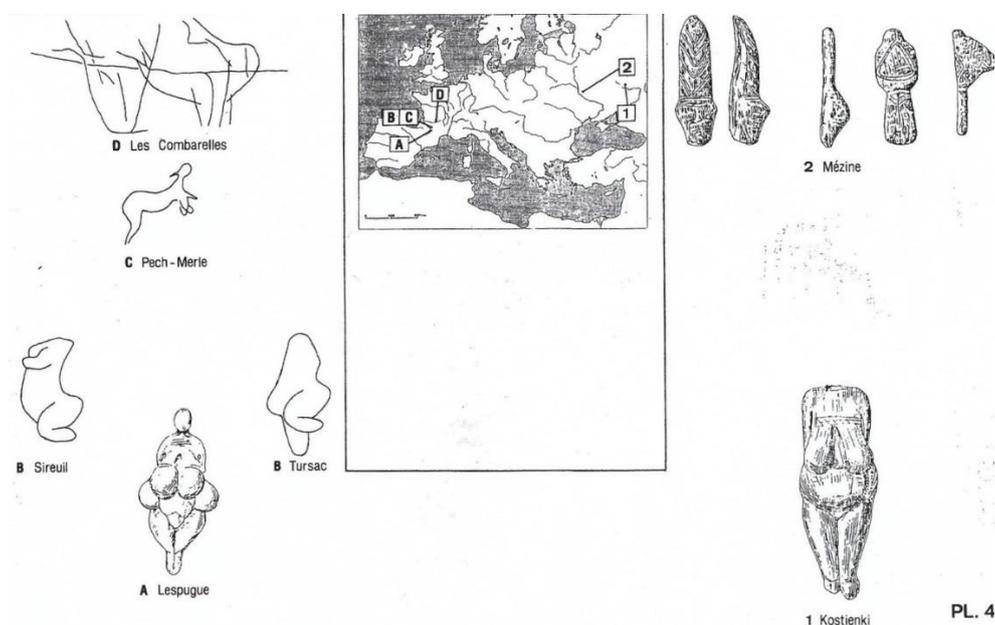
Pl. 3 – The female statuettes went, inside the Gravettian culture, from East to West of the European continent. During this movement, they lost their realistic appearance for a more stylized and schematic one, leading to a bi-dimensional aspect, appropriated to cave wall decoration, proper to the western part of Europe.

### *Diffusion process*

The female statuettes have been dispersed across Europe both in time and in space (Pl. 3). They can be made either in baked clay, stone or ivory, and they are changing their styles when moving from east to west, from realistic to schematic (Pl.3), but still inside the same cultural tradition. Moving to the west, the pictures also go from tri-dimensions to two-dimensions, leading to wall paintings or engravings. Although the iconography and the style come from central Europe and from statuettes, as soon as they reach the west, they became sculpture on walls or «bas-reliefs» or paintings, following the local Aurignacian tradition. On distances of thousands kilometers and whatever the raw material may be, the icons and the style do not change even across thousands of years, clearly showing the religious importance they are carrying.

### *Drift process*

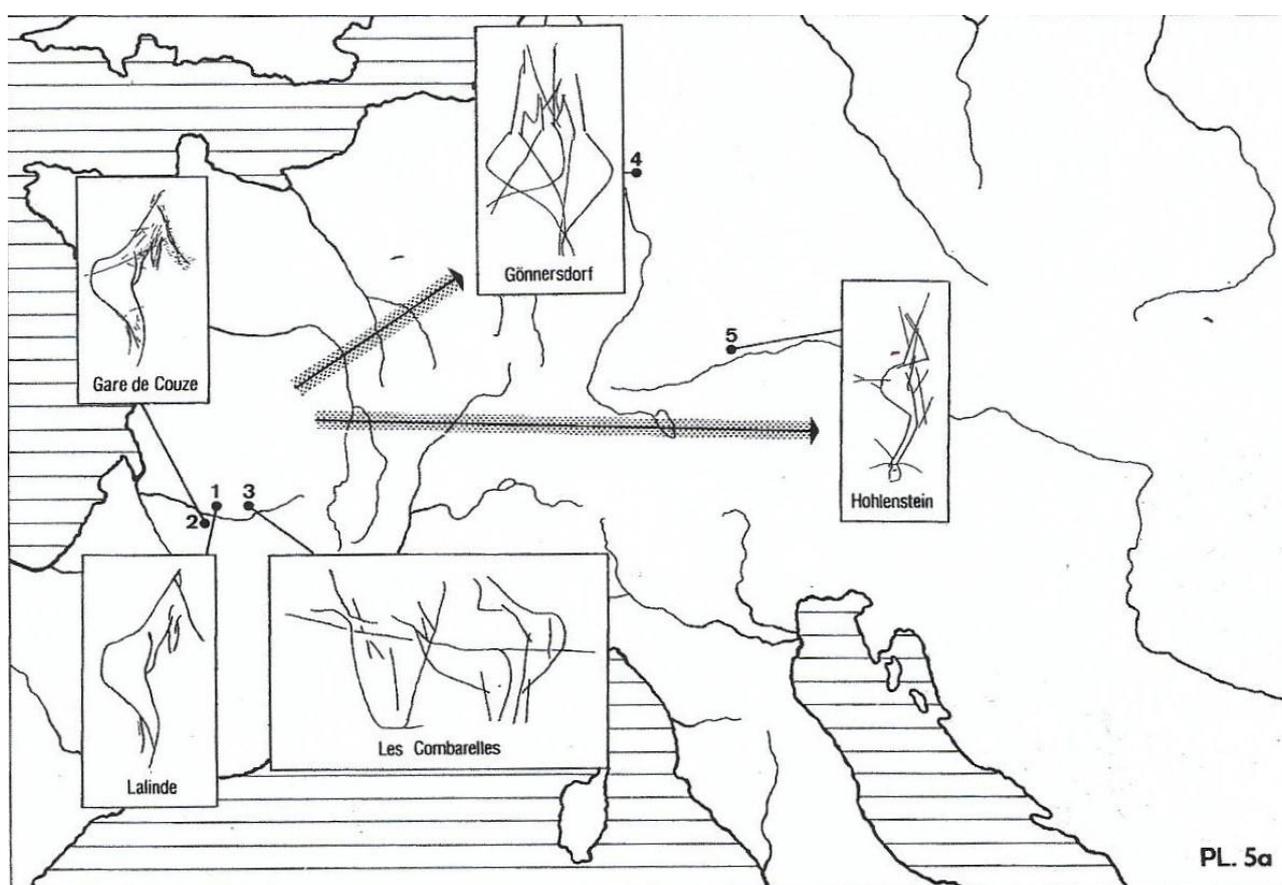
In the different parts of Europe, the harsh climatic conditions created a cultural separation between the east and the west. In these autonomous evolutions, we can observe the same schematization of the female pictures. The recent Gravettian statuettes are to be seen and understood by their side, not in a frontal view like before. By this change, the female pictures were ready to be traced on a wall and seen by only two dimensions (Pl. 4). Strangely enough, the two great European regions went on exactly the same path although they were totally separated: the style's drift, coming from naturalist to schematic anywhere independently, leading to pure abstraction like our alphabetic letters. Figurative art has become semiotic in a totally independent way. This more or less corresponds to the drift observed in the lithic, coming from Gravettian, leading to Magdalenian.



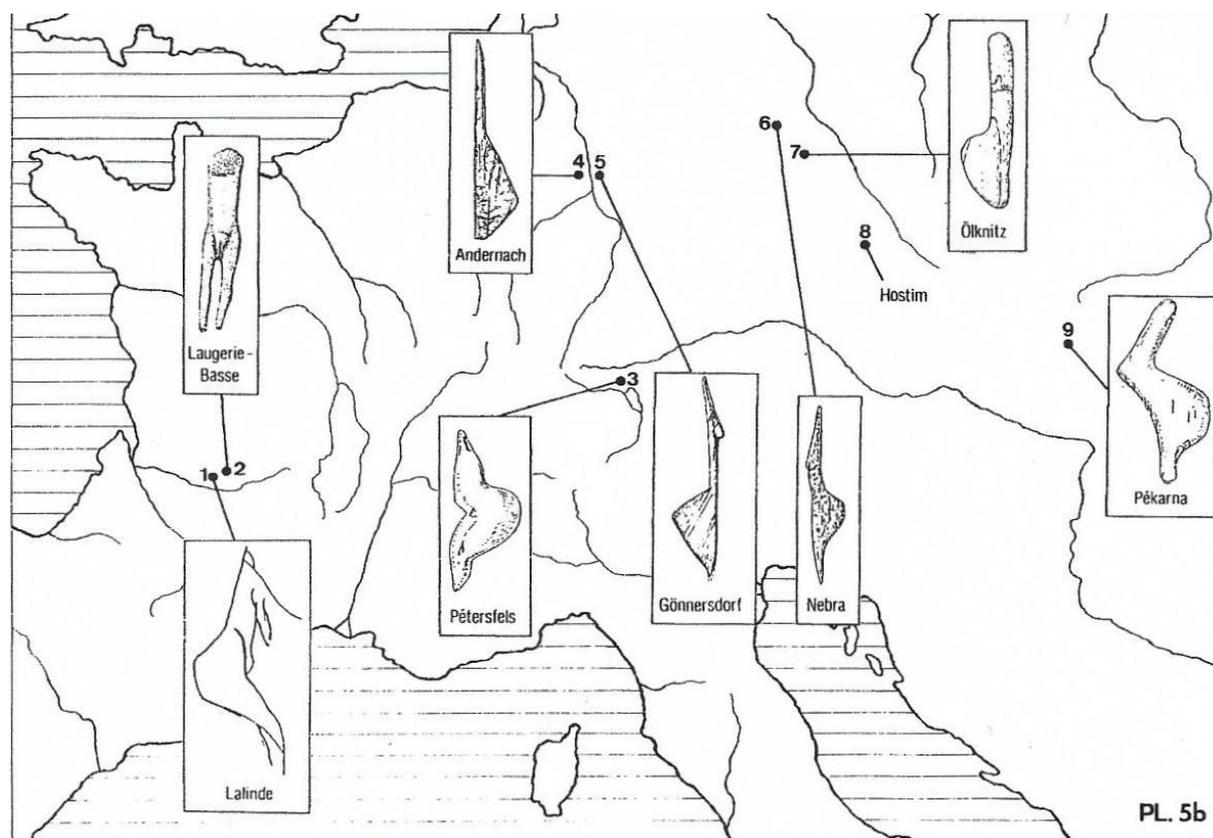
Pl. 4 – During the coldest phase of the last glaciation, East and West of Europe were separated. However, the stylistic evolution went on in parallel ways and towards schematization in both regions

### *Diffusion process*

Realistic style of these animal pictures on portable supports corresponds to a strong argument in favor of a rapid diffusion of the Magdalenian civilization from west to east. At the end of the glacial area, Magdalenian populations moved towards the hilly parts of northern central Europe, where no other populations were still living before (Pl. 5). Lithic technology and arts are combined in this movement. This is no more a question of ideas diffusion but of people themselves moving with their ways of live. We can also see from the raw materials displaced from the origins (France) to the eastern limits. The images have come down from the caves walls to the portable arts just like the Christian cross moving with the pilgrims. Exactly the same pictures are to be found anywhere after this new colonization, either on statuettes or on engraved slabs. At this time, pictures indicate population's movements.



Pl.5a. The displacement process show populations and images moving together from the South- West to Central and Eastern Europe. Not only the technological traditions can be recognized as such, anywhere on this huge area but the religious and pictures went on together as well. People were moving with their beliefs and arts, especially because they were portable



Pl. 5b. At the end of last glaciation, images and objects were moving together with people, but at the Middle part of Europe, the two movements converged. East and West had followed the same schematization tracks and they became a typical for the new way of life and of believes: humans figurines already announce the Mesolithic period

## Conclusion

Our aim is to integrate technological processes to the symbolic ones shown in mobile arts. These two kinds of expressions rely in fact on the same cultural context inside the same human populations which they were conceived an elaborated. Unfortunately they two approaches have been disconnected most of the time on parallel tracks. We think the conclusions have to be reconciled in order accessing to a real historical process as global as possible. In one single population all the compounds were linked together between the different sociological aspects, like dwelling, food, religions and techniques. Differences inside the cultural ways are due to different processes involved in the whole way of life: religions or technologies do not correspond to the same was of symbolic expressions. For instance, the religions concepts can cross different ways of life without altering their technologies, just like to-day. However, with a holistic view, we can observe some connections between Paleolithic cultures and their religious/artistic relationships.

For instance, during Aurignacian, we see a coherent way of artistic elements, both on portable and wall cave arts. On the other hand, transmission processes can be observed between Aurignacian and Gravettian although their technologies totally

differ. Inside Gravettian culture, we can clearly see spatial diffusion all across the middle European corridor, with the same statuette's and the same technologies all the way on. When reaching the west, the portable art was transferred to wall art by changing from three to two dimensions, and turning the statuette to their side. Inside the late Upper Paleolithic, there has been a stylistic change with the appearance of schematizations all across different cultural traditions, both east and west. At the very end, one single image has been brought by moving populations, back to central and northern parts of Europe.

These some examples show the complexity of a global approach but also the richness given by a double look either on the tools showing the contact with the material world, and the images which reflects mythic world created by the same people.

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## Марсель Отте

Льеж университетінің құрметті профессоры, Бельгия,  
Адам Палеонтология институтының корреспондент мүшесі, Париж,  
«Еуразия жоғарғы Палеолиті» комиссиясының президенті

### **ЖЫЛЖЫМАЛЫ ПАЛЕОЛИТ ӨНЕРІ: ҮЛКЕН ҚАШЫҚТЫҚТАҒЫ АДАМ КӨШІ-ҚОНЫНЫҢ ДӘЛЕЛІ**

**Андатпа.** Палеолит Еуропасында мүсіншелердің пайда болуын түсіндіру айтарлықтай өзгерді. Олардың вариацияларын әр түрлі процестермен түсіндіруге болады. «Шығармашылық» арқылы анық, яғни. жоқтан бар жасау, бірақ табиғи әлемнің (жануарлардың) кейбір жақтарына еліктеу арқылы. Ерте жоғарғы палеолит адамдары арасында болған бір дәстүрден екінші дәстүрге «ауысу» деп аталады. Сондай-ақ, мүсіншелердің солтүстік жазықтыққа қоныстанған кездегі адамдармен бірге «қозғалысы». Әр түрлі сабақтар бірдей стильдік вариацияларды ұстанатын «жылжу немесе орын ауыстыру» процесі. Ақырында - «диффузия» процесі, оның барысында батыстан шығысқа қарай Орталық және Шығыс Еуропаға әсер ететін өзгерістер болады. Бұл процестердің барлығы оларды зерттеу мен түсінудің нақты тәсілдерін қажет етеді. Олар нақты анықталған болуы керек және палеолит өнерінің кез келген зерттеуінде қолданылуы керек.

**Түйін сөздер:** мүсіншілер, процестер, жоғарғы палеолит, Еуропа.

## Марсель Отте

почетный профессор доистории Льежского университета, Бельгия,  
Член-корреспондент Института палеонтологии человека, Париж,  
президент комиссии «Верхний палеолит Евразии»

### **ПАЛЕОЛИТИЧЕСКОЕ ИСКУССТВО МАЛЫХ ФОРМ: СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВО МИГРАЦИЙ ЧЕЛОВЕКА НА ОГРОМНЫЕ РАССТОЯНИЯ**

**Аннотация.** Трактовки внешнего облика статуэток в палеолитической Европе существенно менялись. Их вариации можно объяснить разными процессами. Очевидно «творчеством», т.е. созданием из ничего, но через имитацию определенных аспектов природного мира (животных). Так называемым «переходом» от одной традиции к другой, имевшем место у людей раннего верхнего палеолита. А также «передвижением» статуэток вместе с людьми при заселении ими северных равнин. Процесс «дрейфа, или смещения», когда различные основы следуют одним и тем же стилистическим вариациям. И наконец – процесс «диффузии», во время которого происходят изменения, влияющие на Центральную и Восточную Европу, в направлении с запада на восток. Все указанные процессы требуют специфических способов их изучения и осмысления. Их следует четко определить и обязательно применять при любых исследованиях палеолитического искусства.

**Ключевые слова:** статуэтки, процессы, верхний палеолит, Европа.