

Kabazi V

The site is described by Yevtushenko (1998) in chapter 11 of ERAUL 84. ESR and Uranium series dates are reported by Rink et al. and McKinney in chapters 13 and 14 of the same volume. Burke (1999) in chapter 2 of ERAUL 87 provides a faunal analysis.

Kabazi V is on the steep south facing slope of Kalinovaya Balka, a valley on the right bank of the Alma river. Although the site is only about 400 m from Kabazi II, which is on the west facing slope of the same mountain, its situation is described as “quite different”. It was first excavated by Kolosov and Chabai in 1986 when four archaeological units (I-IV) were recognised. Excavations continued in 1990, 1993, and 1995, when these units were subdivided. C.R. Ferring examined the stratigraphy from a geological point of view in the last two of these years. The stratigraphic profile along line “9” is shown in Yevtushenko’s Fig. 11-2. Ferring’s geological description of the strata is at Table 11-1 and a “correlation” of the geological and archaeological sequence is at Table 11-2. The archaeological sequence shows the original units I-IV and their subdivision into levels. There are 18 lithological layers which are grouped into strata A-F, the latter being characterised in a detailed manner. Layers, strata, and archaeological levels III/1-5 are shown in Figure 11-2. In addition, Yevtushenko has suggested that the archaeological units and levels could be combined into a number of “complexes”, and these are listed in the right hand column of Table 11-2.

It appears that, unlike Kabazi II, this really was a “collapsed rock shelter”. Strata F and E derived from bedrock clays. There were two major episodes of roof fall in strata E3 and lower D. Up to that time the site functioned as a rock shelter, and archaeological units IV and III formed within it. From the time of D onwards “colluvial, and possibly eolian, sedimentation” predominated in an open site setting. Archaeological unit II accumulated after the rock shelter roof collapse. Units I, I-A, and II-A, are now recognised to have been displaced. According to Burke, there was not much change in the faunal composition through time, and most occupations were short lived. Only 8.9% of the 7292 recovered remains could be identified by taxon, but these were dominated by saiga tatarica and equids. Exploitation of the open steppe environment on the plateau above the site is indicated, although the river valley was not altogether ignored.

ESR and Uranium series dates have been reported by Rink et al. and McKinney. Rink (Tables 13-6 and 13-7) lists the results for the dating of 4 teeth from archaeological levels III/1 and III/1a. The mean date for three teeth from III/1 is 24+/-2 (EU) and 31+/-1 (LU) kyrs, whereas the best estimate for the tooth from III/1a is that it is <41 kyrs old. Rink states that he has “strong confidence” in the dates for III/1. By contrast, McKinney (Table 14-3) lists the dates for 4 teeth (59 and 210 being replicates) for III/1. His estimated age for the level is 73,300+/-6000 years ago, a result which he considers “reliable”. In the circumstances, a further attempt to date the site is justified.

The profile recorded in 2004 is said to have been situated at the boundary of 6B and 6b, which implies that the excavated area may have been extended beyond line 9, though Chabai (2004) still illustrates the section along that line. The layers correspond to

those previously identified, though subdivisions 12A and 14A and B seem to be new. These points should be checked with Yevtushenko.

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