
Linked by the fire: A Middle Palaeolithic hearth-related assemblage from Abric del Pastor Unit IVf (Alcoi, Spain)

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Résumé

Testing behavioural features of Neanderthal groups requires a high-resolution spatial and temporal approach that helps us get closer to an ethnographic scale and this is hampered by the archaeological palimpsest effect. In this sense, archaeostratigraphic and spatial analyses of the macroscopic archaeological record (i.e. lithic, faunal and combustion remains) has shown to be a useful tool for defining new analytical frameworks that help us to approach the human timescale. A series of Neanderthal short-term occupations have previously been identified at the Abric del Pastor Middle Palaeolithic site (Alcoi, Spain) based on high-resolution archaeostratigraphic data from Units IVa, IVb, IVc and IVd (Machado et al. 2013; 2019; Mallol et al. 2019). Here, we performed archaeostratigraphic, lithic raw material and technological analyses on an *in situ* archaeological combustion area from Unit IVf.

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Preliminary results show a discrete low-density accumulation of materials around a hearth as a potential human occupation episode. Thus, this is an opportunity to understand the formation processes of archaeological assemblages in a high-resolution way, allowing us to identify behavioural strategies that could go unnoticed in the study of dense palimpsests. These results will be compared to other MIS 4 primary human occupation contexts to explore variability in settlement patterns within this period.

Mots-Clés: Neanderthal behaviour, Archaeostratigraphy, Raw material, Lithic technology