
Modern humans at La Viña rock shelter (northern Spain) during the Aurignacian between H4 and H3 climatic events

Ana B. Marin-Arroyo*^{†1}, Gabriele Terlato¹, Leire Torres Iglesias¹, Alicia Sanz-Royo¹, Jennifer R. Jones², and Marco De La Rasilla³

¹Universidad de Cantabria – Espagne

²University of Central Lancashire – Royaume-Uni

³Universidad de Oviedo – Espagne

Résumé

While the Aurignacian appears around 43 ka cal BP in northern Iberia, the arrival of the first Anatomically Modern Humans at the westernmost point of the Vasco-Cantabrian region (Marín-Arroyo et al 2018) does not occur until a few millennia later at La Viña rock shelter. This site contains evidence of repeated human occupation during the time of span of the Aurignacian culture. Recent chronological dating anthropogenically modified ungulate remains using ultrafiltered collagen, situate the early Upper Paleolithic groups between 37.5-33.6 ka cal BP in the western sector of the site, over ancient eroded Mousterian occupations. The goal of this work is to present the data about the paleoeconomic behaviour undertaken by Aurignacian human groups and the environmental information at the time they dwelled in the western (levels XIII, XII, XI and VIII) and Central (IX, IX inf and VIII) sectors within the site. Macrofaunal remains, from both the central and western sectors, were studied from a multidisciplinary perspective: taphonomy to discern the origin of the bone accumulation; archaeozoological to unravel the human subsistence and stable isotope analysis on red deer to provide environmental data. The results indicate a high fragmentation rate of the bone assemblage. Despite that, dual exploitation of red deer and chamois is observed, revealing exploitation of mixed open and forested landscapes. Bone breakage indicates intensive carcass exploitation for meat, grease and marrow. Seasonality data obtained of some individuals indicates a spring occupation. The $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values reflect an open landscape with C3 plants and a low density of tree cover. The $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values are stable throughout the three levels but are higher than later parts of the sequence, which might suggest slightly drier conditions. These results thereby provide the first paleoeconomic and paleoenvironmental data of an important early and evolved Aurignacian sequence in the Vasco-Cantabrian region.

Marín-Arroyo, A.B., et al. 2018 Chronological reassessment of the Middle to Upper Paleolithic transition and Early Upper Paleolithic cultures in Cantabrian Spain. PLoS ONE 13(4): e0194708.

Mots-Clés: La Viña, Aurignacian, Iberia, MIS3, subsistence

*Intervenant

[†]Auteur correspondant: marinab@unican.es