
On the fringes of the main settlement areas: The Middle Palaeolithic of the Hérault department (Southern France)

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Résumé

Although the Middle Palaeolithic of the southern France is a reference in many ways, it is mainly known in the Aquitaine Basin and the Rhône Valley where different techno-complexes were defined very early. However, certain peripheral zones or contact zones remain still little known for this period. This statement is mainly due to a scientific bias, both in the fieldwork and in the regionalisation of the research. In this communication we will present current research on the Middle Palaeolithic of the Hérault department (Languedoc area), which could be a cultural crossroads between different territories. To the south of the Massif Central, this region could indeed constitute a privileged circulation corridor for Neanderthal populations. Through fieldwork and the reexamination of old collections, several techno-complexes seems to be suggested with various raw materials used, from the Early Middle Palaeolithic with the site of Lunel-Viel I to the Late Middle Palaeolithic with numerous surface stations. The identification of this variety nuances the apparent technological monotony and omnipresence of the Levallois Mousterian on flint of the Languedoc-Roussillon.

Mots-Clés: Middle Palaeolithic, Lithic Techno, Complexes, Southern France, Mousterian, Raw materials

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