
The MP-UP transition in southern Levant: the pace of the cultural changes and coexistence.

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Abstract

The transition from the Middle Palaeolithic to the Upper Paleolithic in Eurasia is characterized with demographic changes and cultural transformations corresponding with the recent out-of-Africa of modern humans. Although this phenomenon is well recognized and studied in various regions in Eurasia its timing is not well established thus making it difficult to reconstruct this considerable event.

The current study focuses on the southern Levant which is the initial place where this transition was first noted and defined. Examination of new high resolution of radiocarbon chronology from late Middle Paleolithic and Initial Upper Paleolithic sites in the region suggest the following scenario.

The transition from the Middle to the Upper Paleolithic in the Levant began as early as 50 thousand years ago at the site of Boker Tachtit, Negev Desert. This process transpired while local Neanderthal populations were still inhabiting the region. The transformation to the fully fledged Upper Paleolithic industries occurred in the Negev at 47 thousand from where it spread to other regions in the Levant.

A similar process occurred in other regions in central Europe and northeast Asia a couple of thousands of years later. The timing of these events supports a rapid out-of-Africa dispersal which included populations coexistence along the migrations path.

Keywords: Middle, Upper Palaeolithic, southern Levant, the cultural changes and coexistence.

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