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# New insights on the oldest lithic assemblages of El Abra and Tibitó (Cundiboyacense Plateau, Eastern Cordillera, Colombia)

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## Résumé

The strategic position of Colombia plays a key role in the knowledge of the early human peopling of South America, in the broader debate on the first peopling of the Americas. The scarcity and fragmentary nature of archaeological record, together with the presence of critical elements related to several early sites, prevent a full and detailed comprehension of chronology, routes of dispersion and technology of the earliest hunter-gatherers of Colombia. The early human settlement of Colombia is characterised by a widespread interregional technological and typological diversity in lithic assemblages, distinctive contemporaneous regional features and patterns, whose origins and interactions are still unclear. How to explain the interregional technological and typological diversity in lithic assemblages of late Pleistocene sites? Does it represent different cultural groups or different functional activities?

From the mid-60s onwards, this diversity was explained by postulating the existence of two different lithic traditions (i.e. *Abriense/Tequendamiense* paradigm, deriving its name from the eponymous sites, El Abra and Tequendama). However, in our opinion the *Abriense/Tequendamiense* definition is not particularly clear, precise and satisfying. This multifaceted definition, which includes several criteria of different nature, not necessarily connected, can easily lead to misleading interpretations and is not adequate to identify the heterogeneity of Colombian lithic industries.

Therefore, we support the necessity to implement a techno-economic analysis of the lithic assemblages overcoming the restrictive traditional distinction and to provide new insights on the interpretation of the oldest lithic industries of the Colombian territory.

In this framework, a reanalysis of the lithic assemblages corresponding to Tibitó 1, El Abra 2 and El Abra 3 (Cundiboyacense Plateau, Eastern Cordillera), traditionally considered the oldest and most significant sites of Colombia, has been conducted.

Our review has highlighted several discrepancies and critical elements contained in previous studies.

**Mots-Clés:** Colombia, lithic industry, early archaeological sites, review

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