

---

# Insights in Epigravettian ornamental traditions: use-wear analysis on the shell ornaments from Martin rockshelter (Alpes-Maritimes, France)

Leïla Hoareau<sup>\*†1</sup>, Didier Binder<sup>2</sup>, and Sylvie Beyries<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cultures et Environnements Préhistoire, Antiquité, Moyen Âge (CEPAM) – CNRS : UMR7264,  
Université Côte d’Azur (UCA) – France

<sup>2</sup>Cultures et environnements. Préhistoire, Antiquité, Moyen Age (CEPAM) – CNRS : UMR7264,  
Université Côte d’Azur (UCA) – Université Nice Sophia Antipolis Campus Saint-Jean-d’Angély - SJA3  
24, avenue des Diables Bleus 06357 Nice Cedex 4, France

<sup>3</sup>Culture et Environnements, Préhistoire, Antiquité, Moyen-Age (CEPAM) – CNRS : UMR7264,  
Université Côte d’Azur (UCA) – Université Nice Sophia Antipolis Campus Saint-Jean-d’Angély - SJA3  
24, avenue des Diables Bleus 06357 Nice Cedex 4, France

## Résumé

More than simple embellishments, ornaments have very diverse roles in human groups: cultural marker, symbol of a social status, etc. This polysemy certainly goes hand in hand with a wide variety of ornamental compositions, which could carry diverse information. Reconstitution of ornamental composition, by restituting the different uses of the elements, can allow us to understand, at least a part, the role of ornaments in societies.

When ornaments are found in undisturbed burials, the preservation of the initial arrangement of the elements facilitate the reconstitution of ornamental compositions, which can have a cultural value. However, this kind of context of discovery is very rare for Epigravettian sites, and ornaments are often scattered over the habitat. It is the case for Martin rockshelter (Alpes-Maritimes, France). Attributed to terminal Epigravettian, this small rockshelter revealed, among other vestiges, dispersed human remains belonging to only one individual, and 138 marine shell ornaments, also scattered in the site. The refitting of lithic and bones in the 3 terminal Epigravettian layers suggests a reworking which explains vestige dispersal. In this context, observing directly the arrangement of ornaments on the body is impossible and only a functional study can give us elements for reflection.

An experimental protocol have been carried out in order to identify the different traces on shells. Smoothing of edges and modification of the shape of the objects, observed macroscopically, allow to recognise the area of rubbing and constraints on the objects, giving precious evidence about the arrangements of the objects. Polish and striations, observed with the microscope provide information on the materials in contact with the objects and the way ornaments moved during their use.

These experimentations enabled us to suggest a reconstitution of ornamental composition used at Martin rockshelter.

---

\*Intervenant

†Auteur correspondant:

**Mots-Clés:** shell ornaments, Epigravettian, use, wear analysis, experimentation