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# A single Neanderthal short-term occupation? Assessing a high-temporal resolution example at the Abric del Pastor Lithostratigraphic Unit IVd (Alicante, Spain)

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## Abstract

Current temporal approaches to Middle Palaeolithic palimpsest deposits have shown that a hearth-related accumulation is the most reliable material imprint of a single occupation episode performed by Neanderthals. These analyses have also emphasized that single lithic tools and small archaeological scatters not spatially associated to any combustion feature could be possible traces of such episodes as well. All of these kinds of anthropogenic assemblages are commonly interpreted as the remains of short-term occupations whose variability in behavioral and temporal terms currently is one of the main goals of the research agenda. In order to contribute to the study of such topic, we present an archaeological assemblage from the Middle Palaeolithic site of Abric del Pastor (Alicante, Spain) that potentially represents a single short-term human occupation episode. This assemblage is a hearth-related accumulation which has been defined within the Lithostratigraphic Unit IVd using archaeostratigraphic methods. In addition to the performed temporal and behavioral analysis of this record, we also discuss its hypothetical characterization as the material manifestation of a single short-term Neanderthal occupation.

**Keywords:** Middle Palaeolithic, palimpsest, short occupations, combustion features, Neanderthal behavioral variability

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