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# Understanding space perception by a contextual study of decorated areas of Cussac (Dordogne, France)

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## Résumé

Bringing together human remains and parietal art, the cave of Cussac (Dordogne, France), discovered in 2000, is one of the major paleolithic sanctuaries of Europe. In 2009, a research group has been set up (dir. J. Jaubert), organizing the research around 3 main themes: the natural environment, the animal frequentation and the human appropriation. As part of the third axis, the very well preserved state of the remains and testimonies all reported to the Middle Gravettian period (Jaubert *et al.*, 2016), allowed to begin an interdisciplinary study about the question of the factors involved in the parietal arrangement, the layout of the graphic entities and their perception.

For this purpose, a few sub-objectives were defined:

- To find out the nature, the features and the state of preservation of the decorated surfaces,
- To record the repartition of the panels and their immediate environment,
- To check the co-visibility between panels,
- To document the accesses to the decorated walls and to the observation areas,
- To record the visibility and legibility areas of the panels.

They allow the discussion about the question of space investment and the moves in the cave via an interdisciplinary and innovative study, combining geology and taphonomy of the

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walls, karstology, parietal art, activity traces and lighting.

We propose for this communication to present and detail the analytical method developed and employed, then to discuss the first results about the Gravettian people behaviour inside Cussac cave.

**Mots-Clés:** Cussac cave, Gravettian, Parietal art, prehistoric art, parietal structuration, subterranean context, pathways, lighting, visibility