
Middle Pleistocene microlithic tool production at Bolomor Cave (MIS 9-5, Valencia, Spain)

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Résumé

The presence of small-sized lithic products in Middle Palaeolithic industries has repeatedly been proven, and for numerous European archaeological sites, this does not constitute recent evidence. In our study, we analyse the production process of these small artefacts –an intentional technological production within the Neanderthal lineage communities– using a chrono-stratigraphic sequence framed within the late Middle Pleistocene of the Iberian Peninsula. Specifically, we review the concepts and propose new approaches through the information provided by the small-sized lithic assemblages from the stratigraphic sequence of Bolomor Cave, Valencia, Spain. Multidisciplinary analyses of the Bolomor deposits have made it possible to identify a stratigraphic sequence spanning the time period from approximately 350–100 ka.

Small tools within the lithic assemblages of Bolomor Cave have been recovered on several archaeological levels. This allows us to explore different research lines and variables of analysis from different perspectives, such as the supply of raw materials, the management of the lithic economy, including the ramifications as well as the recycling and mobility patterns.

In this work, we try to explore the origin of this production, its diachronic perspective and its particular characteristics beyond the prejudices of the supposed cognitive limitations of the Neanderthal societies regarding complex technological production models. We consider that the study of these aspects is vital to understand the general behaviour of these human communities.

The singular character of these Palaeolithic productions will arouse future debates about their specific definition, characteristics and function. It will also enable us to analyse the link (or lack thereof) between the Palaeolithic productions and other complex production systems as well as the variability of the old lithic technological systems in Europe.

Mots-Clés: Small tools, Middle Pleistocene, Iberian Peninsula, Bolomor Cave

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