Short-term Mousterian occupations in Abrigo del Molino (Central Iberia) through the analysis of the lithic raw materials and the catchment area

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Abstract

Abrigo del Molino is located in the upper part of Eresma river valley (Segovia, Central Spain), in the northern slope of Central System mountain range. The site is being excavated since 2013 and it contains a wide stratigraphy in which three Mousterian occupation levels have been found, with a chronology between 40 and 50 Ka.

Based on the analysis of the density of the archaeological remains, their characteristics, and the integrity and type of the chaîne opératoires, it can be deduced that all registered occupations are the result of short-term and recurrent stays over a long period of time. Therefore, the human occupations at Abrigo del Molino are not the result of a permanent habitat of the Neanderthal groups.

The presence of endogenous and exogenous lithic materials, together with their selection, according to their characteristics, shows a high degree of selection and planning of the activities carried out in Abrigo del Molino. Thanks to the studies of raw materials and the analysis of the catchment area of the site, we can perform an analysis of the mobility patterns of the Neanderthal groups in this area in relation to the short-term occupations which took place at the Abrigo del Molino between 40 and 50 ka BP.

Keywords: Catchment area, Mousterian, Neanderthals, Geoarchaeology

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