
Cantacorbs: Recovering a forgotten Neolithic site at the Prades Mountains (Montblanc, Catalonia)

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Résumé

In the mid of the past century a series of high-altitude chert workshops were found in the Prades Mountains (Montblanc, Catalonia). These workshops were ascribed to the Neolithic, but to date just one of them -Cantacorbs- become part of a wider archaeological project. This open-air site is located in the top of a calcareous high plateau (1022 masl), dominating one of the main routes through the Prades Mountains. The main characteristic of the site is the large amount of knapped lithic material on the surface, among which all the stages of the reduction sequence (cortical flakes, cores on different stages of reduction, crested pieces, core tablets and other core-shaping flakes, blades and blade fragments, etc.) are represented. Raw material provenance shows a regional range, coming from at least four different procurement areas.

The aim of this work is to propose an organization of the occupational sequence based on the study of the lithic assemblage from the "Capdevila" private collection together with the data obtained during the two fieldwork campaigns carried out to date. Technological and typological traits allow to ascribe the occupations of the site to different moments of the Neolithic. Although the majority of the lithic assemblage is composed by flint knapping by-products, blades and fragmented blades, there are also found some geometric elements, truncated pieces, notches and a noteworthy presence of borers.

The identification of percussive elements, standing out the presence bush hammers for the production of ground tools, reinforces the interpretations of the functionality of the site as a chert workshop area (although to date just one ground axe was recovered). In the same way, the abundance of cores, core-shaping elements and the presence of a large amount of small by-products allow to infer the *in situ* character of the site.

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Mots-Clés: Neolithic, chert workshop, lithic technology, geometrics, bush hammers