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BELFAST

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WEAVING NARRATIVES



ABSTRACT BOOK

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from the layers associated to the LGM, and specifically its taphonomic history. Our results showed the diversity of fauna consumed between the Solutrean and the Gravettian, mainly red deer, and the anthropic activity on some specimens, such as cut marks, impact notches and burning, while carnivore activity was sparse. The conditions of deposition allowed for an overall good preservation of the remains, though carbonated concretions hinder analyses of the surfaces.

6 NEW DATA ON THE ACHEULEAN TECHNO-COMPLEX FROM THE LEFT BANK OF MINHO VALLEY (PORTUGAL)

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Abstract format: Oral

Archaeological work carried out on the left bank of the Minho River (Portugal), since 2016, has allowed the identification of new Palaeolithic sites – Pedreiras 2 and Bela, in Monção, and Carvalhas, in Melgaço – generally associated with ancient river deposits, dating from the Middle Pleistocene (MIS 9/ MIS 8).

Their characteristic large cutting tools include different types of handaxes, most of them made from quartzite pebbles or wide flakes removed from large cores, cleavers and other artefacts such as cores and flakes, sometimes retouched.

In contrast to what occurs in southernmost river basins of the Iberian Atlantic Façade, where similar occupations are generally associated with high-energy depositional contexts, in the Minho valley such occupations are found often among fine deposits, related to flood phases.

In these cases, raw material sourcing for the production of lithic tools may have occurred away from the site, however not far. In small tributary basins of the Minho River the quartzite appears as an exogenous raw material, and always as knapped tools carried by humans.

In Carvalhas, one of the main sites, preliminary results suggest that the Acheulean implements are connected to an ancient river channel or meander, some of them carried from colluvia/slope deposit. Another assemblage, with a significant amount of flakes associated with a flood deposit, may date from a later period and may be related eventually to the Middle Palaeolithic (no dates available for this context).

These results, similar to those obtained in the right bank of the Minho River (Galicia, Spain), show abundance and diversity of the lithic assemblages, and attest to the human presence at the NW of Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Pleistocene.

7 ACHEULEAN OCCUPATION IN LIS VALLEY (PORTUGAL): THE CASAL DO AZEMEL SITE

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Abstract format: Oral

Fluvial archives are key to understanding human behaviour in the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Pleistocene and, specifically, to discuss the technological and chronological trends of the Iberian Acheulean techno-complex. Indeed, assemblages are mostly located in valley environments related to the main Atlantic regional rivers' basins, not only because they contain sedimentary archives that enhance the conservation of past human occupations' remains, but also due to the richness of these ecosystems.

In central Portugal, numerous Acheulean sites have been found in association to fluvial deposits in the hydrographic basin of the Lis River, and in some colluvial deposits that affect the top of formations that develop on adjacent plateaus. Among these, we highlight Casal do Azemel, a paradigmatic Large Flake Acheulean (LFA) site, with an assemblage composed of 3957 artefacts, in which the high presence of Large Cutting Tools (around 750) stands out. Despite the association of the remains with a colluvial deposit that locally affected the top of the Pliocene marine formation, their concentration in an area that does not stand out topographically from the surrounding flat surface, and the texture of the deposits that comprise them, are indicative of their anthropic origin. Given the pronounced eolisation of the artifacts, human occupation would take place during an important deflation phase and would have been seasonal since the location in a sandy plateau would only be possible in moments in which the scarcity of vegetation would allow human groups to benefit from the advantage of the control of a vast area. In this context, the production sequences identified at the site are the material evidence of a highly structured behaviour that would echo on other dimensions of these groups' dynamics, such as the ecodynamics of territorial exploitation, in which the lithic component would have played a key role.