
The Aurignacian toolkit. 15 years of traceological analysis on Aurignacian collections from Western Europe.

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Résumé

The Aurignacian is characterized by the appearance and development of certain tool types like backed bladelets, on blade end/scrapers or burins. Certain other types that characterized the Chatelperronian are absent, like big stone weapon tips, and new bone tools, like sagaies appear and generalize during the Aurignacian. Also, during the Aurignacian, we witness a real development of symbolic behavior with the generalization of ornaments and art. All these changes suggest that we are facing a completely new cultural complex with new technological necessities.

Our hypothesis is that these new situations demand new tools to be accomplished, but this must be demonstrated through use-wear analyses. In the last 15 years we have analyzed several collections from western Europe, most of them in Dordogne (Barbas III, Les Garris, Vieux Coutets, etc.), SW France (Ituritz, Brassempouy) and northern Iberian Peninsula (Aitzbitarte, Labeko Koba). These analyses suggest that most of the characteristics of the Aurignacian, in terms of use wear, develop already in the Protoaurignacian: multicomposite hunting weapons; link between end-scrapers/hide and burins/bone-antler). Also we observe particular situations like the existence of tools dedicated to the production of ornaments; tools submitted to particular use-rules like the big blades from Barbas III; or the dual nature (tools/cores) of carinated end-scrapers. All these features linked with others like the high standardization of toolkits (Bon 2002), the existence of expert productions (Ortega et al. 2006), or the long distance transport of certain tool types, like the Bergeracois (Fernandes et al. 2012), suggest that the lithic production and use played an important role in the complex societies of the Aurignacian.

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Mots-Clés: Aurignacian, use wear, France, Spain