At the moment a geographical source area for the Aurignacian is not recognizable. To the contrary, assemblages yielding fundamental Aurignacian elements, such as specific bladelet cores (e.g. carinated & nosed endscrapers) and its end-products (e.g. unilaterally, bilaterally & alternately retouched bladelets & microblades), occur prior to the Heinrich 4 event within a vast region between the river Don in the East, the Atlantic shore in the West and the Mediterranean in the South.

In the present study the beginning of the Aurignacian is examined from a multiregional point of view. For that approach empiric data from Aurignacian assemblages of the Western and the Eastern margin of Europe were techno-typologically analyzed and compared with secondary information including assemblage composition, chronology and environmental data from Western, Central and Southern European Aurignacian sites.

Of special importance is the Proto-Aurignacian (stage 0) and Early Aurignacian (stage 1) dichotomy, suggesting a temporal succession reflecting the initial migration of AMH groups into and through Europe (Banks et al. 2013, Teyssandier et al. 2010). On the basis of empiric studies of lithic assemblages from Northern Spain (Labeko Koba & Ekain), the Middle Don region (Kostenki 14) and Crimea (Siuren 1) the integrity of the Aurignacian stages 0 and 1 is critically analyzed. On the one hand the study of the Labeko Koba sequence reveals a high share of common technological knowledge within the analysed assemblages. On the other hand investigations of Aurignacian assemblages of Eastern Europe show a mixture of Aurignacian elements belonging to different stages of the established Western European Aurignacian sequence. Inter-assemblage variability seems to reflect predominantly regional specific adaptation mechanisms. A high share of Aurignacian tool/core types within the lowest initial Upper Palaeolithic complex IVb1-2 of Kostenki 14 emphasizes an early multi-regional spread of specific adaptive elements. Moreover, a technological shift in the bladelet production of the Siuren 1 Aurignacian sequence in connection with a technological and typological continuity regarding tool composition and blade production militates in favour of a regional in situ development.

In the framework of the current study the Aurignacian is understood as a specific set of adaptive elements (Model of adaptive segments) which plays a fundamental role in the onset of the European Upper Palaeolithic. In this context the present day favoured interpretation of the Aurignacian as physical output of an unilineal spread of AMH through Europe is challenged. In contrast to that, a model of multilinear information transfer, which allows for movements of ideas or human groups back and forth, is postulated. Thus, both regional similarities and differences can be explained.

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**ORAL**

4. NEANDERTHALS AND MODERN HUMANS AROUND 40 KYR CALBP AT COVA GRAN (SOUTHEASTERN PREPYRENEES, IBERIA)

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Appearance of the Upper Paleolithic across Western Eurasia is the subject of intense debate. Iberian Peninsula plays a fundamental role in these discussions, since it is considered one of the last refuges of Neanderthals during the spread of anatomically modern humans across Europe.

Cova Gran de Santa Linya contains Late Middle Paleolithic (LMP) and Early Upper Paleolithic (EUP) sequence which provides contextual, techno-typological and radiometric elements that contribute to the debate on the MP/UP transition.

We analyze the geometry, stratigraphy and resolution of the archaeological levels from Cova Gran. These contextual indicators lead us to discuss the role of syn/post depositional processes and their impact on the homogeneity of the archaeological levels.

Technology of the Middle and Upper Paleolithic levels is compared, with special emphasis on the lithic assemblage of the most recent LMP unit (S1B) and the first EUP level (497D). Finally, series of 14C AMS dates of the LMP and EUP archaeological units is presented and discussed within the Iberian regional context.

Cova Gran contributes to the debate on the MP/UP transition. Given the paucity of well contextualized transi-
tional levels in Iberia, Cova Gran record fills a gap in the regional sequence.

This sedimentary geometry of S1B/497D levels is particularly relevant to the discussion of the MP/UP transition. Limited thickness of the levels suggests that the archaeological assemblages are homogeneous entities and reveals no evidence of mixing between layers, either by percolation of materials, cryoturbation, or deficient recording of artifacts.

Between Middle and Upper Paleolithic a systemic technological rupture can be described with no elements of cultural continuity. Technical attributes ascribe levels S1B to the Middle Paleolithic, since they present similar features in other MP levels of Cova Gran to other nearby Mousterian sites.

Otherwise, level 497D lithics main characteristic is to obtain elongated products, from large blades to bladelets and flakes. Retouched artifacts, pieces with denticulate edges and side scrapers on flake predominate. However, retouched blades, end scrapers, burins, and truncations produced on blades, plus backed points and backed bladelets are represented.

Finally, Cova Gran LMP-EUP radiocarbon series show ambiguities usually affecting chronometric data from radiocarbon older than 30 kyr BP. Although these incertitude, we sustain ^{14}C data from S1B/497D are relevant in the discussion MP/UP Transition debate.

Cova Gran indicates clear disjunction between Middle and Upper Paleolithic. The archaeological record clearly defines two traditions that represent different technical behaviors. Cova Gran opens up interesting perspectives to analyze the emergence of the Upper Paleolithic in the Iberian Peninsula and to discuss the possible coexistence of Neanderthals and modern humans.

The cave of Lezetxiki (Arrasate) has been excavated in two series of seasons. Between 1956 and 1968, José Miguel de Barandiarán, together with a number of collaborators, excavated a large area of the deposit (some 100m²), and since 1996 a new series of fieldwork has been carried out under the direction of Alvaro Arrizabalaga, in a much smaller area. Owing to the taphonomic circumstances of this deposit, the difficulties in obtaining a consistent geochronological framework for it, and the complex nature of the lithic assemblage, great confusion has arisen about the stratigraphic units that should be included in a discussion about the Middle to Upper Palaeolithic transition at Lezetxiki. Strictly speaking, the only level that can be attributed to this period is Level III, which is subdivided into IIIa and IIIb, separated by an erosional contact. Sublevel IIIa, with abundant industrial remains, is dated in the Aurignacian, whereas Sublevel IIIb, in which hardly any lithic industry or remains of fauna associated with human activity were found, corresponds to a very late phase of the Mousterian. As a result of the circumstances in the initial series of excavations, mixing of some materials between the two sublevels may have taken place, although their original differentiation was made by José Miguel de Barandiarán, and these possible cases should be regarded as few in number.

**5. DISSECTING THE MIDDLE TO UPPER PALAEOLITHIC TRANSITION AT LEZETXIKI (BASQUE COUNTRY, NORTHERN IBERIA)**

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6. ARRILLOR CAVE (ÁLAVA). CHRONOLOGICAL, PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL NOTES ON A LONG MOUSTERIAN SEQUENCE

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Arrillor is located in the southern foothills of the Gorbea Massif (Murua, Álava). It has yielded evidence of several human occupations, alternating with times when the cave was abandoned. All these occupations are assigned