
A new Mesolithic site in the Eastern Pyrenees: the Bauma dels Fadrins (Queralbs, Girona)

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Abstract

In 2019 a new site, Bauma dels Fadrins, dated ca. IX millennium cal BP was discovered in the Catalan Pyrenees. The last archaeological findings dated to this period in the Girona province were unearthed 20 years ago. The site is a rock-shelter located in the village of Queralbs, at 1236 m.a.s.l. This is the highest position never attested for human occupation to this period in the Eastern Pyrenees. So far, the fieldwork seasons revealed a sequence of occupation dated from the Late Pleistocene to the Mid Holocene. The rock-shelter is located in a strategic position on the RibesValley, one of the main routes to cross the Pyrenees. The occupation layer dated to 8900-8700 cal BP is characterized by a dense distribution of remains and anthropic structures, including several hearths providing an important number of artifacts, faunal and charred plant remains. Although taphonomic and geomorphological studies in course suggest repeated seasonal freezing-melting phenomena affecting these deposits, they appear to be well preserved. The lithic assemblage recovered so far suggests a predominant use of small local quartz fragments for toolmaking, with a testimonial presence of chert and other rocks. Flake production is mainly attested by bipolar flaking producing a large quantity of debris and angular fragments. Up to now, chert appears exclusively in form of isolated flakes, putatively suggesting that they were introduced in the site already detached. Faunal remains show evidence of hunting and targeting and the constitution of product reserves. Regarding plant remains, the available data suggests exploitation of local resources and seasonal-reliance on represented taxa as well as slightly colder conditions during the Early Holocene. This research is carried out under the frame of the ARRELS project granted by the Government of Catalonia (ES) (code CLT009/18/00048).

Keywords: Eastern Pyrenees, new archaeological site, ca. VIII millennium BP, last hunter, gatherers

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