
Environment and firewood use at Tourasse cave (South-West France) around the Late Glacial-Holocene transition

Aurélie Liard^{*†1}, Benjamin Marquebielle^{‡2}, Jean-Paul Huot^{§3}, and Auréade Henry^{¶1}

¹Culture et Environnements, Préhistoire, Antiquité, Moyen-Age (CEPAM) – Université Côte d’Azur, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique : UMR7264 – Université Nice Sophia Antipolis Campus Saint-Jean-d’Angély - SJA3 24, avenue des Diabes Bleus 06357 Nice Cedex 4, France

²Travaux et recherches archéologiques sur les cultures, les espaces et les sociétés (TRACES) – Université Toulouse 2, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique : UMR5608 – Maison de la Recherche, 5 allée Antonio Machado 31058 TOULOUSE Cedex 9, France

³Chercheur Indépendant – Chercheur indépendant – France

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present new data on vegetation dynamics and firewood collection practices during the Late Glacial and the Early Holocene in South-Western France. Tourasse cave is located in the Pyrenean foothills, where the Azilian cultural complex was initially defined. Charcoal analysis was performed on its Azilian (ca. 13000-11500 cal BP) and Sauveterrian (ca. 10500-9000 cal BP) levels, excavated during the 1980’s and 1990’s and currently being revisited with additional multidisciplinary analyses. Our results evidence a closing environment with the gradual passage from an open shrubland to the mixed oak forest, speaking in favor of the biochronological coherence of this sequence. However, marked differences in taxonomic richness and state of the wood from one level to another, unrelated to the prevailing environmental conditions, suggest variable behavior towards wood that could result from differing mobility strategies, hearth functionalities or taxonomic preferences.

Keywords: Charcoal analysis, firewood, Late Glacial, Mesolithic, South West France

*Speaker

†Corresponding author: aurelie.liard.97@gmail.com

‡Corresponding author: benjamin.marquebielle@yahoo.fr

§Corresponding author: jean-paul.huot@laposte.net

¶Corresponding author: aureade.henry@cepam.cnrs.fr