
Hunters in transition through the Pleistocene-Holocene boundary: a historical view from northern Iberia.

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Abstract

Cantabrian Spain, in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, is a key region for studying the late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic in Europe. The importance of the cultural manifestations that have been conserved and the intensity of research during over a century favour such studies. Cantabrian Spain has repeatedly been considered a valid unit of analysis for the study of the last hunter-gatherer societies. However, advancement in research makes us beware of raising ‘frontiers’ and advocates approaches that take into consideration the circulation of people, objects and ideas across different natural areas. This communication analyses the historical process that led, in about 8000 cal BC, to the start of a new era, clearly distinct from the late Palaeolithic. Environmental changes and their influence on the cultural transformations identified in the Pleistocene-Holocene transition will be assessed, paying special attention to the population patterns, subsistence, technology and symbolic expression.

Keywords: North Iberia, Late Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Transition

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