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Session 2



Human and carnivore activity during the Early Upper Palaeolithic in the Central Balkans: A case study of Orlovača cave, Serbia

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ABSTRACT: Recent research on the Early Upper Palaeolithic in the Balkan peninsula has been significant, as it has provided new information about cultural and demographic changes during this period and the role of the Danubian Corridor in the spread of modern humans towards central Europe. One of the recently discovered sites is Orlovača cave, located in village Panjevac in the Resava river valley in eastern Serbia. The site yielded archaeological remains from the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic. This study focuses on the vertebrate remains from the Aurignacian occupation levels. Faunal remains consist of a wide range of species, including four species of ungulates (*Bison priscus*, *Cervus elaphus*, *Capra ibex*, *Equus* sp.) and seven species of carnivores (*Ursus spelaeus*, *Crocuta spelaea*, *Panthera spelaea*, *Canis lupus*, *Mustela nivalis*, *Mustela erminea*, *Vulpes vulpes*) among which *Ursus spelaeus* is the most represented. Taphonomic analysis shows traces of human modifications and butchery, which points to human activity at this site, as well as, traces of carnivore activity evidenced by gnawed and digested bone fragments. This indicates that the faunal remains have been accumulated by both carnivore and human groups. The aim of this analysis is to understand to what degree humans and carnivores were respectively responsible for accumulating the bones in these occupation levels. The results indicate that Orlovača cave was mostly occupied by carnivores and that the cave was a temporary camp for human groups, as suggested by previous research.

