

Neanderthal Lithic Industries at La Quina

Arthur J. Jelinek

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Representing a comprehensive publication of the lithic industries and related archaeology of La Quina, this monograph is a pivotal addition to the study of Neanderthal behavior. Interesting sections on past excavations and research will be of benefit to researchers of theoretical and practical evolution of the field of archaeology. Through this review I intend to highlight both Jelinek's contribution to this area of study and the book's usefulness in summarizing and presenting these discussions. Overall, however, I wish to highlight the contribution this site and indeed this monograph makes to the field of Paleolithic research.

Since its discovery and early excavations in the 1880s, La Quina has produced one of the more important lithic assemblages and records with which to assess Neanderthal behavior. Chapters 1 and 2 detail the archaeological history of the site including the foundation of the modern project. These chapters include details on the extensive excavations by the Henri-Martins from 1905 through to 1975. Jelinek has included original photos, sketches, and plans from the excavations that show (among other things) the situation and excavation of the articulated Neanderthal remains in 1911. This publication is a great record of excavation techniques and practice in past archaeology and equally an amazing record of a pivotal finding. The inclusion of the detailed story of the excavation of the skeletal remains *overnight* on the 18th of September, 1911, is one of the reasons this monograph stands out. Chapter 2 details the formation of the project that led to the recent research and this publication. While this section is a bit dry, it provides an interesting account of the politics of the institutes and research backgrounds involved and a greater understanding of the nature of research through this time.

Jelinek's contribution to statistical analysis in relation to typology is highlighted throughout the core chapters of the monograph (Chapters 3–7). Chapter 3 is the necessary description of the methodology and sampling of the lithics. His data collection methodology is extremely comprehensive and would be useful for all lithic analysts when questioning what data to collect when studying an assemblage. While it could be said the mass of data Jelinek has produced for this assemblage is somewhat unnecessary and unrealistic for most data collection projects, it provides a useful guide to what can be done with a lithic collection such as La Quina. Chapter 4 details the archaeological and geological situation of the site as a whole. This highlights the importance of La Quina to the understanding of the Neanderthal

behavioral record and its relationship to climatic changes. While we as Paleolithic researchers often discuss hominid responses to climate and technological developments associated with both geological and archaeological records, we rarely have such a comprehensive dataset to begin to test these questions. La Quina provides such a chance.

The center of this publication is the analysis presented in Chapters 5–7. These three chapters of the lithic analysis provide the perfect opportunity for Jelinek to go in-depth into his whole assemblage analysis at La Quina. They separate typology (Chapter 5, "A matter of form"), *chaîne opératoire* (Chapter 6, "A matter of quantity and quality"), and assemblage patterns (Chapter 7, "A matter of time") of the large lithic collection excavated through the Cooperative American-French Excavation Project (1984–1994). The author also includes additional data and material from previous excavations, where beneficial, and comparisons to sites such as Combe-Capelle Bas. The combination of these chapters really highlights what can be achieved by analysing full assemblages. Patterns and observations here emphasize how useful La Quina is to understanding later Middle Paleolithic Neanderthal behavior, especially for Southern France.

As Chapters 8 and 9 highlight, this site will remain important for our understanding of this period over the coming decades. The publication is well-ordered and clear and provides an easily accessible source for comparison when discussing Neanderthal behavior across Europe. It also provides an interesting and useful monograph for discussing the development of Paleolithic archaeology and research over the last century and a half. It is especially useful for those in the Anglo speaking world where these discussions are often (if not always) printed in French and yet are pivotal to the overall development of our field and the understanding of the rich archaeological record of Southwestern France. Jelinek's publication provides one bridge between French and Anglo research in a region that has long had Paleolithic research focus worldwide. Overall we can highlight a number of fundamental research areas that La Quina (and therefore this monograph) can contribute to, including faunal exploitation, technological development, and locale organization. For my part, I see La Quina's assemblages and archaeology as contributing most to our understanding of Neanderthal behavior in relation to changing climate through the later part of the Middle Paleolithic. A central part of my own research, the conclusions drawn

by Jelinek and the La Quina team should be reviewed by any research associated with hominid response to climate.

The contribution Jelinek has made to typology, particularly to the Bordian system, is especially highlighted throughout this monograph. While it is true that these typological and theoretical systems, including those that preceded Bordes (Mortillet, Breuil, etc.), are entrenched within the French research system, they have contributed heavily to the understanding of Neanderthal behavior throughout Europe and Asia. For this reason, this monograph contributes not only to the understanding of Neanderthal technological practice at La Quina and its surrounding environs, but also to a number of other important questions. For example, how has the development of Mousterian typology over the past 150 years influenced and affected ideas on Neanderthal technology? How have the gaps be-

tween French and Anglo research affected our knowledge and understanding on a larger scale? It is for the current generation of Paleolithic research to start to bridge these gaps both in knowledge and practice in the same way this project managed more than two decades ago; moving away from Southwestern France and encompassing Europe and Asia as a whole.

To conclude, this monograph will add to any discussion for a range of research questions and archaeological comparisons. It seems strangely rare in the current climate to come across a fully published monograph for site excavations (let alone such a comprehensively published one). While monographs restrict access (normally to well-stocked libraries), they do *provide* access to fully published results and synthesis that research papers often do not.