

The emergence of the Acheulian: a view from the Levantine Corridor

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The numerous Acheulian sites and find spots located in the Levantine Corridor have yielded a detailed time trajectory and an exceptionally rich data archive providing information on different traditions within the technocomplex, as expressed in the material cultures of both open-air and cave sites. During the 1.35 Ma of Acheulian presence in the Levantine Corridor, climatic and environmental changes caused the introduction, speciation and extinction of various species, all influencing the hominin realm. Continuous interdisciplinary research focused on different paleobiological aspects has formulated a set of environmental reconstructions that are indispensable for insight into the adaptive and evolutionary processes that took place away from the African continent.

Research on the prehistoric record in recent years has provided information on many aspects of site formation processes and the role of hominin behavior. In the domain of the former much progress has been made, especially in the field of taphonomy. In that of the latter, a variety of studies have contributed new data and a wider scope to our understanding of the cognitive abilities of the Acheulian hominins. In particular, we may point to increasing in-depth information and insight into various components of planning, technological innovation (among them the important role of fire), communal and personal memory, division of labor, various issues relating to the Acheulian diet, as well as aspects of spatial organization.

Long stratigraphic sequences, such as those of the Acheulian sites of 'Ubeidiya, Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, Revadim, Tabun, and Qesem Caves, furnish data on changes through time and comprise the background for analyses of the type of occupations (e.g., task-specific, homebase, etc.). These sequences also shed light on the particulars of the occupations and their potential for research on the general behavioral modes of Acheulian hunter-gatherer groups, their size, and their many and varied patterns of mobility.

Processes of adaptation, in-depth knowledge and use of the landscape, procurement of different raw materials, and highly sophisticated modes of exploitation of different ecological niches, among others, enabled the colonization of new terrains, particularly those of Eurasia.