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TÜBINGEN

Faunal exploitation during the Mesolithic at Kohlhau-Abri

Giulia Toniato, Thomas Beutelspacher, Claus-Joachim Kind, Yvonne Tafelmaier

giulia.toniato@ifu.uni-tuebingen.de

Introduction

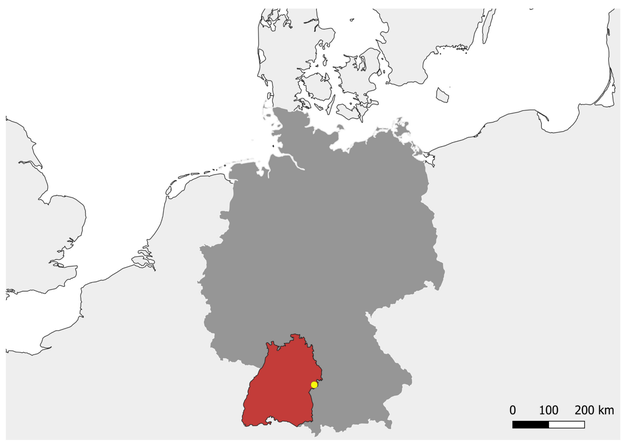
Kohlhau-Abri is a rock shelter site close to the Lone Valley in the Swabian Jura, Southwestern Germany excavated between 2015 and 2018[1].

It holds mainly Neolithic and Mesolithic deposits. Kind[2] ascribed most of the Mesolithic artefacts to the Beuronian C (Early Mesolithic) and suggested that the site was used as a hunting station.

A radiocarbon date of 7954-7820 cal BC (8808 ± 27 BP) confirms the Boreal age of part of the assemblage.

Research questions

- **Was the site used as a hunting station?**
- **How does Kohlhau-Abri compare with other Mesolithic sites in the region?**



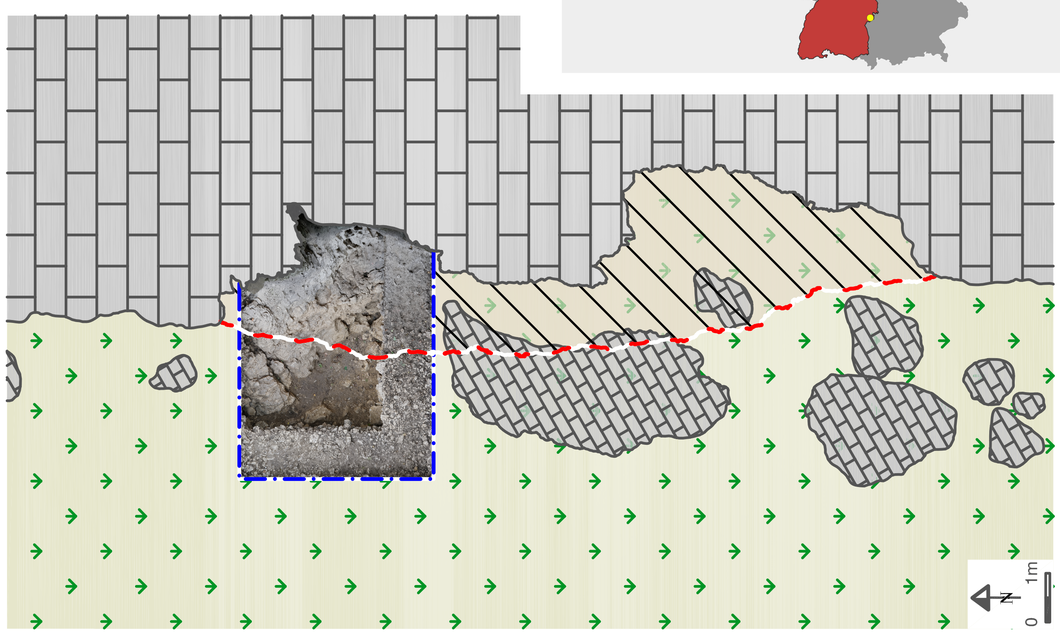


Fig.1 Plan view of the excavation showing the position of the excavation trench

Taphonomy

- Most anthropogenic modifications are on unidentifiable remains
- The few identifiable remains with cut and/or percussion marks belong mostly to cervids
- These include a moose ulna with cutmarks probably related to filleting

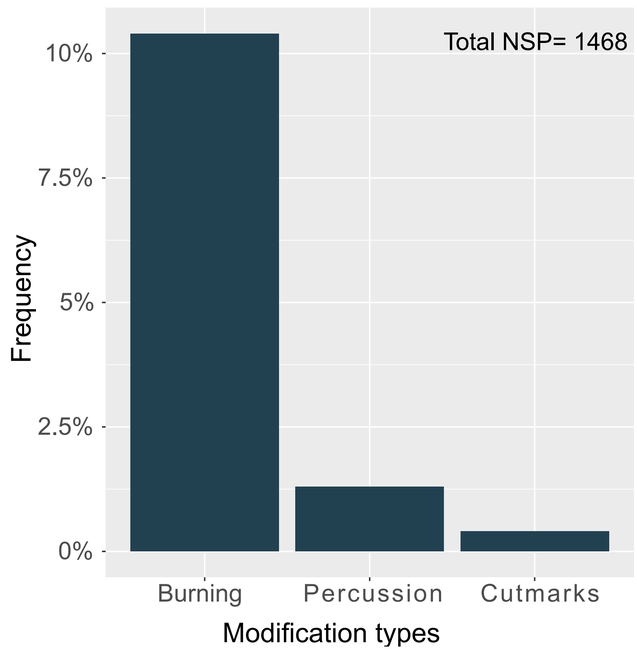


Fig.3 Frequency of anthropogenic modifications

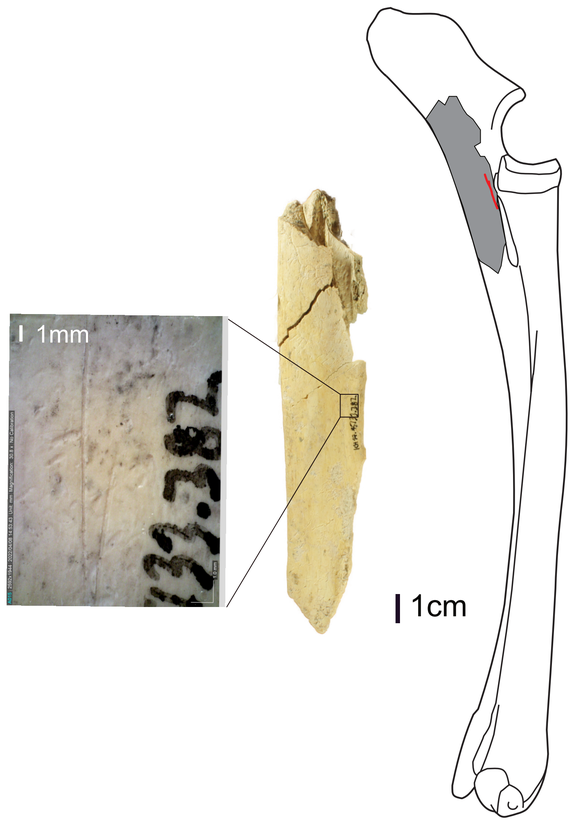
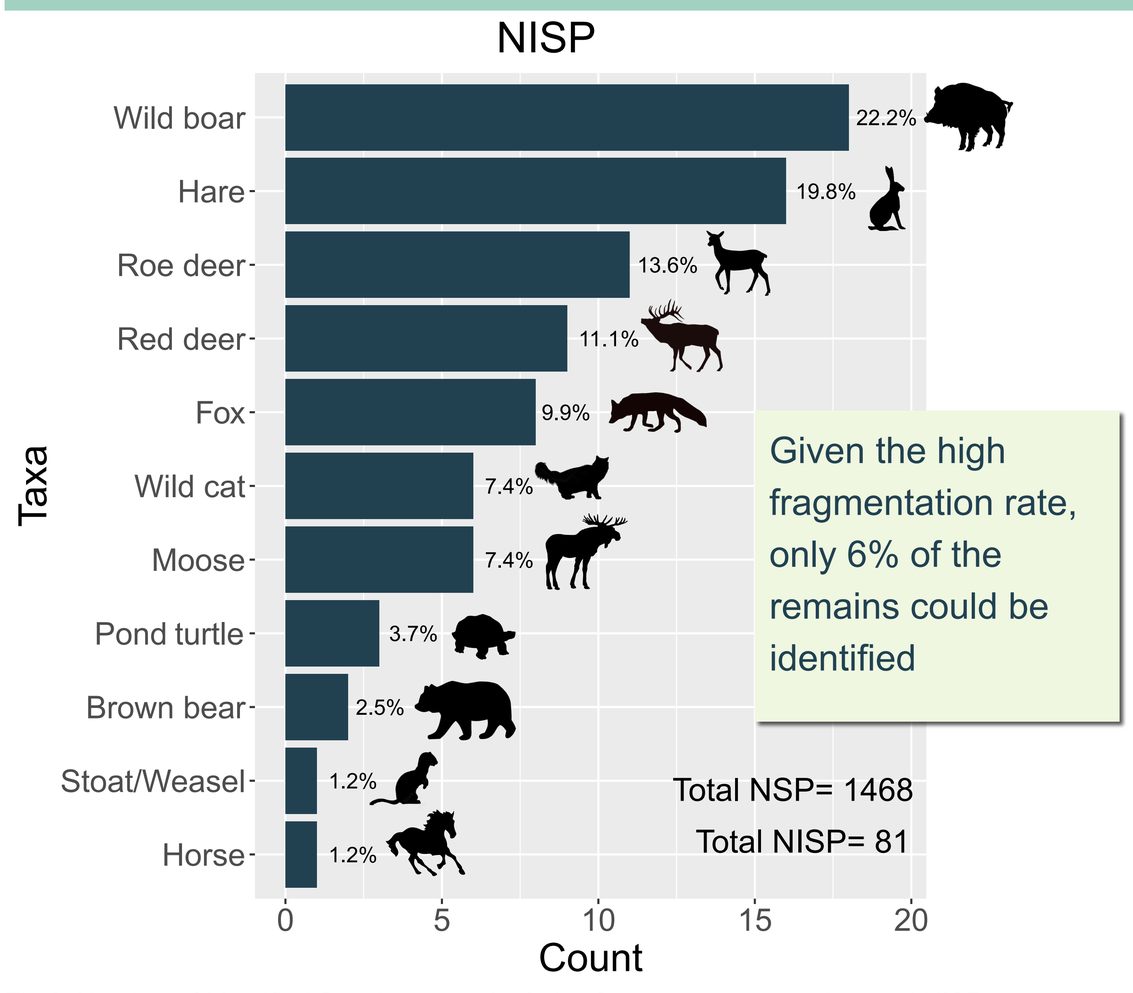


Fig.4 Moose proximal ulna with cutmarks

- Burnt bones show light to heavy damage
- Among percussion marks small bone debitage debris and splinters are recurrent

Fig.5 Bone debitage and flakes

Faunal composition



Given the high fragmentation rate, only 6% of the remains could be identified

Fig.2 Number of Identified Specimens and relative frequency compared to total NISP

Conclusions and Future Work

Anthropogenic marks on game species are indicative of hunting

→ ZooMS analyses may refine identification of undiagnostic fragments to gain a better picture of which species were exploited

Presence of species like moose and pond turtle is important for palaeocological reconstructions in the context of Pleistocene-Holocene faunal turnover

→ Comparisons with other sites where these species have been found will be useful for reconstructing animal/human migration routes

Diagenetic biogenic modifications largely obliterate the archaeological record

→ More detailed taphonomic analysis will help clarify the role played by natural agents on the archaeological deposits

The Early Mesolithic assemblage of Kohlhau adds new information to the punctuated evidence for the Mesolithic development in South Germany

→ Contextualization of the site in the regional framework

References

[1]Beutelspacher, T., Kind, C.-J., 2019. Rentierjäger im Tiefen Täle. Die abschließenden Ausgrabungen am Kohlhau-Abri: Niederstotzingen-Stetten ob Lontal, Kreis Heidenheim. Arch. Ausgr. Baden-Württemberg 2018, 64–68.

[2]Kind, C.-J., Beutelspacher, T. 2020. Das Kohlhau-Abri: eine neue Felsdachfundstelle in Nachbarschaft zum Lonetal. Fundberichte aus Baden-Württemberg 40, 103-124.