



Early art and music from the Swabian Jura and the biogeography of modern humans

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Paleolithic research in the Swabian Jura began with the seminal work of Oscar Fraas in the 1860s. Since then each generation of archaeologists made contributions to early prehistory, Quaternary ecology and human evolution. The Swabian Jura includes many sites just tens of kilometers north of the Würmian glacier in the upper reaches of the Danube drainage. This research tradition informs us on many questions including important issues related to the evolution and spread of modern *Homo sapiens*. More specifically, the sites of Vogelherd and Hohlenstein-Stadel in the Lone Valley and Geißenklösterle and Hohle Fels in Ach Valley have yielded the best record of early Paleolithic figurative art and musical instruments. This paper presents aspects of the long history of research in the region and discusses the many artworks and musical instruments recovered from the Aurignacian deposits at these sites. While in the late 20th century researchers viewed the artworks and musical instruments as highly exceptional finds, recent and ongoing excavations by the University of Tübingen demonstrate that every major site that has been excavated with modern methods has added to the record of art and music from the Swabian Aurignacian. Current research suggests that many Aurignacian technological and symbolic innovations originate from the Upper Danube region around 42,000 years ago. This paper presents new discoveries from the Swabian caves and examines why the region's Neanderthals went extinct and modern humans rapidly spread across Eurasia and beyond.

References

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