



# **The Cave of Fontéchevade: Recent Excavations and their Paleoanthropological Implications**

*Philip G. Chase , André Debénath, Harold L. Dibble, Shannon P. McPherron*

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Summary of the discoveries made during the course of excavations at the Paleolithic cave site of Fontéchevade, France, between 1994 and 1998. The excavation team address major problems raised by earlier excavations at the site from 1937 to 1954. These earlier excavations produced two sets of problematic data : first, the Lower Paleolithic stone tool industry, the Tayacian, that differs in fundamental ways from other contemporary industries, second, the human skull fragment that has been interpreted as modern in nature but that apparently dates from the last interglacial, long before there is any evidence for humans from any other site in Europe. By applying modern stratigraphic, lithic, faunal, geological, geophysical, and radiometric analyses, the interdisciplinary team demonstrates that the Tayacian 'industry' is a product of site formation processes and that the actual age of the Fontéchevade I fossil is compatible with other evidence for the arrival of modern humans in Europe.

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