

Vogelherd - human remain assemblage

General Information

Name: Vogelherd - human remain assemblage

Overall number of objects: 7

MNI: 5

First Description:

Repository:

Property Status:

Copyright Holder(s):

Curator(s):

Cultural Attribution:

Geochronological Attribution:

Age Determination

Dating Abstract: All collagen samples provided unexpectedly young, mid-Holocene ages.? (Conard, Grootes & Smith 2004: 199).

Dating Association: Direct absolute Dating

Dating Analysis:

Linked Files / Pages

Collection Item(s):

Bibliography: Gieseler 1937

Multimedia Files:

Linked Pages:

Index:

Additional Content

From the Aurignacian layers V and IV, several human bone finds were reported (Riek 1934; Gieseler 1937; Churchill & Smith 2000). Until recently, these "human specimens from the Vogelherd cave came to be viewed as the best evidence for an association between modern humans and early Aurignacian finds." (Conard, Grootes & Smith 2004: 198). But new series of radiocarbon dating showed, that the human skeletal remains were intrusive burials from the Neolithic. (see below)

History: "Riek and Gieseler reported well-preserved bones of modern humans, including a cranium and mandible (Stetten 1 (...)), a humerus (Stetten 3), two vertebrae (Stetten 4), a metacarpus (Stetten 5) from the base of the lower Aurignacian of AH V, and a cranium (Stetten 2) from the top of the upper Aurignacian of AH IV. With exception of the humerus, which was recovered near the central part of the cave, and the Stetten 2 cranium, recovered near the southern entrance, the other finds were recovered near the southwest entrance. Riek was present on July 22 1931 when the Stetten 1 cranium was recovered, and described the provenance of this and the other fossils in great detail. His description of the stratigraphic position of the human remains is unambiguous and provides no indication that the finds might have been intrusive." (Conard, Grootes & Smith 2004: 199). "Thus human skeletal remains from Vogelherd constituted key evidence that modern humans produced these Aurignacian assemblages and by association the Aurignacian in general. (...) Direct radiocarbon dating was needed to confirm or refute the age attributed to the human skeletal remains on the basis of archaeological associations." (Conard, Grootes & Smith 2004: 199)

New radiocarbon dates: "All collagen samples provided unexpectedly young, mid-Holocene ages." (Conard, Grootes & Smith 2004: 199). "The six AMS radiocarbon dates (...) show that all of the Vogelherd human skeletal remains are irrelevant to discussions on the origin of modern Europeans." (Conard, Grootes & Smith 2004: 200)

(gallery)

Pix

Lab. number	Specimen	Placed in stratigraphic context	Collagen yield (µg)	Material	Date (BP)
HA 20867	Stetten 1 mandible	AH V base	0.9	Collagen	4,810 ± 30
HA 20868	Stetten 1 mandible*	AH V base	4.7	Insoluble residue	4,810 ± 30
HA 19028	Stetten 1 mandible	AH V base	0.7	Insoluble residue	4,810 ± 30
HA 19029	Stetten 1 mandible	AH V base	3.8	Collagen	4,810 ± 30
HA 19032	Stetten 2 cranium†	AH IV top	1.4	Insoluble residue	4,880 ± 30
HA 19033	Stetten 2 cranium†	AH IV top	3.8	Collagen	4,880 ± 30
HA 19038	Stetten 4 vertebra	AH V base	1.4	Insoluble residue	3,980 ± 30
HA 19039	Stetten 4 vertebra	AH V base	0.8	Collagen	4,170 ± 30
HA 19040	Stetten 3 humerus	AH V base	4.8	Insoluble residue	4,210 ± 30
HA 19041	Stetten 3 humerus	AH V base	3.8	Organic groundmass	105.1 ± 0.4 (2σ) (see text for RFR)
HA 19042	Stetten 3 humerus	AH V base	4.7	Collagen	4,000 ± 30
HA 19043	Stetten 3 humerus	AH V base	2.2	Insoluble residue	4,170 ± 30

*Collagen yields were all utilized for relative radiocarbon dates. †Measurements reflect the actual radiocarbon age of the material analyzed. The radiocarbon ages for insoluble residues and organic groundmass are discussed in the text.

Table of new radiocarbon ages for the Vogelherd (Stetten) human remains