



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

**LISA ROGERS**

BA (Hons) (University of Victoria, 2013)

**“Human-Material Interaction in the Aurignacian of Europe, 35,000-27,000 BP: An Analysis of Marine Shell Ornament Distribution”**

Department of Anthropology

Monday, October 22, 2018

9:00 A.M.

Clearihue Building

Room B017

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. April Nowell, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Ann Stahl, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Jennifer French, Institute of Archaeology, University College London

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. David Scoones, Department of Economics, UVic

## **Abstract**

The Aurignacian period (35,000-27,000 BP) is the earliest phase of human occupation in the European Upper Paleolithic. As early inhabitants moved across the landscape they came into contact with others and left behind material traces of these interactions. Ornaments, or beads and pendants, made from marine shells are found in large numbers in Aurignacian assemblages. These objects are particularly useful for exploring the circulation of people and materials, as their presence far from the sea can be indicative of dynamic interactions between materials, individuals, and groups.

This research explores the processes of human-material interactions during the Aurignacian based on the shapes of marine shells used as ornaments. More specifically, a network analysis is used to determine whether there are discernible patterns in the geographic distribution of marine shell shapes used for the creation of ornaments. Through the use of a social network analysis software called Gephi, this research visually maps the interactions between sites and regions during the Aurignacian. By creating network visualizations that are analyzed mathematically, in addition to geographic maps of site locations, patterns in the interactions within which materials and people were entangled are explored. Engaging with theories of materiality and material affordances (Conneller 2011; Gosden 2005; Malafouris 2013; Robb 2015; Wells 2008, 2012), this research sheds light on the active role of ornaments in the complex interactions between people and materials during the Aurignacian. The results support the notion that particular shapes of shells were preferentially selected and that some regions, such as the Dordogne of France, were important centers in the broader circulation of materials.