Two major reasons for karstic formation in Périgord—difficult to distinguish between the two

1. typical karstic excavation that happens everywhere (possibly commenced during Saunoisien or Ludien)
2. excavation as a result of the last marine regression in Aquitaine which raised the land mass (difficult to date but moved from east to west)

Siderolithic and sables du Perigord date from Saunoisien

Sables preserve limestone surface and reduce karstic phenomena on the larger scale

many limestone surfaces in the Périgord have lapiazées surfaces (surface of crack networks formed from runoff or cryoclasty) covered by Sables du Périgord

Karstic cycles

1. Fenelon argues that reddish clay in caves comes from the insoluble bits in the dissolved limestone (pech Sarladais)
2. karstic development from a lowering of the water table that sculptures the rock (petite Beune caverns)

galleries with cupolas characteristic of formation from deep karstic activity

according to Fenelon a karstic network was first formed underneath the valley of the Beune; at the end of the Pliocene erosions cut the network and left small cavities on each side of the valley