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Multi-scalar Characterization of Raw Materials

Session 4: Understanding Non-Flint Raw materials: Characterization and Technological Organization

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The increasing approaches to non-flint lithic raw materials are widening our understanding of the economy articulated around lithic resources by prehistoric societies. The characterization of stone using a wide-spectra of geoarchaeological disciplines, the identification of technological features and traces of usage on stone artifacts and the spatial-temporal organization of lithic reduction sequences in the understanding of technological organization are promoting new narratives in lithic studies.

Despite such lithic studies having gained attention over the last decades, approaches combining different scientific disciplines are still rare. Traditionally, these raw materials (quartz, quartzite, obsidian, limestone, slate, obsidian, etc.) have only been considered as alternative resources in those territories void of chert outcrops. Moreover, they are also present in most lithic assemblages, playing different techno-economic roles (percussion tools, supplementary resources, shaping and functional specialization, etc.).

This session will focus on the role of non-flint raw materials within prehistoric economies, not only through geoarchaeological perspectives but also on other approaches such as technological or functional analyses that allow the understanding of the different roles played by these raw materials. Particularly, this session will promote discussions addressing the application of multiple and multi-scalar methods in the understanding of non-flint raw materials and how they are widening our perceptions of the technological organization of Pleistocene and Holocene groups.