

Tarragona, Spain
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Multi-scalar Characterization of Raw Materials

Session 6: Quarries as Extractive and Initial Transformation Contexts of Raw Materials in Prehistoric Times

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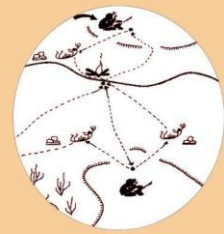
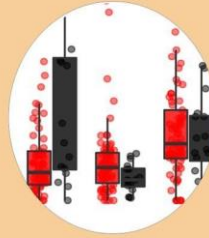
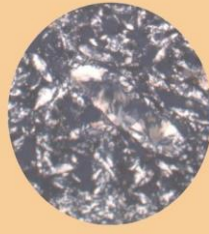
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Throughout prehistory, the provision of mineral raw materials - with the objective of tool and ornament production - took place in many ways - from a simple collection of pebbles on the surface of rocky outcrops or river terraces, to the excavation of deep mining galleries in search of the best mineral veins.

Among the different strategies for the raw material procurement, quarrying activities have gone, in a way, unnoticed in the scientific literature. The reasons for this circumstance may be various - on the one hand, the difficulty of their locational identification, and on the other hand, the scarce archaeological record generated by them. These may affect the scientific profitability of their excavation and study. Fortunately, this trend has changed in recent years, since fieldwork and remote detection directed towards the location of prehistoric exploitations sites have been carried out. In this way, numerous quarries linked to obtaining a great diversity of mineral resources have been uncovered and excavated - from quarries devoted to obtaining large stone blocks for the construction of megaliths, to the exploitation of mineral colorants, and to the exploitation of rocks for axe head manufacture.

In this session we will focus attention on quarrying activities aimed at obtaining knappable raw materials. These contexts are of great importance since they contain very valuable information on the mining tools and the strategies put into practice in the exploitation of the quarries, in the management of waste, as well as on the selection of those blocks most appropriate for specific types of exploitation. As well, an initial transformation of the raw materials is usually carried out at this location to optimize the volume of the raw material to be transported. All of this gives us valuable information on the objectives of the quarrying work.

Rock and Roll: 13th International Symposium on Knappable Materials



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In this way, those contributions focused on obtaining knappable raw materials through quarrying activities will be welcome; whether they are focused on the exploitation strategies developed in the mineral outcrops, in activities devoted to obtaining the raw material, or in their initial transformation, thus contextualizing all of these aspects within the framework of the landscape in which they are located and of the economic activities of the communities that carried them out.