



Tarragona, Spain  
4th-7th October, 2021

Multi-scalar Characterization of Raw Materials

## Session 7: Re-Thinking the Concept of Embedded Versus Direct Lithic Procurement

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Lithic raw material procurement strategies are often divided in a dichotomous manner into two main types: direct procurement, which is the forming of forays aimed specifically towards the acquisition of lithic materials; and embedded procurement, in which lithic material acquisition is integrated into other subsistence activities. The dominance of local lithic materials within archaeological assemblages was interpreted by Lewis Binford as reflecting embedded procurement, while selectivity in raw material acquisition, as well as a significant presence of distant materials, are occasionally associated with the direct procurement of lithic materials. Interestingly, while selectivity in raw material procurement and exploitation has been repeatedly demonstrated in the archaeological record concerning both near-by and distant materials, and while extensive quarrying activities have been repeatedly observed, these approaches are still being commonly used in research to this very day. But does the use of predominantly local materials necessarily reflect an embedded procurement, and a lack of preference? Can materials be procured from afar, and/or selectively, while performing other activities? Is the current concept too simplistic and constrictive? Should we re-think this entire approach? This session will tackle this issue, re-evaluating the relevance of this approach.

This session aims at bringing together scholars dealing with the subject from diverse perspectives to present the state-of-the-art regarding the scientific knowledge of lithic procurement and exploitation strategies applied by prehistoric societies, and their interpretation. We wish to explore the subject using both theoretical models and simulations and archaeological case studies. For this we would like to invite archaeologists from different backgrounds and research orientations to share their insights, data and observations concerning the acquisition and exploitation of lithic materials as seen in the archaeological record, and the procurement strategies implied by these. Ethnographic accounts of lithic procurement and exploitation strategies among recent human groups are very welcome as well.