

12th International Symposium on Knappable Materials

Budapest, 18th - 22th November 2019

Session proposal: Blade and bladelet evolution in Europe from the Middle Palaeolithic to the Transitional Period - A technological revolution or contingent changes?

Organisers: Giulia MARCIANI^{1,2} & Leonardo CARMIGNANI^{3,4}

¹Dipartimento di Beni Culturali, Università di Bologna. Via degli Ariani 1, 48121 Ravenna, Italia.

²U. R. Preistoria e Antropologia. Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche, della Terra e dell'Ambiente. Università degli Studi di Siena. Via Laterina, 8, 53100, Siena, Italia.

³Department of World Archeology, Human Origin Group, Leiden University, Einsteinweg 2, 2333 CC Leiden, The Netherlands

⁴ UMR 7041, Équipe AnTET, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, Nanterre Cedex, France.

Email addresses: giulia.marciani@unibo.it
 l.carmignani@arch.leidenuniv.nl

Traditionally the production of a sequence of blades and/or bladelets on the European continent was considered a distinctive trait of modern behaviour. However, a preference towards laminar/lamellar production has been documented dating from the Middle Palaeolithic (MP). This issue is a crucial topic in current scientific prehistoric debate, not least because of the role of elongated tools in the transition to the Upper Palaeolithic (UP) and the possible mutual influences between different groups which populated the European continent.

Over time, blades were produced utilizing a variety of debitage concepts which differ in their conceptual idea and in the final technical features of the desired products. Furthermore, bladelets production in MP, even less frequent than blades, constitute a burning issue that remain still poorly understood.

The purpose of this session is to invite reflections on the blade/bladelets phenomenon: the aim is to discuss the validity of the paradigm of “blade/bladelets = modernity”. We intend to disentangle this issue working towards a definition of the various debitage concepts, methods and techniques used to produce blades and bladelets. We want to evaluate their relations and evolution over time, considering specific contextual issues: possible raw material constraints, their functions, their production systems and their temporal and spatial distribution over time.

In particular, this session wants to encourage the discussion of the role of blades/bladelets production in the course of human evolution.

We envision some of the following broader themes to be addressed: technological descriptions of the production process, the functionality of blades/bladelets, their evolution over time, their relation with the flake productions.

We encourage presentations of specific cases, as well as contributions related to the state of the arts in the various European regions.