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Session Proposal: Lithic technology of recent periods: Modern and Mediaeval

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Abstract

This session explores the breadth of technologies and economic backgrounds involved in the post-prehistoric use of siliceous raw materials. Although the heydays of chipped stone tool technology lie in deep prehistory, specific elements of this economic branch survived significantly longer. Oftentimes under-regarded in archaeological research, the use of siliceous raw materials for various tasks was pervasive until very recently. Examples include fire making as the most persistent phenomenon, implements for threshing sledges, glass and porcelain production and *nota bene* the military significance in the form of gunflint production.

During the first half of the 16th century, the prototype of the flintlock mechanism was developed in Spain and eventually took over during the 17th century. The increasing need for gunflints used for the flintlock resulted in the establishment of extensive gunflint industries throughout Europe between the late 17th and early 19th centuries. The largest centers were located in England (Brandon) and France (Meusnes), and in former Galicia (now Poland and the Ukraine) supplying the Austrian army predominantly during the Napoleonic Wars. Gunflint industry consequently gave rise to a final boom in lithic technology.

Research has laid more attention on these recent phenomena of lithic technology during the last decades, resulting in a plethora of scientific publications (e.g. Ballin 2012; Emy 1978; Luedtke 1999; Weiner 2012). However, the field is still in its incipient stages. Therefore, we want to encourage researchers to present newest outcomes and the state of the art in post-prehistoric lithic studies, specifically the technological and socio-economic background of the various uses of siliceous materials.

Literature:

Ballin, T.B. (2012). 'State of the art' of British gunflint research, with special focus on the early gunflint workshop at Dun Eistean, Lewis. *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 46/1, 116–142.

Emy, J. (1978). *Histoire de la pierre à fusil*. Blois: Société de l'Exploitation de l'Imprimerie Alleaume. Blois, 380.

Luedtke, B. (1999). Gunflints in the Northeast. *Northeast Anthropology* 57, 27–56.

Weiner, J. (2012). Flintensteine. In: Floss, H. (ed), 2012 *Steinartefakte. Vom Altpaläolithikum bis in die Neuzeit*. Tübingen Publications in Prehistory, Kerns Verlag Tübingen, 961–972.