Rethinking Lithic Taxonomy and Technological Variability in the Middle Palaeolithic: Toward Eurasian Shared Analytical Frameworks

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Abstract:
The Middle Palaeolithic of Eurasia is currently documented by an exceptional quantity of lithic assemblages, yet the potential of these data for large-scale synthesis remains largely unrealised. A key obstacle lies in the heterogeneity of analytical traditions, terminology, and levels of technological detail across publications. Additionally, research has long been shaped by a predominantly Western Eurocentric perspective that has limited the integration of comparative data and interpretive frameworks from other regions of Eurasia.

This session aims to address these challenges by fostering an international dialogue on lithic taxonomy, techno-morphological identification, and the description of technological traits. We seek contributions that critically evaluate how classificatory systems, attribute recording, chaîne opératoire approaches, and regional research histories shape our understanding of Middle Palaeolithic variability. In this context, the need for explicit inter-regional comparison and for integrating perspectives from research groups working within different analytical and terminological traditions becomes central, as it allows us to move beyond fragmented or geographically bounded narratives. A key goal of the session is to explore how to balance broad technological patterns—essential for identifying evolutionary trajectories across wide temporal and spatial scales—with high-resolution local diversity that reflects group-specific ecological, social and cultural adaptations.

By opening a platform for comparative discussion and by highlighting the importance of accessibility, reproducibility and open-science principles, this session aims to advance shared analytical frameworks. Such collaborative efforts are indispensable for reconstructing technological entities in a period marked by population diversity, intense interactions, and significant climatic fluctuationste Quaternary history.