

**The Lower Palaeolithic of Central Europe and neighboring regions:
State of the art 30 years after the “Short Chronology”**

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Abstract:

Thirty years ago, the Lower Palaeolithic record of Europe was revised by Wil Roebroeks and colleagues. Referring to well-preserved sites in fine-grained deposits, the authors proposed a “Short Chronology” for the first hominin occupation of Europe, which was claimed to have begun no earlier than ca. 500 ka ago. With discoveries at different localities in Atapuerca and other newly discovered or (re-)dated southern European Lower Palaeolithic sites that contributed to understanding the first occupation of Europe, this model was quickly revised, highlighting the much earlier occupation of the regions south of the European high mountain chains.

Over the last few years, however, new research initiatives into the Lower Palaeolithic of Central Europe and neighboring regions are entering a new, intensive phase of development, involving not only new fieldwork and (also archival) site studies but also the precise assessment of site chronologies, based on radiometric methods as well as on new methods of relative dating, as well as biostratigraphic analyses, which are becoming increasingly important. Detailed palaeoclimatic and palaeoecological reconstructions are opening up new possibilities for modelling the habitat suitability for and size of past hominin populations across Europe.

The current session aims to compile, review, and synthesise the Lower Palaeolithic record of Central Europe and its neighbouring regions across technological, palaeoenvironmental, and chronological aspects. It tries to assess whether we still need to stick to a short chronology of hominin presence or whether new data can be interpreted as an earlier occupation of the region. The session will also outline future research agendas and address whether this record is chronologically restricted by preservation biases – mainly related to geological factors – or

by the more continental and, during winter periods, much colder climate that characterised Central and Eastern Europe.