

Session: #225

Theme: 5. *Theories and methods in archaeology: interactions between disciplines*

Session format: regular session

Title: **Looking beyond the microscope: Interdisciplinary approaches to use-wear and residue analysis**

Abstract:

Use-wear and residue analyses have come to play a fundamental role in archaeological enquiries into the cultural biographies of past artefacts. Deployed either separately or in conjunction with one another, they have been turned by three generations of researchers into core scientific methods for understanding the behavioural and social interactions of prehistoric communities. In the last few years, a concerted effort has been made to improve and standardise research procedures in the two disciplines through explicit replication strategies, rigorous analytical and experimental protocols, and blind testing. This has ensured a degree of disciplinary maturity that, when successfully contextualised, can be harnessed to reach some of the highest dangling fruits of the interpretative tree and develop new explanatory models for past human behaviour.

The session invites specialists in world prehistory to present their inter- and cross-disciplinary research into primate and human archaeology from the Lower Palaeolithic to the Metal Ages. It aims to explore socially contextualised problems, in which use-wear and residue analysis (on any materials and artefacts) are deployed as part of a wider range of integrated research approaches. The papers will discuss broad questions concerning the human past including the making of the mind in both primate and human evolution, technological changes and technological choices, interaction between and within communities of practice, skill, and acculturation (or lack thereof) following technology transfer. A parallel poster session will host contributions with narrower and more method-oriented foci.

Keywords: Archaeological Science, Interpretative archaeology, Use-wear analysis, Residue analysis, Interdisciplinary approaches and methods

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