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# Changing the perspective, adapting the scale: macro- and micro lithic technologies of SW Iberian Early Mesolithic.

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## Abstract

What determines the choice of a specific lithic solution among the set of skills and know-hows that are part of a group's cultural background? Early Mesolithic from SW Iberia shows a high diversity of lithic solutions considering the various aspects of the manufacturing process: debitage strategies, technical procedures, blanks and tool-types. At each site and at each location the group select the most adequate solution to respond efficiently to the needs. Synchronous sites show different lithic components; there are no recurrent patterns. Macrolithic and microlithic technologies were adopted, depending on the site, but the selection of one over the other seems to be independent of site functionality. What determined the choice? Environmental contingencies, functionality, ability, ethnicity? This peculiar facet that characterizes Early Mesolithic lithic production contrasts to the pattern observed for the Upper Palaeolithic, particularly its latest stages, where the same constellation of tools is systematically represented in the archaeological record. Flint does not abound in SW Iberia and has a very uneven distribution in landscape. But to a greater or lesser extent this lithology is systematically used to produce the small armatures that typifies the hunting equipment of the Magdalenian groups, being present even in sites that are located far distant from flint sources (> 150 km). Conversely, raw material procurement and selection do not constitute a dilemma to Early Mesolithic people: the locally available rocks and minerals are evenly used, independently of their quality for knapping activities.

Macrolithic technologies directed towards the massive production of cutting edges (the flakes) and heavy-duty tools produced from medium coarse-grained quartzite, and similar rocks, co-exist in SW Iberia Early Mesolithic record with microlithic technologies focused to the fabric of very small bladelets to be transformed in tiny armatures made from good-quality flint. Although contemporaneous, each lithic solution has its own geographic identity.

How to analyse, compare and interpret archaeologically assemblages that are so disparate? How to establish a general characterization that can work as a trait, a reference of that time and concurrently respects its plurality? No analytical template or criteria are sufficiently comprehensible to make us *understand the multitude of memories lithics carry* but

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some approaches can help us to overcome the impasse by letting us get to the histories that are behind the lithic artefacts.

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