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interpreting lithic raw material variability in Middle Palaeolithic contexts: a modeling approach with applications to the Bau de l'Aubesier (Southeastern France)

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Propositions

Stellingen

Behorend bij het proefschrift “Interpreting lithic raw material variability in Middle Palaeolithic contexts: A modeling approach with applications to the Bau de l’Aubiesier (Southeastern France)”

1. Lithic raw material exploitation data from the Bau indicate that Neanderthals had excellent spatial memory and were likely capable of using Euclidean mental representations of space for navigation.
2. In the Vaucluse, Neanderthals regularly exploited territories comparable or exceeding in size the territories typically used by ethnographically documented hunter-gatherer populations.
3. Spatial relationships between raw material sources can and must be taken into account in order to interpret archaeological lithic raw material variability.
4. The Bau lithic provenance data reflect a strictly utilitarian and pragmatic use of stone by Neanderthals.
5. Land use should be inferred from lithic raw material variability by modelling zones of compatibility with archaeological observations using computer simulations, rather than by looking at vectors that define minimum transfer distances.
6. Evidence for the selection and management of local lithic resources exploited directly from a site should be interpreted with caution in contexts where a large proportion of an assemblage is thought to have been imported. This is because in such contexts a substantial component of the seemingly local toolstone may have been imported via other sites as well.
7. Raw material provenance data should only be integrated with techno-typological studies once its intrinsic information potential has been exhausted.
8. Lithic refitting across sites is not a research avenue that is worth pursuing, notwithstanding its hypothetical potential.
9. The archaeological record cannot provide a clear picture of the composition of ancient mobile toolkits.
10. Abstract agent-based models should only be employed as preliminary exploratory tools. Archaeological conclusions should only be drawn based on minimally realistic models that employ real units.
11. Search engines and social network sites, as generally implemented, exacerbate the problem of confirmation bias, thus undermining a key contribution of the internet. A dissimilarity search engine is needed, where results for a given search would explicitly aim to reflect the knowledge, beliefs, and values of socially distant cliques.