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**29<sup>TH</sup> EAA ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Belfast, Northern Ireland**  
**2023**

**ABSTRACT BOOK**

Recently, this topic could be revisited thanks to the interest it holds for the X-Scape Synergy project (INCIPIIT-CSIC Santiago de Compostela and partners). The X-Scape project aims to understand the relationship between the mind and the material world, implementing state-of-the-art visual neuroscience and agent-based simulations. Including Barbanza as a case study in embodied visual perception permits for further research on these megalithic monuments and the implications they and their spatial arrangements can hold for the societies they belonged to.

In this presentation the first results of this year's field campaigns are detailed. Moreover, the potential of this archaeological line of investigation is discussed. This study brings new knowledge for the megalithic context of Barbanza and the northwestern Iberian Peninsula to the table, but also in a broader sense furthers attempts to understand societies and their perceptions throughout prehistory.

## 8 BUILDING COMMUNITY: TECHNOLOGY, AESTHETICS, AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN NEOLITHIC CAITHNESS

**Abstract author(s):** Zaleskaya, Liudmila (University of Edinburgh)

**Abstract format:** Oral

Chambered cairns are still a common fixture in the Scottish landscape. They remain a vital source of evidence for the Neolithic period, especially in the regions where settlement data is scarce/lacking.

Owing to the durability of their material components, they present an image of longevity – massive, unchanging. Was this, however, the builders' intent or mere unintended consequence? How can we investigate the impulses behind and the implications of the design of drystone chambered cairns (beyond the often-explored ideas of order, cosmology, and ritual)? How did the tradition form? What were the modes of its perpetuation? What was its role in the negotiation of community identity and social cohesion?

The discussion is focused on several Orkney-Cromarty tombs in Caithness to understand how their architectural design/style, technological, and visual properties fit into the visual culture, aesthetics, and tradition in the Neolithic. Here, cairn architecture is conceptualised as evidence for, and instrument of, the construction of Neolithic community identities. The technological, design, visual, and aesthetic aspects of it are considered for their role in such social processes of community formation, negotiation, and perpetuation.

The existence of the aesthetic and visual traditions and concerns, alongside the technological ones, in the Neolithic Caithness is highlighted and explored. Such concerns, norms, rules-of-thumb, and dogmas are considered for their role in technological knowledge transmission, and as the mechanisms which fostered social cohesion. The notion of exercised creativity and deliberate choices in the past is explored and contrasted with the role of tradition and conformity in the establishment and perpetuation of communities/communities of practice in Neolithic north-east Scotland. A theoretical and methodological framework incorporating an aesthetic approach and communities-of-practice approach in archaeology is explored and evaluated in terms of its applicability towards the study of the material remains of the past, particularly prehistoric architecture.

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## 169 NEOLITHIC AND CHALCOLITHIC LARGE BLADES. IDENTIFYING AND DEFINING EXCEPTIONAL LITHIC PRODUCTS

**Session theme:** 1. Artefacts, Buildings & Ecofacts

**Session organisers:** Guichet, Thomas (Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne; UMR 8215 Trajectoires) - Collin, Jean-Philippe (Université Libre de Bruxelles; CreA-Patrimoine; UMR 8215 Trajectoires)

**Session format:** Regular session

In Neolithic and Chalcolithic Europe, large flint and obsidian blades stood out from most of the contemporary lithic productions. In some cases these might be a few exceptional blades produced on the fringes of normal debitage by mobile knappers, whilst in others they might represent large-scale production on dedicated sites. Either way, the large blades are distinctive by their size and more broadly by the technical investment they display.

Their very uneven distribution across Europe – from Bulgaria to Portugal and from Italy to Denmark – is surprising and inevitably raises the question of the appearance of these exceptional blades: local, autonomous development and/or technical transmission from another part of Europe?

The organizers of this session wish to bring together observations from across Europe, with a particular focus on:

- the general archaeological context: culture, chronology, places of production (household, settlement, dedicated workshops...), distribution areas.
- the technical specificities of the debitage: acquisition and selection of rocks, shaping the core, removals preparation, debitage techniques. Any further information regarding the criteria used for debitage technique diagnosis would be highly appreciated.

The ultimate aim of the session is to draw up a panorama of the emergence and decline of large flint and obsidian blades across the continent.

## ABSTRACTS

### 1 WHEN LARGE START TO BE MEANINGFUL: LONG BLADES PRODUCTION OF THE BLICQUY/VILLENEUVE-SAINT-GERMAIN CULTURE

**Abstract author(s):** Bostyn, Françoise (University of Paris 1; UMR 8215) - Denis, Solène (CNSR-UMR 8068 Temps)

**Abstract format:** Oral

Our paper will question the appearance of large blade production in North-western Europe. At the turn of the Vth millennium, the Blicquy/Villeneuve-Saint-Germain culture emerges in Northern France and Middle Belgium on an LBK substratum. An important rupture with the LBK occurs at that time within the organisation of lithic productions. A diversification of productions (flake and faceted tool versus blade productions) reveals a segmentation of tasks with the coexistence of different groups of knappers. This segmentation goes even beyond domestic needs with the emergence, in the course of the chronology, of the production of large blades. This production is exclusive to some sites of the Paris Basin and is conducted by knappers of a very high level of know-how who can be considered specialists. Furthermore, these long blades are produced to circulate within a large territory, sometimes by itinerant knappers. So, the individualisation of large blades as a proper techno-economic category starts to be meaningful at the beginning of the Vth millennium in this part of Europe. It allows for highlighting the social segmentation of the activities among these post-LBK communities.

### 2 FROM THE FLINT MINES TO THE ENCLOSURES : LARGE BLADES FROM SPIENNES (BELGIUM) DURING EARLY IVTH MILLENIUM BCE

**Abstract author(s):** Guichet, Thomas (Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne; UMR 8215 Trajectoires)

**Abstract format:** Oral

Spiennes flint mines had been first described between 1842 and 1851 before proper excavations took place in 1867. One hundred years and many campaigns later, hundreds of well shafts have been discovered, displayed between two sectors, Petit-Spiennes and Camp-à-Cayaux.

Blades and cores had been already found during the 19th century researchs. Modern excavations in the 60s and 80s revealed blades production workshops within the two sectors, in addition of an intense production of flint axes.

The flint mines of Spiennes have been largely exploited during Neolithic, from the 42nd to the 23rd centuries. Blades production workshops have been dated to the early 4th millenary. Those dates are contemporary to others enclosures and domestic settlements where Spiennes blades have been found.

This contribution's purpose is to present the results of the latests studies made about blades productions within the two differents sectors of Spiennes flint mines.

Flint blocks, directly excavated from the well shafts, were shaped within the workshops near by and blades were produced at the very same place.

Blades have regular breadth and thinness. They are between 15 and 20 cm long but the longest are up to 25 cm. Their edges and ridges are linear. Furthermore, some blades butts and bulbs could refer to the pressure technic. Based upon those criterias, we assume the coexistence of two major technics : indirect striking and pressure.

Such productions needed a high level of skill and raise the question of technic specialization, especially when we compare them to others productions at Spiennes. Furthermore, clues of apprenticeship have been identified within the workshops.

Majority of the blades were displayed toward northern France and Belgium enclosures, belonging to the Michelsberg culture. The proportion of Spiennes artefacts among blades is high. Spiennes workshops were significant blades displays for communities north of Paris Basin.

### 3 THE NEOLITHIC SITE OF ORP/JANDRAIN-JANDRENOUILLE: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE LARGE BLADES OF MIDDLE BELGIUM

**Abstract author(s):** Collin, Jean-Philippe (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

**Abstract format:** Oral

Regarding flint mines and blades production, the area of Middle Belgium is well known thanks to sites such as Spiennes (Mons Basin, Belgium) and Rijckholt-Sint-Geertruid (Limburg, The Netherlands). Both sites emerged at the end