

Conceptual differences in rock procurement practices in the Stone Age of Southern Norway

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Quarries are not a homogeneous source category. It varies both regionally and chronologically. My comparative study of quarry sites in the Mesolithic and Neolithic of Southern Norway demonstrates that practices of rock procurement had meaning beyond their functional and pragmatic aspects.

Some variation is preconditioned by regional availability of rock due to the diverse geology of Southern Norway. Flint was found as nodules at the beaches, but quartzites, rhyolite, diabase and greenstone was quarried from outcrops. Quarry sites are found at the coast, inland and in the high mountain areas. However, availability does not necessarily determine their use. As I will show, the differences of lithic raw material practices are not found in their location in various landscapes, nor in the type of rock quarried. Instead, the significant differences are found in the time depth of practices, the intensity of use of a place and the distribution of specifically quarried rock.

Using the theoretical and methodological framework of the *chaîne opératoire* as a point of departure, the variations and developments are perceived as representing different concepts. Some practices are opportunistic and routine parts everyday lives, others are more deliberate and strategic. The developments in the Mesolithic are discussed as a process linked to mobility patterns, but also an increased focus on Society as such and the idea of the Collective. By the end of the Mesolithic, some of the sites had turned into significant places where ancestral presence was evident. At the start of the Neolithic, the Hunter-Gatherers of Western Norway met new people and impulses from a farming Southern Scandinavia. At that time, rock and control of rock gained a new meaning.