

Looking at things anew

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Abstrak

The paper by Anderson-Whymark, Garrow and Sturt raises very important questions about how we understand Later Mesolithic Britain, Ireland and continental Europe. National research traditions have, at times, obscured our understanding of contacts and connections between areas in the Mesolithic. A focus on the distribution of a small range of artefacts has created a situation where Mesolithic cultures begin to resemble nation-states (Marchand 2014: 11). Our terminology reflects and reifies these distinctions. If we wish to understand how social geographies within Britain and Ireland change over time, it is unhelpful, to say the least, that they should have such inconsistent period terminology: the British Early Mesolithic is absent from Ireland; the British Later Mesolithic is the Irish Early Mesolithic; and the Irish Later Mesolithic does not exist in Britain. The continental terminology is different again, and linguistic barriers remain a problem to regional-level synthesis. Anderson-Whymark et al.'s engagement with the loving detail of French lithic typology is hence to be welcomed.