

International workshop

Cultural Evolution during the Middle-to-Upper Paleolithic Transition in the Levant and Surrounding Regions

12th–14th March, 2026

Program



The University Museum, The University of Tokyo,
Tokyo, JAPAN

サピエンス
数理先史学
Mathematical Prehistory
of *Homo sapiens* 2024-2028

organized by the project: *Mathematical Prehistory
of Homo sapiens – Modeling the Cultural
Evolution during the Range Expansion of
Paleolithic Modern Humans*

Aim of the workshop

The narrative of 'modern human superiority' once sufficed to explain the global expansion of *Homo sapiens* and the concomitant demise of archaic humans. However, recent studies suggest more complicated biological and cultural history, involving interbreeding and temporally/spatially diverse cultural changes. Focusing on the latter, our project 'Mathematical Prehistory of *Homo sapiens*' aims to clarify processes of cultural changes during the dispersals of *Homo sapiens* in two geographic scales: a continental scale over Eurasia (particularly Asia) and a local scale focusing on West Asia.

This workshop is organized as part of the local-scale study in West Asia, focusing on the Middle-to-Upper Paleolithic transition, which encompasses three general chrono-cultural units: the Late Middle Paleolithic, the Initial Upper Paleolithic, and the Early Upper Paleolithic.

To gain insights into cultural evolutionary processes across these phases, we invited researchers for their presentations based on recent fieldwork and material analyses that explore spatio-temporal patterns of cultural variability and their ecological or social implications. Relevant topics include, but are not limited to, lithic techno-typology and function, chronology, mobility, resource procurement, subsistence strategies, social interactions, and paleoenvironmental reconstruction. Quantitative approaches are particularly encouraged.

Through the exchange of information and scholarly dialogue on the latest research developments, the workshop seeks to foster future research endeavors and international collaboration.

In the workshop, we exhibit MP and UP artifacts collected by Japanese expeditions in West Asia.

Organizers

Yoshihiro Nishiaki (The University Museum, The University of Tokyo)

Seiji Kadowaki (Nagoya University Museum, Nagoya University)

Funding

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"Mathematical Prehistory of *Homo sapiens* -Modeling the Cultural Evolution during the Range Expansion of Paleolithic Modern Humans"

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<https://mathematicalprehistory.jp/en/>

11th (Wed) March

Reception commemorating Prof. Nishiaki's completion of full professorship at The University of Tokyo

Time: 17:00–18:30

Venue: Fukutake Hall, Learning Studio (B2F) in The University of Tokyo Hongo Campus

12th (Thu) March Workshop Day 1

10:30 Yoshihiro Nishiaki — Introduction

11:00 Kohei Tamura — Current developments and challenges in quantitative approaches on linking area studies and macroscopic comparative research

Southern Levant

11:30 Maya Oron —Lithic variability, mobility, and territorial behavior in the Late Middle Paleolithic: A view from the northeastern Negev

12:00 **Lunch**

14:00 Seiji Kadowaki — Re-investigations of late Middle Paleolithic remains at Tor Faraj and Tor Sabiha, southern Jordan

14:30 Masato Hirose — Paleolithic investigation in the western Hisma Basin: renewed excavations at Tor Sabiha and its Middle Paleolithic faunal records

15:00 Zeljko Rezek — Multicentric emergence of the Initial Upper Paleolithic in the Levant

15:30 **Break**

16:00 Exhibition of MP and UP artifacts collected by Japanese expeditions in the Levant

Free time

18:00 Dinner

13th (Fri) March Workshop Day 2

Southern Levant

10:30 Maayan Shemer —Carinated typology in the Levantine Upper Paleolithic and its potential value for lithic comparative analyses

Northern Levant, Caucasus, Iran

11:00 Ismail Baykara — Behavioral characteristics during the late Middle Palaeolithic in the northern Levant from Üçağızlı II Cave, Hatay, Türkiye

11:30 Derya Silibolatlaz — Spatial analysis of the Late Middle Paleolithic layers of Ucağızlı II Cave (Hatay): Site-use patterns in light of zooarchaeological data

12:00 **Lunch**

13:30 Elham Ghasidian — Cultural and population dynamics during the Late Middle to Early Upper Palaeolithic: Regional variability across the Iranian Plateau

14:00 Saman H. Guran — Middle to Upper Palaeolithic transition in the Bawa Yawan Rockshelter, Kermanshah region, West Central Zagros Mountains

14:30 **Break**

European perspective

15:00 Armando Falucci — Rethinking the Levantine-European connection: A quantitative perspective on the onset of the Mediterranean Upper Paleolithic

15:30 Gilbert Tostevin — Propriospic and the Knapper: the mathematics of individuals in MP-UP lithic assemblages

16:00 Discussion

14th (Sat) March Public lecture

Zeljko Rezek — Biological and behavioral evolution of early *Homo sapiens* in northern Africa: New excavations and data from Morocco and Egypt

Time: 14:00–15:30

Venue: JP Tower Museum INTERMEDIATEQUE, Lecture room ACADEMIA

KITTE 2-3F, 2-7-2 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

<https://www.intermediatheque.jp/en>