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# Landscapes of habit: understanding cultural variation in MIS 11 Europe

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## Résumé

Britain has a rich record of human occupation during MIS 11, with a wealth of sites, artefact assemblages and other non-lithic technologies. This record is associated with abundant environmental evidence, which, in combination with improved understanding of the stratigraphic record and application of dating, provides a robust chronological framework in which to place these industries. Three phases of human occupation of Britain during MIS 11 can be identified: initial colonisation during MIS 11c, represented by a non-handaxe lithic industry; a second phase also during MIS11c but with handaxe technology; and a final phase during a later sub-stage of MIS 11, possibly associated with twisted ovates. Each phase of occupation is likely to represent a new incursion of hominins into Britain from mainland Europe. The European record can be characterised by considerable chronological and geographical variation in the archaeological record. It is argued that the complex mosaic of lithic assemblages reflects the creation of landscapes of habit within stable environments, where localised culture developed alongside strategies for living in particular habitats with the specific resources they provided. Persistence of place, however, depended on stability, sometimes provided by protective features of the landscape. The longer-term instability of the open-air sites of northern Europe caused by climatic and environmental change brought about large-scale shifts in population. For Britain we can begin to unpick this record and see how shifts in environment brought changes in population, represented by different material cultures, reflecting population movement from source to sink areas of MIS 11 Europe.

**Mots-Clés:** MIS 11, Acheulean, hominin dispersals, Northern Europe, Lower Palaeolithic

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