

### ***Theoretical and cultural anthropological issues***

#### ***- Exploring the allure of obsidian: symbolic, social, and practical values for obsidian***

Its physical appearance often dazzles the beholder (including archaeologists), but how far can these features be used to understand how and why obsidian was valued in the past? In what ways can we explain the extensive use of obsidian at particular times and places, but not in others? What underlies the choices of obsidian for use in practical, symbolic or ritual contexts? This session will explore the broad range of values assigned to obsidian in the past both as a raw material and as manufactured items. For example, studies might consider the variables that conditioned raw material choice (e.g., obsidian vs. other raw materials or among different obsidian sources), access to raw material through exchange, manufacturing strategies, social control, prestige, symbolic meanings of obsidian and/or specific artefact forms, etc.