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The Acheulean record of Konso-Gardula and Middle Awash, Ethiopia



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Early and Middle Pleistocene archaeological sites of eastern Africa have provided researchers with a wealth of data that is unparalleled anywhere else. The earliest Oldowan and Acheulean industries have been respectively dated to ca. 2.6 Ma and 1.75 Ma. The shift from the simple core-flake technology called Oldowan to the knapping of large flake blanks off from large boulders is evidenced at least at two sites, Konso-Gardula in south Ethiopia and Kokiselei, west of Lake Turkana, Kenya. At Konso-Gardula, it was demonstrated that the knapping of large flakes from mega-cores and shaping of large cutting tools (LCT) had started by 1.75 Ma and showed important technological changes thereafter. This is seen at various localities until 0.8 Ma, spanning the crudest forms of LCT shaping to the finely made 3D symmetric bifaces. In the Middle Awash research area, in the main Ethiopian Rift, we also have Oldowan and Acheulean occurrences and hominid fossils associated with them. The Middle Pleistocene sites of the Middle Awash are important to our understanding of the Acheulean and its subsequent replacement by Middle Stone Age technologies.



Yonas Beyene is a prehistorian involved in many international paleoanthropological programs in Ethiopia (Afar, Omo, Ethiopian Rift). He is notably co-PI of the research performed in the Middle Awash, at Chorora, at Fejej, and at Konso-Gardula. He is internationally renowned for his work on the Acheulean culture and on the oldest well-documented lithic culture, the Oldowan. He contributed to several major paleoanthropological discoveries, from *Ardipithecus* to some of the earliest representatives of *Homo sapiens*. His career at the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture considerably benefited to the development of paleoanthropological research in Ethiopia.