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MESO2025 - 11th International Conference on the Mesolithic in Europe

Session 12

# Current Research and Mesolithic Narratives

*Coordinated by Colas Guéret and Adriana Soto Sebastián*

Beyond their definition of hunter-gatherer-fisher societies, Mesolithic communities constituted diverse and complex realities. The research carried out on those populations reveals: the development and adoption of different strategies of exploitation and relationship with the environment, along with different ways of mobility and territoriality; the exploration of new spaces; the dynamism of their contact and exchange networks; the construction of different identities; their technological, artistic and symbolic practices; and their social and spatial organisation, among many other issues. These heterogeneous and dynamic realities can only be tackled successfully from a plurality of perspectives, approaches, methodologies, and interpretations.

This session aims to include all those proposals that do not fit in the topics addressed in the other sessions, but which reflect the diversity of narratives and perspectives that encompass Mesolithic research. In this sense, the following issues will be welcomed: presentations of projects or new lines of research, with innovative thematic, methodological, and/or theoretical approaches; results of fieldwork and discoveries; analysis of materials and archaeological contexts; collaborative projects (collaborative databases, networks, etc.); and dissemination and social valorisation activities about Mesolithic research, as well as its impact on current societies. In short, all those efforts that constitute and build from plural and diverse perspectives our knowledge about Mesolithic societies.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.09:45-10:00*

# The NAUTICC (Norms and Uses of Techniques in Prehistoric Coastal Communities) database: a tool for prehistoric maritime techniques

Pirrone Giada * (1)

1 - Centre de Recherche en Archéologie, Archéosciences, Histoire (Université de Rennes 1 Bâtiment 24-25 Campus de Beaulieu 263, Avenue du général Leclerc Campus de Beaulieu CS 74205 - 35042 Rennes Cedex- France France)

* corresponding author: giada.pirrone@univ-rennes.fr

Coastal hunter-gatherer communities in Europe interacted with their environment through diverse technical actions, but studies of their maritime life have long been marginalised. As part of the MSCA doctoral network ArCHe, through my doctoral research this gap will be addressed by producing a comprehensive synthesis of the technical systems employed by these prehistoric coastal societies. The research spans multiple disciplines, including archaeology, archaeozoology, ethnography, and paleoecology and different geographical coastal areas: Cantabria (Spain), Brittany (France), South-East Norway and Latvia. A key objective is to establish a unified methodology that integrates and makes heterogeneous datasets comparable. A central tool in this project is the NAUTICC relational database (NORMS AND USES OF TECHNIQUES IN PREHISTORIC COASTAL COMMUNITIES), designed to systematically record and organize data from diverse sources. This database facilitates the extrapolation of new archaeological insights into the social structures of coastal communities on local scales, as well as patterns of cultural continuity and change across regions. The project analyzes data related to key aspects of Mesolithic life, including hunting, fishing, cooking, dwelling, tool making and symbolic practices. Data are gathered from four primary sources: grey literature (to improve accessibility), open databases, open data repositories, and published literature. By synthesizing a vast array of data across time and space, this research provides new perspectives on the norms and practices of prehistoric coastal communities.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.10:00-10:15*

# The Skoklefall site revisited - resource exploitation and subsistence in coastal Late Mesolithic, southeast Norway

Damlien Hege * (1), Rosenvinge Carine (2), Solheim Steinar (2)

1 - Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo (P.O. Box 6762, St. Olavs plass, 0130 Oslo Norway), 2 - Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo (P.O. Box 6762, St. Olavs plass, 0130 Oslo Norway)

* corresponding author: hege.damlien@khm.uio.no

Marine resources are considered of central importance to the economy and settlement of the Mesolithic population of southeast Norway. There is, however, limited data that can provide direct information about the Mesolithic diet and economy in the region. Although some Late Mesolithic sites have produced bone material, this is often burnt and very fragmented. Due to taphonomic processes, the fauna material is not considered representative in terms of the composition and utilization of species. Consequently, the importance of marine resources to Late Mesolithic subsistence in this region is still not clear, as well as its implications for our understanding of these societies. This is especially relevant considering the dramatic reshaping of the landscape due to sea-level change in the area during the Mesolithic. The Late Mesolithic Skoklefall site located in the inner Oslo Fjord, southeast Norway, contribute to this discussion providing a well-preserved fauna material both from a shell midden, the, so far, only of its kind in southeast Norway, as well as the associated settlement area. In this talk, we present the result from the archeological excavations, focusing on the fauna material. The results provide new understanding of Late Mesolithic resource exploitation and subsistence in the Oslo Fjord region.

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*Friday 19th September, h.10:15-10:30*

# NOT JUST A DISASTER STORY – INVESTIGATIONS OF THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE STOREGGA TSUNAMI 8200 YEARS AGO

Nyland Astrid Johanne * (1)

1 - Museum of Archaeology (University of Stavanger Norway)

* corresponding author: astrid.j.nyland@uis.no

During the coldest years of the 8.2ka climatic cold anomaly, the coast of west Norway, Scotland and northeastern England, and beyond, was hit by a massive tsunami, the Storegga tsunami. The to date, largest known submarine landslide triggered a tsunami larger than the 'Boxing-Day' tsunami in Asia 2004. This large-scale geo-event has been thought to bring about disaster and demographic collapse to the Mesolithic coastal communities in the region. One of the aims of the LAST-project (2021-2024), however, was to challenge this somewhat one-sided narrative. In this paper, I will present results from this project together with some of the obstacle faced when investigating social impacts of a tsunami. For one, there are few well dated sites with evidence of direct impact. The question is though, do we need that? In this paper then, I'll discuss the archaeological visibility of crisis, or perhaps more: our expectations of such. I will show how 'the day the sea turned monster' turned out to be more than a disaster story.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.10:30-10:45*

# The impact of Storegga in Northern Scotland: excavations at Tarradale 2D

Elliott Ben * (1), Grant Eric (2)

1 - UHI Archaeology Institute (UHI Orkney, East Road, Kirkwall, KW15 1LX United Kingdom), 2 - Independent Researcher (N/a United Kingdom)

* corresponding author: benjamin.elliott@uhi.ac.uk

The Storegga submarine landslide and tsunami of c.8150 cal BCE left an indelible mark on coastal sedimentation sequences around the North Sea basin, testament to its incredible intensity and short term environmental impact. However, tracking human responses in coastal areas is complicated by the destructive nature of the event itself, with a lack of evidence for coastal activity in this region in the late 7th millenium BCE often ascribed to the erosion of deposits during Storegga. Excavations at the shell midden site of Tarradale 2D, in the Beauly Firth, Northern Scotland, provided a unique opportunity to address this lacunae in an area of Britain that has seen little focussed research on Mesolithic coastal settlement to date. Test pitting of the midden undertaken by Eric Grant and the North of Scotland Archaeology Society in 2011 recovered shell-rich deposits containing charcoal and animal bone, and produced two radiocardon measurements bracketing 8150 cal BCE. In recognition of the potential of these deposits to inform on human responses to Storegga, the site was revisited in 2023 by the Life After the Storegga Tsunami project. This paper will present the results of these excavations and subsequent post excavation analysis, including new radiocarbon dates, zooarchaeological analysis, soil micromorphology, ZooMS and stable isotope analysis. These results provide rare insights into changes in Mesolithic coastal exploitation strategies in response to changing evironmental conditions around the time of the Storegga Tsunami.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.11:15-11:30*

# Excavations at No Name Hill: an early Mesolithic wetland site in the Star Carr landscape

Taylor Barry * (1), Gray-Jones Amy (1), Overton Nick (2), Piper Stephanie (3)

1 - University of Chester (Parkgate Road, Chester CH1 4BJ United Kingdom), 2 - University of Manchester [Manchester] (Oxford Rd, Manchester M13 9PL United Kingdom), 3 - The British Museum (Great Russell St, London WC1B 3DG, UK United Kingdom)

* corresponding author: b.taylor@chester.ac.uk

In this paper we report on new archaeological and palaeoenvironmental investigations at a Mesolithic wetland site in the Vale of Pickering, in the North of England. While the area is best known for the excavations at the early Mesolithic site at Star Carr, a further 25 areas of Mesolithic activity have been identified within the surrounding landscape. New excavations at one of these sites, an island within a palaeo-lake, have recorded an extensive area of early Mesolithic activity that includes faunal remains, worked flint, antler working waste, osseous material culture, and wood working debris. Palaeoenvironmental analysis shows that this activity was focused on the island's shore, with much of the material deposited into an adjacent area of shallow water. The results of this work have been combined with earlier investigations at the site, providing important new information on the ways human societies occupied this landscape during the early part of the Mesolithic.

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# WRITING MESOLITHIC HUNTER-FISHER-GATHERERS: A VIEW FROM ARCHAEOZOOLOGY AND MULTISPECIES ARCHAEOLOGY

Živaljević Ivana * (1)

1 - University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy (Novi Sad 402920, Serbia Serbia)

* corresponding author: ivana.zivaljevic@ff.uns.ac.rs

Following recent debates on the implications of the term hunter-gatherer, this paper will explore whether there are particular ways of writing Mesolithic hunter-fisher-gatherer relations with animals, particularly from an archaeozoological and a multispecies perspective. Although the tradition of classifying societies on the basis of the modes of subsistence and conventional terminology largely obscure the multifaceted nature of human experience, there still remains something deeply engrained in Mesolithic and hunter-gatherer research that makes it intimately bound to animals and their remains from archaeological sites. Nevertheless, hunting and fishing practices, as well as the variety of interspecies relations they afforded, were by no means exclusive to societies we traditionally lump under the term hunter-gatherer. What kinds of narratives do we weave then based on the faunal record, and is there such a thing as hunter-fisher-gatherer (as opposed to any other) archaeozoology? To address this question, I use two distinct faunal assemblages (from a Mesolithic-Neolithic and a Medieval context) as case studies, and reflect on the different interpretations I offered, the language I used, and the themes I engaged with while studying them. While there are obvious reasons why certain theoretical approaches figure more prominently in studies of particular time periods, it is worth examining the underlying assumptions wrapped around such practices. This paper is an attempt to move away from the polarizing view of framing hunter-gatherer research in ontological terms, and the study of everyone else in terms of ideology, and to engage instead with the diversity of lived experience

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.12:15-12:30*

# MESOLITHIC HEARTH FEATURES OF SW IBERIA. NEW FUEL FOR AN OLD DISCUSSION

Cruz José Bruno * (1), Abreu Carla (2), Costa Ana Maria (3) (4) (5) (6), Martinho Micael (2), Monteiro Patricia (3) (7), Neves César (4) (8), Simões Carlos (7), Teixeira André (9), Tomás Carla (10), Araújo Ana Cristina (3) (4) (6)

1 - CIEBA, Centro de Investigação e de Estudos em Belas-Artes, Faculdades de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa, (Largo da Academia Nacional de Belas-Artes, 1249-058, Lisboa, Portugal Portugal), 2 - GEAL – Museu da Lourinhã (Rua João Luis de Moura, 2530-158 Lourinhã Portugal), 3 - Laboratório de Arqueociências (LARC)-Património Cultural, IP. (Travessa do Mirante à Ajuda, nº 10A Portugal), 4 - UNIARQ, Centre for Archaeology, University of Lisbon (Alameda da Universidade, 1600-214 Lisbon Portugal), 5 - IDL - Instituto Dom Luiz (Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon Portugal), 6 - InBIO Laboratório Associado, BIOPOLIS - Programme in Genomics, Biodiversity and Land Planning, CIBIO - Centro de Investigação em Biodiversidade e Recursos Genéticos (Vairão, Portugal. Portugal), 7 - The Interdisplinary Center for Archaeology and Evolution of Human Behaviour, Universidade do Algarve (Campus de Gambelas, 8005-139 Faro, Portugal Portugal), 8 - AAP/Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses (Largo do Carmo, 1200-092 Lisboa, Portugal Portugal), 9 - CHAM, Centro de Humanidades, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade NOVA de Lisboa. (Av. de Berna, 26 C, 1069-061 Lisboa Portugal), 10 - Grupo Aragosaurus-IUCA, Paleontología, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad de Zaragoza (Pedro Cerbuna 12, 50009 Zaragoza, España Spain).

* corresponding author: acaraujo@patrimoniocultural.gov.pt.pt

From c. 10.5 k cal BP onwards and before the advent of the first agro-pastoral economies in south-west Iberia, the archaeological record mirrors a human settlement scattered along the present-day coast and a subsistence system that systematically includes a significant marine component even in sites located quite far from the littoral. Sites are mostly shell middens, rather small and essentially related to the exploitation of local resources. However, two particular sites have been discovered and excavated in Central Portugal, revealing a different reality, hitherto unknown and still difficult to define. The Casal Leitão and Cova da Baleia sites are both located near the present-day coast but are not shell middens. Both are characterized by a considerable number of pit-like hearth features, strikingly similar in terms of architecture, size and contents and featuring burned clay walls. At Casal Leitao, in addition to the walls themselves, these structures yielded charcoal and burned local sandstone cobbles within a sandy, homogeneous sedimentary content. Radiocarbon dating indicates an Early Mesolithic chronology for these two sites, revealing a novel type of occupation, in terms of the well-known patterns recorded at neighbouring coeval sites. The ongoing multidisciplinary research on the recently excavated Casal Leitao is designed to address a number of issues pertaining to site formation processes, function and use, typology, lifetime, single or multiple use, etc. Our ultimate goal is to contribute to a better understanding of Early Mesolithic societies and their ways of life, know-how and adaptations in SW Iberia and beyond.

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*Friday 19th September, h.12:30-12:45*

# Uncovering Mesolithic Life: Archaeological Excavations and Interpretations at Cabeço da Amoreira, Muge (Central Portugal)

Gonçalves Célia * (1), Bicho Nuno (1), Umbelino Cláudia (2) (1), Godinho Ricardo Miguel (1), Coutinho Nogueira Dany (2), Rufà Anna (1) (3), Filipe Leonor (1), André Lino (1), Cascalheira João (1)

1 - ICArEHB, Universidade do Algarve (Campus de Gambelas, 8005-139 Faro Portugal), 2 - CIAS – Centro de Investigação em Antropologia e Saúde, Universidade de Coimbra (Calçada Martim de Freitas, 3000-456 Coimbra Portugal), 3 - Univ. Bordeaux, CNRS, MCC, PACEA (UMR 5199, F-33600 Pessac France)

* corresponding author: cmgoncalves@ualg.pt

The Muge shell middens, located in the Tagus Valley (Portugal), represent one of the most significant archaeological contexts of the European Mesolithic. These sites provide unparalleled insights into human adaptations during the Holocene, illustrating the interplay between environmental changes and the emergence of early social complexity. Among them, Cabeço da Amoreira stands out as a key site, with extensive data resulting from systematic archaeological excavations and interdisciplinary analyses conducted over the past fifteen years. The occupation of Cabeço da Amoreira, dated to between 7950 and 7350 cal BP, has yielded a diverse array of evidence, including lithic artifacts, faunal remains, and funerary contexts. These findings reflect the intensive exploitation of estuarine and terrestrial resources alongside complex social behaviors, such as the development of funerary practices. A layer of small pebbles and sediments, interpreted as a cairn, raises critical questions regarding its function: was it a deliberate landscape marker following the site's abandonment, or does it reflect natural taphonomic processes? Such findings provide new perspectives on the symbolic and functional dimensions of Mesolithic landscape use. This presentation synthesizes the results of long-term excavations at Cabeço da Amoreira, showcasing the breadth of data accumulated and the understanding it provided about the Mesolithic in the Tagus Valley. By integrating chronological, spatial, and bioarchaeological evidence, the study enhances our comprehension of how Mesolithic communities organized their subsistence strategies, social structures, and interactions with their environment.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.12:45-13:00*

# New evidence of Mesolithic presence in northwestern inland Iberia: A Cova de Veiga do Muín (León, Spain)

Fernández-Rodríguez Carlos * (1), Fuertes-Prieto M. Natividad * (1), Ramil-Rego Eduardo (1)

1 - Universidad de León [León] (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras - Departamento de Historia Campus de Vegazana, s/n 24071 León Spain)

* corresponding author: cferr@unileon.es, n.fuertes@unileon.es

A Cova de Veiga de Muín, a small limestone cave located in El Bierzo comarca (León, Spain), was investigated through some test pits conducted between 2020 and 2022. These excavations revealed archaeological materials within a stratigraphic context, although the deposits have been affected by various natural and biological post-depositional processes. The recovered assemblage consists primarily of faunal remains (mainly macromammals), ceramics attributed to Recent Prehistory, and lithic artifacts. While evidence suggests sporadic visits to the site during Recent Prehistory, the typo-technological characteristics of the lithic industry—such as the presence of laminar blanks and microliths (notably crescents)—indicate a Mesolithic occupation. Radiocarbon dating, alongside faunal analysis, provides further insights into this phase of human activity. This study aims to present the key features of the archaeological assemblage and its significance for understanding the Mesolithic occupation of the site. Analyzing this record will improve our knowledge of Mesolithic groups in the northwestern Iberian interior and facilitate comparisons with surrounding regions. Furthermore, it contributes to the broader discussion on hunter-gatherer adaptations during the Holocene within the Iberian context.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.13:00-13:15*

# Level 3 Bauma dels Fadrins (7200-6700 cal BC): a new Mesolithic occupation in the Eastern Pyrenees

Tornero Carlos * (1) (2), Díaz-Cansco Celia (2) (3), Del Valle Héctor (2) (4), Berihuete Marian (1), Morales Juan Ignacio (2) (4), Soto Maria (5) (6), Picornell-Gelabert Llorenç (7), Carbonell Eudald (2)

1 - Prehistory Department, Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), (Edifici B, B9/121 Campus de la UAB · 08193 Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès) · Barcelona · Spain Spain), 2 - Institut Català de Paleoecologia Humana i Evolució Social (Zona Educacional 4 Campus Sescelades URV (Edifici W3) 43007, Tarragona Spain), 3 - AASPE "Archéozoologie, Archéobotanique: Sociétés, Pratiques, Environnements", UMR 7209 CNRS / MNHN (Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle - Case postale 56 - 55 rue Buffon - 75005 Paris France), 4 - University Rovira i virgili = Universidad Rovira y Virgili = Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Calle de l'Escorxador, s/n, Tarragona, 43003 Spain), 5 - Madrid Institute for Advanced Study (MIAS) (Casa de Velázquez Ciudad Universitaria C/ de Paul Guinard, 3 E - 28040 Madrid Spain), 6 - Universidad Autonoma de Madrid (Ciudad Universitaria de Cantoblanco · 28049 Madrid Spain), 7 - Universitat de les Illes Balears = Universidad de las Islas Baleares = University of the Balearic Islands (Cra. de Valldemossa, km 7.5. Palma Illes Balears Spain)

* corresponding author: @ ctornero@iphes.cat

The Bauma dels Fadrins is a large rockshelter located in the Eastern Pyrenees (Spain) at 1190 meters above sea level. Between 2019 and 2023, excavation work on occupation level 3 was completed, covering an area of more than 20 m². Radiocarbon dating has placed this level between approximately 7200-6700 cal BC. The archaeological work has documented around ten combustion structures, well defined and characterized by the accumulation of charred archaeobotanical remains both inside and around them. Areas with large accumulations of lithic remains, mostly debitage, linked to knapping events in the rockshelter, have also been identified. An abundant set of faunal remains, all from wild species, has been found, with wild goat and red deer being the main targeted species. The lithic reduction remains indicate a production mainly made of quartz, suggesting a techno-complex of flakes and retouched flakes. Additionally, macro-lithic elements such as pestles, mills, and grindstones, as well as personal ornamentation objects, were also found in smaller quantities. This communication presents the overall results of the study, considering both the spatial distribution of activity areas and the exploitation of biotic and abiotic resources, as well as the characterization of artifact and ecofactual productions. Knowledge of the last hunter-gatherer groups in the Northeast Iberian Peninsula is limited, especially in the Pyrenean context. The Bauma dels Fadrins site provides significant information, using current and modern techniques to better understand the nature of these Mesolithic groups.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.14:30-14:45*

# The Mesolithic occupations at the new site of Balma del Barranc del Regatxol (Mas de Barberans, Catalonia, Spain): implications for the Prehistory of the lower Ebro River basin

Gironès Rofes Ivan * (1), Vicens Saiz Laura Valeria (1), Monforte Barberan Andreu (1), Sisa López De Pablo Joaquim (1), Alcàntara Fors Roger (1), Marín González Lara (1), Sicart Chavarria Xavier (2), Jiménez Fuentes Cristina (3), Gibaja Bao Juan Francisco (4), Bosch Argilagós Josep (5), Pardo Gordó Salvador (6), Bach Gómez Anna (1), Molist Montaña Miquel (1)

1 - SAPPO-GRAMPO. Departament de Prehistòria. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Edifici MRA, Plaça del Coneixement, Campus de Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès) Spain), 2 - GRESEPIA. Departament d'Història i Història de l'Art. Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Facultat de Lletres, Campus Catalunya Av. Catalunya, 35, Tarragona. Spain), 3 - Independent Archeologist (- Spain), 4 - Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Institució Milà i Fontanals (IMF-CSIC), Grupo InDi (C/ Egipcíaques 15, Barcelona Spain), 5 - Museu de Gavà // SAPPO-GRAMPO. Departament de Prehistòria. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Plaça de Dolors Clua, 13-14, Gavà, Barcelona. // Edifici MRA, Plaça del Coneixement, Campus de Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès) Spain), 6 - GISPRAYA – ARQHISPA, Departamento de Geografía e Historia, Universidad de La Laguna (C/ Prof. José Luis Moreno Becerra, s/n. Facultad de Humanidades, San Cristóbal de La Laguna, Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Spain)

* corresponding author: Ivan.Girones@uab.cat

In 2019, the SAPPO-GRAMPO research group (UAB), in collaboration with Museu de les Terres de l'Ebre and Parc Natural dels Ports, conducted systematic surveys to revitalise the study of prehistoric occupations in El Port Massif (Catalonia, Spain). These surveys identified significant prehistoric potential at Balma del Barranc del Regatxol (Mas de Barberans, Tarragona), leading to archaeological fieldwork to examine the preserved stratigraphic sequence. Excavations carried out in 2021, 2023, and 2024 confirmed a Mesolithic occupation sequence dated between 10,000 and 6,500 cal. BC. This site is now a key reference for reconstructing the Mesolithic of the region. It also stands out for its abundance of findings, comparable to the well-known sites of Cova del Clot de l'Hospital and Cova del Vidre. Preliminary analyses reveal a series of occupations characterized by intensive exploitation, processing and production involving lithic materials, minerals pigments, bones and marine resources. This communication presents initial data from the occupation sequence in Trench 4 and its associated materials, integrating the recovered record with local and regional evidence to offer new insights into the last hunter-gatherer communities in the Lower Ebro basin.

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*Friday 19th September, h.14:45-15:00*

# La Baume de la Bruyère 3: new evidence of Early Holocene human occupation in Southeastern France

Ricci Giulia * (1), Audiard Benjamin (2), Bignon Marie (3), Hoareau Leïla (1), Julien Marie-Anne (4), Purdue Louise (3), Szymanec Marcin (5), Tomasso Antonin (3)

1 - Université de Toulouse Jean Jaurès, CNRS, TRACES, UMR 5608. (Maison de la recherche, 5, allées Antonio Machado, 31058 Toulouse cedex 9 France), 2 - Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne - UMR 7041 ArScAn - AnTET (MSH Mondes, 200 avenue de la République 92000 Nanterre France), 3 - Culture et Environnements, Préhistoire, Antiquité, Moyen-Age (Université Côte d'Azur Pôle universitaire Saint-Jean-d'Angély - SJA3 24, avenue des Diables Bleus 06357 Nice Cedex 4 France), 4 - GeoArchEon SARL (30 Rue de la Victoire, 55210 Vigneulles-lès-Hattonchâtel France), 5 - Faculty of Geology, University of Warsaw (ul. Żwirki i Wigury 93, 02-089 Warszawa Poland)

* corresponding author: giuliaricci.1986@gmail.com

For the past two years, the Baumes de la Bruyère project has been pivotal in advancing the study of human occupation during the Pleistocene-Holocene transition in eastern Provence, uncovering previously undocumented prehistoric occupations in two of the several karstic cavities in the Bruyère Gorge (Var, France). This is particularly significant considering the scarcity of early Holocene sites in the region, which make difficult the reconstruction of prehistoric cultural identities.

Initial surveys and investigations identified 17 cavities, seven of which revealed evidence of archaeological significance. Among these, two—BBY1 and BBY3—are currently the focus of ongoing research, with preliminary results proving highly promising.

The most notable findings to date pertain to cavity number 3 (BBY3) where a multi-stratified sequence was uncovered, revealing a complex record of human activity at the site. Several layers (US3 to US8) have been radiocarbon dated to the Pre-Boreal/Boreal period (11,100–9,500 cal BP). Significantly, numerous episodes of human occupation are preserved within alluvial silt sediments, demonstrating a high degree of archaeological integrity. Organic remains, including faunal materials, show exceptional preservation. The assemblage is remarkably diverse, featuring lithic industries, marine shell ornaments, mammalian fauna and malacofauna. The presence of small elements such as flint debris and micro-flakes indicates minimal post-depositional disturbance, further emphasizing the assemblage's integrity.

An interdisciplinary analysis is underway to synthesize findings on Mesolithic occupation, focusing on technical traditions, economic and symbolic practices, and subsistence strategies, providing valuable insights into human activities during this transitional period.

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MESO2025 - 11th International Conference on the Mesolithic in Europe

ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.15:30-15:45*

# The Early Holocene occupation of the Ljubljansko barje (Ljubljana Marshes), Slovenia. The case of the Vrbičev hribec site

Turk Matija * (1)

1 - ZRC SAZU Institute of Archaeology (Novi trg 2 SI-1000 Ljubljana Slovenia)

* corresponding author: matija.turk@zrc-sazu.si

The Ljubljansko barje (Ljubljana Marshes) are an extensive marshy plain south of Ljubljana, where a lake formed at the end of the Pleistocene. Numerous pile dwellings were built on the shores of the lake during the Holocene, dating from the Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age. Archaeological finds indicate the presence of humans in the Ljubljansko barje area as early as the Middle Palaeolithic. Traces of human occupation accumulate in the Late Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods. Lithic scatters from this period were discovered on isolated elevations or in their surroundings on the edge of Ljubljansko barje. The finds from these sites were mostly collected by surface surveys. Test excavations were only carried out in Vrbičev hribec and in Breg pri Škofljici. Among the Mesolithic sites, Zalog pri Verdu stands out, where the finds were collected during an underwater investigation of the Ljubija riverbed. In our presentation, we will present and critically evaluate archaeologically investigated Mesolithic sites in Ljubljansko barje. We will present the preliminary results of a new excavation on Vrbičev hribec, which took place in the summer of 2024. The new excavation confirmed the existence of two cultural layers. In addition to stone tools, the lower cultural layer also contained poorly preserved, fragmented animal remains and fragments of bone points. A paved area was discovered in the upper cultural layer. The lithic assemblage is characterised by a large number of cores. Rock crystal is also represented among the raw materials, which mostly consist of local chert.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.15:45-16:00*

# The Final Paleolithic – Mesolithic site Rostislavl 2 in the Central East European Plain

Kuzminova Yulia * (1) (2), Leonova Elena (1), Simonenko Anton (3) (1)

1 - Institute of Archaeology, Russian Academy of Science (Dmitriya Ul'yanova, 19, Moscow, 117292 Russia), 2 - Museum of Moscow (Zubovskiy Bul'var, 2, Moscow, 119034 Russia), 3 - The State Historical Museum (Red Square, 1, Moscow, 109012 Russia)

* corresponding author: juliakuzminovamos@gmail.com

The Rostislavl 2 site is situated in the southern part of the Moscow region, on the right bank of the Oka River at an elevation of approximately 6 meters above the river level. The site was discovered by A.V. Trusov in 2014 and has been investigated over an area of 48 m² in 2014–2020. In 2024, further work was conducted by Y.V. Kuzminova. The site has revealed two distinct layers: a Mesolithic layer and a Final Paleolithic layer, separated by sterile deposits ranging from 20 to 90 cm in thickness. The Mesolithic layer has been partially explored over a small area, revealing a section that appears to be associated with a lithic processing site. The flint inventory found here includes a core, flakes, narrow blades and bladelets, burins along with hammerstones. The lower layer contains compact well-defined concentrations of stone artifacts characterized by various tools including single-platform flake-blade cores, as well as flake and wide blade tools (up to 3 cm), end-scrapers, retouched and dihedral burins, curved backed point, asymmetric shouldered points, and large Lyngby tanged point. The faunal remains are mostly poorly preserved; however, one area yielded an artifact crafted from moose antler. Based on stratigraphy, typology, and data from faunal and paleopedological analysis, the materials from the lower layer can be referred to the Allerød period, dating back approximately 13,000 years. This site currently stands as the easternmost location on the Russian Plain associated with Final Paleolithic cultures featuring Lyngby-Ahrensburgian tanged points.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.16:00-16:15*

# When the dead become alive: life histories of Mesolithic individuals from Northern Europe

Mannermaa Kristiina * (1)

1 - Helsingin yliopisto = Helsingfors universitet = University of Helsinki (Yliopistonkatu 4, 00100 Helsinki Finland)

* corresponding author: kristiina.mannermaa@helsinki.fi

This paper summarizes some results of the project Animals Make Identities, where we study human-animal relationships based on burial materials from northern European cemeteries. Our approach has been holistic, consisting of many kinds of archaeological evidence, including human skeletons, find inventories, and the landscape. Animals and artifacts made of them may have played active roles in representation of social identities, family relations, or societal roles, and these elements can be reflected in mortuary practices. Therefore, artifacts, when studied together with other grave evidence, including bioarchaeological analyses, can yield important information about individuals' identities and the structure of their societies. To better understand and compare the information that grave inventory can provide, we have reconstructed the life histories of several individuals from three renowned northern European cemeteries: Donkalnis in Lithuania, Zvejnieki in Latvia, and Yuzhniy Oleniy Ostrov in Russian Karelia. The aim is to create "informed narratives" of the buried individuals. These narratives, reconstructed based on our research and containing some speculative elements, bring Mesolithic people back to life again. This approach allows us to portray them in a manner that is more live, more fascinating, and less alienating.

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ORAL PRESENTATION

*Friday 19th September, h.16:45-17:00*

# History of research, archaeological data and relative chronology: what do we know about Mesolithic in Kaliningrad district, Russia (South-Eastern Baltic)?

Tkach Evgeniia * (1)

1 - Institute for the History of Material Culture [St Petersburg] (Dvortsovaia naberezhnaia 18, 191186 Saint Petersburg, Russia Russia)

* corresponding author: jenij90@mail.ru

Mesolithic materials in the Kaliningrad region (part of former East Prussia) were first discovered in the early 20th century (mostly bone and antler artifacts). Unfortunately, after 1945 most of the collections were lost, and only publications with approximate descriptions of the locations of finds survived. In the second half of the 20th century, a series of locations with Mesolithic-Neolithic materials were discovered. At most, only surface material was collected. In total, Mesolithic materials were found at 12 sites, most of them multi-layered. Only at three sites Mesolithic materials be traced (according of stratigraphic position, typological and technological materials). The report will summarize all the materials related to the Mesolithic period and propose possible cultural interpretation of them.

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POSTER

*Friday 19th September, h.11:45-12:00*

# A DATABASE ON SHELL MIDDENS, A TOOL TO COMPARE THEM ACROSS THE ATLANTIC COAST OF EUROPE

Butsch Anass (1), Dupont Catherine * (1), Troccaz Olivier * (1)

1 - CNRS, CReAAH (Université de Rennes, Bat? 24-25 Campus de Beaulieu, 263 avenue du Général Leclerc, Cs 74206, 35042 Rennes Cedex France)

* corresponding author: catherine.dupont@univ-rennes.fr, olivier.troccaz@univ-rennes.fr

Shell midden sites are a precious source of information about lifeways during prehistoric times. They are the archaeological evidence of human activities along the shore by hunter-fisher-gatherer communities. The important concentration of shells generates an alkaline environment in the soil that creates great conditions of preservation of various types of archaeological artefacts specifically organic ones. These types of sites allow us access to information regarding life on the shore: diet, settlement patterns, activities around a shell midden. The accumulation is so significant in some cases that they can appear as small mounds in the landscape. Knowledge on shell middens is heterogeneous across the Atlantic Coast of Europe. They present a great diversity of size and shape; therefore, the quality and the quantity of information may vary significantly from place to place. In the context of the Archaeological Coastal Heritage: Past, present and future of a hidden prehistoric legacy project (ArCHe), our goal is to study and compare shell midden sites along the Atlantic coast of Europe and compare them. We plan to achieve this goal by updating and working on a database that will gather information (location, type of species, carbon dating) on shell midden from all regions across the Atlantic coast of Europe. We aim to have a better understanding of their great diversity on a European scale. This database will allow us to compare components and physical characteristics of shell middens to observe their singularities and common phenomena.

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POSTER

*Friday 19th September, h.11:45-12:00*

# Increasing the scientific and public value of Europe's Mesolithic coastal heritage – approaches on contemporary nature-culture relations in the HORIZON MSCA Doctoral network ArCHe

Schülke Almut * (1)

1 - Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo (Postboks 6762, St. Olavs Plass 0130 Oslo Norway)

* corresponding author: almut.schulke@khm.uio.no

The material remains of hunter-fisher-gatherer populations in coastal areas across Europe are fractured, highly vulnerable and often merely visible. In addition to being endangered by climate change and development in coastal areas, this often-underestimated legacy tends to be under-communicated to the public. The HORIZON MSCA Doctoral Network ArCHe "Archaeological Coastal Heritage: Past, present and future of a hidden prehistoric legacy" (www.arche.uio.no ), sets the scientific and public value of archaeological remains of Stone Age hunter-fisher-gatherers (c. 12.000-2.000 calBC) across different European coastal areas on the agenda, analysing them in a comparative, international and interdisciplinary perspective. The network trains 10 Doctoral Candidates based at six beneficiaries in five European countries (University of Oslo, University of Gothenburg, CNRS/University of Rennes, University of Latvia, University of Cantabria and Fundación Instituto Hidráulica Ambiental de Cantabria) – in the fields of archaeology, social anthropology, critical heritage studies, heritage management, bioarchaeology, geology, oceanography, coastal engineering/preservation. Further, the communication of this coastal heritage in its respective environments and lived landscapes is in focus. With its past-present-future approach ArCHe unites research on hunter-fisher-gatherer past, the embeddedness of our knowledge on this past in its present situation/lived landscapes and management, and the development of integrated practices for the future of this heritage. The poster will present the project and its objectives with a specific focus on nature-culture-relations.

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POSTER

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# Finding Mesolithic Time: assessing Scotland's Mesolithic stone tools as a heritage resource

Rodrigues Lucille * (1)

1 - University of the Highlands and Islands Archaeology Institute (UHI Orkney, East Road, Kirkwall, Orkney Islands, KW15 1LX United Kingdom)

* corresponding author: 22013781@uhi.ac.uk

While knowledge of the Scottish Mesolithic continues to expand, certain regions of the country, including the North East and The Borders, have received comparatively less attention. Excitingly, lithic collections held by National Museums Scotland (NMS) and other regional museums, have the potential to bring these regions' Mesolithic narratives to the fore. Using typo-technological, metric and multivariate statistical analysis, lithic assemblages from the two case study regions will be subjected to extensive examination with the primary aim of elucidating regional stone working traditions and technologies. Subsequently, these findings will be presented to the public through interactive workshops and NMS' own gallery redesign, providing a unique opportunity for the lithic artefacts to be assessed on their value as heritage resources to inform both academic and public understanding of Mesolithic lifeways.

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POSTER

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# New stratigraphic evidence from Grotta dell'Arco (Palermo, Sicily): the spread of Mesolithic in the Central Mediterranean

Speciale Claudia * (1) (2), Vergès Josep Maria (2), Sicart Xavier (3), Battaglia Giuseppina (4), Forgia Vincenza (5)

1 - Universitat Rovira i Virgili (43007 Tarragona Spain), 2 - Institut Català de Paleoecologia Humana i Evolució Social (Zona Educacional 4 Campus Sescelades URV (Edifici W3) 43007, Tarragona Spain), 3 - Independent Researcher (Tortosa Spain), 4 - Soprintendenza BBCCAA Palermo (Palermo Italy), 5 - Università degli studi di Palermo - University of Palermo (Piazza Marina, 61 90133 - PALERMO Italy)

* corresponding author: cspeciale@iphes.cat

Grotta dell'Arco (Bagheria, Palermo) is a karst cavity opening along the current coastline in the Triassic-Liassic dolomitic limestones. The cavity is located northwest of the promontory of Capo Zafferano, in an area rich in archaeological evidence that covers a wide chronological span. The area is characterised by a system of fractures and faults oriented in a NW-SE and NE-SW direction. The current morphology is determined by phenomena due to sea level oscillations and tectonics. The remnant of the vault of the cave, partially collapsed, forms a monumental natural arch. Previous survey and an old radiocarbon date from a Patella suggested the presence of an archaeological (Mesolithic) deposit still in situ. Since the cave is reachable only by the sea or by ropes from the slope, the probability to find a preserved archaeological record is high, so, in agreement and cooperation with the Soprintendenza dei BB.CC.AA. of Palermo, we planned a research intervention. The first 2024 excavation campaign was aimed at 3D surveying of the cavity, identifying preserved archaeological deposits and excavating the best-preserved area with visible remains of malacofauna (mainly marine) and charcoal. The excavation highlighted the presence of 4 subcomplexes (named 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4) starting from an altitude of 30.58 m asl to 29.70 m asl. Sampling was performed also for vegetal microremains. The finds were coordinated (SR ETRS'89 – UTM33N coordinate system) by 20 cm squares. In this poster we would like to present the first results of the ongoing archaeobotanical, lithic and malacofaunal studies.

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POSTER

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# A Mesolithic site under the football field: escue excavation at Scandicci (Florence, Central Italy)

Wierer Ursula * (1), Balli Patrizio (2), Biagiotti Federica (3), Boschin Francesco (4) (5), Capotorti Andrea (6), Crezzini Jacopo (4) (5), Gonzalez Muro Xabier (7)

1 - Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Firenze e le province di Pistoia e Prato (Piazza de' Pitti, 1 - 50125 Firenze Italy), 2 - Freelance (Pistoia Italy), 3 - Freelance (Firenze Italy), 4 - Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche, della Terra e dell'Ambiente, Università degli Studi di Siena (Strada Laterina 8, 53100 Siena Italy), 5 - Centro Studi sul Quaternario (Via Nuova dell'Ammazzatoio 7, 52037, Sansepolcro, Arezzo Italy), 6 - Geosol s.r.l. Geologia Ambiente e Territorio (Viale Europa 31 35100 Siena Italy), 7 - Dipartimento di Archeologia, Università di Bologna (Piazza San Giovanni in Monte 2, 40124 Bologna Italy)

* corresponding author: ursula.wierer@cultura.gov.it

In spring 2024 during excavations for a new school building planned in the sports area "Turri" at Scandicci (Tuscany), a few km West of Florence, Mesolithic layers were identified and investigated through a rescue excavation. The discovery occurred on the southern margin of the Piana Fiorentina crossed by the Arno River and its tributaries. Evidence of fire associated with lithic industry and with few faunal remains, indicate a small short-term open-air site used by hunter-gatherers at the beginning of the Holocene period. Diagnostic techno-typological features of the lithics allow to attribute the context to the Sauveterrian, which is confirmed by the C14-datings. Knapping was carried out on-site, as shown by the presence of cores and flaking waste. First data about the excavation and the finds are reported, and the dwelling contextualized in the frame of the rare coeval sites known in the region.

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POSTER

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# A new Mesolithic frequentation in the Romagna Apennine: Comignolo open-air site on the shores of Lake Ridracoli (Emilia Romagna, Italy)

Discosti Rachele * (1), Bertola Stefano (2), Milantoni Cecilia (3), Monti Michelangelo (3), Urbini Lorenzo (3), Pirraglia Romina (4), Peresani Marco * (1)

1 - Università di Ferrara, Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Sezione di Scienze preistoriche e antropologiche (Corso Ercole I d'Este 32, 44121 Ferrara Italy), 2 - Dipartimento SAGAS - Unità di Archeologia Preistorica, Università di Firenze (Via S. Egidio, 21 50121 Firenze Italy), 3 - Akanthos srl (Cesena (FC) 47521 – Via Uberti, 9 Italy), 4 - SOPRINTENDENZA ARCHEOLOGIA, BELLE ARTI E PAESAGGIO PER LE PROVINCE DI RAVENNA, FORLI'-CESENA E RIMINI (Via San Vitale, 17 - 48121 Ravenna (RA) Italy).

* corresponding author: dscrhl@unife.it, psm@unife.it

While hundreds of sites are known for Aemilian and Tosco-Aemilian Apennine, current knowledge about Mesolithic settlement in the Romagna Apennine is still limited. The recent discovery and excavation of an open-air site on an alluvial terrace along the banks of Ridracoli Lake at 560 m of elevation (National Park of Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona, and Campigna, Emilia Romagna, Italy) provided new data relating to a Mesolithic frequentation in this mid-altitude area. The study of the lithic assemblage found at the site revealed the existence of occupations likely ranged between the Sauveterrian and early Neolithic. However, disturbance in the original record prevents precise chronological and environmental interpretations. Recent anthropic activities and periodical water flooding of the area are the main causes of this lack of information. Here we summarize and present data from the site focusing on the lithic industry and the raw material sourcing, revealing possible connections with non-local contexts along and beyond the Apennine watershed.

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# The Mesolithic occupations of Jonquilles cave: first interdisciplinary results

Constans Guilhem * (1) (2), Arbez Louis (1), Garcia-Tarac Emilie (1), Gardeur Marine (1), Henry Auréade (3), Lejay Mathieu (1) (4), Mallye Jean-Baptiste (5), Martínez-Varea Carmen María (6), Royer Aurélien (7)

1 - Travaux et recherches archéologiques sur les cultures, les espaces et les sociétés (Maison de la Recherche, 5 allée Antonio Machado 31058 TOULOUSE Cedex 9 France), 2 - Études et valorisations archéologiques (31 rue Soyouz - ESTER Technopole87 068 LIMOGES CedexTel : 05 55 10 98 72contact@eveha.fr France), 3 - Culture et Environnements, Préhistoire, Antiquité, Moyen-Age (Université Côte d'Azur Pôle universitaire Saint-Jean-d'Angély - SJA3 24, avenue des Diables Bleus 06357 Nice Cedex 4 France), 4 - GeoArchEon SARL (30 Rue de la Victoire, 55210 Vigneulles-lès-Hattonchâtel France), 5 - De la Préhistoire à l'Actuel : Culture, Environnement et Anthropologie (Université de Bordeaux - Bâtiment B8 - CS50023 - Allée Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire - 33615 Pessac Cedex France), 6 - University of Valencia (Av. de Blasco Ibáñez, 13, 46010 València Spain), 7 - Biogéosciences - UMR 6282 (Université de Bourgogne - 6 boulevard Gabriel - 21000 Dijon France)

* corresponding author: guilhem.constans@hotmail.fr

Located in the heart of the Causse de Gramat, in the northern part of the Causses du Quercy (Lot, France), the Mesolithic site of Jonquilles, near Cuzoul de Gramat, offers an exceptional context for studying human occupations during the Mesolithic. Situated in a dolina in the Braunhie forest, this partially collapsed cave lies in a remarkable karstic environment. Discovered in 2018, the site has been under excavation since 2021. It reveals a significant stratigraphic sequence encompassing the Late and Early Mesolithic. The Late Mesolithic (6-5 ka cal BC) is characterized by deposits rich in ash and snail shells. The lithic material, although scarce and heavily altered, is complemented by abundant but fragmented and often burnt faunal remains. The levels attributed to the Early Mesolithic are more clayey, darker, and rich in charcoal. Lithic material appears to be rare. As this sequence has not yet been excavated, data remains limited. This poster presents the initial results of ongoing lithic, zooarchaeological, anthracological, carpological, and geoarchaeological analyses. These studies shed new light on settlement dynamics and the interactions between human groups and their environment, while also highlighting site complementarity within a dense local network of Mesolithic occupations.

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POSTER

*Friday 19th September, h.15:00-15:15*

# New data on Mesolithic occupations in the Bayas river valley (northen Spain)

Soto Adriana * (1), Alday Alfonso (1), Rodríguez-Lejarza Ander (2), Nieto María (2), Villaluenga Aritza (1)

1 - University of the Basque Country (Department of Geography, Prehistory and Archaeology C/Tomás y Valiente, s/n 01006, Vitoria-Gasteiz Spain), 2 - ? (? Spain)

* corresponding author: adriana.soto@ehu.eus

In the 1980s, several archaeological excavations were carried out in the middle valley of the Bayas river (northern Spain), which led to the identification of the first hunter-gatherer occupations in the region. The identified record included various sites, Fuente Hoz and Socuevas in rock shelters, and the open-air site of Berniollo, covering a chronology initially placed between an undetermined Epipalaeolithic and the Neolithic. Subsequent interventions allowed to extend the archaeological sequence in the case of the Socuevas, and recognised a detailed stratigraphy from the end of the Upper Magdalenian to the Late Mesolithic. In the last year, a new comprehensive research project has been proposed for these archaeological records, aiming to reconstruct the occupation dynamics of the valley from the end of the Late Glacial period to the early Neolithic and their relationship with neighbouring regions (Cantabrian area and the Ebro Valley). In this presentation, we offer the preliminary results of this project, focusing primarily on the data (chronology, stratigraphy, fauna, lithic industry, raw materials and catchment areas) from the Mesolithic levels of the Fuente Hoz site.

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POSTER

*Friday 19th September, h.17:00-17:15*

# The tunnel valley of Ahrensburg: Status and plans for new activities

Richter Daniel * (1) (2) (3), Hinrichs Moiken (4), Unglaub Christoph (4), Weber Mara-Julia (5), Gaudzinski-Windheuser Sabine (3) (6)

1 - Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie - LEIZA-ZBSA (Schleswig Germany), 2 - Dept. of Human Origins Max-Planck-Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (Leipzig Germany), 3 - Institut für Altertumswissenschaften, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz (Mainz Germany), 4 - Archäologisches Landesamt Schleswig-Holstein (Bad Segeberg Germany), 5 - Museum für Archäologie Schloss Gottorf (Schlossinsel 1, 24837 Schleswig Germany), 6 - Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie - LEIZA-Monrepos (Neuwied Germany)

* corresponding author: daniel.richter@leiza.de

The well known sites in the Ahrensburg Tunneltal in Northern Germany have yielded spectacular finds of especially the Late Palaeolithic, notably nearly complete arrows. Construction activities will require renewed excavations by the State Heritage authorities (Archäologisches Landesamt Schleswig-Holstein, ALSL) and include a collaboration with the Leibniz Zentrum für Archäologie (LEIZA-ZBSA). The current knowledge will be presented and the project plans outlined.

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POSTER

*Friday 19th September, h.17:00-17:15*

# Ground stone tools in action: subsistence strategies of Early and Middle Holocene Hunter-Gatherer-Fishers at Šventoji, Lithuania

Orłowska Justyna * (1), Cristiani Emanuela (2), Piličiauskas Gytis (3), Piličiauskienė Giedrė (4), Osipowicz Grzegorz (5)

1 - Nicolaus Copernicus University, Institute of Archaeology (Szosa Bydgoska 44/48 Street 87-100 Torun Poland Poland), 2 - DANTE – Diet and Ancient Technology laboratory, Sapienza University of Rome (Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, 00185 Roma Italy), 3 - Archaeology Department, Lithuanian Institute of History (Kraziu st. 5, LT-01108, Vilnius Lithuania), 4 - Vilnius University (Universiteto 7, LT-015013, Vilnius, Lithuania Lithuania), 5 - Nicolaus Copernicus University, Institute of Archaeology (Institute of Archaeology Nicolaus Copernicus University Szosa Bydgoska 44/48 street 87-100 Toruń Poland)

* corresponding author: justyna.orlowska@umk.pl

The Early and Middle Holocene hunter-gatherer-fisher sites at Šventoji, Lithuania, are renowned for their exceptional artefacts made from organic raw materials, mainly wood, bone and plant fibres, remarkably preserved and found in significant quantities. In addition to the organic finds, the Šventoji sites have yielded other categories of artefacts, including ground stone tools, which encompass a diverse and multipurpose category of non-flint artefacts utilised for percussion, abrasion, polishing, cutting, and grinding activities. This category of artefacts from the above-mentioned sites has received little recognition and analysis. However, based on the variability and numbers, it is safe to say that these tools played an important role in the economic aspects of life for the communities living in Šventoji. This poster delineates the primary objectives and preliminary findings of a recently initiated research project focused on reconstructing the usage history of ground stone tools from the Šventoji sites. The research employs a multidisciplinary approach, integrating advanced qualitative and quantitative analyses of technology, use-wear, and residues. The study's overarching objective is to characterise various aspects of this artefact category, including raw material selection and procurement, tool preparation and design, use-related actions and processed materials, and potential multiple uses. Ultimately, we aim to comprehensively understand the role of ground stone tools at the studied sites within Early and Middle Holocene adaptations in the region.

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*Friday 19th September, h.17:00-17:15*

# The Early Mesolithic site Djupedalen 111 at Stord, Western Norway: the northernmost Maglemosean site in Europe?

Waraas Tor Arne * (1), Åstveit Leif Inge (2)

1 - University of Bergen (Postboks 7800, NO-5020 Bergen Norway), 2 - University of Bergen (Postboks 7800, NO-5020 Bergen Norway)

* corresponding author: tor.waraas@uib.no

The site Djupedalen 111 is well-defined within the context of the Early Mesolithic (EM) of coastal Norway. Assuming that the site was shore-bound, it can be dated to approximately 9000 Cal BC. Among a total of 12,467 lithics, primarily composed of high-quality Senonian flint, the main tool categories include burins (23) and flake axes (33). The extensive production and maintenance of flake axes are evident in the presence of 258 wing-shaped flakes and waste from the production of symmetrical flat-trimmed axes. Five of the flake axes may be regarded as chisels. While this is a relatively ordinary composition of artifacts for EM sites in the area, several characteristics make Djupedalen special. First, while most sites have a maritime orientation facing large bodies of open water, the Djupedalen site is located at the inner part of a long, narrow inlet, clearly oriented towards terrestrial resources. Second, and most importantly, the projectiles make this site exceptional in a Norwegian context. These consist of 104 simple lanceolate microliths, remarkably homogeneous and almost exclusively produced using the microburin technique (confirmed by the 143 microburins from the site and refitting studies). Furthermore, there is an almost complete absence of tanged and single-edge points, which is the opposite of what is observed at EM sites in the region. We believe that the closest parallels for this material can be found within the South Scandinavian Maglemose o techno complex. If this holds true, the Djupedalen site represents one of the northernmost occurrences of Maglemose culture in Europe.

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POSTER

*Friday 19th September, h.17:00-17:15*

# STONE DEAD PROJECT: A MULTI-PROXY STUDY OF LITHIC GRAVE GOODS FROM ZVEJNIEKI CEMETERY

Petrović Anđa * (1), Macāne Aija (2), Bates Jessica (3), Nordqvist Kerkko (4), Zagorska Ilga (5), Edmonds Mark (3), Little Aimée (3)

1 - University of Belgrade (Studentski Trg 1, 11000 Belgrade Serbia), 2 - Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia, University of Helsinki (Kalpaka bulvāris 4, Rīga LV-1050 Latvia), 3 - Centre for Artefacts and Materials Analysis, Department of Archaeology, University of York (DS 113 PalaeoHub, Wentworth Way, York, YO105DD, UK United Kingdom), 4 - Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies [University of Helsinki] (Fabianinkatu 24, FI-00014 University of Helsinki Finland), 5 - Institute of Latvian History [University of Latvia] (Kalpaka bulvāris 4, Rīga LV-1050 Latvia)

* corresponding author: andja.petrovic@f.bg.ac.rs

This poster presents results from the AHRC-funded Stone Dead Project. Focussed on the lithic assemblages from the Stone Age (Mesolithic & Neolithic) Zvejnieki cemetery (Latvia) in NE Europe, the primary aim of Stone Dead was to better understand why people gave lithics to the dead, and how their choices varied across the site and over time. To achieve this, we applied a multiproxy approach, combining geology, techno-functional analysis (experimental archaeology and microwear analysis), contextual studies and spatial modelling. Information on the biography of lithic artefacts was integrated from human biographical data to assess whether certain tool types, used and unused, were given to specific individuals based on their age and sex and other key categories. Results revealed both spatial and temporal patterns in the deposition of stone axes, bifacial points and scrapers. Wear traces on axes from both the cemetery and adjacent settlement has enabled critical new insights into the special treatment and role of axes within Stone Age death rites. Finally, we present an important legacy from the project: an open access database of Zvejnieki lithic grave goods and associated burial contexts.