

Session: #697

Theme & Session Format

Theme:

4. Persisting with Change: Theory and Archaeological Scrutiny

Session format:

Regular session

Title & Content

Title:

Human-Environment Interactions in European Calcareous Landscapes during the Pleistocene and Holocene

Content:

The calcareous landscapes of Europe have long been understood to be an important setting for Palaeolithic and later prehistoric habitation sites and monuments, providing the eventual focus for some of the most iconic settlement and ceremonial complexes. Their landscapes and ecologies undoubtedly provided important qualities for the development of these complexes by virtue of their environmental characteristics resulting a diverse history of human-environment interaction. However, courtesy of their alkaline substrate, reconstructing the history of these landscapes and their interaction with human groups has routinely posed a number of methodological and analytical problems (e.g., geochronology, preservation), including in some geographical areas reliance upon a limited avenue of palaeoenvironmental proxies from geological archives (e.g., Mollusca), whilst in others dependence upon data from archaeological archives (e.g., caves). Due to these challenges, the true diversity of calcareous landscapes, the interrelationships that landscapes had upon the lifeways of populations at the time and the extent to which ecologies impacted settlement and subsistence choices, remain to be fully understood. This session seeks to hear about the latest research that has explored many of the methodological and analytical problems associated with the study of calcareous landscape history, and where research has provided important new insights into human-environment interactions in these settings, especially evidence for transformation, resilience and adaptation. Given that many geological and archaeological archives are located in these iconic calcareous landscapes, the session will also explore how these archives are being protected, conserved and managed in the face of a range of threats at the present day and those predicted for the future.

Keywords:

Pleistocene, Holocene, Palaeolithic, Late Prehistory, Environment, Interactions

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