

Association for Environmental Archaeology

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AEA Newsletter 167

June 2025

Hello to all members of the AEA. As many of us approach the busy field season, I wish you a productive summer.

It's also that time of year that many dissertations are submitted. For those students who have produced outstanding environmental archaeology work, please do consider submitting their dissertations to the John Evans Prize. It is a prestigious prize and comes with a three-year membership of the AEA. You can find more information about the prize and examples of past winners at envarch.net/john-evans-dissertation.

For this quarter we have a bumper newsletter. I hope you enjoy the research article "Traces of the Colonial past" by colleagues working in Brazil. It's a fascinating article that showcases the interdisciplinary principles that are at the heart of environmental archaeology, combining many different approaches to these at-risk remains. We always welcome short research pieces from the community. If you have something you think will be of interest, please do get in touch with the newsletter editor.

In this issue you will also see interesting news from Cyprus where AEA representation is growing. The AEA continues to enhance its international reputation in many places around the world, and the driving principle of Promoting Environmental Archaeology Worldwide remains central to the AEA's efforts. Speaking of which, you will also find in this issue an enjoyable review of the Sofia AEA spring conference, as well as lots of exciting details about the Stavanger autumn conference - get your abstracts in!

We will have our AGM around the Stavanger conference. Whilst it is a way off,

there will be vacancies on the managing committee. Please do consider joining. If you have any questions about what is involved, please do feel free to get in contact with me directly.

I'll end with a call for action. The managing committee are currently exploring the possibility of registering as a charitable organisation. Perhaps some of you were under the impression that the AEA is already a registered charity? We have, however, never actually been through the process. No decision has been made - and, indeed, such a significant change to the governance of the AEA would need to be made by the membership at the AGM. Nevertheless, the committee believes there are sufficient potential benefits to warrant further investigation. If you or anyone close to you has experience in establishing or running charities, I would very much like to hear about your views and experiences. You can always reach me directly at chair@envarch.net.

.Michael Wallace, Chair of the AEA



Spring Conference Review AEA SOFIA 2025

Conference report of the Spring Conference of the Association for Environmental Archaeology, Sofia 2025

Mila Andonova-Katsarski (Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences & Department of Archaeology, University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski")

The Spring Conference of the Association for Environmental Archaeology, titled "*Of Mountains and Rivers: Perspectives in Environmental Archaeology*," was held at the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski" on April 12–13, 2025. Organised in partnership with the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the event brought together a vibrant international community of scholars and researchers. The conference welcomed 129 delegates, with 70% of participants coming from outside Bulgaria. Notably, 37% of attendees were early-career researchers, including doctoral and postdoctoral scholars. The programme featured 35 oral presentations and 15 posters, along with a keynote lecture and a practical workshop. The thematic sessions addressed key areas within environmental archaeology, including archaeobotany, zooarchaeology, landscape archaeology, and multi-proxy approaches. Additional contributions focused on the study of human remains and the application of digital methods in environmental archaeological research.

The **archaeobotanical** session showcased a rich array of topics spanning both geography and chronology. These included research on the Early Neolithic of the central Pyrenees (Antolín et al. 2025), Neolithic Albania (Idrizi and Allen 2025), and Late Chalcolithic Bulgaria (Boyadzhiev et al. 2025), as well as studies on the Iron Age and Medieval periods in Bulgaria (Hristova et al. 2025) and Scotland (Dimova et al. 2025; Alexandrova 2025). Further contributions explored cross-chronological archaeobotanical evidence from North Wales (Kay 2025) and India (Pandey 2025), alongside a multi-instrumental analysis of millet consumption across Europe (Depaermentier et al. 2025). Other presentations included macro- and microbotanical investigations of

Late Antiquity Bulgaria (Katreva et al. 2025; Andonova-Katsarski et al. 2025), Celtic Germany (Holler et al. 2025), and Medieval Bulgaria (Toncheva et al. 2025), as well as a micromorphological study of prehistoric earthen architecture in Bulgaria (Todorov 2025).

The **zooarchaeology** panel offered comparative insights into various cultural and ecological settings. Topics ranged from dietary reconstruction in the ancient Maya world (Rand et al. 2025), to dolphin hunting along the Black Sea coast (Karastoyanova and Dimitrov 2025), faunal exploitation in the Middle Ganga Plain (Sontakke 2025), and Iron Age bioarchaeology in Romania (Cretu et al. 2025). Presentations addressing **human remains** included analyses of ancient human hair (Popovici et al. 2025) and a study of the Muslim period in Romania (Donciu et al. 2025). One poster explored burial mounds and their environmental context during the Roman period in Bulgaria (Hristov 2025).

The sessions on **multi-proxy approaches** and **landscape archaeology** incorporated a wide variety of methodological frameworks. Topics included geoarchaeological investigations in the Balkans (Tsirtsoni et al. 2025), landscape evolution in the Swiss Alps (Chevassu et al. 2025), and the dynamics of settlement along major European rivers (Ries 2025; Cholakov and Kirilova 2025; Zlatkov and Kolev 2025; Todorova et al. 2025), as well as studies of human-environment interaction in mountainous regions of Europe (Baiges-Salvador 2025; Georgiev and Popov 2025).

A major highlight of the event was the **keynote lecture** delivered by Dr. Elena Marinova-Wolff of the State Office for Cultural Heritage of Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Titled "*Achievements and Future Outlook for Environmental Archaeological Research in Bulgaria: An Archaeobotanical Perspective*," her presentation traced the development of archaeobotanical research in Bulgaria from its earliest days, emphasising both macro- and microbotanical approaches and highlighting the pioneering scholars who shaped the field.

On the second day, a combined **theoretical and practical workshop** titled "*Wild or Domestic?*

Spring Conference Review AEA SOFIA 2025

and practical workshop titled “*Wild or Domestic? Identification Criteria of Cereal Chaff Remains with Examples from Neolithic Southeast Europe and Southwest Asia*” was held. Led by Prof. Ferran Antolín (German Archaeological Institute, Berlin & University of Basel) and Miss Amalia Sabanov (University of Belgrade), the session included a theoretical overview followed by hands-on microscopy work with both reference and archaeological samples.

In a dedicated session, Dr. Lara González Carretero and Miss Kay Hamilton of the AEA Management Committee provided updates on current campaigns and opportunities within the Association. Delegates also had the opportunity to learn more and engage informally at the AEA merchandise table, where promotional items were available.

Two awards were presented during the conference. The **Don Brothwell Prize (2024)** was awarded to Capriles, J. M., Miller, M. J., Fox, J. R., Browman, D. L., and Yoder Urista, C. for their article “*Evaluating Dietary Diversity among Andean Central Altiplano Early Camelid Pastoralists Using Stable Isotope Analysis*,” published in *Environmental Archaeology*, 29(3), 246–264. Two publications received special mentions: Antolín and Schäfer’s study “*Insect Pests of Pulse Crops and their Management in Neolithic Europe*” (*Environmental Archaeology*, 29(1), 20–33), and Moilanen et al.’s “*The Color of the Grave is Green’ – Moss and Juniper in Early Medieval Graves at Toppolanmäki, Finland*” (*Environmental Archaeology*, 29(5), 403–413).

The **John Evans Dissertation Prize (2024)** was awarded in two categories. The undergraduate prize went to Miss Amelia G. Rankin (Bournemouth University) for her thesis “*A Study of the Size Difference of Herpetofauna from Boncuklu Höyük*,” while the postgraduate prize was awarded to Dr. Sophia A. De Schiffart (University College London) for her work “*Exploring the First Indicators of Neolithic Pastoralism in the Azraq Basin, Jordan, through the Faunal Remains from Bawabaat al-Ghazal*.”

Overall, the conference served as a vibrant and stimulating forum, fostering collaboration and dialogue across a broad range of approaches in environmental archaeology. Notably, it was the first event of its kind to be held in the Balkan region, marking an important milestone and initiating active discussions on the diverse methodologies within the field. Both formal and informal conversations highlighted a wealth of ongoing research involving archaeological material from sites across Bulgaria, underscoring the growing relevance of environmental archaeology in the region.

A key theme that emerged from these discussions was the absence of a legal and institutional framework to support and promote the various sub-disciplines of environmental archaeology in Bulgaria. This gap was identified as a pressing issue, with participants emphasising the need for concrete steps toward establishing national standards and support mechanisms. As potential models, the community looked to existing guidance and best-practice manuals from other European countries, including Historic England’s protocols in the United Kingdom and the field sampling guidelines developed by the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences.

The conference received generous support from both regional and national museums, which granted free entry to delegates. Among these were the National Archaeological Museum and the Regional Historical Museum of Sofia. Financial support for the practical aspects of the event was provided by the National Scientific Council of Bulgaria (grant number КП-06-МНФ/55-17.12.2024).

academic and architectural legacy.

45th Conference of the Association for Environmental Archaeology, Stavanger, Norway, 4th-6th of December 2025

We would like to welcome you to the 45th conference of the Association for Environmental Archaeology, held this year in Stavanger, Norway. We are excited to be bringing this conference to Norway for the very first time!

Life on the Edge: Exploring Resilience & Adaptations to Challenging Environments

When: Thursday 4th – Saturday 6th December 2025

Where: Museum of Archaeology, Stavanger, Norway

Cost: Details on our website soon

Abstract Submission via: <https://nettskjema.no/a/525786>

Abstract Submission Deadline: 15th August 2025

Registration: Opens on our website soon and closes 31st October 2025

General enquiries to: AEA_Stavanger@uis.no

More information on the conference and Stavanger city can be found on our **website**.

<https://aeastavanger.wordpress.com/>



Conference venues: Museum of Archaeology and Iron Age Farm Reconstruction (Jernaldergården)

Organising Committee: Rosie R Bishop, Daniel Fredh, Daisy Spencer, Christin Jensen, Sara Westling, Dawn Elise Mooney, Hanne Øvretveit Helgeland, Jutta Lechterbeck, Grethe Pedersen, Ingrid Helland & Bettina Ebert.



45th Conference of the Association for Environmental Archaeology, Stavanger, Norway, 4th-6th of December 2025

Theme of the 45th AEA Conference – Life on the Edge: Exploring Resilience & Adaptations to Challenging Environments

Environmental archaeology is uniquely positioned to explore the large-scale environmental changes that have unfolded over millennia, both in specific landscapes, as well as across entire regions, allowing for global comparisons. Evidence from environmental archaeology can also be used to directly examine human responses to environmental change at a fine level of resolution. One of the biggest challenges our world now faces is climate change. Another is environmental degradation and its effects on human communities. However, these challenges are not just modern phenomena. By comparing environmental data to human responses over the long *durée* we can gain insights into the resilience of ancient communities and their skill and resolve to adapt. This allows us to investigate not just their way of life, but the strategies that can be used in the present day to adapt to future environmental challenges.

Over the millennia people across the world have developed a range of resilient strategies to buffer against the extremes of climate and thrive in the most challenging of environments. With a focus on hunter-gatherers and early (pre-modern) farming communities (Mesolithic to Medieval), this conference aims to explore and discuss differing adaptations to both climate change and challenging environments. Looking back through history and deep into prehistory, we can examine ways in which human populations adapted to new and variable conditions; be these variations in temperature or precipitation, flooding or drought. How readily a community could adapt was determined by their subsistence economy and the risk management strategies they employed. Human resilience in the past can also be examined in relation to the settlement and exploitation of marginal environments, such as the cold climates of the North, mountainous terrain, islands and coasts, wetlands and arid deserts.



Landscape from Lysebotn – Annette Øvrelid

Abstract Submission – Now Open!

We invite all papers on environmental archaeology but particularly welcome papers on the following themes:

Living in Remote and Challenging Environments

Hunter-gatherer and Early (Pre-Modern) Farming Adaptations (Mesolithic – Medieval)

Identifying Resilience and Risk Management Strategies in the Past

Adaptations to Past Climate Changes e.g. 4.2k Event, Little Ice Age

We also encourage Nordic investigations into these themes.

Presentation Formats (In-person presentations only): We accept oral presentations (15 minutes), lightning presentations (5 minutes) and posters.

Abstract submission is now open and can be accessed via this [link](#) or the QR code below.



Preliminary Schedule (Subject to slight changes once abstract submission is complete)**Thursday 4th December**

Registration from 11.00

Welcome at 13.00

Sessions from 13.30 – 16.00 (including tea breaks with snacks)

Keynote 16.30 – 17.30

Welcome drinks reception with nibbles 17.30 – 19.00

Friday 5th December

Sessions from 09.00 – 12.00 (including tea breaks)

Lunch served in museum café 12.00 – 13.00

Sessions from 13.00 – 14.00

Keynote 14.00 – 15.00

Use of public transport between venues

Afternoon at Jernaldergården 16.00 – 18.00 (Tours of Iron Age farm reconstruction)

Optional conference dinner at additional cost

Conference Dinner at Jernaldergården 18.30 – 23.00 (Pre-dinner drinks in the Iron Age farm reconstruction and dinner served in visitor centre café)

Saturday 6th December

Sessions from 09.00 – 12.00 (including tea breaks)

Lunch served in museum café (12.00 – 13.00)

Sessions from 13.00 – 14.00

Poster session from 14.00 – 15.00

Sessions from 15.00 -16.30 (including tea breaks)

Closing discussion 16.30 – 17.00

Information on Keynote Speakers

We are delighted to announce two keynote speakers for the 45th AEA conference in Stavanger.

Professor Kari Loe Hjelle

Dean – Museum Director, University of Bergen,
Norway

Research Interests:

Pollen analysis
Quantitative reconstructions
Pollen deposition – vegetational relationships
Cultural landscape development
Agricultural history
Use of plants through time



Professor Peter Rowley-Conwy

Professor Emeritus, Department of Archaeology,
Durham University, UK

Research Interests:

Eurasian mammal bones – especially pigs
Agricultural plants from archaeological sites
Scandinavian archaeology
Hunter-gatherers and origins of agriculture
History of archaeology

International Workgroup for Palaeoethnobotany

21st—25th July 2025

The IWGP returns to Groningen

After a successful meeting of the International Work Group for Palaeoethnobotany in České Budějovice, the organization for the 20th IWGP conference in Groningen in 2025 is in full swing.

The organisation is a collaboration between the Groningen Institute of Archaeology, the Centre for Landscape Studies (University of Groningen) and the Cultural Heritage Agency (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science).

The IWGP was established in 1968 by, amongst others, Willem van Zeist and is one of the most important meetings for researchers specialised in paleoethnobotany in Europe and parts of Asia. The meeting has taken place triennially since its establishment, and the last Groningen IWGP was organised in 1983 by Willem van Zeist, Sytze Bottema and Wil Casparie. We are thus proud to once more represent the strong archaeobotanical tradition of Groningen, including an emphasis on studies of landscape history and cultural heritage of the Netherlands!

The conference will be held from 21st—25th July 2025, the post-conference excursion will take place on the 26th July 2025.

The conference will be held at the city of Groningen, the Netherlands. Further information about the venue and practicalities will follow soon.

Early bird scholar: € 250

Early bird (PhD) student: € 150

Late bird scholar: € 325

Late bird (PhD) student: € 195

(Early bird fees are applicable until the 28th of February 2025)

Dinner and party (24th July): € 50

Excursion (26th July): € 50

You can register [here](#).

Information on stipends to attend the conference can be found [here](#).



Full session information can be found [here](#).

Session 1: Wild plant use in past societies

Session 2: Method development within archaeobotany

Session 3: Archaeobotanical 'storytelling': developing science-based narratives and dissemination activities for different audiences

Session 4: Exploring the archaeobotany of food

Session 5: Data sharing and FAIR principles in archaeobotany

Session 6: Plant management, plant cultivation & resilience

Session 7: Archaeobotany beyond binary oppositions:

Traditional Ecological Knowledge & fresh ways of understanding past plant-people interaction

Session 8: Global plant domestication

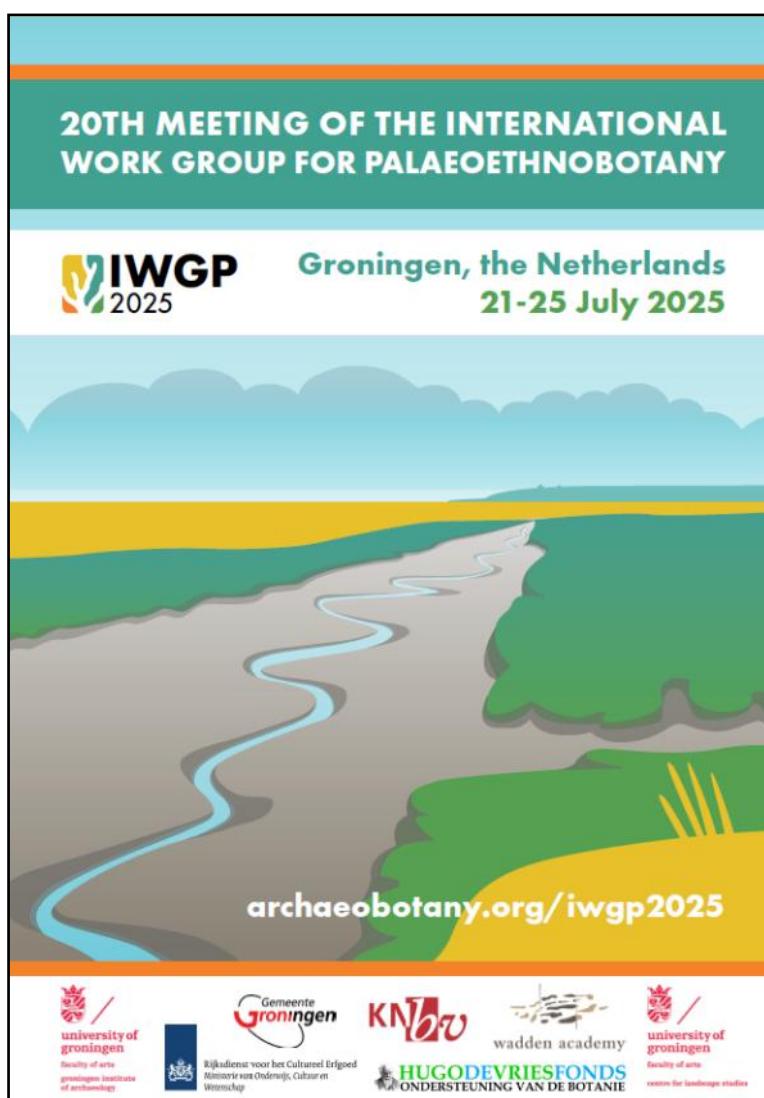
Session 9: The archaeobotany of settlements and urban landscapes

Session 10: Innovations and legacies in medieval agriculture

Session 11: The movement of plants

Session 12: General session

For queries please contact iwgp2025@rug.nl



45^e RENCONTRES INTERNATIONALES D'ARCHÉOLOGIE ET D'HISTOIRE DE NICE CÔTE D'AZUR

organisées par :

ALEXANDRA BIVOLARU, NICOLAS NAUDINOT, TATIANA THEODOROPOULOU

Océans, littoraux, îles et sociétés

fluctuations environnementales, activités humaines
et défis socio-environnementaux à travers le temps

*Oceans, coasts, islands, and societies:
Environmental fluctuations, human activities,
and socio-environmental entanglements over time*

Nice

14-17 octobre 2025

cepam.rencontres-de-nice@univ-cotedazur.fr

Funded by
the European UnionEuropean Research Council
Established by the European Commission

45th International Archaeology and History Meetings of Nice Côte d'Azur

45th International Archaeology and History Meetings of Nice Côte d'Azur

Oceans, coasts, islands, and societies:

Environmental fluctuations, human activities, and socio-environmental entanglements over time

The 2025 edition of the Nice Meetings aligns with the events organized for the **Year of the Sea** (September 2024-September 2025) and will conclude a year rich in scientific events in Nice, including the **United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC2025)**. In the Anthropocene era, marine and coastal ecosystems are subjected to numerous pressures, both climatic and anthropogenic. Facing this unprecedented degradation, which directly impacts societal aspects, the scientific community has been utilizing retrospective approaches in recent years through the study of archives from the past. These research efforts aim to compare the weight of past climatic and anthropogenic impacts with those of the present to assess the resilience of marine ecosystems to these various pressures. Moreover, studying marine and coastal environments in the past also involves understanding human societies and their adaptation to these changing environments. The 45th International History and Archaeology Meetings of Nice Côte d'Azur aim to bring together studies from paleo-environmental, archaeological, and historical perspectives, exploring oceans, coastlines, and the interactions with the human societies that have inhabited and exploited these environments.

The 2025 conference aims to tackle different aspects and scales of socio-ecosystem resilience related to oceans and coastlines through various lenses. Attention will be given to studies on the mineral or organic components of marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as their evolution across different time scales, which can indicate the exposure of these areas to paleoenvironmental and climatic variations (*1/ The impacts of climatic and environmental fluctuations on marine, coastal, and island geo-ecosystems: the shifting territories of past human societies*). Initial signs of anthropogenic pressures will also be examined. The value of assessing the conditions of oceans and coastlines in the past is only starting to be recognized and measured, especially for earlier periods, through interdisciplinary and innovative approaches (*2/ The origins of anthropogenic pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems: integrated approaches*). Additionally, these environmental changes affect not only ecosystems and landscapes but also the communities living near these ecosystems. To better understand how past societies adapted to these changing environments over time, the conference will explore changes in settlement patterns along coastlines, social practices, economic structures, and the cultural identity of coastal communities (*3/ Evolutions of marine and coastal spaces, evolutions of activities and perceptions—human adaptations over time*). Today, the effects of these changes also impact coastal heritage, often submerged, eroded, and vulnerable overall. Heritage sites offer a unique perspective to study current community responses to these challenges, combining scientific and traditional knowledge, utilizing modern technologies, and involving citizen science (*4/ Between sea and memory: how environmental changes shape societies and their coastal eco-archaeological heritage*).

All these approaches will contribute to a comprehensive assessment of the socio-ecosystemic resilience of oceans and coastlines over the long term.

Keywords: *oceans, coastlines, climatic forces, environmental fluctuations, anthropogenic pressures, coastal areas, perception of fluctuations, human adaptations, preservation of coastal and submerged heritage, sustainable management, valorization.*

Sessions

1/ The impacts of climatic and environmental fluctuations on marine, coastal, and island geo-ecosystems: the changing territories of past human societies

This session delves into the historical climatic and environmental changes, emphasizing their impacts on marine, coastal, and island geo-ecosystems. It explores the diverse challenges that human societies have faced, such as adapting to sea level fluctuations, coastal deformations induced by sedimentary budgets, and shifts in local ecosystems. These changes, often abrupt, are the result not only of natural factors but also of intensive human activities, like deforestation, that exacerbate environmental dynamics. Through an interdisciplinary approach that merges geoarchaeology, geomorphology, and environmental history, this session aims to analyze geo-systems from source-to-sink approach. The objective is to craft a diachronic analytical framework that enhances, in a non-deterministic approach, our understanding of how climatic and environmental changes have influenced the trajectories of human societies over time.

Keywords: climate and environmental changes; interdisciplinary studies; geoarchaeology; environmental history

2/ The origins of anthropogenic pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems: integrated approaches

In recent years, the scientific community has been increasingly focusing on the early anthropogenic impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems. These impacts are only now starting to be appreciated and measured, and are estimated to have begun much earlier than previously thought. This session aims to present various records that reflect these pressures, along with new interdisciplinary approaches that allow for the identification and assessment of their impact on oceans and coastlines in the past across different spatial and temporal scales. By analyzing the consequences of human activities (deforestation, agriculture, terrace systems, coastal developments, fishing, harvesting), on both abiotic (in terms of sedimentation, pollution, and erosion) and biotic (reduction in sizes, rarity of taxa) aspects, these studies will contribute to a better understanding of the enduring impact of human societies on ecosystems and the resulting environmental feedbacks.

Keywords: pristine ecosystems; anthropogenic pressures; coastal deformations; marine organisms

3/ Evolutions of marine and coastal areas, human activities, and perceptions over time

The goal of this session is to explore, in a diachronic manner, the organization of human activities in response to changes along coastlines. We will examine the evolution of settlement patterns along the coast, economic structures, and the social connections between communities and the changing marine, island, and coastal spaces. We will address the theme of "sea as a resource" by questioning the role of these environments and their resources, whether organic or mineral, for food or craftsmanship. This session will also provide an opportunity to discuss perceptions of these marine and coastal spaces and their transformations, their conceptualization as both stable and mutable spaces, and their appropriation at varying paces.

Keywords: human settlements; subsistence activities; social practices; perceptions of coastal areas

4/For millennia, coastal societies had to adapt to environmental transformations, whether it be rising sea levels, storms, or fluctuations in marine and coastal ecosystems. Today, these transformations also impact archaeological heritage, which is often submerged, eroded, and deteriorated. Furthermore, coastal ecosystems, which often play a key role in the protection and preservation of these sites (such as mangroves or coral reefs), are themselves subjected to unprecedented environmental pressures. This session aims to explore the perception of current environmental changes on a human scale and the social and cultural interactions it generates in terms of management, preservation, and valorization of coastal eco-archaeological heritage. The dialogue between past and present, between the responses of ancient and contemporary societies, can inform us about the types and degrees of resilience in the face of these transformations.

Keywords: submerged and coastal heritage; cultural identity; sustainable management; resilience

Organisers: Alexandra Bivolaru (CEPAM, CNRS-Université Côte d'Azur), Nicolas Naudinot (MNHN, UMR 7194 HNHP, Paris), Tatiana Theodoropoulou (CEPAM, CNRS -Université Côte d'Azur)

Date: 14-17 October 2025

Venue: Nice

Registration: opening in July 2025

Deadline: proposals for papers should be sent before **June 25th**

Link to the call and submission form: <https://www.cepam.cnrs.fr/evenement/colloque-oceans-littoraux-iles-et-societes-fluctuations-environnementales-activites-humaines-et-defis-socio-environnementaux-a-travers-le-temps/>

Mediterranean Zooarchaeology News!

We are pleased to invite you to take part in the MED-Zooarch Network and the inaugural MED-Zooarch Symposium—a new initiative aimed at connecting zooarchaeologists across the Mediterranean region, without the need for formal membership.

We're excited to announce that abstract submission opened on the 1st of July 2025!

Symposium Dates: 29–31 January 2026

Submission Deadline: 30 September 2025

Format: Entirely online

Registration Fee: Free of charge

More Information: <https://www.artuklu.edu.tr/medzooarch>

We welcome participation from researchers at all career stages who are interested in collaborative, voluntary, and inclusive approaches to Mediterranean zooarchaeology.

Please also feel free to share this announcement with colleagues or networks who might be interested.

If you have any questions or would like further information, don't hesitate to reach out to us at: medzooarch@gmail.com

We look forward to your participation!

On behalf of the Organizing Team

MED-Zooarch Network & MED-Zooarch Symposium

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New ERA Chair relevant to Environmental Archaeology is appointed in Cyprus

ERA Chairs are a major instrument of the Horizon Europe programme to support building advanced research capacity in selected countries within the EU, typically for a five-year duration. Over the next five years, Professor Patrick Degryse, an international leader in isotope studies, will work at The Cyprus Institute as the ERA Chair in one Archaeological Science (*OneArchSci*) to develop new and improved analytical approaches, offering long-term opportunities in new research and training programmes. The ERA Chair in One Archaeological Science represents a significant success for The Cyprus Institute, further confirming its mission as a Center of Excellence for Cyprus and the region.

The project foresees the employment at Cyl of additional researchers specializing in isotope studies to ensure the sustainability of the initiative. Through this project, the analytical excellence of researchers at The Cyprus Institute will be expanded and strengthened to include isotope studies, for addressing key archaeological and environmental research questions in Cyprus and beyond. The aim is to make this new expertise widely available across sectorial boundaries, fostering links with government agencies, NGOs and SMEs.

Professor Patrick Degryse, the ERA Chair in One Archaeological Science, referred to the importance of the project, which, as he said, focuses on deepening the expertise in stable and heavy isotope studies across all archaeological sciences in a unifying approach for environmental archaeology, studies of human nutrition and mobility, and on research of archaeological materials.



Professor Patrick Degryse, ERA Chair in One Archaeological Science at The Cyprus Institute

New Zooarchaeology project in Cyprus

Long-term environmental resilience in Cyprus: the last 800 years of human-animal interactions with a view to the future

A new 2-year project focusing on environmental change in Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean region over the last 800 years has kicked off in June 2025. The project is titled 'Long-term environmental resilience in Cyprus: the last 800 years of human-animal interactions with a view to the future', funded by the Research & Innovation Foundation of the Republic of Cyprus and hosted at the Science and Technology in Archaeology and Culture Research Center (STARC) of The Cyprus Institute in Nicosia. Here follows a summary by the PI of the project, Angelos Hadjikoumis.

Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean are particularly impacted by the current climate crisis and future projections suggest increased negative impacts. Mitigation of and adaptation to this reality are thus pressing needs. Environmental change, natural or anthropogenic, has been a recurrent challenge that Cypriots faced and responded to with a diversity of adaptations. Archaeology is uniquely poised to contribute long-term records of human adaptations to environmental change. The archaeological record of the last 800 years, especially on human-animal interactions, remains under-explored in Cyprus. Project RECEN800 aspires to establish a detailed record of human-animal interactions over the last 800 years, integrate it with climatic and historical records over the same period and reconstruct environmentally sustainable resilient management strategies that can help tackle current environmental problems.

This is achievable through a novel interdisciplinary methodology, spearheaded by zooarchaeology and complemented by stable isotopes, dental microwear, data from historical sources and ethnography. Zooarchaeology documents the physical aspects of animal management (species composition, mortality, sex ratios, size/shape, etc.), stable isotope and dental microwear analyses provide further insights into animal management (seasonality of births and diet), historical sources contribute data on human-animal/plant interactions that are absent from or complement archaeological data, while ethnographic interviews first-hand experiences and data on 20th century management. These lines of evidence enable a holistic approach that encompasses economic, social, cultural practices and environmental management, which is necessary due to the diversity of factors shaping human-animal interactions. Publications, workshops and meetings with stakeholders, as well as a

Concluded project in Cyprus

The Animals REsilient in TIme (ARETI) Project: Unravelling the genetic, economic and cultural history of cattle in Cyprus from prehistoric times to the present

Concluding Remarks

The indigenous cattle breed of Cyprus is the island's only native cattle breed, having evolved and adapted over millennia to local environmental conditions and rural traditions. Like many Mediterranean breeds, it is currently endangered, with a population of approximately 1,200 animals. **Animals REsilient in TIme (ARETI)** is a research project funded by the A.G. Leventis Foundation that set out to explore the economic, cultural, and genetic history of Cyprus's indigenous cattle from antiquity to the present. The project brought together expertise from The Cyprus Institute, the Cyprus Agricultural Research Institute, and the Smurfit Institute of Genetics at Trinity College Dublin. To highlight the breed's diverse value and promote its conservation, ARETI employed a multidisciplinary approach, integrating zooarchaeology, history, genetics, archival research, ethnography, and folklore studies. This holistic methodology revealed the significant economic and cultural roles cattle have played in Cyprus, and confirmed the breed's long-term—and possibly continuous—presence from the 1st millennium BC to the present day, underscoring its significant socio-cultural importance for Cyprus. Furthermore, high-throughput DNA microarray analysis of 96 contemporary Cyprus cattle samples demonstrated significant genetic differentiation from other indigenous breeds in Greece and Turkey, as well as from all commercial cattle breeds currently present in Cyprus. Beyond its scientific contributions, ARETI actively fostered community engagement through specialised seminars for breeders, collaborations **with local artists**, and the production of a documentary to raise public awareness. This integrated model offers a valuable framework for attributing value and promoting the conservation of other endangered breeds and landraces in Cyprus, the broader Mediterranean, and beyond.

Anna Spyrou,
Post Doctoral Researcher
Science and Technology in Archaeology and Culture Research Centre
The Cyprus Institute
Nicosia, Cyprus



Cattles of Cyprus



Research Piece

Traces of the Colonial past: Analysis of the degradation of osteological material in Itapiúna, Ceará, Brazil

Archaeological excavations at the Itans chapel in Itapiúna, Ceará, Brazil, during 2015 restoration efforts, unearthed a collection of skeletal remains from post-contact burials. This preliminary report announces an ongoing investigation into the conservation of these osteological materials. Histochemical analyses and sediment pH testing will be conducted to make it clear the key factors contributing to the bones' deterioration. Visual documentation of the excavation context and related structures where bioarchaeological remains were found is provided in Figures 1a, b, and c.



Figure 1: The progression of excavation at the chapel's central area: a. Frontal view of the altar area during trenching, b. a segment of wood separating sediment layers containing bone remains c. the distribution of the identifiable human bone remains. Source: Instituto Cobra Azul (ICA) collection, 2015.

The context of the chapel is in understanding post-burial processes that have affected the deterioration of the remains over time. Located roughly two hundred meters from a watercourse, the village's low elevation results in water accumulation during rain, a phenomenon documented during excavations (Fig. 2 - 3). Excavations revealed that subsurface runoff caused significant humidity, reaching almost one meter above ground level in the village.



Figures 2-3: Archaeologists removing water from the excavation spot and accumulated water in the original foundation of the chapel, respectively. Source: ICA collection, 2015.

Osteological remains were primarily unearthed from the chapel's central nave. However, subsequent renovations, as detailed in NOBRE et al. (2024), included lowering the floor and reusing sediment for fill, leading to the relocation of some bone material to the more recently constructed right transept.



Figure 4: Scattered and fragmented bone remains found during the excavation of the central nave of the chapel. Source: ICA collection 2015.

These renovations also suggest that fragmentation of the osteological material may have resulted from the renovation activities themselves. Considering the numerous impacts these remains experienced while *in situ*, this study seeks to determine the extent to which underground water flow during rainy periods and soil pH contributed to the degradation of the material by altering its physical-chemical structure and/or promoting microbial and fungal activity (PEZO-LANFRANCO) (Fig. 4).

Archaeological excavation methods for human bones and bioarchaeological materials in general at the site followed a multi-stage approach for data interpretation. The excavation area, encompassing trenches and boreholes, was initially mapped and stratified layers identified. Sediment removal proceeded in 10cm artificial layers using delicate tools like brushes and wooden implements to protect the fragile remains. Upon discovery, bone fragments were meticulously uncovered, their position, orientation, and quantity recorded. All recovered bones were fragmented and intermingled, with no complete skeletons found. Each fragment was individually identified, cataloged, and removed, ensuring context was maintained. Soil samples were also collected for laboratory pH analysis to investigate diagenesis. The preservation state of the bones was assessed to determine suitable conservation measures. Subsequently, these bioarchaeological remains were taken to the laboratory for physical and morphological analysis to reconstruct the biological and cultural aspects of the individuals buried in this sacred space (Fig. 05).



Figure 5: Teeth and cranium fragments of some of the bioarchaeological remains currently being analyzed at the Federal University of Ceará.

Preliminary examination reveals that select samples are presently undergoing DNA extraction and sequencing. This process aims to generate data pertaining to the communities that inhabited, participated in, and ultimately met their end in these specific locales and regions.

Reference:

PEZO-LANFRANCO, Luis Nicanor. **Bioarqueologia e antropologia forense: métodos de escavação, recuperação e curadoria de ossos humanos.** São Paulo, Brazil Publishing, 1^a edição, 2021.

NOBRE, J. N. de S., FREIRES, B. A., NASCIMENTO, R. A. CAVALCANTE NETO, J. M., SANTOS, R. D. dos, MACHADO, D. L., CHAVES, R. B. Escavação arqueológica na obra de restauração da capela de Itans – Itapiúna-CE. IN: **Revista Tarairiú**, Campina Grande - PB, Volume 1 - Número 25– 2024.

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Special issue of Environmental Archaeology Invitation

Special Issue title:

“Baskets and Their Belongings: Archaeobotany and Conservation of Vegetal Basketry Objects and Their Vegetal Content”¹

Summary of the Special Issue:

The ancient basketry craft transitioned through the entire human history – from the early prehistoric human groups to the contemporary market of the 21st century. Basket-making is a trans-geographical and pervasive activity, resulting in products of diverse shapes, sizes, raw materials and functions as they service a wide utilisation spectrum by humans. Basketry is also strongly related to the vegetal raw material, including woody and non-woody plants, allowing for the creation of objects not only of different dimensions but also with specific properties such as durability, heavy load-resistivity, excellent ventilation or even waterproofness.

On the other hand, basketry products are often chosen for the storage, transportation and processing of raw materials or products of plant origin (consumables and non-consumables). Sometimes, a single plant may offer its different plant parts for both – a basket and its content. Examples of that could be some cereal species with stems and leaves appropriate for weaving, but also with a good grain yield which could be subsequently stored in a basket; or some tree species that provide outstanding properties for basket-making, but once shaped into a basket could also contain woody materials. The crucial role of conservation science is to uncover, document and preserve these objects, ensuring archaeobotanical analysis of both the baskets and their contents. This particular link between the vegetal basketry object, its vegetal content (alimentary and non-alimentary) and their conservation is what we aim to explore in the current special issue.

How to participate:

-> Submit your abstract to the three guest editors of this Special Issue by April, 30th 2025.

-> If your abstract is accepted, then submit your paper directly to Environmental Archaeology, indicating that your submission is for the Special Issue, entitled “Baskets and Their Belongings: Archaeobotany and Conservation of Vegetal Basketry Objects and Their Vegetal Content” by August, 31st 2025.

Please note that each paper is subject to a separate production process and will be made available online as soon as it is accepted, even if this is before the completion of all submissions for the volume.

Guest Editors of the Special Issue:

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¹ This special issue of Environmental Archaeology stems from session #975 entitled “Baskets and their belongings: Archaeobotany and conservation of vegetal basketry objects and their vegetal contents” which took part in the 30th Annual Meeting of the Association of European Archaeologists in La Sapienza University, Rome (28th–31st August 2024).

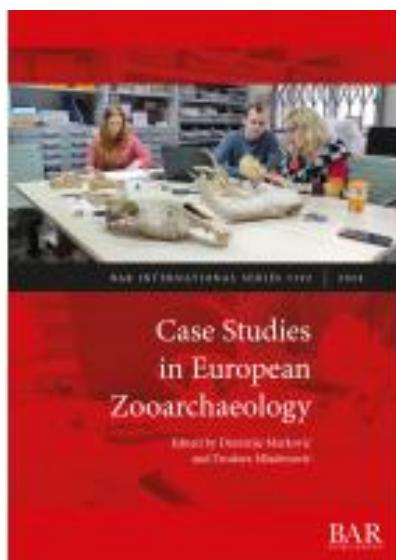
Book Review

Marković, D., Mladenović, T. (eds.) 2024. *Case studies in European Zooarchaeology*. BAR International Series 3192. Oxford: BAR Publishing. 142 pages. ISBN 9781407361918. £40.00

According to the Editor's Note, the book is intended to provide "additional support for smaller case studies that are increasingly difficult to publish today." As large-scale and expensive analyses are ever more featured in international publications, the book follows a seldom-seen path in zooarchaeological research, mostly highlighting smaller, more traditional approaches to zooarchaeology and human-animal relations. The majority of the chapters result from the 9th Postgraduate Zooarchaeology Forum that took place online in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The papers contribute to opening lines of research at the geographical, chronological, or thematic level. Human-animal relations are explored from the Magdalenian to the Medieval periods, and from Spain to Bulgaria. Drawing on diverse datasets, they primarily focus on site-specific analysis and regional comparisons, from biogeochemical and technological studies to discussions of subsistence and symbolic behavior.

Cerezo-Fernández and colleagues present the technological analysis of four unpublished "bevelled tools" recovered in the Magdalenian levels of Tito Bustillo Cave (Spain). Experimental studies involved the removal of the brow tine and the modification into a bevelled tool, enabling the description of two different operational sequences with similar morphological results, but whose technical production sequence is different from the archaeological specimens. Future functional analysis will help characterize these lightly modified but important tools.

Tomac evaluates animal exploitation at two middle to late Neolithic sites from eastern Croatia, Kremenača and Topole, while comparing the results at the supra-regional level. Taxonomy and anatomy composition, kill-off patterns, and taphonomy allow for discussion of food processing and consumption, and animal husbandry, with a focus on cattle, which were the most prevalent. Prillo and colleagues assess animal exploitation in the Middle Neolithic of Piano dei Cardoni, located on the small volcanic island of Ustica. Among others, the assemblage is dominated by caprines and other mammals, birds, and mollusks. Regional comparison, including insular and continental Sicilian sites, demonstrates differing strategies from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age due to ecological, socio-cultural, and ritual factors. Messana and colleagues apply biogeochemistry to the Mas Castellar de Pontós (Spain) Iron Age rural settlement. Sequential oxygen isotope analysis of sheep tooth enamel from a small sample is done to acquire life-history data on birth seasonality, duration of the lambing period, and sheep lambing deseasoning. Distinct demographic management strategies, with natural and "out-of-season" births, show an important human manipulation, probably related to intensive secondary product exploitation or an increase in herd size.



Book Review

Savić offers an iconographic study of crocodile motifs. Scenes showing crocodiles, generally considered a symbol of Egypt, are depicted on the Nile together with other zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, and floral motifs in fitting environments, with hunting, fighting, and erotic scenes. Both spatial and temporal criteria were applied to look at the Nile crocodile representation anomalies (also related to the skill of the artist) and their significance in Egyptian, Roman, and Christian cultures. Pazos and colleagues address the faunal record from the Hispano-Roman *villae* of Almenara de Adaja-Puras (Spain). Cattle and caprines dominate the assemblage, with mostly adults followed by sub-adult individuals. Besides common fauna analysis, the authors delve into understudied butchery practices, and the data is integrated to reconstruct meat processing and different species exploitation strategies. Marković and Petković consider the inclusion of animals in Roman human cremation burials from the Davidovac-Gradište necropolis (Serbia). They identify a prevalence of pig and chicken, followed by caprines and cattle, suggesting that some remains originated from the sedimentary matrix, while others relate to the funerary ceremony (feasting and post-cremation food offerings). The buried individuals' sex or age does not relate to specific body parts or species.

With Mladenović and Bondžulić, we discuss Late Antiquity and Early Byzantine exploitation of equids and camels in Serbia. Abundance, anatomic profiles, demographics, pathologies, and butchery practices are considered according to chronology and settlement type. Equids and camels are deemed beasts of burden, albeit with different uses and chronological specificities. Older individuals' consumption appears to have been occasional and related to the difficult times resulting from ongoing battles. The Site 7 (Bulgaria) Late Medieval occupation included four pits that yielded eggshells and other faunal remains: cattle, dog, sheep, goat, pig, horse, duck, fish, and mussel. Similar pits with animal bones and eggs are unknown in Bulgaria. Vasileva and Vladova discuss this data together with the features and associated materials, suggesting a ritualized function rather than simple food-refuse disposal. Mladenović and Vranić analyze the Middle Ages in Serbia. Written, iconographic, archaeological, and zooarchaeological data from different types of settlements allow for discussing hunting and its varying roles. The authors address socio-cultural, economic, and subsistence factors, and how these relate to species, techniques, and types of hunting. Historical and zooarchaeological records are not in accordance, possibly due to the latter's information bias, such as the number of assemblages, sample size, and recovery technique.

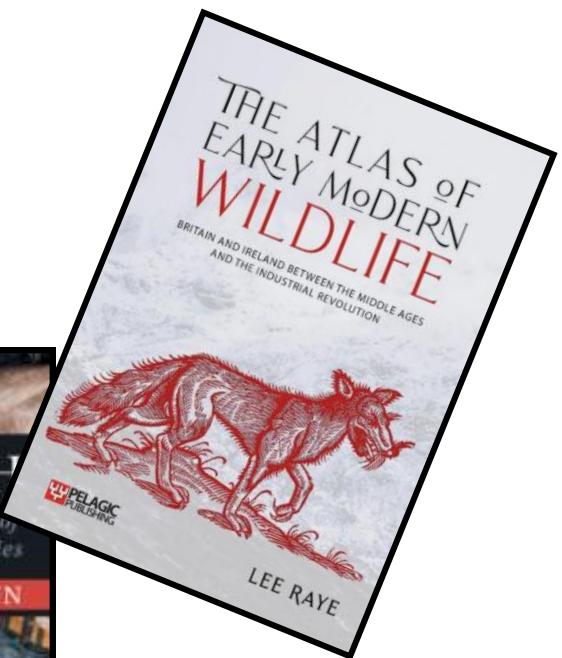
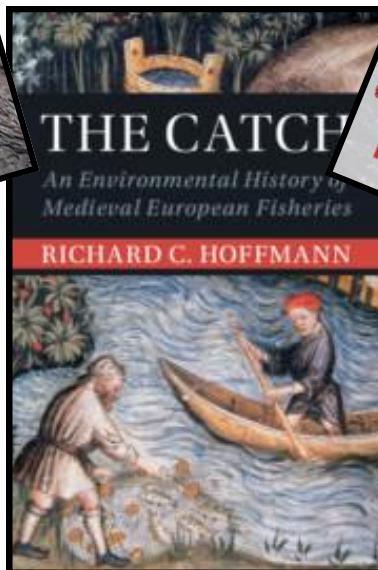
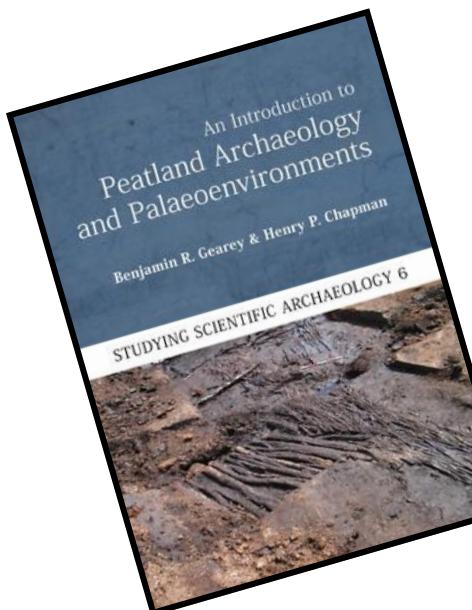
Overall, the different contributions have a balanced editorial space, are well-written, and are accompanied by informative tables and figures. They focus on understudied human-animal relations topics in the different regions with varying degrees of research "maturity". The authors openly acknowledge sampling constraints, data limitations, and unresolved questions, while also outlining future research directions. Despite some chronological and geographical gaps, the book succeeds in its aim of highlighting "smaller case" studies on European archaeology. This is a valuable scholarly contribution and of interest to readers of this newsletter, from students to specialists looking at zooarchaeological and cross-disciplinary studies on human-animal relations.

Nelson J. Almeida, Universidade de Évora, Escola de Ciências Sociais, CHAIA / IN2PAST; UNIARQ, Universidade de Lisboa (nelson.almeida@uevora.pt)

Book Reviews

The AEA has a long history of reviewing the latest book releases and the AEA newsletter is now home to these book reviews.

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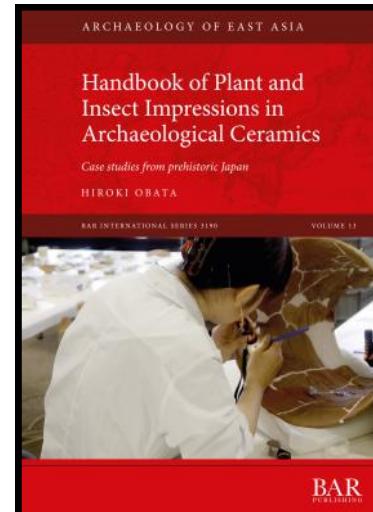
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Handbook of Plant and Insect Impressions in Archaeological Ceramics

Case studies from prehistoric Japan

Hiroki Obata

Focussing on examples from prehistoric Japan, this book provides a case study of the use of impressions analysis techniques. New insights include evidence of soybean cultivation, pest infestations in chestnut storage, and the cohabitation of cockroaches alongside humans. This handbook introduces these new methodologies to an international audience, opening up opportunities for pottery impressions analysis worldwide.



La fauna del villaggio dell'età del Ferro di Bressanone-Stufles (Alto Adige, Italia)

Indagini archeozoologiche e paleoecologiche nel quadro della protostoria padano-alpina

Claudia Brosseder

Silvia Eccher *In Italian with English and German forewords*

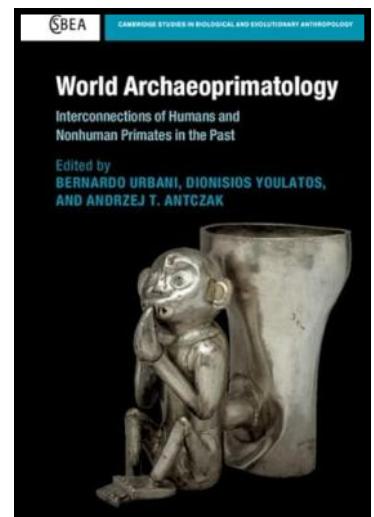
The large animal bone assemblage analysed in this study, which includes published data from previous publication as well as unpublished materials, made it possible to formulate hypotheses on the palaeo-economy adopted by the human group inhabiting this village and to establish a socio-economic model for the Rhaetian area.



World Archaeoprimatology

Bernardo Urbani

Archaeoprimatology intertwines archaeology and primatology to understand the ancient liminal relationships between humans and nonhuman primates. During the last decade, novel studies have boosted this discipline. This edited volume is the first compendium of archaeoprimatological studies ever produced. Written by a culturally diverse group of scholars, with multiple theoretical views and methodological perspectives, it includes new zooarchaeological examinations and material culture evaluations, as well as innovative uses of oral and written sources.

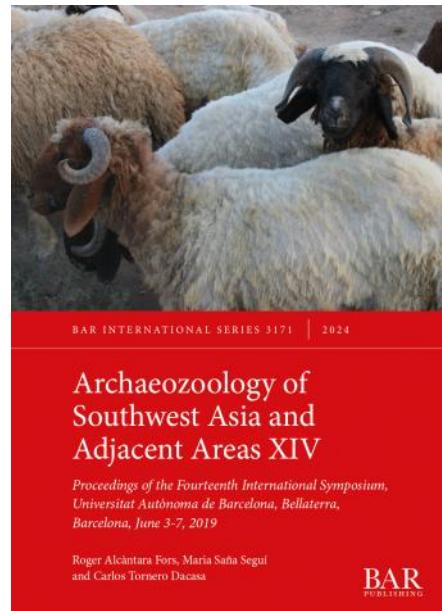


Archaeozoology of Southwest Asia and Adjacent Areas XIV

Roger Alcàntara Fors, Maria Saña Seguí and Carlos Tornero Dacasa

This volume represents a collection of papers resulting from the Archaeozoology of Southwest Asia Working group meeting held in Barcelona in 2019, when early-career and well-established researchers debated on nearly 10,000 years of adaptation and change in human-animal interactions. The 14 chapters in this volume range from the Neolithic to the Byzantine period, travelling through the regions of modern Turkey, Syria, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Egypt, among others.

Intertwining new archaeological and archaeozoological data, this volume reviews the development of complementary food acquisition strategies. These approaches to understanding fishing, hunting and husbandry practices discuss adaptation and perseverance against constant social, cultural, economic and political change. They reveal changes through time in food preferences, preparation and storage, the social value of animals, as well as their incredibly adaptive nature.

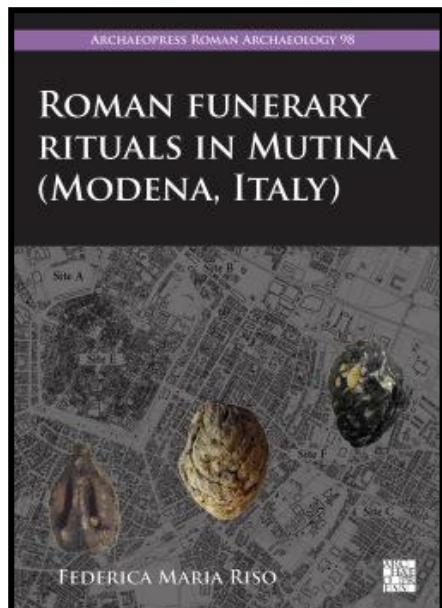


Roman Funerary Rituals in Mutina (Modena, Italy)

Federica Maria Riso

This book presents the results of a research project undertaken in collaboration with the University of Huddersfield. The project sought to identify and reconstruct the funerary space and rituals of the necropolis in Mutina (now Modena) in the period between the first century BC and second century AD.

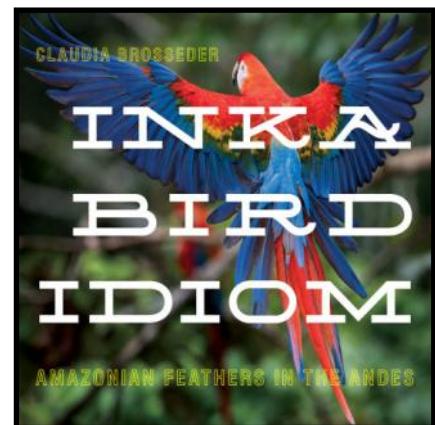
The research is a key example of integrated analyses, linking the different results in the same interpretative system and supporting traditional strategies (archaeology and archaeobotany) with advanced technology (SAXS, CT-scan). The archaeobotanical remains (seeds and fruit) and the objects involved in the ceremonies constitute an important investigatory lens to reconstruct the mortuary rituals and attendance at the funerary space.



Inka Bird Idiom. Amazonian Feathers in the Andes**Claudia Brosseder**

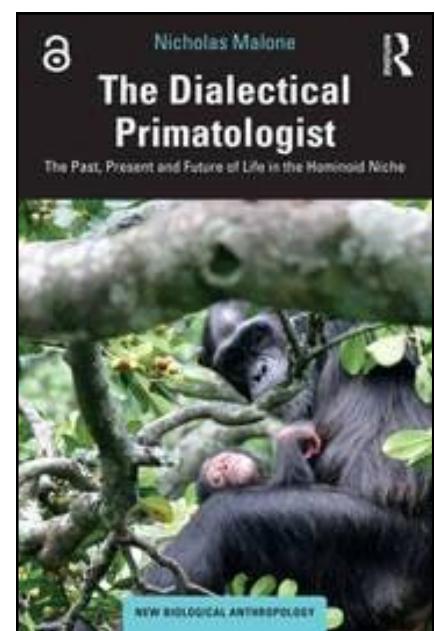
How Indigenous People Used Feathers as a Significant Way of Symbolic Communication in the Andes

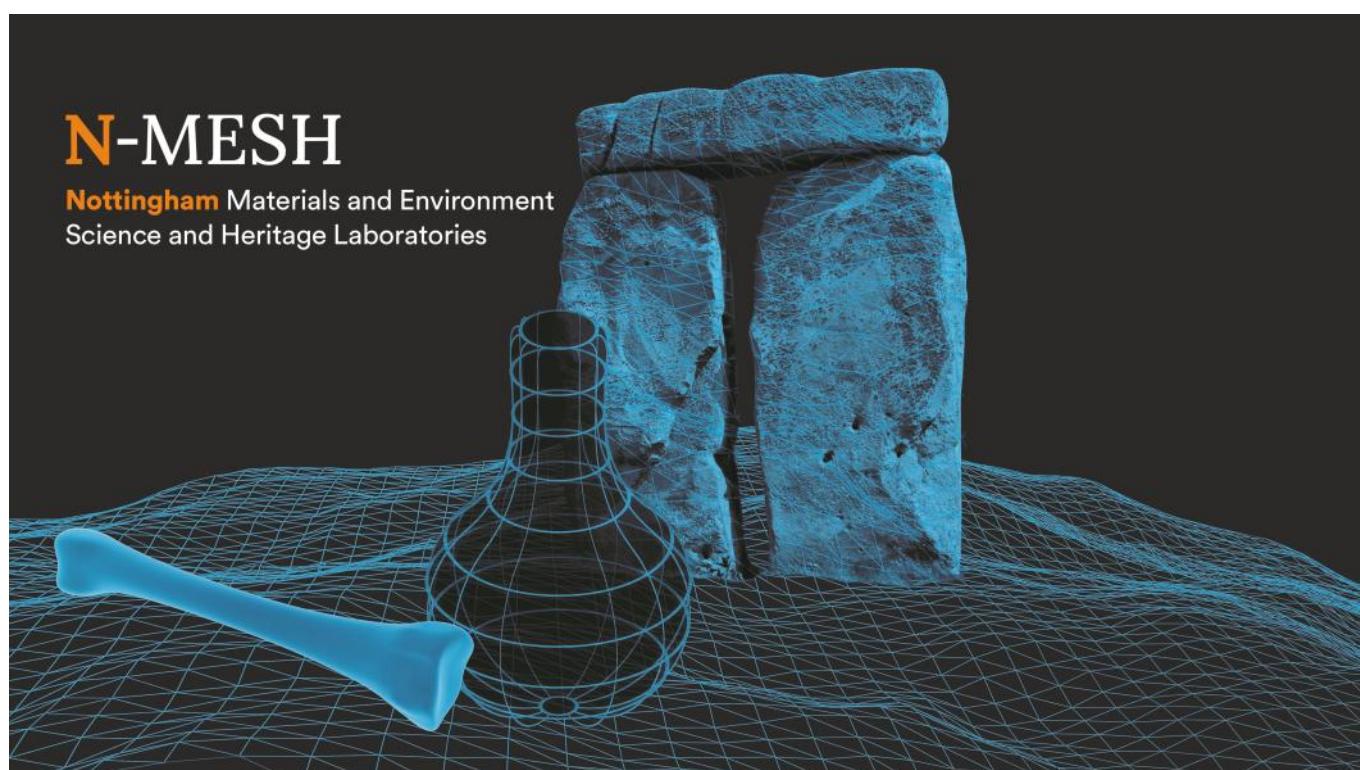
From majestic Amazonian macaws and highland Andean hawks to tiny colorful tanagers and tall flamingos, birds and their feathers played an important role in the Inka empire. Claudia Brosseder uncovers the many meanings that Inkas attached to the diverse fowl of the Amazon, the eastern Andean foothills, and the highlands. She shows how birds and feathers shaped Inka politics, launched wars, and initiated peace. Feathers provided protection against unpredictable enemies, made possible communication with deities, and brought an imagined Inka past into a political present.

**The Dialectical Primatologist****Nicholas Malone**

The Dialectical Primatologist identifies the essential parameters vital for the continued coexistence of hominoids (apes and humans), synthesising primate research and conservation in order to develop culturally compelling conservation strategies required for the facilitation of hominoid coexistence.

This book will be of keen interest to academics in biological anthropology, primatology, environmental anthropology, conservation and human-animal studies.





N-MESH

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The N-MESH (Nottingham – Materials and Environmental Science and Heritage) group is a newly formed network across the University of Nottingham (UK) bringing together experts across a wide variety of areas from materials science to zooarchaeology. Of especial interest to AEA members will be our environmental science and bioarchaeology strands, which include ancient and environmental DNA, palaeoproteomics, osteology, stable and radiogenic isotope analysis (in collaboration with the British Geological Survey, Keyworth), pollen and microfossil analysis, XRF and pXRF, X-ray and micro-CT scanning, and high-resolution metrology including Alicona scanners. If you have a research project that is suitable for a British Academy, Leverhulme Trust, MSCA, UKRI-FLF or other postdoctoral fellowship and would like to use any of the above methods, do get in touch. Likewise if you are a commercial user with a need for one of the above techniques we welcome enquiries. Please contact Dr Holly Miller (Holly.Miller@Nottingham.ac.uk) or Prof. Hannah O'Regan (Hannah.Oregan@nottingham.ac.uk) for further info.

N-MESH link:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/arts/research/multidisciplinary-research-and-knowledge-exchange/n-mesh/n-mesh.aspx>

N-MESH

Nottingham Materials and Environment
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Trending in Environmental Archaeology



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Another feature of the Roman barn from the Cemex West Deeping Quarry is the presence of a granary in its northern part. Made from three parallel beam slots, the structure had clearly burnt down preserving distinct layers of grain, chaff and charcoal.



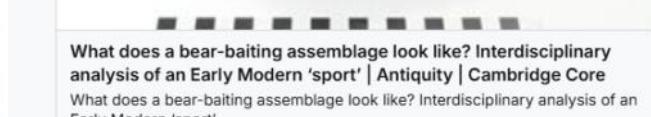
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IWGP

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AEA Autumn Conference

Abstract Submission Deadline: 15th August 2025

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Evi Margaritis