

Session proposal

Archaeology, Art and Spirituality during Prehistory and Protohistory

Archaeology and Arts of prehistoric and protohistoric chronologies contribute with excellent inputs for understanding the spirituality of early human cultures. For example, beliefs of spiritual character seem to go back as far as more than 80 000 years, regarding the Shanidar burials, which corpses were set in a foetal position and covered with flowers, transmitting an idea of rebirth or afterlife, as it is interpreted by several authors. Some millennia later, with the appearance of rock art, other examples of early spirituality can be seen on cave walls and on engravings on outcrops at open air of several parts of the world.

Megalithic funerary cults left not only grave goods, but also examples of prehistoric art, where hunting scenes and sun imagery, among other cases, evidence a belief in life afterlife.

There are also some examples of the existence of spiritual leaders, which role would be the mediation between the earthen and the celestial worlds, being also responsible for healing, directing ceremonies and transmitting knowledge. This last task, among non-literate societies, would be carried out by oral way or by messages of symbolic character, carved or painted in rocks in a frame of a semiotic and mnemonic value. The present session is interested in papers that will bring to discussion examples of spiritual character available either through material culture, or through prehistoric/protohistoric art, funerary practices, shamanism, archeoastronomy, sacred landscapes, animism and relational ontologies, among other cases that may reflect spirituality during Prehistory and Protohistory.

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