



Prehistoric research, Landscapes and Communities

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Keywords

Prehistory, Knowledge, Landscape, Community, Uncertainty

Abstract

Prehistoric research conveys a kind of knowledge of the past which is characterized by a rare combination of drivers: the very large time scales; the dealing with often completely different and for most unknown patterns of behavior, beliefs and constraints; the building of understandings of the past that are primarily anchored on tangible evidence; the permanent interdisciplinary nature of prehistoric science, from its dawn, two centuries ago. Furthermore, the socialization of prehistoric knowledge starts, also from its onset, with field work, engaging a vast majority of non-scholars (workers, undergraduate students, other volunteers) in the process of building the science data-sets (in surveys, excavations, site finds processing, and beyond).

Besides these avenues, prehistory is also characterized by a rare balance between detail and scenario: any reconstruction of the prehistoric past requires setting the evidences within a landscapes reconstruction, to assess processes of mobility, interaction, intensification, diffusion or autonomy; but there is no global understanding of any period or region in the prehistoric human past that cannot be challenged by a new site-based, or single-evidence based, often unattended discovery. This balance triggers reflections on the structure of datasets, on how episodes or short-term events can have significant relevance, for instance. This session aims to involve contributions on experiences or reflections on the impact of prehistoric research in the mindset and agency of contemporary societies, namely considering:

- Education
- Cognition
- Societal values
- Approach to science
- Approach to heritage
- Communities engagement with research
- Communities management of uncertainty

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