

SECRA Vita inter ruinas : 1st International Conference for Students & Early Career Researchers in Archaeology : Book of Abstracts

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**1ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR STUDENTS & EARLY CAREER
RESEARCHERS IN ARCHAEOLOGY**



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ZAGREB

14-16TH MAY, 2026

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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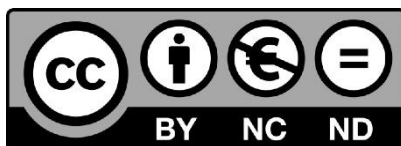
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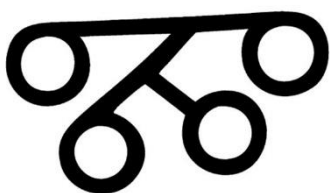
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Department of Archaeology, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

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This year's conference has been financially supported by the Department of Archaeology, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the University of Zagreb Student Center, and the Croatian Archaeological Society.

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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WELCOME REMARKS

Jelena Jakšić – Chair of the Organizing Committee

Dear Participants,

SECRA (*Students and Early Career Researchers in Archaeology*) was created to foster a welcoming, supportive space in which students and young archaeologists, regardless of their current level of study, can share their research and, for some, take their first steps along an academic path. From the beginning, we wanted the conference to be international, so that it could bring together a truly diverse group of young archaeologists with different backgrounds, perspectives, approaches, and research interests. We are therefore especially grateful to have welcomed over 40 participants from 11 countries, even spanning continents. We sincerely thank you for your trust and support.

Diversity has always been one of the greatest strengths of research. Sometimes a simple conversation with a colleague can open a new perspective, spark a fresh idea, or help shape the direction of one's work. Each of you brings something unique to this conference and helps make it what it was meant to be: a place where ideas can be shared, where research can be heard, and where new academic collaborations can begin. With that in mind, this Book of Abstracts brings together related themes from different areas of archaeology in the hope of encouraging discussion and fostering connections that may continue long after the conference itself.

Vita inter ruinas felt especially fitting as SECRA's motto. It captures something deeply familiar to archaeologists: the experience of spending one's life, both symbolically and literally, among ruins, trying to piece together the material traces of worlds long lost to the ravages of time. Through ancient remains, archaeology allows us to uncover stories that might otherwise have remained silent. This is where much of its beauty lies: in giving voice to those long gone, bringing forgotten lives back into view, and leaving us with a powerful sense that there is still so much more waiting to be discovered.

As Chair of the SECRA Organizing Committee, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the members of my committee for their hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm in bringing this event to life. Our special thanks go to our mentor, Professor Iva Kaić, for her invaluable help, guidance, and unwavering support throughout the organization's entire process. I would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our esteemed Scientific Committee and to our sponsors – the Department of Archaeology of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Croatian Archaeological Society, and the Student Center of the University of Zagreb – whose generosity and support have been instrumental in making this conference possible. Finally, I would like to thank all of you, our participants, whose presence, ideas, and enthusiasm truly give this meeting its meaning and, like little mosaic tesserae, together create the beauty of this conference.

On behalf of the entire SECRA Team, I would like to warmly welcome you to Zagreb and to the 1st International Conference for Students and Early Career Researchers in Archaeology. We hope your time here will be inspiring, rewarding, and enjoyable.

Iva Kaić – Mentor of the Organizing Committee

Dear Participants,

As higher education increasingly prioritizes international cooperation, academic mobility, and the dissemination of research beyond institutional boundaries, the need for a dedicated scholarly forum for students and early career researchers in archaeology has become clear. In response to this growing demand, the Archaeology Students' Club at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (KSA FFZG), in cooperation with the Department of Archaeology at the same faculty, established the 1st International Conference for Students & Early Career Researchers in Archaeology (SECRA). The conference was conceived as an academic platform that enables emerging scholars to present their individual research projects and engage in productive exchange with an international scholarly community.

The SECRA Conference is designed to promote critical discussion across a wide range of archaeological subfields and interdisciplinary approaches. Its main objective is to support the academic and professional development of early career researchers in archaeology by creating opportunities to present original research, exchange ideas, and interact with peers and experienced scholars in related disciplines. The conference fosters a welcoming and inclusive academic environment where participants can enhance their scholarly skills, broaden their research experience, and form valuable professional networks.

This publication brings together the abstracts of papers selected by the Conference Organizing Committee. The conference program includes presentations by 44 early career researchers and PhD candidates from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. These contributions are organized into eleven thematic sessions, reflecting the disciplinary and methodological diversity of the research presented.

On behalf of the Department of Archaeology, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all participants, students, early career researchers, doctoral candidates, session chairs, members of the Scientific Committee, conference sponsors, and everyone else whose efforts contributed to the organization and success of the SECRA Conference.

We warmly welcome all participants to the 1st International Conference for Students & Early Career Researchers in Archaeology (SECRA) and wish you an engaging, productive, and memorable conference experience.

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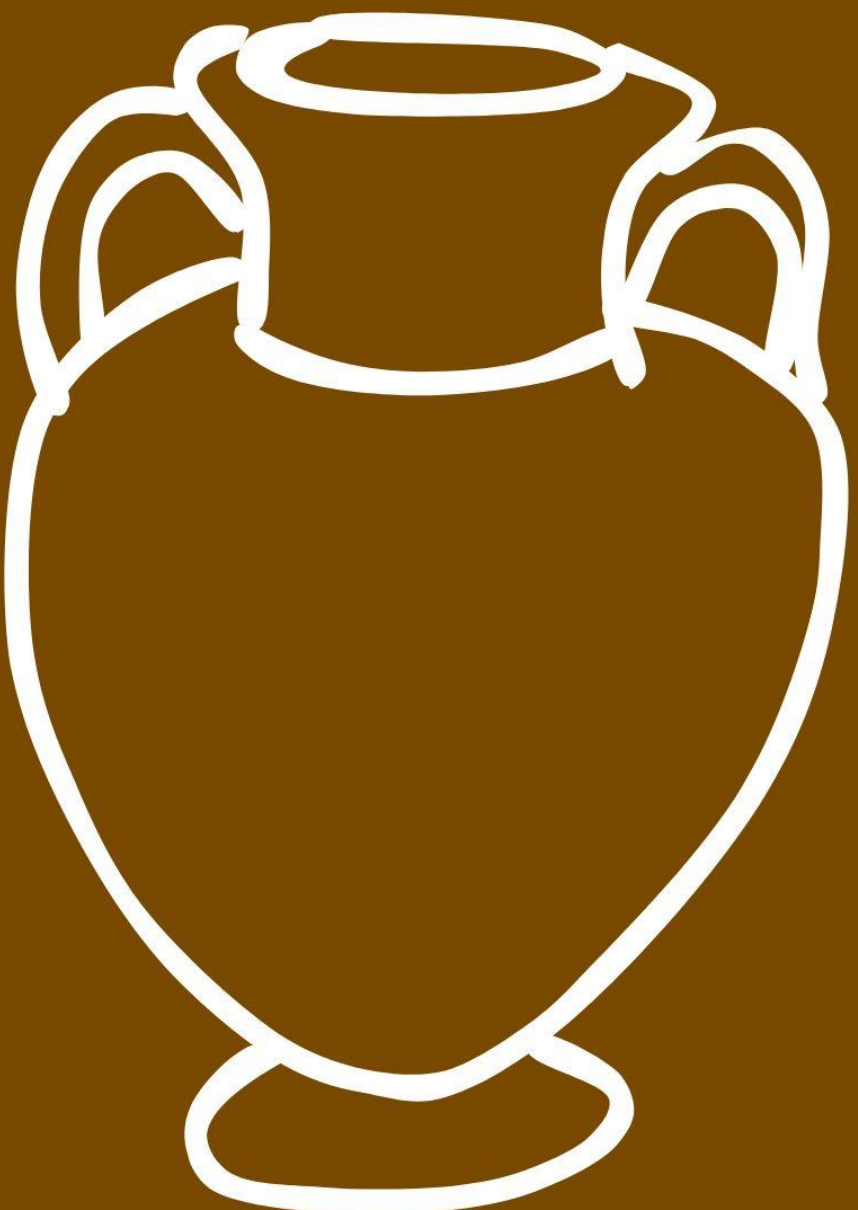
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Day 1 (09:00 – 14:00) – Conference Hall

08:30 – 09:00 – Registration

09:00 – 09:15 – Opening of the conference and welcome remarks

SESSION 1 (09:15 – 10:15) HERITAGE, FILM, AND PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Moderator: Asst. Prof. Ana Pavlović, PhD

09:15 – 09:30 – At the crossroads of Pedagogy and Archaeology: Stories from Archaeological Museums in Split (Antea Ivišić, Jolanda Pisac)

09:30 – 09:45 – Reframing Archaeology Through Film: MFAF Split (Antonia Mihovilović, Jolanda Pisac)

09:45 – 10:00 – Sudanese Archaeology in the Times of War and the Protection of Its Heritage (Nikkia Ren Nagy)

10:00 – 10:15 – Discussion time

10:15 – 10:30 – Coffee break

SESSION 2 (10:30 – 11:45) FIELD SURVEYS & NON-DESTRUCTIVE APPROACHES TO ARCHAEOLOGY

Moderator: Asst. Prof. Vinka Matijević, PhD

10:30 – 10:45 – Integrating Archaeology, LiDAR and Historical Research: The Late Medieval Fortification of Zenthjakab as a Case Study (Vid Đođo)

10:45 – 11:00 – Testing Non-Invasive Approaches for Assessing Archaeological Potential of Caves on the Example of Bela Krajina (Zvonka Janežič)

11:00 – 11:15 – Geomagnetic Prospection of Dežanovac-Petranovac site (Jan Nikolić)

11:15 – 11:30 – Field Survey of Potential Archaeological Sites in the Municipality of Lovinac and the Surrounding Area (Mario Škrilin)

11:30 – 11:45 – Discussion time

11:45 – 12:00 – Coffee break

12:00 – 12:30 – Keynote Lecture (Professor Dimitrij Mlekuž Vrhovnik, University of Ljubljana)

12:30 – 12:45 – Coffee break

SESSION 3 (12:45 – 14:00) LANDSCAPES, MOBILITY, AND THE ECONOMIES OF THE PAST

Moderator: Asst. Prof. Domagoj Bužanić, PhD

12:45 – 13:00 – Milestones, Small Milestones and Stone Structures along the Lujzijana Road: Examples from Netretić Municipality (Marko Kušan)

13:00 – 13:15 – From Late Roman to Early Medieval: Settlement Dynamics in the Upper Orbigo River Basin (Alejandra Mielgo Carrizo)

13:15 – 13:30 – Ancient Mining for Metals at Selected Sites of the Austrian and Slovenian Alps (Ina Flühr)

13:30 – 13:45 – The Economy of the Bronze Age in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Najda Rifatbegović)

13:45 – 14:00 – Discussion time

Social Program: City walk and visit to the Medvedgrad Brewery.

Day 2 (09:00 – 14:00) – Conference Hall

SESSION 4 (09:00 – 10:00) THE VISUAL LANGUAGE OF INSCRIPTIONS, ORNAMENTS, AND MATERIAL EXPRESSION

Moderator: Assist. Josip Parat, PhD

09:00 – 09:15 – The Functions of the Ancient Egyptian Monumental Inscriptions and Their Classification (Łukasz Byrski)

09:15 – 09:30 – King on His Boat in Royal Iconography of the Old Kingdom Egypt (Matěj Hruška)

09:30 – 09:45 – Histri 4.0: Experimental Insights into Visual Memory and Ornament Reproduction (Antonio Stojanovski, Tilen Prelič)

09:45 – 10:00 – Discussion time

10:00 – 10:15 – Coffee break

10:15 – 10:45 – Poster Session

SESSION 5 (10:45 – 11:45) MATERIAL TRACES ACROSS TIME: DEATH, BELIEF AND SOCIETY

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Nikola Vukosavljević, PhD

10:45 – 11:00 – Working with What Remains. A Case Study of Three Sword Burials from Tyrol (Florian Messner)

11:00 – 11:15 – Religious Customs in Prehistory and Protohistory: How Does One Deduce the Immaterial from the Material? (Franco Enio Todorović)

11:15 – 11:30 – Storage and Social Inequality in Archaeology Through the Lens of Legacy Data (Raúl Bagüés-Brocal)

11:30 – 11:45 – Discussion time

11:45 – 12:00 – Coffee break

SESSION 6 (12:00 – 13:15) FOODWAYS, TECHNOLOGY, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCE

Moderator: Prof. Zdravka Hincak Daris, PhD

12:00 – 12:15 – What Can Food Processing Reveal About Starvation in the Pleistocene? (Lovro Gall)

12:15 – 12:30 – Reconstructing Copper Age Plant Food Practices in Eastern Croatia through Phytolith and Starch Analysis (Mia Marijan)

12:30 – 12:45 – Interdisciplinary Study of Two Burials from Kharamis Didi Gora, Georgia (Ana Davitashvili)

12:45 – 13:00 – Ceramic Technology and Raw Material Use in Hatvan Culture Pottery: A multi-analytical Study from Večelnice, South-Central Slovakia (Daniel Pinzón)

13:00 – 13:15 – Discussion time

13:15 – 13:30 – Coffee break

SESSION 7 (13:30 – 14:15) INTERPRETING SOCIAL LIFE AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE IN ARCHAEOLOGY

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Iva Kaić, PhD

13:30 – 13:45 – From Bathing to Bonding: Life in Ancient Issa (Matija Benčik)

13:45 – 14:00 – Chess in the Middle Ages (Sara Čakanić)

14:00 – 14:10 – Discussion time

14:10 – 14:15 – Closing of the in-person conference

Social Program: Visit to the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb (open until 18:00). Organized guide tour from 16:30h.

Day 3 (09:00 – 12:00) – Room A-018 (Virtual Presentations)

VIRTUAL SESSION 1 (09:00 – 10:30) MYTH, RITUAL AND VISUAL EXPRESSION IN ARCHAEOLOGY

Moderator: Assist. Petra Nikšić, PhD

09:00 – 09:15 – A Case Study of “Archaeological Calligraphy”: Focusing on Materials Discovered in Dunhuang (Zhuo Zhiyun)

09:15 – 09:30 – Exploring Kyushu’s Painted Tombs: Visual Strategies, Regional Patterns, and Social Implications (Claudia Zancan)

09:30 – 09:45 – Reforming Paddle Dolls and Their Role in Ritual and Gender Performance: A Revision of the Recent Research and Archaeological Context (Lucía García Gonzalez)

09:45 – 10:00 – Archaeology of Mirrors (Goran Đurđević)

10:00 – 10:15 – Where is Odysseus? An Archaeological Approach to Homeric Ithaca (Teresa Marcos Orozco)

10:15 – 10:30 – Discussion time

10:30 – 10:45 – Coffee break

VIRTUAL SESSION 2 (10:45 – 12:00) LANDSCAPE, MOBILITY, AND BIOARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO PREHISTORY

Moderator: Assist. Goran Tomac, PhD

10:45 – 11:00 – Understanding Human Mobility in the Bronze Age of la Mancha: An Approach from Landscape Archaeology and Geographic Information Systems (Celeste Fernández Pérez, Luis Benítez de Lugo Enrich)

11:00 – 11:15 – Tracing Prehistoric Routes: Hillforts and Tumuli in the Communication Landscape of Herzegovina (Boris Rozić)

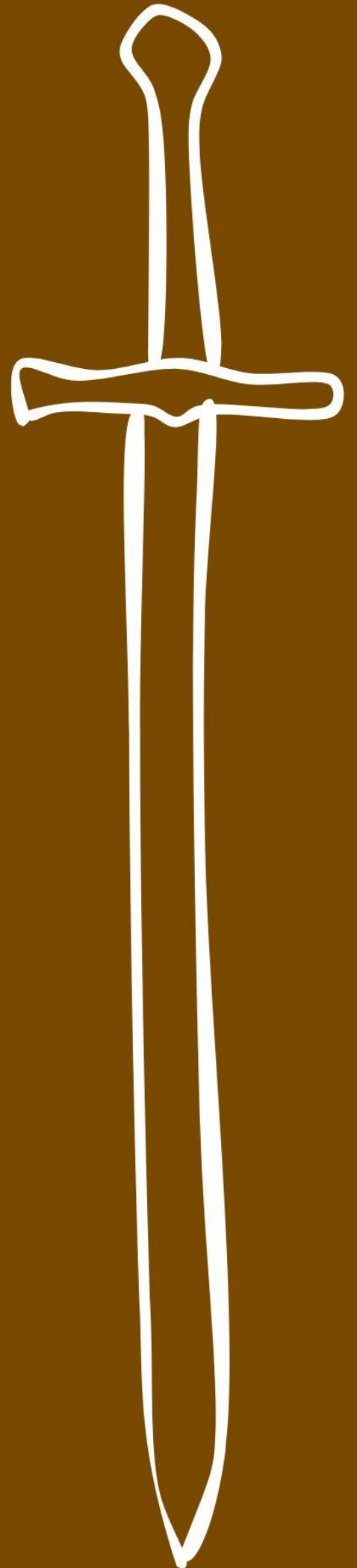
11:15 – 11:30 – Analysis of the skeletal remains from La Cueva de la Arena, a Burial Site from the 3rd Millennium BC (Laura Barrado Rodríguez)

11:30 – 11:45 – From Fossils to Molecules and Atoms: Interdisciplinary Methods and Innovation in the Study of Prehistoric Human (Petra Lazić)

11:45 – 12:00 – Discussion time

Social Program: Excursion to Archaeological Park Andautonia.

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The first/presenting authors of the abstracts are listed alphabetically.

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PP – poster presentation

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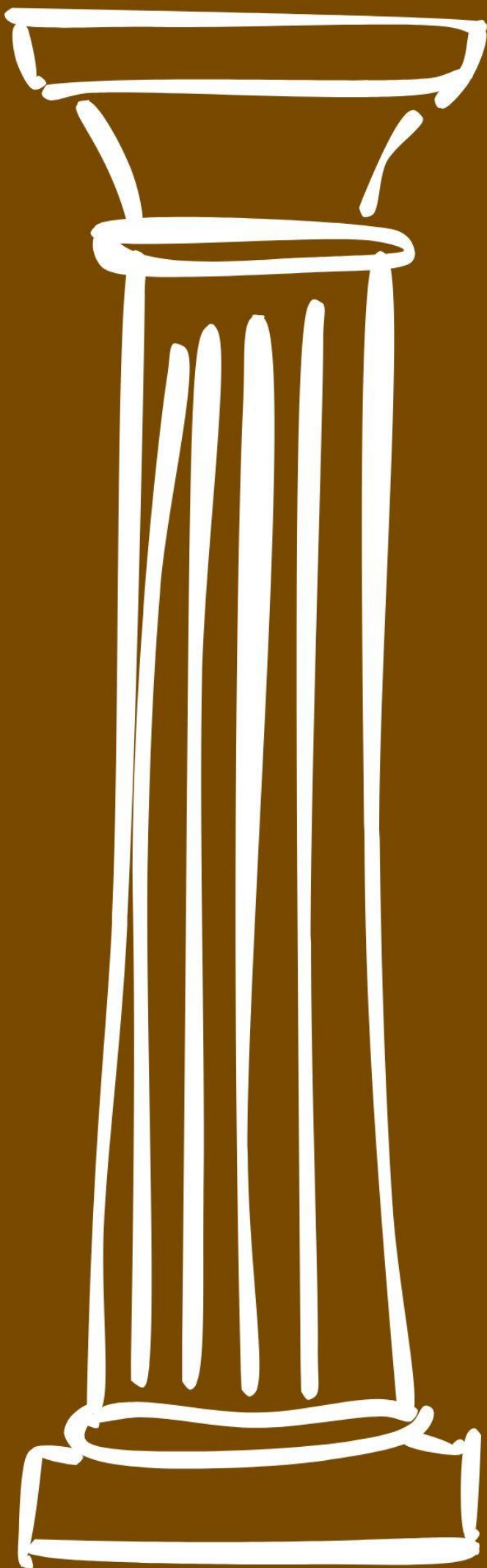
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ABSTRACTS



Abstracts

PATHWAYS OF THE PAST: STUDIES IN LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HUMAN MOBILITY

OP-01 Understanding Human Mobility in the Bronze Age of La Mancha (Spain): An Approach from Landscape Archaeology and Geographic Information Systems

Celeste Fernández Pérez¹, Luis Benítez de Lugo Enrich¹

¹Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

Human mobility in the Bronze Age of La Mancha (2250–1450 cal BC) has been discussed in archaeological research over recent decades. However, most studies have focused primarily on settlements, often overlooking mobility and its role in shaping territorial dynamics. Based on the current state of research on the Bronze Age of La Mancha, this study proposes a reassessment of previously identified mobility dynamics. Although these dynamics have been addressed to varying degrees, they have not been the central focus of research. Nevertheless, the presence of exogenous materials provides clear evidence of exchange networks from the interior of the southern Meseta to both neighboring and more distant regions. Thus, the evidence highlights patterns of human mobility that still require further investigation.

These patterns suggest complex sociocultural dynamics that are key to understanding this cultural horizon. To address this complexity, new methodologies need to be applied to this geographical area in order to provide greater clarity. Approaches from Landscape Archaeology, combined with Geographic Information Systems (GIS), provide particularly effective tools for exploring these processes.

This contribution examines the different spatial scales that may have structured movement across present-day southern Meseta during the Bronze Age. It aims to analyse mobility in La Mancha (Spain) on its own terms, highlighting its specific characteristics rather than interpreting it through frameworks derived from neighbouring cultures.

Keywords: Bronze Age of La Mancha; Geographic Information Systems; Landscape archeology

OP-02 Milestones, Small Milestones and Stone Structures along the Lujzijana Road: Examples from Netretić Municipality

Marko Kušan¹

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The focus of this presentation is the Croatian early modern road called Lujzijana, with particular attention given to big milestones, small milestones, and other stone structures found along its route in the municipality of Netretić. This research is part of the specialized field of archeology called “archaeologies of roads.” Roads represent some of the largest archaeological sites found in the world, yet they are rarely perceived or studied as such.

The Lujzijana road was constructed between 1803 and 1811 with the purpose of connecting two important Croatian trading hubs of the time, the cities of Karlovac and Rijeka. It was named after Marie Louise, the wife of Emperor Napoleon and the daughter of Emperor Francis I, who commissioned its construction. The road was largely built under the supervision of the Austrian general Filip Vukasović. However, due to the French occupation of Croatia, its final mile before Karlovac, also passing through the Netretić municipality, was constructed under French supervision. The Lujzijana was 18 Austrian miles (approximately 130 kilometers) long and represented one of the most modern European roads of its time.

The road began in Rijeka and milestones were placed at every mile along its route to Karlovac. Two of these were located in what is today Netretić municipality, more precisely in villages of Netretić and Prilišće. Unfortunately, the milestone in Netretić has been lost, while the one in Prilišće has recently been reconstructed and it is now standing at its original location. Those two milestones, along with two additional ones located in proximity outside the Netretić municipality, will be presented in this presentation.

Between each milestone, there were also 15 smaller milestones which indicated one Viennese fathom, or 1/16 of a mile. Although the great majority of these small milestones have been lost, this presentation will show where they were located within the municipality of Netretić and what they looked like.

In addition, the presentation will present other stone structure along the Lujzijana road, such as drainage tunnels and kerbstones.

Keywords: Lujzijana Road; Archaeologies of Roads; Milestones; Kerbstones; Netretić Municipality

OP-03 From Late Roman to Early Medieval: Settlement Dynamics in the Upper Órbigo River Basin (León, Spain)

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During the High Empire, the territory along the Órbigo River was fully integrated into the administrative structures of the *Conventus Asturciensis*. It was organised within a rural landscape based on river valleys and subordinate to the hierarchy of nearby urban centres, particularly *Asturica Augusta* and *Legio* in the case of the upper Órbigo basin.

Settlements were concentrated on terraces and in fertile areas, where small agricultural communities coexisted with the earliest forms of *villae*, as well as with the remains of indigenous *oppida*.

From the 3rd century onwards, this balance destabilised due to agricultural intensification, leading to the proliferation of luxurious *villae*, as in the case of La Milla del Río. These functioned both as economic centers and as a means of displaying the status of the aristocracy.

The fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century led to the collapse of the latifundia system, giving rise to a much more fragmented socioeconomic structure. The breakdown of the traditional link between urban centres and their areas of influence facilitated the emergence of highly autonomous peasant communities. In the upper Órbigo basin, this process is reflected in the reoccupation of ancient hilltop settlements or *castra*, which became stable settlements and refuges amid regional instability.

Contrary to traditional theories of depopulation, current research suggests that rural settlement continued throughout the 8th and 9th centuries.

Beginning in the second half of the 9th century, the upper Órbigo basin, along with other regions such as the Páramo, was the centre of the first phase of the “Reconquista” by the Christian kingdoms of northern Iberia, specifically the Kingdom of Asturias-León, which represented an advance of great strategic importance that laid the foundations for the region’s subsequent political and feudal organisation.

Keywords: Early Middle Ages; Late Antiquity; Landscape Archaeology; Rural Settlement Dynamics

OP-04 Tracing Prehistoric Routes: Hillforts and Tumuli in the Communication Landscape of Herzegovina

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This paper presents a segment of a broader research project that focuses on the area of the Municipality of Mostar and examines the role of hillforts and tumuli in reconstructing prehistoric communication networks in Herzegovina. The analysis is grounded in the spatial distribution of these prominent Bronze and Iron Age sites and their relationship to key landscape features. Rather than treating them as isolated entities, the study approaches hillforts and tumuli as integral components of a communication landscape structured by movement, visibility and the traversability of natural corridors. Through the application of GIS-based spatial analysis, their positioning is evaluated in relation to terrain and other topographic variables that may have shaped patterns of mobility and the organization of routes.

The results are contextualized through comparison with the routes of Roman road infrastructure documented in Herzegovina, which frequently follow the same natural corridors and thus suggest continuity in patterns of movement across long temporal spans. This diachronic perspective enables a more nuanced consideration of the persistence of communication pathways in the structuring of space. By integrating spatial analysis with archaeological interpretation, this study demonstrates the potential for reconstructing prehistoric networks even where direct physical evidence of routes is limited, offering a more nuanced understanding of how prehistoric communities organized their territory.

Keywords: GIS; Hillforts; Prehistory; Spatial Analysis; Tumuli

FIELD SURVEYS AND NON-DESTRUCTIVE APPROACHES TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

OP-05 Integrating Archaeology, LiDAR and Historical Research: The Late Medieval Fortification of Zenthjakab as a Case Study

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This paper presents the identification and preliminary assessment of Zenthjakab (Saint Jacob), a newly discovered late medieval fortification located near Gornja Ploščica in central Bjelovar-Bilogora County. The site was detected through analysis of the 2022/2023 LiDAR dataset provided by the State Geodetic Administration as part of a county-wide survey. Previously recorded archaeological sites, primarily based on the works of Goran Jakovljević and Tatjana Tkalčec, were georeferenced and compared with potential sites from the LiDAR data. This process resulted in the discovery of up to twenty potential new fortifications. The Zenthjakab site was, in addition to being identified in the historical sources, visited in order to ascertain the potential for a more extensive field survey, and medieval pottery fragments were observed. The fortification consists of an oval, two-tiered earthen mound surrounded by a ditch. In 18th- and 19th-century maps, the neighboring village of Gornja Ploščica is inscribed as Saint Jacob, after the now non-existent church bearing the same name. This has allowed its identification in earlier literature with the medieval estate Zenthjakab; however, the location of the motte was previously unknown. Historical records indicate that the castellum dates to the 15th century. The estate was part of medieval Križevci County, mainly belonging to the Batthyány and later the Geszti, noble families residing in Hungary. They engaged in a lawsuit concerning the ownership of the estate, to which a market town and 8 villages belonged. This case underscores the value of integrating archaeological and historical research, as well as highlighting significant potential for further interdisciplinary investigation in Bjelovar-Bilogora County.

Keywords: LiDAR; Medieval Archaeology; Medieval Fortification

PP-01 Reconstructing the Forum of Paestum. Archaeology, Stratigraphy, and Digital Models for the History of an Urban Space

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The forum of Paestum represents one of the best-preserved archaeological complexes in southern Italy and offers a key context for investigating the urban and architectural development of Roman cities. This research – originating from a doctoral thesis discussed in September 2025 at the University of Salerno in co-supervision with the Ruhr-Universität of Bochum – examines the diachronic evolution of the forum from the Roman colonial period through later phases, with the aim of reconstructing the chronological and architectural sequence of the buildings surrounding the square and proposing a comprehensive interpretation of the area's development.

The study adopts an integrated methodological approach combining critical analysis of published scholarship, archival research, architectural survey, and digital modelling. A significant part of the work was devoted to the examination of unpublished documentation preserved in the archives. These materials include written records, photographs, and technical documents relating to excavations carried out in the forum area between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although often lacking clear chronological or topographical organization, these sources were systematically collected, analysed, and reorganized in order to reconstruct the main phases of archaeological investigations and to recover information concerning the original configuration of the forum.

At the same time, a detailed architectural and photogrammetric survey of the standing structures surrounding the square was undertaken. The survey formed the basis for producing accurate plans, the analysis of building stratigraphy, and the construction of a stratigraphic matrix describing the relationships between the architectural units. These data were subsequently used to create 3D models and virtual reconstructions illustrating the different phases in the life of the forum, in the form of both realistic models and Extended Matrix reconstructions for the architectural complex composed of the Doric-Corinthian temple, the *Comitium*, and the curia.

The results of the research propose a revised diachronic framework for the forum of Paestum and demonstrate how the integration of archaeological data, historical documentation, and digital technologies can serve both as a powerful analytical tool and as an effective means of communicating archaeological heritage.

Keywords: Paestum; Forum; Roman Archaeology; Digital Reconstruction; 3D Modelling

OP-06 Testing Non-Invasive Approaches for Assessing the Archaeological Potential of Caves on the Example of Bela krajina

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Slovenia is well explored from a speleological perspective, yet the archaeological investigation of caves has significantly lagged behind research on open-air sites. Until recently, no systematic methodology for the non-invasive identification and documentation of cave archaeological sites had been tested in Slovenia. This research addresses that gap by proposing and applying a structured approach to detecting new cave sites.

The study is based on the assumption that systematic documentation and observation of caves can lead to the identification of previously unrecorded archaeological sites. To test this, a model for assessing the archaeological potential of caves was developed. The model was designed as a practical tool to guide future research within a defined geographical area, in this case the region of Bela Krajina.

A relational database of 599 caves located in the study area was established. For each cave, a range of natural, spatial, and cultural attributes was recorded. These attributes were quantified, and an archaeological potential index was calculated using a scoring system, allowing the classification of caves into three groups. This was followed by stratified sampling and field survey of the selected sample.

The fieldwork approach was based on systematic, planned, and non-invasive observation. A total of 57 caves from all three groups were surveyed. In the process, 32 cave archaeological sites were identified, 21 of which were newly discovered. The collected data were subsequently analysed using various data mining and statistical methods. The analyses demonstrated that easy accessibility, a levelled entrance and interior, how well the cave is recognized among locals, and its name are statistically most strongly associated with the presence of archaeological remains.

The research was conducted as part of a master's thesis under the supervision of Dr. Dimitrij Mlekuž Vrhovnik.

Keywords: Archaeological Cave Sites; Archaeological Potential; Bela Krajina; Non-Invasive Observation

PP-02 Archaeological Field Survey of the Smrdelje Settlement

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This work presents the results of an archaeological field survey conducted in the western part of the Municipality of Kistanje, with a focus on the area of Smrdelje, located in central Dalmatia, Croatia. The research was carried out in 2025 as part of a student project organized by the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. The primary aim of the study was to identify and confirm evidence of ancient economic activities, particularly the presumed existence of a Roman-period brick production workshop mentioned in historical sources since the late 19th century.

The methodology combined desk-based analysis and intensive field survey. Preparatory work included the examination of existing literature, historical Austro-Hungarian maps, LiDAR data, and satellite imagery. The field survey encompassed 96 locations, where diagnostic artefacts were collected, quantified, and spatially recorded using GPS technology and QGIS software. Despite challenges such as dense vegetation, difficult terrain, and limited access to certain parcels, the survey yielded significant data on the distribution and density of archaeological material. The results highlight the area of Rivine, located near the confluence of the Jesenak and Kukalj streams, as a zone of high archaeological potential. This area revealed a substantial concentration of Roman pottery and ceramic building material, particularly at location L4, where an exceptionally high density of finds suggests intensive production or economic activity. In contrast, the Groblje area produced only sparse and sporadic material. Additional features, including wall remains, possible architectural structures, and segments of historical road networks, were also documented, indicating the integration of this area within a broader network connected to major Roman centers such as Burnum, Varvaria and Scardona.

In conclusion, the findings strongly support the hypothesis of a Roman-period workshop in Smrdelje and provide a solid foundation for future systematic archaeological investigations.

Keywords: Archaeological Field Survey; Brick Workshop; Dalmatia; Roman Period; Smrdelje

OP-07 Geomagnetic Prospection of Dežanovac-Petranovac site

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Hillforts and other types of mediaeval fortifications have always been a topic of discussion in archaeology. The most attention is given to hillforts in the area of Central Croatia. Central Croatia in the late Middle Ages was well populated with a big number of powerful local nobility. These landowners built earth fortifications as their residences or just for protection in troubled times. In the 16th century, this area formed a border between the Ottoman and Christian kingdoms for hundreds of years, during which both sides used older mediaeval forts or the armies built new ones. That is why in February 2026, a field survey was conducted in the Poilovje region of Central Croatia. With advancements in archaeological research, the use of new LiDAR data provided by the Croatian state and magnetometry was essential. One of the sites that was surveyed was Dežanovac-Petranovac 2 which is situated near the city of Daruvar in Central Croatia. The site was chosen by analysing LiDAR imagery of the area, which showed a characteristic circular rondel. Using LiDAR, even more medieval fortifications were found, which showed the well-constructed spatial organisation in the late Middle Ages in this part of Croatia. Because the site is located in an agricultural field, a magnetic survey was conducted. When analysing the magnetometry data, we saw that right next to the mediaeval fortification there was a Roman villa rustica and a possible Roman road. The use of LiDAR, field survey, magnetometry and eventually excavations, all of which are corroborated, should be the new standard methodology in archaeological research. This survey shows how much new data can be gathered with non-destructive methods in archaeology.

Keywords: Fortification; Magnetometry; Medieval Period; Roman Road; Villa Rustica

OP-08 Field Survey of Potential Archaeological Sites in the Municipality of Lovinac and the Surrounding Area

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This presentation is focused on results of student projects “Field survey of potential archaeological sites in the municipality of Lovinac and the surrounding area”. The first project was conducted in September of 2024, and the second project was conducted in October of 2025. Both projects were carried out in time lapses of one week. During the first year of the field survey, the focus was mostly on municipality Lovinac, while in second year, the focus was mostly on municipality Udbina. There are plans for another project next year, where the focus will be on municipality Gračac. The main goal of the project is to find potential archeological sites of prehistoric hillfort settlements, mainly Late Bronze and Early Iron Age settlements. To achieve that goal, different methods were used: oral traditions, literature review, and interpretation of LiDAR data. During the field survey, we used the application QField, which was directly connected to QGIS, which we used to map archeological finds like pottery, metal, lithics and walls made by dry-wall building technique. Every location which was surveyed could be distinguished in three different categories: Archeological site, potential archeological site and site with no archeological potential. Based on pottery, seven sites from municipality Lovinac could be dated to Late Bronze or Early Iron Age, while two sites could be dated in the same period in municipality Udbina. It is important to note that these sites are categorized based on our field survey and for more information, archaeological excavation is required.

Keywords: Field Survey; Lovinac; Udbina; Lidar; Hillfort

PP-03 Strizivojna-Gaj: A Newly Identified Archaeological Site in the Đakovo Region

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Strizivojna is a municipality located about 15 km southeast of Đakovo in the Đakovo region, in Osijek-Baranja County. The area is characterized by extensive agricultural fields and small woodland areas. The Biđ River flows along its southern edge, while the Merolino forest lies to the southeast. Until recently, Strizivojna had not been considered archaeologically significant. The only previously known archaeological site in the area was Šimenica, discovered in the late 1970s. Trial excavations were carried out in 1979, followed by a rescue excavation in 1985 due to the construction of an oil pipeline. Nearly 40 years later, this story has been revisited and expanded. As part of the student project "Pagus Sztrivoina", field surveys were conducted in 2022 and 2023 at the same site and its surroundings. These surveys confirmed that the site dates to the Late Bronze Age, the La Tène period, and the Roman period (1st – 4th century AD), along with fragments of more recent pottery from the 19th and 20th centuries. Another location, called Selac and situated east of Šimenica, yielded finds that can be dated to the Early Modern period (16th–17th century). With permission from the Conservation Department in Osijek, a new phase of research was initiated in 2025, including field surveys of potential archaeological sites and the collection and documentation of surface finds. During this work, a completely new site — Gaj — was discovered on the southern edge of the village, along the road leading toward the Biđ River (while Šimenica and Selac are located to the north of the village), near the toponym Guzanovića. This scientific poster presents the archaeological site of Gaj, including a description of its location, the density and types of finds, and their dating, with the aim of placing the site as precisely as possible within specific historical periods.

Keywords: Đakovo Region; Late Bronze Age; Middle Ages; Prehistory; Strizivojna

LITHIC PRODUCTION AND THE CRAFT OF STONEMASONRY

PP-04 Stonemasonry in Drniš Region in Late Antiquity and Middle Ages

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Stonemasonry is an activity concerned with the extraction, processing, and shaping of stone. It includes all stages of production, beginning with the quarrying of raw material, continuing through its preparation, and culminating in the carving and installation of finished monuments. Archaeologists have devoted the greatest attention to stone masonry in antiquity, while the medieval period has not been satisfactorily explored. This paper seeks to offer preliminary conclusions regarding this activity in the periods of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages in the Drniš area. During Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the Drniš region was at the crossroads of important routes and in proximity of major centers. Although archaeologically attractive, it remains largely unexplored. Of the few investigations that have been conducted, most have not been published. At several locations chance finds have been recorded, yet none have been subjected to systematic scholarly analysis, resulting in the absence of proper site identification and interpretation. The aim of this presentation is to present the known and confirmed sites, as well as to introduce several previously unpublished chance finds that may indicate the existence of new sites. Particular attention will be devoted to the types of stone used in the production of monuments and to the geology of the area, in order to propose preliminary conclusions regarding potential quarries and the scope of stonemasonry workshops. Finally, the presentation will address some methodological challenges of research in this field and suggest possible solutions.

Keywords: Drniš; Late Antiquity; Middle Ages; Sarcophagus; Stonemasonry

PP-05 Rock Crystal Lithic Technology in the Alpine Area: Production, Use, and Cultural Significance

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This research explores the production, use, and significance of stone tools made from rock crystal in the Alpine area. While most lithic studies focus on materials such as flint, chert, or obsidian, rock crystal is less commonly studied, especially in high-mountain environments. Because of its transparency, internal fractures, and irregular breakage patterns, rock crystal is more difficult to work with than many other types of stone. This study examines how prehistoric communities (from the Palaeolithic age to the early Bronze age) in the Alps selected, shaped, and used this challenging raw material and what this choice may reveal about their technological skills and cultural practices.

The research is based on the analysis of archaeological assemblages from Alpine sites. A combination of techno-typological study, experimental knapping, and microscopic use-wear analysis was used to reconstruct the production process (*chaîne opératoire*) of rock crystal tools. Special attention is given to raw material procurement in mountainous landscapes, where natural crystal deposits may have influenced patterns of mobility and site location. The results show that toolmakers adapted their techniques to the specific properties of rock crystal, carefully selecting nodules and controlling percussion in order to reduce unpredictable fractures.

Despite its brittleness, rock crystal can produce very sharp cutting edges. The analysed tools include flakes and small implements suitable for cutting, scraping, and piercing tasks. Use-wear traces indicate that these tools were used for everyday activities, possibly including processing animal and plant materials. At the same time, the choice of rock crystal—especially in areas where other workable stones were available—suggests that its visual qualities may also have been important. Its transparency and brightness could have given it a special aesthetic or symbolic value.

By focusing on the Alpine area, this research highlights how prehistoric communities adapted their technological practices to the constraints and opportunities of a mountain environment. Overall, the study contributes to a better understanding of raw material selection, technological knowledge, and the relationship between functional needs and cultural meaning in prehistoric Alpine societies (from the Palaeolithic age to the early Bronze age).

Keywords: Prehistory; Rock Crystal; Stone Tools

FROM MINING TO MONEY: RESOURCES AND ECONOMIES OF THE PAST

PP-06 Depictions of Iacchus on Coinage

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Iacchus is a deity attested in written sources from the 5th century BCE, where he most commonly appears either as an alternative name for the god Dionysus or as a closely associated divinity. In ancient literary traditions, he is further linked with Demeter and the Eleusinian Mysteries, although no specific cult practices dedicated to him are securely documented. On the basis of available evidence, he is generally understood as a child or young man who, in accordance with Dionysian symbolism, possessed certain characteristic attributes. For this reason, surviving numismatic evidence is of particular importance, as its iconography contributes significantly to a more nuanced understanding of this deity.

The earliest numismatic depictions potentially associated with Iacchus, according to the interpretation of A. Evans, date to the 4th century BCE and originate in Tarentum, where he identifies the deity in the form of a child bearing attributes such as a kantharos. I. Svoronos also proposed that Iacchus may be identified on certain Athenian “New Style” coin issues, although this attribution remains uncertain. More secure numismatic attestations emerge only in the Roman period, during the reign of Emperor Hadrian.

Hadrian was initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries and, following the premature death of his favourite Antinous, established a cult in his honour. Within this religious framework, Antinous was at times assimilated to Iacchus, as evidenced by specific coin issues. On coins minted at Tarsus, Antinous appears on the obverse as $\text{HP}\Omega\text{C ANTINOOC}$, often wearing a Hemhem crown, while the reverse features strong Dionysian symbolism, including a cista mystica and thyrsus, accompanied by the inscription $\text{NE}\Omega\text{ IAKX}\Omega$.

In some variants, he is depicted with an ivy wreath, and the reverse type may also include an amphora on a pedestal. A comparable example is attested at Adramytteion, where Antinous is explicitly identified with Iacchus on the obverse with the inscription ANTINOOC IAKXOC , while the reverse possibly depicts Demeter, further reinforcing the connection with the Eleusinian Mysteries. Antinous' early death, likely in his ephobic youth, may have contributed to his identification with Iacchus, a youthful divinity associated with hope and consolation within the Eleusinian initiatory context.

Keywords: Iacchus; Iconography; Numismatics; Religion

OP-09 Ancient Mining for Metals at Selected Sites of the Austrian and Slovenian Alps

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Mining and metalworking have been an important part of humanity for thousands of years, as evidenced by Neolithic mines and quarries in the Austrian Alps and prehistoric smelting sites in the Slovenian Alps. Along with the Roman expansion came a heightened need for high-quality metals – particularly iron. Due to its abundance in wide parts of the Austrian Alps and its high-quality steel products, the so-called *Ferrum Noricum* was especially sought after. The fact that the Roman Empire and its communities benefited from this boom in metal mining and working remains undisputed; however, it should also be known that drawbacks, such as heavily impacted health and environmental pollution, followed. While the question of the iron's origin may have been answered, the question of whether gold smelters used gold from the Austrian High Tauern Mountains or from the Taurisci people in the Southeastern Alps remains a heavily discussed topic.

The aim of this Bachelor's thesis was thus to identify mines and smelting places in the Eastern Austrian and Slovenian Alps by using multilingual (specialist) literature, case studies and excavation reports. Ancient works and modern reports of experimental archaeological research have facilitated the drawing of conclusions about ancient mining and metalworking techniques.

It seems that mining and smelting activity during Roman times was mostly concentrated in Carinthia (Austria), as evidenced by multiple large-scale smelting sites. Plenty of evidence for Roman smelting activity throughout Slovenia was also found, though only a few have been discovered in the Alpine region. Here, metalworking may have occurred primarily around Bohinj in the Julian Alps, though no documented mines have been found there. These archaeological sites, along with the associated finds, are expected to provide further insight into the technologies used and, supported by scientific means, offer a glimpse into the lives of ancient mining communities.

Keywords: Eastern Alps; Ferrum Noricum; Metal Working; Mining

OP-10 The Economy of the Bronze Age in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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In this master's thesis, the author presents the available data on the economy during the Bronze Age in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on archaeological finds from systematically excavated sites, which predominantly include settlements (habitation areas and associated features) as well as grave sites, i.e., burial contexts with associated grave goods. While burials generally represent closed assemblages, certain settlement features may also be treated as closed or semi-closed contexts, providing a more reliable basis for interpreting economic activities and material associations.

Previous research has predominantly focused on gathering artifacts and their typological analysis, while less attention has been given to their interpretation within their archaeological context, which is reflected in the lack of a comprehensive understanding of economic activities. Accordingly, this paper summarizes and analyzes data from published works, with particular emphasis on the Late Bronze Age due to the greater number of investigated sites and available sources. Data from the Early and Middle Bronze Age are included in order to consider the continuity of certain economic activities.

Special attention is paid to the main economic branches, among which mining and metallurgy, trade, and pottery production stand out, as well as livestock farming and agriculture, including the use of secondary animal products (e.g., dairy production, bone tool manufacture, etc.). In certain cases, developments and changes within these activities are examined in greater detail, with attention to factors that may have influenced their intensity and organization. In order to substantiate the presence of specific economic branches, typological analysis is combined with the consideration of both direct and indirect archaeological indicators.

The paper also includes basic information on archaeological sites, as well as an overview of previous research on this topic. The discussion follows a chronological framework, using thematic and comparative methods to analyse artefacts and phenomena across different phases of the Bronze Age, extending to regions beyond Bosnia and Herzegovina. This approach aims to highlight similarities and differences among sites while also pointing out gaps in research, which may serve as guidelines for future studies of the Bronze Age economy in this region.

Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bronze Age; Economy; Material Culture Analysis

FOOD AS A MIRROR OF THE PAST: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

OP-11 Storage and Social Inequality in Archaeology Through the Lens of Legacy Data

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Modern economic research suggests that regional disparities in wealth have deep historical roots, with patterns of development showing remarkable persistence since the Neolithic period. One line of explanation emphasises the role of ecological conditions in shaping early economic organisation. In environments characterised by strong seasonal fluctuations in resource availability, the ability to store resources effectively reduces the need for mobility and encourages sedentary settlement. Sedentism, in turn, facilitates the accumulation of predictable surpluses, providing the economic foundation for social groups capable of managing and redistributing resources, processes that may have emerged even before the formal adoption of agriculture.

In this conference, I will present the early stages of my PhD research, which investigates intensive food storage as a key mechanism in the emergence of early socioeconomic inequalities from a global perspective. The project forms part of the ROOTS initiative, a large-scale research program examining the relationship between food storage and inequality prior to the adoption of agriculture.

One of the main challenges of this research is the conceptual and archaeological definition of the concept of 'storage' within such a broad geographical and chronological scope. By synthesising archaeological, paleoclimatic and ethnographic records, the research analyses the last 40,000 years of human history based on legacy data. A key contribution is the construction of a coherent, large-scale dataset compiled from published sources, including evidence such as pottery and storage pits, to identify chronological and geographical patterns in the development and spread of storage technologies. By mapping their adoption and diffusion, the research aims to clarify the relationship between storage capacities and the long-term persistence of global socioeconomic inequalities.

Keywords: Food storage; Inequality; Pits; Pottery; Database

OP-12 What can food processing reveal about starvation in the Pleistocene?

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Recognizing shortages of preferred foods exclusively from the archaeological record is very challenging, particularly among Pleistocene hunter-gatherers. Their skeletal remains can display stress markers that seem ambiguous without additional context provided by artefacts or ecofacts. Since hunting returns were not always predictable, knowledge about easily obtainable foodstuffs was important. According to worldwide ethnographic records, starvation foods mostly consist of wild plants which frequently supply people with fruits, leaves, seeds, tubers and roots. These phyto-organs have likely been used correspondingly since the Palaeolithic era. However, potential consumers must overcome their natural defences. They can be either mechanical or chemical, both of which usually entail processing to boost possible nourishment from vegetation. Relevant methods are therefore based on decortication, tenderization and pyrotechnology. Fungi along with insects were also widely available, but likewise contained harmful compounds that humans could detoxify using fire. Another fallback strategy is bone grease rendering, for which animal remains can be retrieved from caches. Such fatty meals relied on this single ingredient, firstly pulverized by stone tools before the prolonged boiling took place. Additionally, foraged resources may have been included to promote satiety while simultaneously making them edible, therefore marking the emergence of broth. Hominins' familiarity with the paleoenvironment was crucial for surviving crisis periods which almost certainly reoccurred often during the Pleistocene, leaving behind some osteological, archaeozoological or archaeobotanical evidence. Sites with multiple indicators of non-meat consumption may reflect nutritional stress rather than willing dietary expansion. Subsistence in those seasons was laborious, but preparation technologies would significantly reduce health risks. Thus, it can also be argued that certain food processing methods could have been further developed to combat starvation.

Keywords: Ethnoarchaeology; Food Processing; Paleonutrition; Pleistocene; Starvation

OP-13 Reconstructing Copper Age Plant Food Practices in Eastern Croatia through Phytolith and Starch Analysis

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Food practices represent not only a biological necessity but also a complex social and cultural phenomenon that reflects economic strategies, environmental interaction, and daily life within past communities. This research focuses on identifying plant-based dietary practices of Copper Age communities in eastern Croatia through microbotanical analyses, primarily phytolith and starch grain analysis, combined with functional analysis of ceramic vessels.

The study is conducted within the CULPLUS project (Culinary practices, husbandry, and land-use strategies during the Copper Age in Eastern Slavonia, IP-2022-10-9489) funded by the Croatian Science Foundation and carried out at the Dept. of Archaeology, FFZG, Univ. of Zagreb. The project applies a multidisciplinary approach combining functional and spatial analysis of ceramics, archaeobotanical and archaeozoological studies, lipid residue and stable isotope analyses, and radiocarbon dating to reconstruct prehistoric culinary practices from production and processing to preparation and consumption. While archaeobotanical research of the Copper Age in Croatia has predominantly focused on macrobotanical remains, microbotanical evidence remains significantly underexplored. This research addresses that gap by analysing phytoliths and starch grains from soil samples, ceramic vessels, and ceramic and stone tools recovered from several Copper Age settlements in eastern Slavonia.

Preliminary phytolith analyses from the site of Prisunjača, conducted at the BioGeoPal laboratory in Spain, show a high abundance of well-preserved phytoliths, dominated by elongated dendritic morphotypes characteristic of cereal inflorescences, most likely wheat (*Triticum* spp.). These results correspond with macrobotanical evidence confirming the importance of cultivated cereals in local subsistence strategies. By applying microbotanical analyses, this research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of plant food consumption and culinary practices among Copper Age communities in eastern Croatia. Beyond identifying consumed plants, the study explores how plant resources were processed, prepared, cooked, and stored, contributing to broader reconstructions of daily life, environmental conditions, and human interaction with the landscape.

Keywords: Archaeobotany; Copper Age; Phytolith Analysis; Prehistoric Diet; Starch Grains

ARCHEOLOGY THROUGH THE LENS OF THE NATURAL SCIENCES

OP-14 Interdisciplinary Study of Two Burials from Khramis Didi Gora, Georgia

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This paper presents an interdisciplinary study of two burials (N14 and N15) from Khramis Didi Gora, a Late Neolithic settlement in the Kvemo Kartli Plain (Georgia). During the recent excavations (2023–2025), archaeologists revealed a cemetery intrusive into Neolithic layers, which had largely reflected Christian mortuary practices, including extended supine burials, oriented west to east. However, Burials N14 and N15 deviate from this pattern in both stratigraphy and material composition.

Burial N14 represents a primary inhumation of a subadult (4 ± 1 years old), dated to the Mediaeval period (1021–1158 cal AD), while Burial N15 yields a disturbed Early Bronze Age individual (3331–2926 cal BC), partially displaced during the later grave intrusion. This stratigraphic relationship demonstrates significant temporal discontinuity within the burial context. The study integrates osteological, paleopathological, radiocarbon, and stable isotope ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$, $\delta^{15}\text{N}$) analyses, alongside archaeometric examination of associated beads. Isotopic data indicate that both individuals relied primarily on C_3 -based terrestrial diets, with moderate animal protein consumption and no evidence of significant C_4 plant (millet) intake or aquatic resources. Material analysis of bluish-green beads from Burial N15 identified them as glazed steatite, produced by incorporating metallic elements into crushed steatite prior to firing. The presence of Early Bronze Age Kura-Araxes pottery further supports the chronological attribution of this burial.

The combination of mixed stratigraphy, intrusive burial practices, and material culture highlights the complex reuse of the site and provides new insights into long-term occupation, mortuary variability, and cultural continuity in the South Caucasus.

Keywords: Archaeometry; Bioarchaeology; Stable isotope analysis; South Caucasus

PP-07 Lapis Lacedaemonius: Provenance, Material Properties, and Use in the Roman World

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Lapis Lacedaemonius, also known as *krokeatis lithos*, *marmor Lacedaemonium*, *porfido verde antico*, and Spartan basalt, was one of the most distinctive polychrome stones of the ancient Mediterranean. Its only known source lies near Krokeai in Laconia, in the Peloponnese, where it occurs as a characteristic green porphyritic stone already valued in antiquity. The use of this material extended from the Minoan-Mycenaean Bronze Age (as attested at sites such as Mycenae and Knossos) into the Roman Imperial period, when it was increasingly exploited for decorative purposes, and continued thereafter to circulate through processes of reuse. Because the Krokeai quarries were located inland, the stone had to be transported overland to the coast, most probably to Gytheion, the principal harbor of Sparta and Laconia, from where it entered wider Mediterranean maritime networks. Geologically, *Lapis Lacedaemonius* is an altered porphyritic metabasalt, characterised by a dark green groundmass and coarse, lighter green plagioclase crystals, many of which had been altered to albite and epidote, giving the stone its distinctive appearance. It belongs to the broader Triassic volcanic context of the region and appears to have formed within a sub-volcanic system associated with epidiosites and hydrothermal upflow zones. Because of its color, texture, and rarity, *Lapis Lacedaemonius* formed part of the wider repertoire of prestigious polychrome stones exploited and distributed across the Roman world. In antiquity, it was used for seals and vases, while in later periods it became particularly associated with *opera sectilia* slabs, small columns and capitals, statuary, and other decorative architectural elements. Roman demand for colored stones transformed such materials into important markers of status, luxury, and imperial representation in both public and private architecture. Its presence is also attested on the eastern Adriatic. In Diocletian's Palace in Split, *Lapis Lacedaemonius* appears among the costly decorative stones used for wall and floor revetments, while the same material was later reused in the pulpit of Split Cathedral. Such finds are particularly significant because they demonstrate not only the import of high-value stones into Dalmatia and the eastern Adriatic but also the long afterlife of Roman decorative materials in medieval architectural contexts.

Keywords: Ancient Mediterranean; Laconia; Lapis Lacedaemonius; Luxury Decorative Material; Polychrome Stones

OP-15 From Fossils to Molecules and Atoms: Interdisciplinary Methods and Innovation in the Study of Prehistoric Human

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Technological development in recent decades, and even years, has influenced advancement of science, including archaeology. Archaeology is increasingly being recognized as a highly interdisciplinary field that gets stuck in traditional ways. Radiometric dating methods, such as radiocarbon (^{14}C), thermoluminescence (TL), optically stimulated luminescence (OSL), potassium-argon (K-Ar), and uranium-thorium (U-Th), form the foundation of chronological analyses. However, despite their widespread use, there is a certain degree of error that can significantly affect results and interpretation of prehistoric samples. Proper interpretation is an important aspect of archaeology, especially when dealing with prehistoric periods where context represents a “written record” of prehistoric societies. Modern research is increasingly focusing on the analysis of particles and biomolecules, opening the possibility for a deeper understanding of human evolution. From DNA analysis and genetic relationships to dietary and health patterns. This shift from macroscopic remains to molecular-level analysis represents a key step forward in archaeology. In this context, innovative methodological approaches in other branches of science are being developed, such as the application of supercritical CO_2 in the processing of osteological samples. This technology enables efficient lipid extraction and the preservation of collagen, which is highly fragile during extraction, thanks to its high diffusivity and ability to penetrate microporous structures, without the use of toxic chemicals. This improves the quality of samples for further analyses, including radiocarbon dating and paleoproteomics. Combination of bioarchaeological, genetic, and isotopic analyses is used to reconstruct demographic patterns, diet, health, and mobility of prehistoric populations. In combination with geological and bioarchaeological analyses, it is possible to reconstruct environmental conditions and the way of life of prehistoric societies. Research in paleomedicine shows that prehistoric societies distinguished between medicinal and poisonous plants, which they used in treating diseases and injuries, and even in some medically demanding procedures. Continuous integration of other methods and analyses from different scientific fields enables archaeology to expand its interpretative possibilities beyond its traditional boundaries.

Keywords: Interdisciplinary Innovations; Paleomedicine; Prehistoric Human; Supercritical CO_2

OP-16 Ceramic Technology and Raw Material Use in Hatvan Culture Pottery: A Multi-Analytical Study from Včelince, South-Central Slovakia

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This study examines the ceramic assemblage of the Early Bronze Age Hatvan Culture from the site of Včelince (South-Central Slovakia), with a primary focus on manufacturing technology and raw material use through a multi-analytical archaeometric approach. The study integrates thin section petrography, X-ray diffraction (XRD), X-ray fluorescence (XRF), scanning electron microscopy with energy-dispersive spectroscopy (SEM–EDS), and electron microprobe analysis (EMPA) to characterize ceramic fabrics and technological features.

The results highlight a mixed raw material provisioning strategy, with a predominance of local resources alongside regional sedimentary inputs and minor non-local volcanic components. Particular attention is given to the use of grog temper, identified in approximately 50% of the samples. This suggests that, while grog represents a recurrent technological choice consistent with broader Bronze Age practices, its application was not standardized, indicating variability and flexibility in temper selection.

Mineralogical data show the dominance of illite and smectite clays, while the absence of kaolinite suggests firing temperatures exceeding ~600 °C. Microstructural observations further support controlled firing conditions and deliberate technological choices in ceramic production.

Although the analysis of raw material sources is still ongoing, preliminary comparisons support the interpretation of predominantly local resource exploitation. Overall, these preliminary results demonstrate the effectiveness of the integrated analytical framework and confirm its suitability for the analysis of ceramics from later occupational phases at the site.

Keywords: Ceramic technology; Geoarchaeology; Hatvan culture; Raw material provenance

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS AND HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH THEORETICAL ARCHEOLOGY

OP-17 From Bathing to Bonding: Life in Ancient Issa

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Ancient Issa, located on the island of Vis in the southern part of the Croatian coast, is one of the most important Hellenistic and later Roman urban centers in the area of present-day Croatia. Founded in the 4th century BC as a colony of the Syracusan Greeks, Issa developed a complex urban structure over the centuries, which, among other things, includes infrastructural elements characteristic of ancient cities such as a fortification system, public buildings and residential areas. In the context of urban life, thermae, or public baths, are of particular importance, as they were a key element of everyday life in the Roman period. Although Greek cities originally had simpler bathing facilities, with Roman domination Issa adopted their more advanced architectural and technical concepts. Thermae in Issa testify to a high level of urban standards and the integration of the local community into wider Roman cultural patterns.

Archaeological findings indicate the existence of complexes that included the basic rooms typical of Roman thermae: apodyterium (changing room), tepidarium (lukewarm room), caldarium (warm room) and frigidarium (cold room). The heating system was made possible by a hypocaust, a sophisticated underfloor heating system that circulated hot air from the furnace to heat the floors and walls. Such technology indicates a high level of engineering knowledge and work organization.

In addition to the hygienic function, thermal baths had an important social role. They were places of meeting, communication and recreation where social and political contacts took place. In Issa, the thermal baths were therefore an integral part of public life, reflecting the social stratification and cultural habits of the population.

Keywords: Issa; Romanization; Thermae; Urbanism

OP-18 Chess in the Middle Ages

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Chess, as one of the most popular games of the Middle Ages, can help us better understand mediaeval society, its cultural values, and social, religious, ethical, and political circumstances. The roots of chess originate in India, where the game was called chaturanga and whose primary function was to simulate the military exploits of the ancient Indian army embodied in the figurines of king, vizier, elephants, chariots, and foot soldiers. Traveling a long way from India through Persia and the Arab caliphates, chess arrived on European soil presumably in the 8th century with Islamic conquests, where it was first played in the Moorsih courts of Al-Andalus and later introduced to European Christian courts, sometime before the year 1000. Here, the game of chess underwent a transformation in terms of the form and symbolism of the pieces and in the rules of the game. Individual pieces received a new nomenclature and role in accordance with the idealised personalities of Western mediaeval culture, making chess a symbolic representation of the state and feudal society. In the archaeological context, finds of chess pieces most often come from urban or sacred contexts and from fortresses. We distinguish two forms of chess pieces: figural pieces and abstract/geometric pieces, and the material from which they are made is very diverse. While members of the social elite could afford game sets made of expensive materials such as ivory and rock crystal, the lower classes had to be content with low-quality sets made of wood or bone. A very interesting phenomenon are the chess sets kept in church treasuries and incorporated into reliquaries, which testify to the relationship between ecclesiastical and secular rulers. Chess was often condemned and banned by ecclesiastical and secular rulers, but this did not shake its popularity among the social elite, who used this game to pass their free time and develop their cognitive abilities

Keywords: Archeological Findings; Chess; Medieval Society; The Middle Ages

PP-08 Ethnoarchaeology: A Dialogue Between Contemporary Behavioural Patterns and Material Remains in the Domain of Marriage and Intimacy

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Using ethnoarchaeology as its theoretical framework, this paper systematically reviews existing ethnographic and anthropological literature to examine the material practices and behavioural patterns associated with marriage and intimate relationships. The analysis is structured around four key dimensions: dowry circulation, post-marital spatial organisation, marital dissolution, and premarital interaction. This paper further explores how the behavioural regularities identified across these dimensions may serve as analogical references for the interpretation of archaeological remains and systematic absences in the archaeological record. This paper demonstrates that marital behaviour not only shapes the distribution and assemblage of material culture, but also profoundly influences the formation processes and absence patterns of the archaeological record. While engaging with the behaviour–archaeological record framework, this paper critically reflects on the applicable boundaries of ethnographic analogy. It advocates for archaeological interpretation to be guided by a “framework of possibilities” rather than “deterministic reconstruction”, acknowledging the inherent complexity and variability of human behaviour across time and space. This paper aims to deepen interdisciplinary dialogue between anthropology and archaeology, and to offer a methodological pathway for the archaeological study of everyday life and intimate relationships. By foregrounding marriage and intimacy as analytically productive categories, the paper contributes to a growing body of scholarship that seeks to recover the social and relational dimensions of past human experience.

Keywords: Ethnoarchaeology; Ethnographic Analogy; Intimacy; Material Culture

OP-19 Archaeology of Mirrors

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This paper examines mirrors as *artes minores* - small yet socially and politically charged artifacts-within the early imperial formations of Afroeurasia. It advances reflection as a central analytical concept, understood as a multifaceted process that encompasses reversed imagery, perception and cognition, the production of social values, and the articulation of political authority. Rather than treating mirrors as passive instruments of self-viewing, the study conceptualises them as two-sided media: a polished obverse facilitating grooming and visual self-recognition, and a decorated reverse bearing inscriptions and iconography that conveyed moral exempla, cosmological principles, and imperial ideology. Reflection is thus framed as a meta-concept shaped by imperial structures, integrating social practice, religious and magical meanings, and culturally specific constructions of physical and moral beauty.

The project adopts a comparative archaeological approach focused on China, India, Iran, and the Mediterranean during the antiquities (ninth century BCE to eighth century CE). These regions are selected for their broadly comparable imperial formations, characterized by expansive territories, large populations, technological innovation, and bureaucratic governance. Across these contexts, mirrors are examined as media that mediate between individual subjectivity and imperial order.

Reflection is defined as a composite process involving reversed images, sensory perception, mental associations, knowledge systems, and socially embedded values. It comprises two interrelated components: the medium (reflective surfaces) and the observer, whose interaction with both reflective and decorative aspects generates meaning. The study further extends its scope beyond manufactured mirrors to consider reflective phenomena in natural and artificial materials—water, metals, stone, ceramics, and glass—interpreted through natural, social, and political lenses.

The project unfolds in three analytical layers. Firstly, it investigates mirrors as social objects in the Roman and Han empires, addressing selfhood, hierarchy, and codified behaviour. Secondly, it analyses broken, mutilated, and intentionally damaged mirrors across Afroeurasia through an object-oriented ontological framework, foregrounding material agency. Thirdly, it explores reflective surfaces in Han China, Mauryan India, Sasanian Persia, and Rome as hyperobjects embedded in cultural memory, situating reflection at the intersection of materiality, cosmology, and imperial power.

Keywords: Afroeurasia; Artes Minores; Mirrors; Reflection; Theoretical Archaeology

BETWEEN MYTH AND MATERIALITY: RITUAL, BELIEF, AND EMBODIMENT IN ARCHAEOLOGY

OP-20 Reframing Paddle Dolls and Their Role in Ritual and Gender Performance: A Revision of the Recent Research and Archeological Context

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This presentation will focus around egyptian paddle dolls in their archeological and cultural context, arguing that these dolls functioned as active participants in Hathoric ritual performance, embodying specific living women whose tattooed, ornamented, and performative bodies held ritual power in funerary contexts. By centering materiality and corporeal practice rather than passive symbolism, this approach reveals how gender was not merely represented but actively performed, inscribed, and ritualized through both wooden objects and living female bodies in Middle Kingdom Egypt. The painted tattoos on paddle dolls mirror geometric patterns found recently on mummified remains of women buried in Nebhepetre's mortuary temple precinct. The prominent display of the pubic triangle on paddle dolls connects to the anasyrma ritual gesture documented in the Contendings of Horus and Seth, where Hathor revived her father Re through ecstatic performance involving genital exposure. Material analysis also revealed that paddle dolls were augmented with real human hair, textile fragments, and mud-bead ornaments, creating liminal objects between representation and embodied presence. In conclusion, these objects were not just symbols but active ritual tools used by the women participating in the rituals.

Keywords: Gender; Hathor; Materiality; Paddle Dolls; Performativity

OP-21 Where Is Odysseus? An Archaeological Approach to Homeric Ithaca

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This research explores the problematic identification of the island of Ithaca as described by Homer in the *Odyssey*. Through an interdisciplinary analysis, the study contrasts the literary accounts of the poem with the historical and geographical reality of the Ionian Islands.

The study begins by analyzing the concept of *Nóstos* (homecoming) as the primary driver of the journey and the construction of Odysseus' identity. This is followed by a detailed examination of the geographical descriptions provided in the epic to evaluate their correlation with real-world topography. The core of the investigation reviews the most prominent localization hypotheses: the traditional identification supported by Schliemann, Wilhelm Dörpfeld's theory regarding Leucas, and the more recent proposal by Bittlestone and Underhill concerning the Paliki peninsula in Cephalonia. These theories are compared to determine which offers the most plausible scientific framework.

The final section focuses on the Mycenaean archaeological record of modern Ithaca, specifically the site of Agios Athanasios ("Homer's School"). Although monumental structures, hydraulic systems, and defensive walls have been documented, alongside votive objects suggesting a later hero cult, the research concludes that there is still no definitive scientific evidence of a Mycenaean palatial center that fully matches Homer's descriptions.

Keywords: Agios Athanasios; Ithaca; Homeric Geography; Mycenaean Archaeology; Odysseus

OP-22 Religious Customs in Prehistory and Protohistory: How Does One Deduce the Immaterial from the Material?

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The process of reconstructing religious customs of peoples without their own tradition of literacy presents a number of unique challenges. Without the context provided by the written word, researchers are often forced to start with universals and move on to particulars –rather than directly confront particular manifestations of religious cult, as is the norm with extensively recorded religious traditions. To make matters more complicated, the researcher is often forced to rely on subjective criteria in order to even identify signs of religious devotion within the archaeological record. More often than not, in their attempts at reconstructing the religious customs of prehistoric (and proto-historic) peoples, researchers say less about the cultures they're ostensibly subjecting to autopsy and more about their own conceptions of what particular manifestations of human spirituality are supposed to look like. With this presentation, we wish to open a conversation on how we interpret material evidence of religious practice, and, critically, how to avoid reading models into the evidence – as opposed to deducing models on the basis of available evidence as the scientific method demands. Included within the presentation is a brief critical overview of Max D. Price's recently published work on the role of archaeology in understanding the historic emergence of food taboos – *Food Taboos in Archaeology* (2026).

Keywords: Religion; Prehistory; Protohistory; Archaeology and Ethnology

ARCHEOLOGY OF DEATH: BURIAL ASSEMBLAGES, VISUAL TRADITIONS AND RITUAL EXPRESSIONS

OP-23 Working with What Remains. A Case Study of Three Sword Burials from Tyrol

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In the region of the former Princely County of Tyrol, which stretched from Kufstein in Austria to Lake Garda in Italy until 1918, a rich knightly culture developed during the Middle Ages, evidence of which can still be seen today in the imposing castles that tower into the sky. A knight could only enter this elite circle through a special ritual, the accolade, in which a nobleman elevated the candidate with a sword. This object was therefore not only a weapon but also a symbol of status, so it is not surprising that the sword was often buried with its owner. There are eight known sword burials in Tyrol, but they vary greatly in their significance.

In my presentation, I would like to present three specific and very different examples and explore the question of what we can actually learn from them.

The first case comes from Eppan and was discovered around 1900 during canal works. We have records of an extraordinary single-edged sword, but the exact circumstances of its discovery can hardly be reconstructed. Only two historical photographs of the discovery exist, while excavation documentation or notes have not been preserved, and the sword itself is now lost.

The second case concerns the so-called Botschen-Grave, which was discovered during excavations of the Dominican monastery in Bozen in the 1960s. A heavily fragmented sword was found in an unmarked grave. Although the find was made during an archaeological excavation, the original documentation has been lost. All that remains is a published article, while this sword has also since disappeared.

The third case stands in sharp contrast to this: the tomb of Oswald von Schrofenstein in Landeck, which was archaeologically investigated in 2013. The complete documentation is available for this find, and the sword was able to be comprehensively examined and restored. A comparison of these three very different findings will show that even highly fragmented or early discoveries still have considerable archaeological potential when critically analysed.

Keywords: Archaeology; Burials; Middle Ages; Swords; Tyrol

OP-24 Analysis of the skeletal remains from La Cueva de La Arena (Torreiglesias, Segovia), a burial site from the 3rd millennium BC.

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This study presents the results of the osteological analysis and funerary taphonomy of the skeletal remains recovered from the La Arena cave site (Torreiglesias, Segovia). It forms part of the preliminary study of this site and its comparison with other funerary contexts from the interior of the Iberian Peninsula within the chronological framework of the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age. The anthropological analysis consisted of a detailed study of all the recovered remains with the aim of identifying the minimum number of individuals, the anatomical representation and, to the extent possible, reconstructing their biological profiles (age, sex, stature and pathologies) in an effort to better understand the post-depositional history of the bones. The results of C14-AMS dating of a human rib indicate a date of 4125 ± 32 BP (CIRAM-16238), which provisionally places the burial context in the first half of the 3rd millennium BC, within a pre-Bell Beaker context, at least during its funerary use. The Chalcolithic contexts from the same region place this site within a landscape of coexisting cave and pit burials, alongside the presence, at certain sites, of cut marks on human bones associated with secondary burials. The presence of individuals from different age groups, including perinatal remains, neonates, infants, juveniles and adults, supports the interpretation of the cave as a collective funerary space and contributes to a better understanding of Chalcolithic burial practices in the interior of the Iberian Peninsula.

Keywords: Chalcolithic; Collective cave burial; Human remains; Iberian Peninsula

OP-25 Exploring Kyushu's Painted Tombs: Visual Strategies, Regional Patterns, and Social Implications

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The sixth century CE in Kyushu witnessed the peak of decorated tombs (*sōshoku kofun*), with the development of so-called mural/painted tombs, which persisted until the mid-seventh century. Unlike earlier types, these tombs feature decorations on the surfaces of not only the burial chamber walls but also other internal components, such as gates, antechambers, ceilings, and the *ishiyakata*, a distinctive funerary structure resembling a house-shaped open coffin. These decorations are either painted directly onto the stone or engraved. Additionally, beginning in the sixth century, new figurative subjects were introduced into the iconographic repertoire, including human figures, animals, boats, and other motifs influenced by continental culture. Two primary visual strategies thus emerge in these tombs. The first category comprises tombs with a predominantly symbolic iconographic repertoire, in which the depicted subjects are isolated and do not interact with one another. The second category, by contrast, encompasses tombs with narrative scenes in which the subjects interact. This study aims to explore the distribution of the different visual strategies adopted within painted tombs across the Kyushu region. Such an exploration will facilitate an understanding of potential similarities and differences between nearby and distant tomb groups and help assess the regional characteristics of this tomb type. The investigation will seek to determine whether the development of painted tombs represents a homogeneous or heterogeneous phenomenon, and what social implications these differences may suggest.

Keywords: Decorated Tombs; Funerary Art; Iconography; Japanese Archaeology; Kyushu

READING THE VISUAL LANGUAGE OF ART, SYMBOLS, AND MATERIAL EXPRESSION

PP-09 Grotta di Fumane: A Key Prehistoric Site for Neanderthal and Early Homo sapiens Activity in Northern Italy

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Grotta di Fumane, situated in northern Italy, shows an important record of Neanderthal and Homo Sapiens activities as well as possible contact between the two dating back 90 000 to 25 000 years ago.

Associated with Neanderthals is Mousterian culture. Flint tools with Levallois Technique, signs of fire and space organization for manufacturing and waste found in the cave point to that. Another great discovery are the remains of bones of vultures with cuts made with stones to obtain feathers, probably used exclusively for decorations, similarly to nowadays tribes. Shells found in the cave were not local and indicate they intended to collect exotic objects and reuse them as decoration as the shells were perforated with even traces of ochre. So, Fumane cave, along with other sites in Europe (Germany, France, Krapina in Croatia) demonstrate that Neanderthals had symbolic representations.

Around 45 000 years ago, there was a transitional period with H. Sapiens occupation and their flints are related to the Uluzzian culture. Then comes the Aurignacian culture, circa 40 000 years ago, with worked flint and deer antlers used for spears and for manufacturing leather. There are signs of occupation only from spring to autumn because of the weather and hunting opportunities. They also organised the space, with distinct activity areas such as flint knapping, hide-working, and butchery.

This site also presents one of the oldest forms of art, animal shapes painted on stone with red ochre. One piece, though, remains a mystery. Known as the "Shaman", it depicts a figure similar to that of a human, maybe related to some kind of rite or spiritual moment. The last culture is Gravettian and after that the cave collapsed, around 20 000 years ago.

There are still questions that archaeologists need to answer about what the two species had in common and in case how it happened. The cave shows without doubt that the idea we had of H. neanderthalensis from the 19th was wrong, they were intelligent with developed social skills (they might have transmitted manufacturing culture across Europe), abstract thinking and decorating abilities.

Keywords: Archaic Human; Art; Neanderthal; Paleolithic

OP-26 The Functions of the Ancient Egyptian Monumental Inscriptions and Their Classification

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Monumental inscriptions in ancient Egypt can be broadly divided into royal and private, though this distinction is largely modern. Royal inscriptions include Pyramid Texts, temple inscriptions, annals, decrees, and narrative accounts of the pharaoh's achievements, while private monuments feature autobiographies, appeals to the living, and offering formulas. A central medium for such texts were stone stelae, which could serve funerary, commemorative, or official purposes and were often displayed in prominent locations. Meanwhile it seems that ancient Egyptians distinguished two main types of monumental inscribed objects. The hieroglyph O26 representing a stone stela has two readings: *wḏ* and *ḥ'w*. The first category – with literal meaning "stone monument", "boundary stone", "decree", "message", "order", "instruction", "regulation", "inscription" – included not only stelae and monumental inscriptions, but also everything that came from the king, including letters written on papyrus. The second operated in the commemorative and funeral context. Despite their variety, these inscriptions shared a common purpose: preserving the name and legacy of the individual, which in Egyptian belief ensured survival after death. This reflects the concept of hieroglyphs as *medu netjer* ("words of the gods"), highlighting the perceived power of writing as a medium of communication with the divine. Royal inscriptions, much like tomb autobiographies, functioned as declarations of merit before the gods, reinforcing the ruler's legitimacy and worthiness. More broadly, monuments with inscriptions across ancient civilisations appear to have been created to gain divine favour, whether from major deities, local gods, or deified ancestors. Their placement in visible public spaces increased their symbolic impact, even if literacy was limited. The relationship between text and image was crucial, as iconography often reveals the intended recipient—usually a deity—more clearly than the inscription itself. Overall, the type of monument or inscription does not strictly determine its function; rather, these texts can be understood as formalised "reports" addressed to the gods, combining commemoration, self-presentation, and religious intent.

Keywords: Ancient Egypt; Hieroglyphs; Monumental Inscriptions; Stelae, Writing System

OP-27 King on His Boat in Royal Iconography of the Old Kingdom Egypt

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As Herodotus famously said, Egypt is the gift of the Nile river, and so it is not surprising, that one of the most common objects, the ancient egyptians were using, is a boat. And precisely because it was so common, it achieved a very important symbolic and religious function. As the egyptians would travel the land on a boat on the Nile river during their lifetime, so they would travel on it towards their afterlife. Just like the solar god Re traveled everyday in his solar bark as the sun on the sky and during night on his night bark in the underworld. This seemingly almost mundane object was depicted even in the pyramid complexes of egyptian pharaohs, and that is, what I am dealing with in my research. The depiction of the king on his boat takes on multiple forms, either hunting in the marshes of the Nile Delta, coming back from expeditions from another lands, or sailing his „ship of the state”. In my research, I am cataloguing the reliefs in question and I am touching both the symbolic and religious meaning, as well as the possible depiction of real historical events and boat and shipbuilding realities.

Keywords: Ancient Egypt; Boat; Ship; King

PP-10 The Erasure of Ancient Polychromy via Classical Teachings: Altering the Preconceived Notion of “White” Ancient Greco-Roman Sculpture

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It is hard to imagine that the once vividly painted Greek sculptures were ever anything more than what we know them to be today, a celebration of pure form, of undying classical beauty. That their gaze which once carried life has now turned icy and the colour that has once graced their cheek has been washed away with time. This knowledge of ancient statues once being polychromatic seems to have faded from memory during the Renaissance. What took its place was the idea of timelessness, further pushed by the Art historian Johan Joachim Winckelmann who looked at the white marble skeletons and saw harmony in its truest form. And yet traces of colour persist today. Some faint and fragile hidden in the folds of stone. Some invisible to the naked eye.

This presentation argues that polychromy was an essential element to ancient sculpture, fundamental to its visual, cultural and symbolic understanding and function. The idea of ancient sculpture being painted resurfaced in the 18th century, and the advancements in science and technology have led us to analyses such as Visible Induced Luminescence (VIL), that shows us the ghosts of Egyptian blue, the first synthetic pigment of its kind. UV light exposes the red tones of kermes and madder lake, and Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FT-IR), shows us the material's molecular fingerprint. These are some of the methods that restore our vision and give us a better understanding of how these sculptures were once experienced.

Keywords: Polychromy; Pigments; Analysis; Classical Sculpture

OP-28 Histri 4.0: Experimental Insights into Visual Memory and Ornament Reproduction

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In contemporary practice, the visual language of the past continues to inform artistic production and the development of cultural and creative industries. Within the student project Histri 4.0, we explored the creative potential of Iron Age Histrian archaeological heritage by studying and reinterpreting its material culture. Pottery, metal objects, stone sculpture, and both imported and locally produced artefacts were examined by reducing them to their basic formal elements and treating them as units of visual information. These elements then served as starting points for new artistic and design responses developed through processes of deconstruction, recombination, and reinterpretation. A key part of the project was a series of controlled experiments designed to explore how visual information might be transmitted, with particular focus on the transfer of pottery decoration through visual memory. While archaeology has traditionally relied on the formal analysis of shapes and decorative motifs to define archaeological “cultures”, less attention has been given to how such patterns were actually perceived, remembered, and reproduced by individuals. We approached this question by assuming that specialised craftspeople played an important role in creating and shaping complex ornamental systems, producing visual codes widely understood within their communities. In addition to the circulation of pottery itself, the ability to perceive, memorise, and reproduce decorative patterns likely contributed to the wider spread of these visual forms.

To test this, we worked with two groups – students of Archaeology and students of Visual Arts and Design – whose different backgrounds influenced how they approached the tasks. By comparing their ability to memorise, reproduce, and transform ornamental motifs, we were able to model a simplified process of cultural transmission and reflect on how visual information may have circulated within Iron Age Histrian communities.

Keywords: Iron Age Histri; Pottery Decoration; Prehistoric Art; Visual Memory; Cultural Transfer

PP-11 Roman Horse and Rider Brooches

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This study analyses Roman horse-and-rider brooches, a distinctive type of a small metal brooch depicting a mounted rider. These objects date from the mid-1st century AD to Late Antiquity, with the majority of examples belonging to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Usually cast in bronze and measuring approximately two to five centimeters in length, these brooches were produced using casting techniques and were sometimes decorated with enamel, niello inlays, or carvings. Although brooches generally functioned as garment fasteners, the small size of the horse-and-rider brooches indicates that they may have served as decorative pins that have symbolic meaning or votive purposes.

The research is based on a comprehensive dataset compiled from archaeological databases, museum collections, and published studies. In total, 305 examples were recorded, documented, and analysed. Their geographical distribution reveals clear regional concentrations, particularly in the Roman province of Britannia and along the Rhine and the Danube. In Britannia, horse-and-rider brooches are frequently found in religious contexts and are often interpreted as votive offerings or early forms of pilgrimage badges. Along the Rhine and the Danube, these brooches appear more frequently in military contexts and may have had a symbolic value for the soldiers that wore them. They are also found in the Balkan region, although the density of finds there is not as high. Nevertheless, a small concentration can be observed particularly in Slovenia.

A central aim of this study is the development of a new typology for Roman horse-and-rider brooches. Previous classifications have generally focused on individual regional groups and therefore lack a comprehensive overview. By analyzing morphological features, iconography, chronological aspects, and geographical distribution, this study proposes a typological system consisting of three main types and eleven subtypes.

Keywords: Brooch; Distribution; Iconography; Roman Provincial; Typology

OP-29 A Case Study of “Archaeological Calligraphy”: Focusing on Materials Discovered in Dunhuang

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This paper represents an interdisciplinary study at the intersection of archaeology and calligraphy. It introduces the core concept of “Archaeological Calligraphy” and, using calligraphy discovered in Dunhuang as a case study, it explores the pivotal role of archaeology in the study of Chinese calligraphy. For a long time, research on Chinese calligraphy has primarily focused on extant manuscripts and rubbing copies of stele inscriptions, establishing a narrative framework for calligraphy history characterized by “Stele School”(碑学) and “Model Script School”(帖学). This approach has had a profound influence; while its merits are self-evident, its drawbacks include, but are not limited to, neglecting information about the “original context” of calligraphy, downplaying the significance of other calligraphic media, and emphasizing the distinctions rather than the connections between different media. Calligraphic materials discovered in modern and contemporary archaeological activities (referred to in this paper as “archaeological calligraphy”) offer the potential to overcome these limitations. To further explore the potential of “archaeological calligraphy”, this paper takes calligraphic works from Dunhuang as its subject. By analyzing information regarding calligraphic media and excavation contexts revealed in archaeological reports, this paper distinguishes between two types of calligraphy: “Frontier Calligraphy” and “Buddhist Calligraphy”. It further argues that Frontier Calligraphy is characterized by “simplicity”(朴素性) and “temporality”(短暂性), in contrast to the “preciousness”(贵重性) and “permanence”(永恒性) associated with Buddhist Calligraphy. The identification of these characteristics not only provides a foundation for understanding factors such as different calligraphic media, materials, writing styles, and aesthetic preferences, but also represents a theoretical endeavor to apply an archaeological perspective to the study of Chinese calligraphy.

Keywords: Art Archaeology; Chinese Calligraphy; Cross-Media; Materiality

ARCHAEOLOGY ACROSS CONTEXT: FROM HERITAGE PROTECTION TO FILM AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

OP-30 At the Crossroads of Pedagogy and Archaeology: Stories from the Archaeological Museum in Split

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The Archaeological Museum in Split, the oldest museum institution in Croatia, has in recent years placed increasing emphasis on the development of educational programmes aimed at diverse audiences. Within this context, a dedicated education department was established, originating from a student initiative during a university internship and evolving into an integral part of the museum's activities. This paper examines the role of museum education as a space for learning beyond formal educational systems, with particular focus on the active involvement of students in the design and implementation of educational content.

Drawing on our experience working with a wide range of audiences – from kindergarten children to adults and individuals with disabilities – we explore how complex scholarly and historical content can be transformed into accessible and engaging interpretative narratives. Special attention is given to the challenges and opportunities of working in a museum without a permanent exhibition inside the museum building, where continuously changing displays require flexibility and the constant development of new pedagogical approaches.

Through the example of the recent exhibition “Ecclesia et Regnum”, the paper demonstrates how museum education can function as a dynamic and participatory process that extends beyond traditional teaching frameworks. It argues that museums can serve as important environments in which students develop professional and pedagogical competencies while actively contributing to the interpretation and communication of cultural heritage.

Keywords: Education; Guided Tours; Museum Pedagogy; Workshops

OP-31 Reframing Archaeology Through Film: MFAF Split

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The International Archaeology Film Festival (MFAF), organised by the Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments in Split, is a biennial event dedicated to documentary films addressing archaeology, anthropology, and the protection of cultural heritage. Since its establishment in 2010, the festival has promoted film as an interpretative medium capable of translating complex archaeological research into accessible and engaging narratives for broader audiences. Its programme has featured internationally acclaimed productions covering diverse themes, from underwater archaeological investigations to the restoration of major heritage sites, such as Notre Dame Cathedral after the 2019 fire.

Alongside the official International jury, the festival includes a unique Student jury that involves students and early-career researchers. Through this, students are given a chance to craft their own criteria, choose and present the prize to the selected film and its director. By examining this model, the paper explores how participatory practices can function as a form of experiential learning, fostering critical analysis, collaborative decision-making, and professional responsibility.

Beyond film screenings, the festival operates as a broader academic and cultural platform, incorporating site visits, lectures, workshops and discussions on heritage interpretation and cultural identity. In this context, the MFAF can be understood as a “living laboratory” in which academic research, audiovisual media, and public engagement intersect. The paper argues that such initiatives offer valuable frameworks for integrating higher education with cultural production and public archaeology.

Keywords: Anthropology; Archaeology; Film Festival; Interdisciplinarity; MFAF

OP-32 Sudanese Archaeology in the Times of War and the Protection of Its Heritage

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Since 2023, the people of Sudan have been caught in the middle of an ongoing civil war. Consequently, Sudanese archaeological sites and museums are under constant threat and attack. Institutions have been raided, leaving museum workers and archaeologists without employment. Artefacts are being destroyed, stolen, or sold on the black market. Furthermore, archaeological sites are negatively affected by illegal digs, a lack of funding and preservation workers, and a huge influx of displaced Sudanese inhabitants from the most affected cities.

This presentation aims to describe the ongoing situation in Sudan, detailing specifically how archaeological sites are affected, what has happened to the most important museums and institutions, and how archaeological professionals are operating during this time of war. The lecture also highlights ongoing preservation efforts by both Sudanese and international institutions, such as UNESCO and INTERPOL, and summarises how academics around the world can offer support. Additionally, the ongoing efforts of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Czech Institute of Egyptology will be described. Lastly, a case study will be presented focusing on the archaeological site of Usli, which is being studied by the Czech Institute of Egyptology. The processing of archaeological material and the acquisition of new information during wartime and limited site access will be discussed.

Keywords: Heritage; Sudan; Usli; War

PP-12 “Fragmenti”: A Student Journal for Archaeological Research and Publishing

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Fragmenti is a student-run journal of the Department of Archaeology, established in 2003 with the aim of encouraging student participation in academic research and publishing. After a period of inactivity, the journal was revived in 2017 and, since 2023, has been published regularly in a fully digital, open-access format, which has improved its visibility and accessibility.

The journal offers students an opportunity to take their first steps into academic publishing by presenting original work on a wide range of archaeological topics, including field surveys, excavations, site documentation, and material analysis. In doing so, Fragmenti not only showcases student research but also fosters the development of essential academic skills particularly in scientific writing, critical thinking, and the communication of research results. The quality of contributions is ensured through a review process involving faculty members of the Department and other researchers.

Alongside research articles, the journal features interviews, thematic sections, and more informal content, creating a dynamic and engaging publication that connects students, faculty, and the wider academic community. By presenting Fragmenti at this conference, we aim to increase its visibility, encourage new contributions and collaborations, and highlight the important role of student-led initiatives in shaping academic discourse.

Keywords: Academic Publishing; Archaeology; Student Journal; Student Research

About the Archaeology Students' Club KSA FFZG

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is part of the University of Zagreb, one of Europe's oldest universities. Our faculty dates back to 1669 and is the oldest and largest Croatian scientific and higher-education institution in the humanities and social sciences. The Department of Archaeology was founded in 1878 and has flourished ever since.

KSA FFZG (Archaeology Students' Club, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences) was founded in March 2024. It started as an idea to connect fellow archaeology students in Zagreb and build new friendships. Since then, it has formed into a very active student organization. It includes both Undergraduate and Graduate students of archaeology who study in Zagreb but come from all over Croatia and beyond. That, in turn, creates a wide range of curious people, each with different experiences and stories to share. When it comes to stories, we also organize lectures about various domestic and foreign digs and archaeological experiences, first-hand presented to us by scientists and students alike. Not all that we do is formal and scientific, since we also organize “movie nights” (AFV – Arheološke filmske večeri) to watch archaeologically and historically themed movies in collaboration with our faculty professors who lead intros and discussions afterward. In addition, we have organized several ongoing archaeological pub quizzes and, as a reward, offer a range of archaeological books, drinks, pizza, and even “golden” trowels. We also organized a couple of themed workshops on ancient pottery and archaeological board game nights. However, our favorite activity is a simple get-together and having a few drinks while chatting. 😊

We hope you have a great time in Zagreb and look forward to meeting everyone!





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