

Living on the coast: maritime hunter-fisher-gatherers, shell middens and the use of marine resources in Mesolithic

Europe

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One of the main characteristics of the Mesolithic in Europe is the occupation of coastal locations. The abundance of coastal sites in the Atlantic and Mediterranean regions shows clear evidence of the importance of these areas for human settlement and the significance of coastal resources in subsistence strategies. Understanding themes such as: environmental and climatic conditions, the process of formation and erosion of shell middens, settlement patterns and mobility, symbolic activities, as well as the role played by marine resources (molluscs, fish, crustaceans, echinoderms...), are key to gaining a better knowledge on the occupation of the coast by the last hunter-fisher-gatherer societies. These topics can be approached from a wide range of theoretical and methodological points of view, which promotes the enrichment of discussion and debates. The session is intended to gather together presentations on maritime hunter-fisher-gatherers and shell middens (e.g. chronology, micromorphology, macro and micro-spatial analysis...), in addition to multidisciplinary research from a range of methodological perspectives (archaeomalacology, ichthyoarchaeology, geochemistry, use-wear analysis...). All geographical locations and chronological frameworks within Mesolithic Europe will be considered. In summary, this session aims to bring together a wide variety of scholars to discuss the role of maritime hunter-fisher-gatherers, shell middens and marine resources in Mesolithic Europe. It will provide a forum for discussion of different approaches to understanding human use of coastal areas and resources.