

TAG Deva

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**Department of History and Archaeology
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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

to explore Neanderthal art anew, using it to understand Neanderthal use of animal materials and as a window into the interspecies interactions these objects might have mediated, hinting at complex Neanderthal-animal-object relations.

Once Upon a Time in the Arctic: Object Itineraries and Social Relations as seen through Palaeo-Inuit Metal Use (AD 500–1300)

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One of the first groups in the Eastern North American Arctic to widely use and exchange metal are known to archaeologists as Late Dorset (AD 500–1300). Paradoxically, metal remains rare in Late Dorset archaeological collections. By examining the organic objects that may have supported metal blades, this paper will present proxy data for metal use from Late Dorset sites across the Arctic. Moreover, this paper will use these data to explore the ways archaeologically immaterial metal was mobilised to enchain social relations of the Late Dorset through space and, importantly, time. The constrained source regions for Arctic metal (northern Greenland and the Central Arctic) make it an ideal candidate for disentangling Arctic Human-Thing relations and the evolving itinerary of individual metal objects as they travel between regions, generations, and peoples. Ultimately, metal exchange may have been a means for the Late Dorset to create and maintain socio-cultural relations in a vast and sometimes isolating landscape such as the Arctic.

Exploring a Relational Approach to Mesolithic Fishing

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The sociality inherent in human-animal relationships is currently being addressed in hunter-gatherer archaeology, but social zooarchaeology and multispecies archaeology have thus far privileged the furry and feathery animals in their case-studies. In this presentation, fishbone, fishing gear and rock art imagery of halibut and halibut-fishing forms the empirical basis for exploring a relational approach to human-fish encounters in late Mesolithic Norway (6300–3800 cal. BC). Fish contributed considerably to Mesolithic subsistence in this region, but has been given little attention beyond its economic importance. A relational ideal-model is here suggested as a viable alternative to optimizing models. Such models have been considered problematic and the use of ethnographic analogy has been rejected by many Mesolithic scholars, who emphasize variability and the unique potentials of the archaeological record. This paper argues that generalizing is unavoidable when addressing prehistoric sociality, and further maintains that ontological stability is fundamentally important for understanding past hunter-gatherer engagements with non-humans.

Mutual Becomings in Life and Death: Human and Non-Human Animals in the Mesolithic Danube Gorges

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The post-Cartesian ‘Animal Turn’ marked a shift from anthropocentric attitudes to non-human animals as economic or symbolic resources to be exploited, to new understanding of interspecies relations as mutually impactful and inherently social. Borrowing heavily from ethology and relational ontologies, these approaches bear important implications for studies of prehistory and cultural contexts where hunting and fishing afforded particular forms of interspecies interaction. In this paper, I focus on disintegrated and reassembled human and animal bodies in the context of Mesolithic Danube Gorges, and insights they offer into new kinds of entities emerging post-mortem. However, even if death remains materialized and consequently more visible in the archaeological record, it is far from being the only event in human and non-human histories of engagement. The paper therefore considers not only structurally deposited animal remains, but also living animals as subjects and agents in shaping worlds populated by a multitude of beings.

Hunting Aurochs and the Making of a Significant Place: Thinking about the Late Mesolithic Activity at Langley’s Lane

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At Langley’s Lane, Bath and North-East Somerset, an aurochs was killed and primary butchery activities carried out at an active tufa spring. Some of the bones and butchery tools were deposited into the spring waters. Shallow pits were dug at the wetland edge and flint knapped. Later, as the spring became less active, faunal remains and lithics were again placed in its waters. Eventually, the spring dried up, its