
Experimental Archaeology in Mesolithic Research

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Abstract

Experimental archaeology is becoming increasingly important in archaeological practice: both as a scientific tool and as a way to include the public in research. Experiments range from constructing dwellings to burial experiments exploring organic residue survival, involving state-of-the-art bioarchaeological techniques. But how are these approaches transforming our understanding of the Mesolithic, whether that be our own research agendas or the way the Mesolithic is visualised by the public? In this session we would like to bring together researchers who are using experimental archaeology to address key theoretical questions regarding the different aspects of Mesolithic lifeways: pushing beyond functional typological studies to explore more socially grounded questions relating to past processes, activities and materials. We aim to show how a close and intensive dialectic between Mesolithic archaeological remains and experimental archaeological research can enable us to move beyond cliché assumptions about Mesolithic life. We invite speakers to present research which utilises scientific, well documented experiments to address a specific research question relating to archaeological objects, structures, activities and processes, for example, pyrotechnology, adhesive production, foraging, fishing, or burial practices.

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