
Motorways of Prehistory? Boats, Rivers, and Mobility in Mesolithic Ireland

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Abstract

The proposed poster presents a critical review of the way inland navigation is constructed in the archaeological literature as an essential component in the mobility of the Mesolithic hunter-gatherer communities of Ireland, with a particular focus on boats and rivers. Against a scarce background of direct archaeological and environmental evidence, a content analysis of the academic discourse highlights a dominant processual approach structured around three themes: seafaring and pioneering "events"; boat technology and performance; broad generalisations about the land- and waterscape. It is argued that such a narrative could be usefully revisited by adopting a small-scale, high-resolution approach that would explore human and material agency and integrate analogy as a method.

Keywords: mobility, landscape, agency, analogy, methodology, ireland

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