Predictive modeling for Mesolithic site locations in southeastern Europe

Paul Duffy*[†][1] and Dusan Boric*[‡][2]

[1]Department of Anthropology [University of Toronto] – University of Toronto Department of Anthropology 19 Russell Street, Toronto, ON, M5S 2S2, Canada, Canada
[2]Columbia University in the City of New York – 1161 Amsterdam Avenue, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027, United States

Abstract

The sparsity of Mesolithic sites preceding the earliest Neolithic in southeastern Europe has been variously attributed to lack of habitation, low population density, and biased research coverage. The question of whether some parts of the landscape were vacant, or whether the sites are there waiting to be found, has not been answered. This paper provides a land-use model for southeastern Europe that serves as an entry point for discussions about the presence and potential distribution of Mesolithic sites on the landscape. We use elevation and lithic raw material hotspots in key areas of southeastern Europe to build a set of expectations of where more sites might be found in countries where they are already known, and also build expectations for where new sites might be found across national borders where similar environmental conditions prevail. We also discuss potential strategies for prospective field survey in areas with no confirmed Mesolithic sites.

Keywords: southeastern Europe, predictive modelling, buried landscapes, research bias

*Speaker
†Corresponding author: paul.duffy@utoronto.ca
‡Corresponding author: dusan.boric@gmail.com