
Environmental Change, Cultural Landscapes and Human Adaptations in the European Mesolithic

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Résumé

Like any other living being, humans constantly influence their environment, be it intentionally or unintentionally. By extracting natural resources, they shape their environment and also that of plants and other animals. A great difference setting people apart from all other living beings is the ability to construct and develop their own environment. While human's unique tool for this is cultural behaviour, they are also closely entangled with their natural surroundings.

The Early and Mid Holocene are periods of significant change in terms of both the environment and archaeological material culture in Europe. The warming of the northern hemisphere after the Last Glacial Maximum triggered environmental changes which would have had an impact on the lives of Mesolithic hunter-gatherers. Climatically induced changes in the vegetation, for instance, formed different habitats which resulted in changes in the faunal communities. The melting of the Weichselian inland glaciation led to sea level rise along European coasts and land uplift especially in Northern Europe.

This might have led to social consequences which can be seen in transformed hunting and fishing strategies and necessary changes in the toolkit, might have impacted the socio-cultural sphere as well. Furthermore, changes in mobility patterns and settlement strategies and consequently infrastructural alterations of networks have to be regarded as relevant parameters for social relations in these epoch.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of studies focusing on the effects on people during this time:

What climate events occurred?

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What and how significant were the impacts on the environment?

Did people react to specific events or did they cause specific events?

How were people impacted by environmental changes and what is the evidence for that?

We would like to invite researchers dealing with human-environment interactions from the end of the last Ice Age to the introduction of farming. It is preferred if the contributions actively relate to the topic and bridge different scientific disciplines or approaches. The session further aims at sharing information on cutting-edge scientific methodologies and to evaluate the potential of interdisciplinary and multi-species approaches as well as ethnoarchaeological analogies.

Mots-Clés: Human Adaptation, Environmental change, Human Environment Interaction, Cultural Transformation, Environmental Archaeology