

Rethinking

the interpretation of vertical past land use
on mountain environments

Session 199

Convenors:

Astrid Röpke, University of Cologne, Germany
Francesco Carrer, University of Newcastle, UK
Davide Visentin, University of Ferrara, Italy

Mountain regions are characterized by the altitudinal zonation of their vegetation, mainly depending on climate, relief, slope exposition and soil. Similar vegetation belts (subalpine, alpine, montane) can be found on various mountain ranges but at differing altitudes. Since prehistoric times such vertical structure has stimulated the development of specific land use strategies, which in turn led to the gradual evolution of typical mountain cultural landscapes.

In the last decades an increasing number of interdisciplinary projects provided a better understanding of human-environment interaction in the mountains, shedding a new light on the progressive transition from game-hunting to seasonal pastoralism starting from the Neolithic. However, the interpretation of past subsistence practice in the mountains mainly relies on the analogy with historical practices carried out in the same environments or prehistoric practices documented in other environments. More holistic studies, encompassing different altitudinal ranges and using multi-proxy approaches, are necessary to overcome this interpretative bias and develop new theories and hypothesis on human occupation of mountain environments. In this session we seek papers combining data from local palaeoecological archives such as soils and/or near-site pollen archives, macrobotanical remains, archaeozoology, GIS and archaeology to analyse the array of activities undertaken at different altitudes in the mountains: hunting, pastoralism, mining, arable farming and gardening.

Contributors are encouraged to present case studies or regional synthesis related to vertical land use on mountain environments and more specifically to the interactions between different altitude belts and their role in shaping the current cultural landscape of mountain regions.

Keywords:

vertical land use on mountain environments, integrated approach, Geoarchaeology, Micromorphology, Archaeobotany, Archaeology

EAA 2019
25 years

Beyond Paradigms

BERN
4-7 September