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Session proposal: New approaches and methodologies in prehistoric mountain archaeology

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Wieke de Neef (University of Bamberg, Germany), wieke.de-neef@uni-bamberg.de

Francesco Carrer (University of Newcastle, UK), francesco.carrer@newcastle.ac.uk

Mountains and highlands have been both barriers and resource-rich landscapes during various phases of prehistory, depending on their specific topographic, climatic and ecological setting and the archaeological period under investigation. Unraveling the occupation history of mountain landscapes and characterizing human-environment interactions through time have thus been long-standing research goals in Mountain Archaeology. These typically require the orchestration of multiple and diverse scientific disciplines and the application of a broad variety of field methods and analytical techniques. For the pre- and protohistoric periods, this may involve specific challenges such as long depositional histories, limited access to remote locations, and the ephemeral character of human activity.

With this session we aim at bringing together various approaches and methodologies that allow us to gain new insights and a deeper understating of the human use of mountain landscapes. We are especially interested in the application of novel techniques and analytical procedures in prehistoric archaeology research, targeting the challenges of recording ephemeral human presence in mountains and highlands. Possible approaches include (but are not limited to): remote sensing and archaeological prospection, ancient genomics, ZooMS and isotopic techniques, travel and land use modelling, provenance analysis, geochronological dating techniques, paleoenvironmental reconstruction, excavation methodologies, and the use of artificial intelligence in landscape archaeology. Contributions that reflect on the use of traditional techniques and well-established approaches in new spatial or temporal contexts are also welcome.

Keywords: Mountain landscapes, archaeological methodology, geoarchaeology, archaeological prospection, paleoecology, spatial analysis