

Call for Papers: Quantitative and qualitative approaches to prehistoric warfare

Oral papers and posters are invited for the session 'Quantitative and qualitative approaches to prehistoric warfare' to be held at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, Glasgow, 2-5 September. Submissions are open until 16 February 2015 at <http://eaaglasgow2015.com/call-for-papers/>

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We look forward to hearing from you soon,

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Abstract

The last twenty years have seen a renewed interest in the study of prehistoric warfare including, among others, (1) examinations of the combat injuries detectable on human skeletons; (2) body-centred reappraisals of the identity of the prehistoric warrior based on funerary evidence and rock art; (3) martial-art approaches that have tested possible uses of prehistoric weapons and armour in combat experiments; (4) and use-wear analysis of the combat marks visible on prehistoric stone and bronze weapons.

Despite the wealth of new data and interpretations contributed by these studies, research on prehistoric warfare is still largely divided along traditional disciplinary lines. In particular, the subject suffers from a dearth of multi- and cross-disciplinary investigations that make use of scientific techniques and experimental archaeology in order to illuminate archaeological, historical and iconographic sources. Unresolved problems range from how to design meaningful laboratory and field experiments with long-disappeared weapons and long-forgotten fighting styles to how to establish shared analytical protocols for the use-wear analysis of combat marks, thus enabling comparison between different studies. Other open questions concern the possibility of cross-fertilising osteological and weaponry research in order to assess the nature of prehistoric warfare, and what scientific techniques can be best employed to evaluate the material properties of weapons and armour, and how these affected their functionality on the battlefield.

The papers presented at this session will seek to explore problems concerning warfare and combat in world prehistory from the Palaeolithic onwards, paying special attention to how integrated multi- and cross-disciplinary examinations of archaeological, osteological, experimental and analytical evidence can address a broad spectrum of questions regarding the nature, frequency, and intensity of prehistoric warfare, and the use of identifiable fighting styles.