

Session 188: 'Beast and human: Northern Europe, from the Bronze Age to Modern Times'

Keywords: human-animal relationship, history of hunting, farming communities, Northern Europe

Overall theme: widening horizons through human-environment interconnections

Main organiser

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Human relations to wild animals have gone through multiple transformations in Northern Europe (understood in wide geographic terms). From the Bronze Age onwards, wild animals played only a minor, if any, role for human subsistence. How did this influence the perception of wild animals? And if not for food, for what reasons were they hunted? Are there any patterns in the bones of wild animals found in settlements, burials or offering sites? Did farmers (peasants) hunt differently to the upper classes, and were there other populations to whom the hunt remained important in a mixed economy? Is there a meaning in the low representation or absence of significant species? What kinds of wild animals had a prominent place in human life and religion?

The session is open to different kinds of contributions: diachronic or related to certain periods, in a regional or wider sense, archaeological or interdisciplinary (including modern insights into practical hunting). Recent challenges may be worth considering, too, such as the return of wolves or the co-existence of, for example, bears and humans.