

Session 411

A community of ancestors: The urnfield phenomenon in North and West Europe

Theme: 4. Globalisation and archaeology

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This session explores the current state of research into the North and West European urnfield phenomenon in the last millennium BC. The urnfields occur slightly later in the northern and western European coastal plains than in the central European core areas of the Urnfield Culture. The introduction of urnfields as large collective burial monuments was a very distinct cultural development, though across much of North and West Europe the urnfields were incorporated into the various local burial traditions.

The urnfields have traditionally played a major role in constructing the typo-chronological frameworks of the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. In later years, the reinvestigation of urnfield materials shows the potential for in further in-depth studies of burial rites, artefacts and osteological material in the study of e.g. absolute chronology, cultural identity, networks of exchange, demography and cosmology. We invite papers that present the urnfield phenomenon in different regions, reviews of existing typo-chronological systems using relative or scientific dating methods and applications of scientific methods on urnfield material (e.g. strontium isotopes and radiocarbon dating). We especially welcome papers that ask new questions of existing urnfield collections or explore interconnectivity in Northern Europe in the last millennium BC as expressed through the urnfield burial practices.

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