

Session #232

**SWORDS TO PLOUGHSHARES - CONCILIATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO CONFLICTS. A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE BETWEEN LATE NEOLITHIC AND VIKING AGE**

**Theme:** widening\_horizons\_through\_human\_environment\_interconnections

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Thoughts on non-violent conflict solution strategies within pre- and proto historic societies are scarcely published, while works on warfare, warriors and violence are quite prominent in recent archaeological research. Violence and conflict can easily be read from material culture such as finds of weapons, war booties or even mass graves. But what about peaceful solutions? Naturally it is beneficial for everyone to either avoid, prevent, dissolve or end conflicts before they escalate ultimately.

The aim of this session is to spark a discussion about strategies to solve conflicts without violent means and identifying such strategies in the archaeological record. Fortifications as a tool of spatial organisation defining borders can be seen as deescalating/deterrent and conflict reducing factor. Borders and territoriality might be another solution for conflict avoidance. Regional meeting places indicating coexistence. Weren't fortifications built as a deterrent as avoidance of conflicts? Do pit alignments in the landscape mark areas of influence or territorial claims? Does the joint use of rare resources suggest peaceful coexistence? Can diachronic patterns be observed that point to a connection between violence and a. o. the construction of fortifications, the laying down of weaponry hoards or mass graves?

Contributions which approach the following questions are welcome:

What archaeological proxies can we use to identify violence avoiding strategies?

Can we observe diachronic changes in the level of violent conflicts where a decline could be attributed to peaceful conflict resolution strategies?

Is there a potential for reinterpretation or reevaluation of archaeological features like pit alignments, fortifications, (causewayed) enclosures, war booty sacrifices and weaponry hoards in the light of conflict avoidance or peaceful conflict resolution strategies?

Can historical sources on peaceful solutions and conflict suppression provide a new reading of archaeological sources?

How to balance the models between "real" or "symbolic" proxies of warfare and warriorhood?