

Session #446

## **RITUAL OR SIMPLY HABIT - CONTRIBUTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS ABOUT RITUAL EVENTS IN PREHISTORIC CENTRAL AND NORTHERN EUROPE**

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

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Rituals are perceived as part of human nature. In what concrete ways do rituals differ from habits or events? A core aspect of rituals is to bring about change through formal performances and physical actions. The rituals of transition, such as weddings, are examples of such changes through rituals in the present. Rituals also serve to interact with transcendental powers. They strengthen the cohesion of a group and separate it from other groups. Practices are an elementary part of rituals. They are performed by special agents, often at special places or on special occasions with the help of special objects, gestures and words. The results of these actions become obvious when they intervene in the landscape and change it permanently. This can take place, for example, in the form of funerary monuments, intentional depositions or petroglyphs. However, there are also less obvious testimonials of rituals. Here the demarcation to events, for example, becomes more difficult. Are the remains of a celebration part of a ritual or a one-time celebration and how can they be separated concretely?

In this session, different aspects of ritual will be presented and discussed. The framework should cover the Stone Age and the Bronze Age, spatially Central Europe, the British Isles, Scandinavia and the Baltic. Theoretical/ methodological investigations as well as case studies are welcome. The case studies are intended to open up the space for discussion. The aim of the case studies is not necessarily to provide ready-made answers, but to provide a starting point. A focus will therefore be on the discussion of the different archaeological sources and possibilities of interpretation. Ideally, the session will be the starting point for further investigations of specific aspects of ritual in the prehistoric context.