2nd International Conference on the Emergence of the Neolithic in Europe

Conference Programme
and Book of Abstracts
Zadar, 22–25 May 2025

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ene2025

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Zadar 2025

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Croatian Archaeological Society

General info

Following the highly successful 1st Conference on the Early Neolithic in Europe (ENE2019) in Barcelona, we are delighted to welcome you to Zadar for the 2nd Conference on the Emergence of the Neolithic in Europe (ENE2025), which is taking place from May 22–25, 2025, hosted at the University of Zadar, Croatia.

The conference is jointly organised by the Austrian Archaeological Institute, the Archaeological Museum of Zadar, the Croatian Archaeological Society, and the University of Zadar.

Zadar, situated in the heart of the Adriatic, serves as the administrative and cultural center of Zadar County in northern Dalmatia, a region extending from the slopes of the Velebit Massif to the Adriatic coast, encompassing numerous islands and inland plains. With over 2,000 years of rich and dynamic history, Zadar is a city deeply intertwined with the sea. However, the region's interior, characterized by fertile plains, a favourable climate, and mild terrain, is among the most productive agricultural areas in Dalmatia. This area hosts the largest concentration of Neolithic sites in the region, with the earliest agricultural settlements dating back to c. 6000 cal BC.

Recognizing the complexity of the Neolithisation process in Europe—its arrhythmic nature, regional variations, and the prolonged coexistence of the first farmers and the last hunter-fisher-gatherers in some regions—we have slightly adjusted the conference title. While retaining the acronym ENE, the term "Early Neolithic" has been replaced with "Emergence of the Neolithic" to more accurately reflect the broader scope and nuanced dynamics of this transformative process.

Despite this adjustment, the conference retains the same objectives as those established in Barcelona in 2019. It aims to provide a platform for discussing the Neolithisation process in Europe in all its diversity and complexity, balancing regional specificities with the shared Near Eastern origins of the Neolithic way of life.

To address these topics comprehensively, the conference is structured around eight thematic sessions (for details see "Sessions"):

1. Mesolithic–Neolithic Transition: Dynamics of Interactions among Hunter-Fisher-Gatherers and Farming Communities
2. Modelling and Population Dynamics: Formal Approaches for the Understanding of European Late Hunter-Gatherers and Farmers

3. People, Settlement and Territory: Constructing Communities from Local to Regional Scale
4. Human-Environment Dynamics: Environmental Archaeology and Paleoclimate
5. Subsistence and Health: Archaeology of the Emerging Food Systems, Dietary Patterns and Lifestyle Maladies
6. Innovation and Tradition: Technological Perspectives on Europe's Neolithisation
7. Figurative Expressions and Socio-Symbolism
8. Intersecting Identities and Social Dynamics during the Neolithisation of Europe

08-12 Tracing mobility and landscape use in the eastern Italian Alp using oxygen, sulfur, and strontium isotope analyses on Mesolithic and Neolithic burials

Giacomo Capuzzo[1,2], Christophe Snoeck[2], Alice Paladin[3], Valentina Coia[3], Alex Fontana[4], Omar Larentis[1,5],Umberto Tecchiati[6], Annaluisa Pedrotti[1], Elisabetta Mottes[7], Clément Bataille[8,9], Diego E. Angelucci[1]

[1] Bagolini Laboratory: Archaeology, Archaeometry, Photography (LaBAAF), Department of Humanities, University of Trento, Trento, Italy
[2] Archaeology, Environmental Changes& Geo-Chemistry, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium
[3] Institute for Mummy Studies, Eurac Research, Bolzano, Italy
[4] MUSE - Museo delle Scienze, Trento, Italy
[5] CROP - Centre of Research in Osteoarchaeology and Paleopathology, Department of Biotechnology and Life Sciences, University of Insubria, Varese, Lombardy, Italy
[6] Dipartimento di Beni Culturali e Ambientali, PrEcLab—Laboratorio di Preistoria, Protostoria ed Ecologia Preistorica, Università degli Studi di Milano, Milano, Italy
[7] Provincia autonoma di Trento, UMSt Soprintendenza per i beni e le attività culturali, Ufficio beni archeologici, Trento, Italy
[8] Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
[9] Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

In prehistoric times, the eastern Italian Alps (i.e. the Dolomites, Trentino-South Tyrol, and the Veneto Prealps) constituted a connecting region between Central Europe and the Mediterranean, which, despite its imposing nature, has been crossed by humans since the Mesolithic. The Adige and Eisack valleys, culminating in mid-altitude mountain passes such as Reschen and Brenner, provided essential north-south corridors for the circulation of people, objects, and ideas. Within the EU-funded MOLA project, bioarchaeological data derived from oxygen, sulfur, and strontium isotope analyses of cremated (only Sr) and inhumed individuals buried in the eastern Italian Alps have been integrated with advanced spatial modelling techniques. This interdisciplinary approach has allowed to unravel how social strategies influenced human mobility, landscape use, and identity formation in this mountainous region from the 5th to the 2nd millennium BC. While exotic materials, including cinnabar, rock crystal, actinolite schist, jade, shells, and steatite beads, indicate an interaction with alterity through long-distance cultural contacts with areas north of the Alps, the Po Valley, and the

Italian Peninsula, isotope analyses reveal a general stationary pattern for local communities during the Neolithic. This contrasts with an increased mobility observed in later periods, highlighting evolving notions of alterity and belonging, potentially influenced by emerging socio-economic factors. Such analyses are supported by the development of a new high-resolution biologically available strontium isoscape for the eastern Italian Alps, created using a machine learning approach, and new local sulfur baselines derived from faunal remains. The results of the MOLA project will also be discussed in the light of genetic data from the same individuals (Prehistoric Alps project), offering further insights into the construction of prehistoric identities in a mountain environment.