

SESSION TITLE: About the farm

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SESSION PROPOSAL:

In the session About the farm we invite you to discuss the prehistoric and medieval farm and its landscape.

Within settlement archaeology the perspective has broadened during the last century. Focus is no longer restricted to the buildings and the farm as an economic and functional unit but encompasses the farm as social arena and mental construct. The farm mirrors functional aspects connected to the agrarian production and also immaterial aspects based on the cosmological and social/cultural values of prehistoric and medieval people. Modern landscape research has contributed with a pronounced spatial perspective, applied both to settlement and landscape. The long-time perspective is a specific trait of archaeology. It emphasizes both *la longue durée* and periods of rapid change.

What similarities and differences are there between different geographical areas and different periods regarding the architecture of the farm buildings, the lay-out of the toft and the organisation of the surrounding landscape (with roads, arable fields, pastures, water-holes, meadows and managed woods)? How do we explain these (tradition, notions connected to the farm as social space and status manifestation, the organisation of labour, practical considerations)? What do they tell us about contacts?

The social organisation is reflected in settlements and the surrounding landscape. So far the élite has received particular attention. How do we identify the lower social strata? What terms, methods and models do we use to describe and characterise these? How was labour organised (and divided?) and how was co-operation organised?

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