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INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PREHISTORIC
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Session S 21-1

Archaeoacoustics: a novel interdisciplinary way of studying the past

Following several pioneering studies in the second half of the 20th century regarding the use of sound by past societies, it is in the 1990s that the interest in Archaeoacoustics reaches a significant level among researchers. Archaeoacoustics forms part of a multidisciplinary field of research, sometimes still beset by methodological difficulties but is, as mentioned by Scarre (2006), “potentially a vital part of the understanding of the lived experience of past societies”.

Following on from a milestone Conference organized in 2003 at the University of Cambridge, other events about Archaeoacoustics have been organized in several different countries since, with contributions that constitute today a considerable part of the specialised bibliography on this theme, and complement several additional publications that provided a broad view of Archaeoacoustics.

This new discipline, which attempts to recreate the soundscapes of the past, emerged from various experimental methods, and the organisers encourage these types of approaches, which sometimes may take the form of performances. We should note that Archaeology *per se* is very much one aspect of the understanding process which is hampered by the survival (or not) of a material culture. We stress that the intangible

aspects of the past have long since disappeared. It is our responsibility that we re-colour the past by applying a more sensory approach to the available archaeological record.

The organisers intend to have an interdisciplinary session, gathering researchers from different disciplines such as archaeology, experiential archaeology, acoustics, ethnomusicology, archaeoacoustics, anthropology and psychology, among others, with the aim to better understand the ancient human social contexts and sequent behaviours. We are particularly interested in presentations concerning early musical behaviour, shamanism, the representation of musical instruments and/or dancing scenes in prehistoric art, “ringing stones”, the acoustics of classical Greek and Roman buildings and of medieval churches, music archaeology, the effects of specific sounds on the human brain, as well as other possible approaches to the use of sound in past human contexts that interested participants may wish to propose.

Key-words: Archaeoacoustics, interdisciplinarity, soundscapes, Musicarchaeology.

Deadline for abstracts: 15th of May 2023

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