“Transdisciplinary Studies of Pastoralism in Ancient Greece”



Lecture “Transdisciplinary Studies of Pastoralism in Ancient Greece”

Paul Halstead, Professor of Archaeology, University of Sheffield (UK)

Where: ICAC

When: 12:00-13:00 pm

Free entrance

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The lecture is included in the research seminar **Estudis transdisciplinaris sobre ramaderia i pastoralisme**, organized by ICAC, ICRPC and IPHES (**SUMA** Project) and directed by Dr **Josep Maria Vergès** (IPHES) and Dr **Josep Maria Palet** (ICAC).

Paul Halstead studied archaeology at Cambridge University, where the teaching of Tony Legge and Andrew Sherratt inspired an interest in pastoralism. He has conducted archaeological and zooarchaeological research in Greece and ethnoarchaeological study of traditional animal and crop husbandry in Greece and other parts of Mediterranean Europe.

Abstract

As elsewhere in Mediterranean Europe (and beyond), the (pre)history of pastoralism in Greece has been widely debated, and different scholars have claimed **early pastoralism** at dates which range from the Neolithic (or even the Upper Palaeolithic) to the Medieval period.

In part, this lack of consensus has been due to the **limitations** of the evidence deployed: sparse and ambiguous written sources and remote archaeological ‘proxies’ such as site

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location, apparent impermanence of settlement, and long-distance similarities of material culture.

Today, macroscopic zooarchaeological data, stable isotopes, dental microwear, micromorphology and so on provide much more direct measures of human subsistence, the seasonality of settlement, animal diet, and the movement of people, animals and artefacts. Our dramatically improved archaeological methodology will produce few answers, however, until we can agree what our question is – **what do we mean by 'pastoralism'?**

He will address this last question by describing three overlapping, **recent forms of animal husbandry** in Greece: specialized pastoralism, large-scale mixed agro-pastoral farming, and small-scale mixed farming.

He will then use these three models to interpret the available **evidence for 'pastoralism'** in Neolithic, Late Bronze Age and Classical Greece. Although Greece (modern and ancient) serves as a case study, both the models proposed and their tentative application should broadly be relevant to **other parts of Mediterranean Europe**.