Archaeological advances reveal ancestral secrets: Latest updates in research on fire structures in Mediterranean Prehistory

We are pleased to announce the publication of the special issue ***Fire Installations in Mediterranean Late Prehistory: multidisciplinary approaches to their uses and functions*** in the *Journal Archaeological Science Reports*, edited by M. Carme Belarte (ICREA), Miquel Molist (UAB), Marta Portillo (IMF-CSIC), and Marta Mateu (ICAC).

The purpose of this special volume is to **delve into the study of combustion structures in the Late Prehistory** (from the Neolithic to the Iron Age) in the Mediterranean region, using different methodological approaches. The volume consists of nine articles, preceded by an editorial that sets the conceptual framework.

The idea for this publication emerged from the organization of the session titled "Combustion features in Mediterranean Late Prehistory: multidisciplinary approaches to their uses and functions" during the 27th International Meeting of the EAA (European Association of Archaeologists) in Kiel, held from September 6 to 11, 2021. The editors of this volume, along with Alexandre Beylier, played a key role as co-organizers of the session.

Combustion structures are elements frequently found in settlements from any historical period. While traditionally associated with culinary activities, these structures served various functions, such as providing heat to spaces, offering illumination, or transforming raw materials. The location of these structures determines the circulation and use of space, as well as the organization of domestic activities at both individual and collective levels.

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Encesa d'una de les llars experimentals construïdes a la Ciutadella Ibèrica de Calafell, en el marc del projecte TransComb. Foto: ICAC.

Their study can be approached from multiple perspectives to obtain valuable information about aspects such as the types of fuels used, the technological level of the societies that built and used them, the management of natural resources, artisanal activities, and certain ritual or symbolic practices, among others.

In recent years, different research teams have focused on studying combustion structures in various geographical areas and historical periods. This has led to a wide variety of **interdisciplinary methodological approaches, including experimental archaeology and ethnoarchaeology**, as well as interdisciplinary analyses and theoretical reflections that provide new interpretations regarding the control of thermal energy and its

applications.

Special Issue *Fire installations in Mediterranean Late Prehistory: multidisciplinary approaches to their uses and functions* bring together some of the most recent and ongoing research on combustion structures in the Mediterranean region during the Late Prehistory, from diverse methodological perspectives. These contributions promote a better understanding of domestic activities and everyday life in societies of that period.

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