

BIWEEKLY COLLOQUIUM

Semester topic "Challenging environment and social networking as drivers of change"

Monday, April 29th, 4:15 p.m.

"The 'Copper Age': a history of the concept and a discussion of its present-day usefulness"

Mark Pearce (University of Nottingham)

The history of archaeological concepts is of significance in that it can show us how terms acquired their meaning and the debates that underlie them, and help us to contextualise the work of earlier workers, who may use terms in different ways to those in which they are now used, so that we can understand their discourse more fully. In this paper I shall review the history of the use in Europe of the term Copper Age (and its equivalents Chalcolithic and Eneolithic [Aeneolithic]) to denote the period when copper was used alongside flint but (tin-) bronze had not yet been introduced for the manufacture of artefacts. In contemporary usage across Europe, the definition of the Copper Age varies according to regional and national traditions, and the term is even eschewed in some countries, which can engender confusion. Likewise, there is debate as to the validity of using technological stages as chronological periods, so that I shall briefly discuss the history of some alternative conceptualisations of the period when metallurgy emerged.

Venue: Leibnizstraße 1, Seminar Room 204