

## Submitted Abstract

ID IMC22-FSAbstr- 360

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<b>Country</b>	Belgium
<b>Region</b>	Western Europe
<b>Title</b>	The Changing Roles And Rituality Of Monte Primo (Central Apennines, Italy) Between Bronze Age And Roman Conquest.
<b>Keywords</b>	Central Apennines, Italy, Pre-Roman Communities, Archaeological Prospection
<b>Type</b>	List Of Focus Session
<b>Focus Session ID</b>	63

## Abstract

This paper presents new research of the monumental mountaintop site Monte Primo near Camerino (Central Apennines, Marche, Italy) and the changing landscape in which it is situated. Monte Primo was in use between the Late Bronze Age and the Roman Republic period and is characterized by a series of large enclosures of uncertain date which cover an area of ca. 2 hectares. The earliest occupation of this 1300 m high summit is often interpreted as a fire offering place ('Brandopferplatz') related to increased upland exploitation during the Late Bronze Age. The early rituality of the mountain can be linked to a formalization of community membership in this period, with new polities emerging from a radical change in the settlement system. Iron Age and Roman activity is attested by various bronze figurines possibly related to a pastoral Hercules-cult. The enclosure system may have had an additional defensive and/or symbolic function during territorial conflicts in the centuries leading to the Roman conquest of Picenum in 263 BC.

Geophysical prospection, aerial photography, and surface modeling allow to analyze the spatial organization of the large enclosures and natural features on the mountain, and to model the controlled access to the summit. Archaeological surveys, environmental studies, and GIS analyses of the wider mountain landscape situate Monte Primo in a dynamic environment affected by climate fluctuations, the varying availability of natural resources, and changing accessibility of routes across the Apennines. By placing Monte Primo in a *longue durée* context of increasing social complexity and landscape formation processes, this presentation proposes how this site was embedded in its cultural and natural surroundings, and how its role changed during its 1000-year occupation history.