

About

In archaeology, we encounter models in a wide variety of contexts, whether as deliberate methodological tools or, more implicitly, as theoretical approaches whose model-like nature is often not recognised as such. 3D modelling, in particular, has recently dominated the field of modelling in archaeology; but climate modelling, population modelling and the modelling of human-environment relationships are just some of the areas that increasingly find their way into archaeology. Next to it there is also widespread use of less explicit models: social ranking systems or diffusion models can be cited as theoretical models and have in this sense been in use since the emergence of the first 'social models' in the 18th century.

But it is not only from the post-processual perspective that the use and value of models are frequently called into question. The criticism begins with the suitability of archaeological data for modelling and ends at questioning the explanatory power of models in general.

Therefore, we would like to explore the various applications of models in archaeology and discuss topics such as:

What new insights can be obtained through models? Or do they represent such an abstraction of reality that they become devoid of meaning? To what extent can models from modern environmental or social sciences be applied to long-lost cultures? What specific limitations do archaeological data present when used for modelling?
Where does their reliability end?

