NEPTUNE TALKS

a series of online scientific lectures



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Investigating Pleistocene sea-level changes through cultural heritage: methods and tools from SPHeritage Project

Understanding the impact of sea-level changes on human societies is one of the most challenging scientific issues of the 21st century. Alternative to a probabilistic approach, based on modelling future inundation scenarios, a neo-deterministic approach can be explored, based on cause-effect relationship between sea-level change and human population in the past.

In this talk some case studies will be shown demonstrating how cultural heritage, in different ways, can be employed as a proxy in palaeoenvironmental research and, particularly, how it can create/preserve accurate relative sea-level index points. Moreover, methods and tools will be illustrated, together with some preliminary results, from the ongoing SPHeritage Project. This study is aimed at reconstructing the environmental scenarios connected particularly with interglacial sea-levels of the last 400ky. Its purpose is investigating human response driven by coastal landscape modifications and climatic/environmental change in their living space. The Liguro-Provençal coast in NW Mediterranean represents the study area, where a number of sites of uttermost archaeological/anthropological relevance are present. Finally, an overview of potentially fruitful and unexplored avenues of research will be outlined, aimed at unravelling the relationship between sea-level change and the spread of humans worldwide, their settling attitudes and adaptation strategies to the coastal environment. From heritage of the past, great lessons for the future can be learned.

