

# Lake View Has Always Been An Issue

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## 1. Project: BELAVI – Beyond Lake Villages

Funding: supported by the joint projects funding scheme D-A-CH (FWF, DFG and SNF).  
Content: studying the prehistoric lake village sites in the three contries and their wider region.  
Aim: to characterize human impact in terms of land use dynamics during the Neolithic.



## 2. Austrian Research Area

- northern foothills of the Austrian Alps/Northern Pre-Alps.
- Attersee-Mondsee Region (Salzburg and Upper Austria).
- appx. 1400 km<sup>2</sup>.

## 3. Study: Ideas And Background

One of our project objectives is to gain a deeper insight into spatial relations between landscape and Neolithic societies. The showcased study is based on two main ideas:

1. Mountains and lakes dominate the research area, forming barriers and open spaces.
2. Vision is the most important sense for human spatial perception.

The main focus is to evaluate the impact of the visual context of the lakes on archaeological sites.

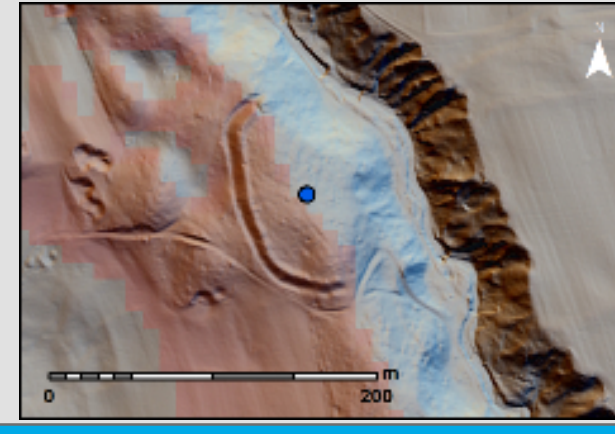


Fig. 1 Oberhofen am Irrsee: Hillfort (undated)

## 4. Analyses: Technical Details

Viewsheds from the shore and centre lines have been calculated on four lakes: Attersee, Irrsee, Mondsee and Wolfgangsee. The spatial relation between the location of archaeological sites and the lake view has been analysed.

- DTM - Digital Terrain Model, 10 meters resolution.
- Placement of observer points, every 50 meters.
- Observer height, 1,5 meters (simulation of eye level).
- Sites register, Federal Monuments Authority Austria (BDA).

## 5. Results And Examples

Regarding the distribution of registered archaeological sites in relation to the viewshed analysis:

- In comparison to burial grounds and single find spots, an increased tendency for settlements with lake view is recorded.
- The Pre-Alpine lakes are invisible from the sites located at the northern lowlands.

In total, the capturing extent of the lake visibility is rather small: "they lived in a small world". Examples depicted in Fig. 1 to 3 show a selection of hillforts within the view catchment of the lakes (partly on the very edge of it).

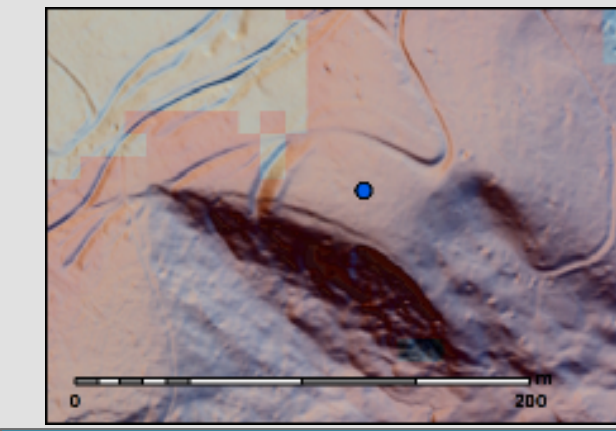


Fig. 2 Anberg bei Thalham: Hillfort (undated)

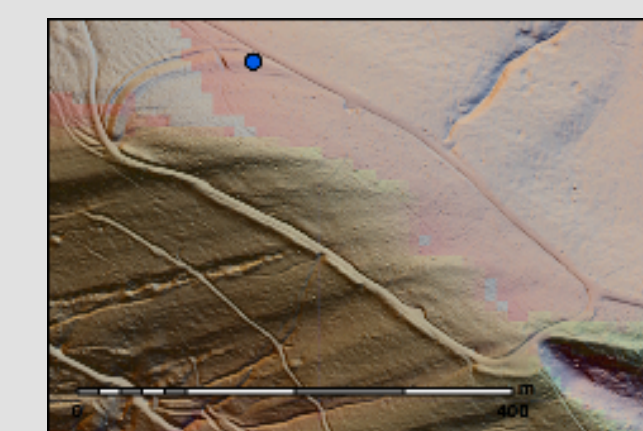
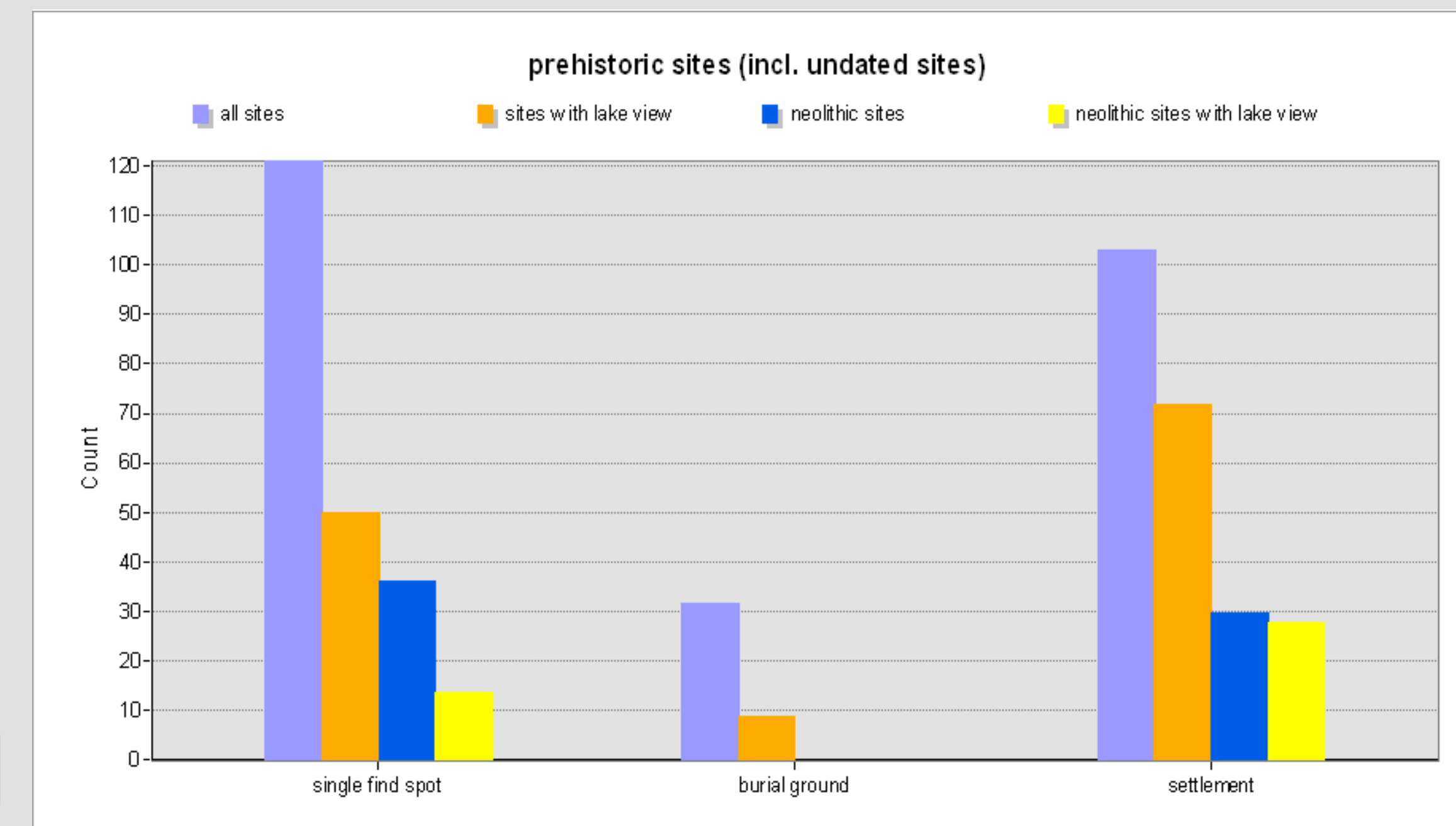


Fig. 3 Buchberg am Attersee: Hillfort (Bronze Age)

## 6. Conclusion And Out View

A relation between settlement location and lake view position is clearly observable (Diagram). How do we interpret the sites outside of the visible boundaries now? Different function? Different society? Is the extant of the accumulated viewshed also a cultural limit? These thoughts need to be continued...

