

Publication

A massacre of early Neolithic farmers in the high Pyrenees at Els Trocs, Spain

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Violence seems deeply rooted in human nature and an endemic potential for such is today frequently associated with differing ethnic, religious or socio-economic backgrounds. Ethnic nepotism is believed to be one of the main causes of inter-group violence in multi-ethnic societies. At the site of Els Trocs in the Spanish Pyrenees, rivalling groups of either migrating early farmers or farmers and indigenous hunter-gatherers collided violently around 5300 BCE. This clash apparently resulted in a massacre of the Els Trocs farmers. The overkill reaction was possibly triggered by xenophobia or massive disputes over resources or privileges. In the present, violence and xenophobia are controlled and sanctioned through social codes of conduct and institutions. So that, rather than representing an insurmountable evolutionary inheritance, violence and ethnic nepotism can be overcome and a sustainable future achieved through mutual respect, tolerance and openness to multi-ethnic societies.

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