

Monte Cetona (Siena, Tuscany): visual marker, nodal settlement point and cultural indicator in interregional relations between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age.

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The Apennine ridge of southern Tuscany finds in the Monte Cetona a singular relief that from a height of 1140 m asl overlooks the humid flatland area of the Val di Chiana and nearby rolling foothills. During Prehistory, Monte Cetona was a point of reference in the course of the Holocene (Pleistocene evidences exclusively attributable to the presence of Neanderthal groups are rare) since the Neolithic but above all in the Metal Ages, particularly during the Bronze Age period. A visual marker set in a water-rich landscape, Monte Cetona was capable of taking on the role of settlement attraction pole, a result that derived not only from its geographical location but also from the presence of numerous caverns. On its slopes and summit, in fact, various settlements and forms of ritual evidence have been recorded. The Authors of this contribution will present an overview of our current knowledge of the different environmental and economic assets, production activities and forms of local resource exploitation, showing how this mountain can be considered a nodal point for both mobility and communication routes in the wider territory of Central Tyrrhenian Italy.