

## GEOCHEMICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF FRENCH AZILUM, PA

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French Azilum Specialist Report: Phosphate Analysis

At French Azilum phosphate analysis was able to identify the cultural frameworks within which the people living there acted, to recognize land-use patterns over the site and to locate several structures that were previously unknown and to show how known structures were used. Phosphate analysis is useful as an archaeological site and/or feature location technique, but its value is magnified through application to use-of-space studies within identified sites. Phosphate analysis can be used to identify and interpret 'clean' and 'dirty' activity areas (Matthews *et al.* 1997: 293), including sleeping areas (Terry *et al.* 2004: 1243), food consumption/production/storage areas (Sanchez *et al.* 1999: 56), animal pens (Craddock 1980), areas where refuse was deposited (Crowther 1998: 118) and some craft areas (Eidt and Wood 1974: 44). Phosphate analysis can also be used to interpret less archaeologically tangible components of use-of-space such as the placement of entryways (Yerkes *et al.* 2002: 865) and pathways (Parnell *et al.* 2002: 336), which can help interpret how people were creating and using their own landscape(s). This research model can be interpreted to identify the symbolic social constructs visible through particular modes of use of the landscape. Phosphate analysis is a valuable source of information in this regard, because in many cases these features and ideas cannot be identified through conventional archaeological excavation. In these ways, phosphate analysis has aided in the archaeological interpretation of French Azilum on the large and small scale.