



SESSION ABSTRACT

The Seasonal and the Material: Anthropology of Seasonal Practices

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Abstract: Humans are not only social animals but seasonal as well. The worldwide ethnographic record provides many perspectives on seasonal human behavior, such as seasonal dwellings, seasonal use of space, and seasonal changes in the socio-political organization among non-state groups. Nevertheless, it remains challenging to identify seasonality from prehistoric assemblages. In exceptional cases, ethnographically documented practices observed among present communities may be used to infer seasonal practices from the archaeological evidence, based on direct historical analogy. In most prehistoric settings, however, a historical analogy may not be suitable due to the time-lag of millennia and the difficulty of providing the continuity between the past and present communities. In latter cases, building hypotheses based on cross-cultural anthropological research may be more suitable. Moreover, whereas such cross-cultural anthropological insights (e.g. round dwellings are more likely to be associated with seasonal occupation) can be used as a starting point, prehistoric archaeological artifacts may speak for themselves. Most commonly, archaeologists infer seasonal practices from prehistoric evidence through settlement patterns, types of farming, lifecycles of animals and plants, and oxygen isotopic analyses of marine mollusc shells among others, while continuously developing new methods and sampling techniques.

This session welcomes contributions dealing with seasonal practices in non-state sedentary and (semi-)nomadic groups, from ethnographic, historical anthropological, and archaeological perspectives. The topic of seasonality may be addressed through a socio-political organization (e.g., fusion and fission of groups, fluctuations in leadership), dwellings, use of space, crafts, and farming/foraging practices. Based on the Pecha Kucha format, the presentations will be limited to 20 slides with 20 seconds of commentary for each slide. Both single ethnographic and/or archaeological cases studies, as well as comparative approaches to seasonality, are welcome. The main aim of the session is to foster dialogue between socio-cultural anthropologists and archaeologists dealing with seasonal practices.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Tuesday, September 27, 2022 | Slot 1 | Room 4

Franz Krause: Against monotony: an argument for the primacy of seasonal practices

Januzaj Clirimtare: Isnig as a land of transhumant pastoralism: a brief anthropological overview

Lisa Francesca Rail: Cheese, tenure, and roads: diverging practices and infrastructures of seasonal pastoralism across the Austrian Alps

Wulf Frauen: Staying at one place and leading a life shaped through seasonal migration – A contradiction in terms?

Tuesday, September 27, 2022 | Slot 2 | Room 4

Hojjat Darabi: Seasonal vs permanent: towards differentiating Neolithic lifeways in western Iran

Laura Dietrcih: Plant food and seasonality at Early Neolithic Göbekli Tepe

Raffaella Da Vela: Ergonomics and seasonality in production processes of the Iron Age Apennines: the case of Pottery Workshops (9th to 5th centuries BCE)

Augusto Cacopardo: The Role of Seasonality in the Symbolic System of the Kalasha of the Hindu Kush (Pakistan)

SESSION PAPERS

Against monotony: an argument for the primacy of seasonal practices

Franz Krause

This presentation argues for turning the challenge of having to infer seasonality from the archaeological record around, by suggesting that social life is inherently seasonal. Instead, assuming the monotony of practices, livelihoods and settlement patterns from the archaeological record should be considered as suspect conjecture. To substantiate this proposition, this presentation will provide short ethnographic insights into life in a river delta located between the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Settlement areas in the Canadian Arctic, into livelihoods in an Estonian wetland area, and into traditional and highly infrastructured river uses in Northern Finland. These snippets suggest that because of the fundamentally rhythmic temporality of the landscape, including the behavior of water animal movements, temperatures, electricity consumption and human yearnings, life is always seasonal. Interpreting the archaeological record must start from this assumption and, where appropriate, explain non-seasonal practices rather than the other way around. .

Isnig as a land of transhumant pastoralism: a brief anthropological overview

Çlirimtare Januzaj

The lack of treatment of topics related to pastoralism in Balkans from an anthropological point of view and the great need for pastoralist literature, has grabbed my attention about the need to launch a research of this kind. In addition to reading and reviewing the literature, my methodological approach in this research, is mainly

ethnography and fieldwork. Thus, by selecting and using the qualitative method, many interviews were conducted with different age groups.

The research begins with a brief analysis of transhumant pastoralism as an anthropological concept, which shows what pastoralism means as a practice. It then continues with a broader analysis showing how pastoralist practices are deeply rooted in many cultures of the world, their differences and commonalities.

The key to this research lies in the thorough study of transhumant pastoralism as a practice, based on the extensive empirical research I did last year in the mountains of a village in Kosovo called Isniq. The research continues with the mountains of Isniq, as the most authentic reflection of this study, and the place where almost all pastoralist practices are performed. Here I will talk about their history, as interpreted by the inhabitants and by authors of some written sources which were not easy to find. Additionally,, their division, ownership and restrictions on them, are sub-topics that I will discuss during this research. I will make a short overview on how the unity of the organization of the mountains of Isniq, has directly influenced their use as a pastoralist place by the inhabitants.

Cheese, tenure, and roads: diverging practices and infrastructures of seasonal pastoralism across the Austrian Alps

Lisa Francesca Rail

The European Alps have been shaped by centuries, even millennia, of seasonal pastoralism. Vegetation patterns have been altered. Watercourses have been changed. Paths of herders and herds have been engraved into the landscape. Stables, huts, dairying buildings, wells, corrals, or barns have been built and partly keep being used and renewed. The working and thus the built infrastructure of high-altitude summer pastoralism varies highly across the Alps. The most well-described distinctions are between (1) regions that traditionally practice long-distance transhumance from lowland areas like the Po-Basin to the Alps, and short distance mobility; between (2) whole villages moving seasonally to the alps on the Southern side of the Alps or only designated herding and dairying personal moving with the animals in Northern areas; between (3) regions characterized by division of agrarian estate and those characterized by primogeniture; and between (4) regions that have historically been involved in large-scaled cheese-making for trade and those that have not. Such differences result in diverging building and land-use patterns both on the alps themselves, as well as in winter settlements: the number and stability of housing, the presence of dairying infrastructure, the use of energy resources, the storage facilities, the sizes of estates, etc.

In my paper I add contemporary parameters of diverging alpine use to the just named and established historical ones. Drawing on my ethnographic dissertation fieldwork on seasonal pastoralism in the Austrian Alps I elaborate on influencing factors like tourism, contemporary property titles, changing subsidy regulations, the development of agricultural structure in the lowlands, the distribution and concentration of creameries, the presence (or absence) of drivable roads or of environmental protection zones. I describe how such factors have physically shaped and keep shaping the natural-cultural set-ups of alps – and how they do so in patterned, partly interconnected, and recurrent ways.

Staying at one place and leading a life shaped through seasonal migration – A contradiction in terms?

Wulf Frauen

It is hardly news to anthropologists and economists as well that different economic activities require different modes of living. In short one could sum up: The social structure and distinctive culture of a group is influenced by their means of livelihood. A society's livelihood then again is a response to its natural environment and its material needs are culturally influenced. Some of these livelihoods may structure the life of a social group in a seasonal way. An example would be the Iranian pastoral nomadism that can be considered a specific *genre de vie*. My contribution will describe this specific way of life by analysing the socio-cultural structure of a mountain community in Kermān, Iran. The interesting thing about the community studied is that they do not follow a seasonal migration pattern anymore. Nevertheless, the social life of the community is still shaped through their past in various ways. My contribution will show how the past of a community is quintessential to understand its present and vice versa by using an innovative concept developed within the Collaborative Research Centre 1070 (SFB 1070) with the name ResourceCultures.

Seasonal vs permanent: towards differentiating Neolithic lifeways in western Iran

Hojjat Darabi

Unlike the preceding period of Epipaleolithic with a circulating movement of hunter-gatherers, the subsequent Neolithic period is remarked by a combination of both seasonal and permanent settlements in western Iran. It is believed that mobility played a key role as a resilient behavior through time. However, differentiating these two major patterns remains to be a controversy as it is difficult to simply assign specific finds to specific corresponding communities (mobile, semi-mobile, permanent, transhumant pastoral, nomadic pastoral groups). Traditionally, the classification of settlements was mostly conducted with special regard to architectural traces, natural settings of the sites and the volume of their deposit (mounded vs open-air sites). Nevertheless, these types of evidence are not solely enough to address seasonality of Neolithic settlements and thereby their corresponding settlers. Taking currently available evidence, this article aims at differentiating various forms of Neolithic occupation and that how they can be attributed to specific lifeways. This not only brings to fore current research challenges of investigating seasonality it but also paves the ground for better understanding of socio-economic interactions of the Neolithic communities in western Iran.

Keywords: Neolithic, seasonality, mobility, western Iran

Plant food and seasonality at Early Neolithic Göbekli Tepe

Laura Dietrich

At Göbekli Tepe in southeastern Turkey, hunter-foragers constructed the earliest so far known monumental stone architecture of mankind during the 10th and 9th millennia BC. In an older phase, circular enclosures made up of up to 5.5m high pillars decorated richly, mainly with animal motifs, were erected, while in a younger phase rectangular buildings with smaller pillars were in use. No evidence for domesticated animals or plants has been found. Klaus Schmidt, the discoverer and excavator, saw the presence of people at the site as temporary, envisioning seasonal congregations

for building work and religious activities. Meanwhile, this view has been contested as probable domestic structures have been identified. The analysis of the role and scale of plant food within the subsistence of the builders of Göbekli Tepe has added new arguments to this discussion. The talk will discuss the results of research into >10.000 tools for plant food processing from the point of view of use-wear and residue analysis and its contribution to resolving the question of seasonality at Göbekli Tepe.

Ergonomics and seasonality in production processes of the Iron Age Apennines: the case of Pottery Workshops (9th to 5th centuries BCE)

Raffaella Da Vela

My proposal deals with the relationship between seasonality and ergonomics in open air pottery workshops of the Iron Age in the region of the northern Apennines in Italy. Ergonomics studies the organisation of working spaces and times to improve the life quality of workers. The Apennines were a mountainous contact zone between different groups of people, such as Etruscans, Umbrians, and Ligurians, who inhabited this region as rural communities between the 9th and 5th centuries BCE. The focus of my research lies on rural pottery workshops, whose production activities were restricted to the summer period. A main research question regards seasonality and how it affected the ergonomic and spatial organisation within the workshops, in particular how the seasonal abandonment and reoccupation of the sites was intertwined to the conceptional planning of the working life. The attention to ergonomic patterns in ancient pottery production is very recent and permits to detect ancient strategies to integrate functional and social needs in their broader human-environmental networks. For this reason, ergonomics and seasonality are strictly linked to each other. Ethnoarchaeology and experimental archaeology are very commonly adopted in the study of protohistoric pottery production processes, in form of comparisons and analogies, regarding mostly technical and cognitive aspects of the works. A very common issue in these approaches is that any society could respond differently to the same environmental precondition and needs, developing different strategies to optimize production processes. I will discuss the potential of analogies and comparisons with anthropological case studies in understanding ergonomic patterns in ancient pottery workshops, focussing on a problem-solving approach.

The Role of Seasonality in the Symbolic System of the Kalasha of the Hindu Kush (Pakistan)

Augusto Cacopardo

Seasonality has an important role in the traditional system of the Kalasha of the Hindu Kush. The Kalasha are the last example of a cultural complex formerly spread throughout the Hindu Kush/Karakorum. Starting from the mid XVI century a succession of Islamic waves gradually converted this large polytheistic world, with the sole exception of the Kalasha of Chitral, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.

At the economic level, like in all alpine communities, seasonal movements allow the Kalasha to make full use of natural resources both in the agricultural and in the pastoral field. At the social level, from spring to autumn the community stretches out over the territory, social space becomes much wider and the pattern of settlement changes accordingly.

It is at the symbolic level, however, that seasonality plays a role characteristic of the Kalasha cultural complex. The pastoral ideology informing the system stems from a fundamental pure/impure polarity associating men and goat herding with harmony with nature and its spirits, solidarity and the principle of sharing; and women and agriculture with the opposite principles of keeping and of unwarranted appropriation of natural resources.

In the male perspective, seasonality allows this polarity to become a lived reality. In the high summer pastures, off-limits for women, men feel the life they lead is in harmony with the will of gods and spirits. They often describe the high pastures as an earthly paradise: far from village quarrels, the cooperative system that characterizes herding in summer concretely enacts the principle of sharing, milk and cheese are abundant, the air is cool, the mountain spirits are appeased with rituals and all sources of pollution are kept at bay.