

2. The Diversity of Hunter-Gatherer Pasts

16209 - A Neanderthal childhood: Thinking outside the box?

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): Spikins, Penny (*Department of Archaeology, University of York, YORK, Un. Kingdom / Ver Königr.*)

Are analogies with modern hunter-gatherers relevant to studies of Neanderthals? Here we consider the archaeological evidence which separates Neanderthals from past and present modern hunter-gatherers as well as the evidence which argues for continuity. Using the case of Neanderthal childhood we argue that common elements form an important basis for understanding the emotional and social context of growing up as a Neanderthal child. However understanding Neanderthal society also demands thinking 'outside of the box' which our imagined construction of societies half way to the present has created.

16207 - Let's start with our academic past first

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Blumauer, Reinhard (Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna, Austria / Österreich)*

Drawing on the historical example of the Austrian School of Anthropology I reflect the necessity and pitfalls of a diachronic comparative method. The "Viennese culture-historical school of ethnology", as it was also called, was one of the earliest paradigms which used ethnographic fieldwork in hunting-gathering societies as a source for reconstructing the human past. A critical analysis of their achievements and, even more important, their misconceptions can provide new starting points for reflecting on our own ways of theorizing. Besides a general overview of this school of ethnology the presentation will concentrate on similarities and differences to recent conceptions in hunter-gatherer-studies.

On the one hand the culture-historical school under the auspices of Wilhelm Schmidt emphasized the need for more accurate ethnographical accounts of hunter-gatherers. Figures as Paul Schebesta and Martin Gusinde have been pioneers in this field and their legacies, as found in their monographs and collections, are still relevant sources.

On the other hand, the paradigmatic framework, a quite rigorously generalizing form of diffusionism combined with theological implications, led to misrepresentations of the empirical data. So their theorizing was caught up in a vicious circle which in consequence led to the radical abandonment of this particular paradigm by later scholars.

The "Viennese School" shows, that paradigmatic preconceptions must not become dogmatisms or otherwise it may end up in simple circular reasoning. Because of the clerical background of the proponents, the paradigm has often been criticised for the apologetic character of the theories. This leads to the crucial question how ideological notions in general affect our theorizing especially when departing from empirical data, as in trying to reconstruct our human past. The historical debates also addressed the im-/possibilities of the comparison of recent and prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies and the use of analogies.

Nevertheless, the example also shows that a comparative paradigm is the necessary basis for our understanding of the human past. Furthermore, it also shows the interplay of various disciplines, as cultural anthropology, prehistory, linguistics and physical anthropology, in the study of hunter-gatherers and our human past.

16175 - Recovering histories of hunter-gatherers in the Bolivian lowlands

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): Zanesco, Alexander (*University of Innsbruck/city archive of Hall in Tirol, Hall in Tirol, Austria / Österreich*)

Ethnographic collections passed down from a mission museum, a compilation of historical photographs, as well as written records preserved in an archive belonging to the Franciscan province of Tyrol/Austria, reveal a history of contact between national society, religious orders and hunter-gatherers in the Bolivian lowlands. Research on these collections from the 1920s and 1930s, hidden for decades, go beyond history.

After a century of Franciscan proselytization on the Guarayos, those missions served as a base for further evangelization and “reduction” of neighboring hunter-gatherers, mainly Sirionós/Mbia. The collections mirror this point in history, when pressure from colonists and other indigenous groups, most notably Ayoreos, forced them into the relative safety of the newly founded mission of Santa Maria de Lourdes, in today’s province of Guarayos.

The collection history and contemporary statements of clerics demonstrate a prolonged, frictional and costly process of acculturation. Reports written by missionaries provide a wealth of ethnographic data, yet show unwillingness to understanding the foreign culture. Although their work and intentions were benevolent, missions have played a key role in a historically complex political situation.

The primary task of this paper is not to provide new historic data, but rather to highlight how the integration of indigenous societies in the process of ethnographic research on the items recovered stimulates remembrance and construction of history by all parties involved. This process contrasts societies of strongly acculturated present day hunter-gatherers against their ancestors from only few decades ago. The report introduces a research program, its tasks and methods, preliminary results and gives some impressions from the field.

16138 - For Better or Worse: Using contemporary hunter-gatherer ethnography for archaeological reconstruction

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Goldstein, Paul (University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, USA); Fortier, Jana (University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, USA)*

Binford's American school of ethnoarchaeology has argued that rigorous analogies can be useful for comparison of contemporary and pre-historic foraging societies using controlled frames of reference. While this positivist approach has its merits, several post-processual schools of thought express skepticism on several levels. Thus, European schools of archaeology posit that too many modern influences distort comparison, making such attempts ultimately futile. Another school of British archaeology considers contemporary foraging societies as too few in number to capture the cultural richness of mesolithic and paleolithic cultures worldwide. In this paper, we consider each of these approaches through a presentation of selected ethnographic material from a contemporary Asian foraging society, the Raute of the central Himalayas. We build a frame of reference using this nomadic hunting society and consider what aspects of their technology, language, and culture are, and are not, useful for analogies with pre-neolithic societies that have lived in similar environments, i.e., subtropical deciduous and moist coniferous forests.

16121 - What can the modern profile of linguistic geography and genealogy of foragers tell us about human prehistory?

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Güldemann, Tom (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany / Deutschland); Hammarström, Harald (Max-Planck-Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, Netherlands / Niederlande)*

The last decades have witnessed a considerable increase in our general linguistic knowledge on a worldwide scale. Two domains are particularly relevant for the present conference in general and the workshop “The Diversity of Hunter-Gatherer Pasts” in particular: global patterns of all kinds of linguistic distributions on the one hand and the linguistic and sociolinguistic history of foraging populations in terms of both their diversity and regional depth on the other hand. Our paper starts out from a data base that attempts to arrive at a near-to-complete inventory of languages that are/were spoken by forager groups at their first ethnographic documentation time; at present this comprises more than 1250 entities. Among other things, this data base can be assessed regarding the distribution of forager languages in terms of geographical space and genealogical structure. Even though forager language distribution has been subject to tremendous changes since the Neolithic and even more so the era of colonialism and globalization, their modern geographical and genealogical profile still allows one to draw several conclusions for earlier human history. The talk will discuss three hypotheses derived from this distribution profile:

- a) This profile is first of all a function of the scope and success of the Neolithic revolution and later global socio-economic developments.
- b) This profile is compatible or even gives evidence for the assumption that foragers also produced geographically and genealogically large language families (against one recurrent reading of the farming/language dispersal hypothesis by Renfrew and Bellwood, e.g., 2002).
- c) This profile contradicts approaches to certain foraging populations as being secondary products of economic specialization, this also and in particular with respect to the claim that original foraging in rain forest environments independent of food production is unlikely.

References:

Bellwood, Peter and Colin Renfrew (eds.). 2002. Examining the farming/language dispersal hypothesis. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

16036 - Sources of Hunter-Gatherer Diversity in the Japanese Islands

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Hudson, Mark (University of West Kyushu, Kyushu, Japan)*

The Japanese Islands provide a useful place to study hunter-gatherer diversity for three reasons. Firstly, the Islands contain a wide range of ecological zones from sub-tropical coral islands in the south to sub-arctic tundra in the north. Secondly, hunter-gathering continued late into the Holocene and in some regions until the 19th century, affording the opportunity to study long-term changes in diversity. Finally, hunter-gatherers in the Japanese Islands were impacted by a range of different sociopolitical systems, providing a chance to analyze how hunter-gatherer diversity relates to broader social change. This paper will analyze hunter-gatherer diversity using examples from three different cultural and ecological contexts: the southern Ryukyu Islands ca. 4000-1000 BP, the Late-Final Jomon of northwest Kyushu, and the Ainu of medieval/early modern Hokkaido. The paper will compare the role of ecological and political change and also examine to what extent hunter-gatherer diversity was an adaptation to broader social change.

15966 - Subsistence and Society in Central Africa across 3000 Years

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *de Luna, Kathryn (Georgetown University, Washington, DC, Austria / Österreich)*

The transition from hunting and gathering to farming dominates histories of early Africa and other world regions. Indeed, the association between political complexity and the development of farming, sedentism, and food surplus has been a productive model of historical change, but it assumes a complete distinction between the activities of farmers and hunter-gatherers. For Africa, this distinction produced scholarship either conflating subsistence practice and ethnicity or treating food surplus as axiomatic to forms of political complexity focused only on centralization, rather than processes that diffuse political power. This paper traces the history of bushcraft—hunting, fishing, and foraging—among farming communities who spoke languages of the Botatwe family. Approaching the food collection-production divide from the opposite direction of studies of hunter-gatherer diversity, this project reunites the activities of hunters, fishers, and foragers with those of farmers to better understand the contribution of wild resource use to political change in farming communities.

As a recent iteration of the intellectual project of tracing hunter-gatherer variation, some recent research has pointed to the ways in which subsistence categories like “hunter-gatherer” and “farmer” developed in Western intellectual traditions were social identities and often mobilized in the making of other kinds of gendered, ethnic, or racial identities. This paper takes as its starting point the idea that Western scholars, lay intellectuals, and ordinary people were not the only communities to recruit subsistence practices into identity politics. Building on a book project, this paper traces the *longue durée* history of subsistence in central Africa (1000 BCE to 1900 CE) to recover a similar project in precolonial Africa.

In the last millennium BCE, the distinction between producing yams and collecting food was not entirely clear among Botatwe peoples. As cereal agriculture and pastoralism spread into the area in the early first millennium, central Africans committed to more sedentary lifestyles and food production. Unexpectedly, the commitment to cereal agriculture sustained a revolution in spearcraft and a reconceptualization of the landscape. Some forms of hunting, fishing, and foraging were mustered to create new landscape forms and invent a politics of bushcraft and reputation-building that confounded the concentration of power around control of the agricultural economy.

To produce the history of subsistence in central Africa over the last three thousand years, I draw on both the published archaeological and paleo-climatological record. My main source of historical evidence, however, are the histories of words’ changing meanings reconstructed through the methodology of comparative historical linguistics from modern words collected during over 48 months of fieldwork over the last decade among speakers of the poorly documented Botatwe languages, a subbranch of Bantu.

15903 - FROM SOUTH TO NORTH: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUNTER-FISCHER-GATHERER SOCIETIES OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO AND THE NORTHWEST COAST.

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Estévez, Jordi (AGREST-Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Bellaterra, Spain / Spanien)*

Cultural histories have viewed the development of societies with a particularistic approach denying the possibility of searching recurrences and emphasizing the differences instead. The adaptive approach on its turn also focuses on the particular features of ecosystems and particular environments. Criticism against the classical Evolutionism has contributed to a skepticism on the feasibility of a comparative analysis of development of hunter-gatherer-fisher societies. Those living on both extremes of the Pacific coast of America have been used to discuss the Evolutionist approach. Despite particular trends and the effort to concretize the differences of every case of study, if considering a macroscale, there are striking common traits in the evolution of the societies in both extremes. Their evolution began to diverge only after a particular point. The impacts of some sudden changes and mismatches show up as hiatuses in the respective developments. In Tierra del Fuego people manage to control and adjust their own reproduction, whilst the North West Coast entered into a spiral development that led to the complex societies described in the ethnographic record.

We will point up those parallels and moments of divergence.

15810 - The end of hunting and gathering

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Finlayson, Bill (CBRL, London, Un. Kingdom / Ver Königr.)*

The social and economic transformations that took place in the early Holocene of SW Asia mark the beginning of the end of a world solely occupied by people reliant on wild resources and the shift to food production. This is a unique period in history, characterised by a huge autochthonous shift in lifeways for which we have no direct ethnographic analogy. Intermediary societies incorporating elements of low-level food production flourished for thousands of years over a region extending from the Mediterranean to the Zagros. Archaeological knowledge, and the sophistication of analytical techniques and models, has developed enormously over recent decades, however we still operate in an overall framework of simple to complex hunter-gatherer, followed by farmer, which permits us to fall back on oversimplified ethnographic analogy. In part this relies on a 'new archaeology' approach to analogy that relies on law-like assumptions regarding hunter-gatherer behaviour, even where the context is far removed from processualism, and in part requires the boundary shifts between hunter-gatherers and farmers to remain visible in a qualified terminology of 'complex' or 'incipient'. Smith, Harris, and others have discussed the intermediate zone between hunting and gathering and farming, but almost exclusively in economic terms. Categorisation into food production and food procurement, although seeking to remove some of the dichotomies present in most models, continues to preserve boundaries.

There remains a naive belief in much archaeology, that because people were dependent on hunting and gathering for all, or a majority of their subsistence, they can be squeezed into the modern definition of 'hunter-gatherer', and their behaviour squeezed out of modern analogy. This appears possible because we are more tolerant to the idea of modern hunter-gatherer societies obtaining some of their subsistence from food production or domesticates, than we seem to be for ancient contexts. This may be because we see no middle ground, no intermediate zone, in the modern world, but a clear gap between forager and farmer. The world of hunter-gatherers that existed 10,000 years ago contained a far greater diversity of societies than the surviving, generally marginal and highly adapted, hunter-gatherers who live today. Rather than borrowing and simplifying modern ethnography to study the past, archaeology should be attempting to make a contribution to wider hunter-gatherer studies from its knowledge of the past. This presentation seeks to examine the nature of society and economy early in a process of transformation and consider what may be a very different form of hunter-gatherer society. This is important, as it is these ancient hunter-gatherers who engineer the first transition to food-producing societies.

15809 - Making the familiar past: NW European Hunter-gatherers, analogies and comparisons

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Warren, Graeme (UCD School of Archaeology, Dublin 4, Ireland / Irland)*

This paper reviews archaeological understandings of the hunter-gatherer settlement of Northwestern Europe following the Late Glacial Maximum (from c 13,000 cal BC; the Late Upper Palaeolithic and the Mesolithic periods) and the transformation of these societies associated with the adoption of agriculture (by c 4000 cal BC; the Neolithic). A rich and variable material record of these past human lives has been the focus of archaeological research since the formation of the discipline. This evidence has been interpreted in varied ways over this time period, but has always drawn on generalisations about hunter-gatherer behaviour: sometimes developed formally and explicitly, sometimes based on implicit assumptions, both often derived from ethnographic or anthropological models. The study of European hunter-gatherers has, therefore, consumed generalised models of hunter-gatherers, rather than produced new understandings of what 'hunter-gatherer' might mean in terms of social, behavioural and cultural variability. In this sense archaeologists have rendered the past in terms of familiar models. Against this background, this paper highlights some of the important and distinctive characteristics of European hunter-gatherers, including resilience and creativity in the face of social and environmental change, as well as dynamism and variability in the creation of particular historical trajectories. Our models of the character of past hunter-gatherer societies are themselves influenced by the particular temporal resolution of the data available to us, and include insights into the long-term characteristics of change in hunter-gatherer societies