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**FRONTIERS OR INTERACTION ZONES?
BORDERLANDS AS AREAS OF COMMUNICATION AND MOBILITY
28.02.-02.03.2019**

ABSTRACTS



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Intercultural exchange and inequality. Some notes on conceptual approaches to cultural transfers

By the end of the 19th century, when cultural studies had achieved a status that, at least gradually, overcame the obsession of local roots and the hermetically closed spheres of territorially integrated cultures, a series of very different ideas emerged about the consequences of cultural exchange. In fact, the interest in the extent to which different cultures are entangled or even dependent on each other, or otherwise interacting, intensified only in the context of so-called "globalization". At the same time, the much appreciated, late 20th century debates about global flows, processes of diffusion, and new cultural phenomena spreading throughout the world brought up the fundamental deficits of these disciplines, whose formative phase was in the 19th century.

Too often, and in a form that has little to do with the historically observed realities, scholars have assumed appropriation, hybridization, domestication, and other forms of self-conscious resistance in the context of such exchange practices. Only in recent years has it become clear to which extent cultural exchanges are entwined with destruction, questioning cultural identity and even the perception, that a particular culture is threatened. The research field of postcolonial studies has in many respects opened new scholarly approaches to intercultural exchange, highlighting the intensity of overlapping, dominance and violence in association. Michael Dietler is one of the few archaeologists to have linked specific archaeological findings with postcolonial theory.

In this contribution, in addition to the classic works dealing with "cultural encounter", such as by Mary Louise Pratt, special attention will be given to some older anthropological models of encounter and inequality. Thus, Adolf Bastian did already point to the (involuntary) self-change; in fact, he spoke about the "mutilation" of cultures. Today, inequality through cultural contact and through cultural exchange should be regarded as a universal phenomenon that is only partially understood by the humanities.

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Exchange and trade in societies without state and market – insights from economic anthropology

Economic anthropology emerged at the beginning of the 20th century with the realization that the way Melanesian, and many Amerindian and African societies had organized exchange relationships before they were incorporated into colonial economies could not be understood with standard concepts of economic theory, like market, exchange value, money, barter, profit and the like. Superficial resemblances of traditional objects of exchange like cowry shells, shell and stone discs etc. with modern money had induced early observers to speak of primitive money and primitive markets, and even of primitive banking systems. The work of researchers like Richard Thurnwald, Bronislaw Malinowski, Marcel Mauss, and later Karl Polanyi and Marshal Sahlins with time led to the realization that exchange of objects and services in such societies had not given rise to a specialized institution like our market, but remained embedded in social relationships.

This means, basically, that exchange in such societies can only take place within broad alliances, and that the exchange of objects and services itself reproduces such alliances – both between collectives and individuals. Based on this assumption, three propositions concerning exchange in such societies – termed “archaic societies” by Marcel Mauss – follow:

First, exchange in such societies is always in a non-liquidating mode. I.e. a counter-gift or a payment doesn't end the mutual obligation of the exchange partners but renews it in a self-perpetuating process of social integration – unless war disrupts the relationship. Exchange in such societies is bound up in ceremony and tradition and is “slow and inefficient”. In contrast, we are used to think of exchange as straightforward, efficient and naturally liquidating, as our market economy is built on this mode of exchange.

Second, there is no such thing as primitive barter, i.e. exchange motivated solely by the double coincidence of surplus and needs by the partners to the exchange. Adam Smith first formulated the hypothesis that exchange was invented for economic purposes, and that barter was its natural form. From an economic anthropological perspective, as David Graeber recently showed,

nothing could be further from the truth. The primary objective of exchange in “archaic societies” is to build alliances, to extend peace beyond the local group across borders, so to speak. Sedentary societies are particularly in need of such socially embedded exchange with their neighbours in order to keep peace. What we regard as the economic function of exchange is conceived as an afterthought, in such societies.

Third, markets, money, barter and all other traits of liquidating exchange with a purely economic function can only emerge when exchange itself becomes liberated from its alliance-building, political function. This is the case in the measure as supra-local peace-keeping institutions such as federations, guilds, cults, and ultimately, states, emerge.

In my paper, I will substantiate these claims by presenting and analysing a number of ethnographic examples.

SESSION I: THEORY

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Pottery beyond Cultures – A praxeological Approach to Mobility, Entanglements and Transformations in Prehistoric Societies

Life in the 21st century seems to be particularly shaped by mobility, from daily commuter movements to poverty-, war- or climate-induced migration. But what role has spatial mobility played in the prehistoric past? Surprisingly, we still do know rather little about it. This is particularly true for the European Neolithic societies. Questionable premises like concepts of social and cultural coherence of residence groups and the ethnic interpretation of archaeological cultures fostered ideas of static and homogeneous social entities with fixed borders. Beyond that farming – understood as the core of the Neolithic way of life – was rather associated with sedentariness than with mobility.

Yet the numerous outstandingly preserved Neolithic UNESCO World Heritage wetland sites of the Northern Alpine Foreland dating to 4th millennium BC are a solid research basis to address such questions. In particular, many of the dendrochronologically dated settlements on Lake Zurich and Lake Constance of the period between 3950 and 3800 BCE offer a rare opportunity to investigate cultural, social and economic processes with a high temporal and spatial resolution. In this paper we will use them as a case study to inquire the role of spatial mobility, for cultural entanglements and transformations in prehistoric societies.

Taking three recent paradigmatic shifts as a theoretical starting point – the mobility, practice and material turn –, we have developed a mixed-methodology to investigate spatial mobility using ceramics. While qualitative methods (impressionistic classification of vessel designs) allow us to understand social practices of pottery production from the actors' perspective (micro level), quantitative methods (computational autoclassification of vessels shapes) make it possible to explore structural patterns of pottery consumption practice across several settlements (macro perspective). Through the combination of both perspectives, far-reaching entanglements between regions become visible, as well as mobility related local appropriations and transformations of pottery practices in the rhythm of decades. In this way, the usual culture historic models of homogenous societies can be deconstructed and replaced by entanglements between different communities of practice.

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Prehistoric Wayfinding Within and Across Spatial Boundaries: Issues, Resources, and Proposals

The paper deals with an underlying issue of territories, so-called 'cultural spaces' and network systems: The perception, notion and management of space by the relevant people in times before the introduction of writing.

It will be outlined, how the definition and notion of spatial boundaries and the interrelationship between the delimited areas (on the micro and macro scale) are essentially depending on the human perception and conception of space, and how physical factors and cosmological ideas are densely entangled. The aspect of prehistoric wayfinding in the context of space/s and boundaries (re-)production will be discussed in particular: How did people get around? How did people think to know where they were, and how did they think to know where they were not?

Examples from the European Bronze and Iron Ages will be consulted and critically discussed in regards to their epistemological value and archaeological significance, and kaleidoscopically combined into a set of theoretical-conceptual suggestions on the geographical imagination of the people between the 3rd and the 1st millennium BC.

SESSION II: ALPS

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North and South. Cross regional influences in the lithic industries of the Mesolithic sites in the Kleinwalsertal (Vorarlberg, Austria)

At the end of the last Ice Age and with the melting of the glaciers the Alps, a landscape of 200.000 km², formerly covered almost entirely by ice became again inhabitable for plants, animals and humans alike. One of these newly occupied areas were the Northern Alps of Western Austria. This region is situated on the border of Central and Southern Europe, as well as on the boundary of the Southwestern German Mesolithic to the North and the Mesolithic of the Southern Alpine region to the South. This location at the edge prompts a variety of important and interesting questions: From where were the Northern Austrian Alps first inhabited? Which technological influences can be detected in the artefacts of this region and which is the dominant one? What does the provenance of the raw materials tell us? And can the Northern Austrian Alps be seen as an unsurpassable divide or a permeable barrier?

In this paper, questions of this kind will be dealt with using the Mesolithic artefacts of the sites of the Kleinwalsertal as an example. The research area is located in the Northeastern most corner of the Province of Vorarlberg in Western Austria. Here over 80 Mesolithic find spots of various size and function have been found over the last thirty years by local collectors and various research groups. The find spots and their artefacts are currently studied by the author as a part of her doctoral project, which is funded by a DOC-scholarship of the Austrian Academy of Science.

First results of a typological examination of the lithic industries and a geological analysis of their raw materials indicate ties to the Mesolithic groups to the North as well as to the South. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Kleinwalsertal, as well as possibly the entire northern Alpine region, might be regarded as a bridge between the different groups and technological systems. So it seems that the Alps were neither in the Mesolithic nor today an unsurmountable frontier, but rather a region of transition and cultural contacts.

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Archaeology on the border between the Alps and the Alpine foothills. The district of Reutte (Tyrol/Austria) – A borderland from Prehistory to today

The district of Reutte in prehistoric times is the subject of the PhD thesis at the Institute of Archaeologies at the University of Innsbruck financed by the Austrian Academy of Sciences as part of a DOC scholarship.

This district is separated from the inner Alpine region by the Lechtaler Alps and can only be reached all year round via the Fernpass (1216 m above sea level). In the direction of Germany the Reutte basin opens up and merges into the Bavarian Alpine foothills. To this day, the region is to be regarded as a borderland, politically and also in modern local perception belonging to the province of Tyrol. However, the foothills of the Alps are and were much easier accessible than the inner Alpine region. This is still reflected in linguistic similarities and numerous so-called border crossers due to the better work and shopping opportunities in Germany.

During the Iron Age, a great cultural influence from the Bavarian Alpine foothills can be observed in the Inn valley of North Tyrol up to the Ha D1 phase. Thereafter, this influence markedly declined and the Fritzens-Sanzano culture developed in the Alpine region. In the Reutte district, this development was completely unclear until current research. Due to a lack of field research and prehistoric finds and structures, no statement could be made about Iron Age population or settlements in this region. The border between the so-called Celtic and Rhaetian people was therefore mostly drawn schematically across this region.

Extensive surveys as well as geophysical measurements and excavations carried out recently in the course of the PhD project yielded numerous finds largely to be interpreted as single finds or finds with reference to transport routes. Prehistoric settlement sites have not yet been identified, even at prominent sites on unspoilt, elevated plateaus or in areas predestined for settlements due to their proximity to raw material deposits (e. g. iron ore). It is thus conceivable that we are dealing with an empty "buffer zone" between the different cultures of the Alpine foothills and the inner Alpine region rather than with a "boundary". Instead, the evaluation of the finds from the district of Reutte shows that they have influences from the foothills of the Alps, the inner Alpine region and the southern Alpine region which together with the evidence of an important north-south Alpine transversal indicates that the area can be regarded as an interaction zone that regardless of – or perhaps precisely for? – this status was not settled.

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Transalpine contacts in the light of the gravegoods from a Late Bronze Age burial at Geroldshausen (Lower Franconia, Bavaria, Germany)

In this study, we will discuss the grave goods found within a burial dated to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. During the 1890s an isolated stone-cist burial was documented on the territory of the village of Geroldshausen (Lower Franconia, Bavaria, Germany). The finds have been preserved at the Archaeological Collection of the Bavarian State of Munich.

The two pottery vessels and the bronze dagger are locally made objects. However, there are two other objects which allow a connection to the Alps. The first object, a razor-knife, has parallels extending across the whole of Bavaria and part of the Czech Republic. Of particular interest is the other parallel of an object found near the north entrance to the Brenner pass as a main crossing point of the central Alps. The most remarkable object is a bronze needle of a type developed in Northern Italy, which only central European parallel is the object found in Geroldshausen.

We will discuss three possible scenarios to explain the presence of this extraordinary finds in Franconia. First, whether it could have been part of a chaîne opératoire based either on metals, amber or clothing. Secondly, whether its owner can be considered as a refugee fleeing the collapse of the Terramare in the Po valley and the Alpine foothills in Italy. And thirdly, whether an imported object such as this grave good could identify a person as a social outsider. Finally, we will discuss the conformities and differences between the burials of Geroldshausen and the Egtved Girl (Denmark).

A final conclusion cannot be drawn at this time. But the aim of the study is to make some suggestions that could be taken into account in future research on this subject.

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SESSION III: MEDITERRANEAN

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A seascape of change: concepts of maritime connectivity within the east Aegean islands and west Anatolian during the third millennium BC

The archaeology of the Aegean and Anatolian Early Bronze Age (EBA), covering chronologically the third millennium BC, has been largely dominated by concepts of long-distance exchange networks, cultural interaction and technological transfer, especially in the EB II period. Narratives of maritime interaction and communication via the sea have occupied archaeological scholarship of this area, bordering two seemingly different 'worlds'. Although these areas are by no means geographically distant, being separated by narrow sea straits, two main concepts are usually in favour: one that considers them as representing a cultural koine on the basis of common architectural planning and material culture evidence (mainly pottery styles and ceramic repertoire), while on the other hand the areas under examination are frequently considered archaeologically by perspectives of boundedness and separateness. The former case is over-simplistic and follows evolutionary theories that favour the notion of cultural homogeneity in the material expression of these regions at the expense of a coherent picture of small-scale developments at a local level. The latter is also insufficient in that it interprets archaeological frontiers and boundaries by post-colonialist models of core-periphery relationships that, however, face many problems. Especially in the case of insular versus mainland areas these include the treatment of frontiers – in this case the east Aegean islands – as passive recipients of core (Anatolian) innovations, the reliance on macro-scales analytical models and the assumptions that there are sharp differences in the expression of material culture between the areas bordering these frontiers.

Pottery has held a key position in investigating these issues, mainly through typological and stylistic analysis, in many cases failing to characterise technological practices or changes and continuities that go beyond vessel form and surface finish. The integration of new methodologies in ceramic analyses has successfully demonstrated that questions of distribution of pottery can be approached in a more meaningful way. The almost complete absence of such work at the eastern Aegean has impeded a better understanding of the

islands often thought of as intermediaries or stepping stones in the transmission of finished products (e.g. ceramic containers), knowledge and ideas, and people from east (Anatolia) to west (Cyclades and Mainland Greece).

This paper employs an integrated ceramic analytical programme at the island settlement of Heraion on Samos and considers anew issues of connectivity, insularity, geographical and cultural borderlines, and social change. Focusing on the seascape perspective, this paper provides a solid background for the interpretation of regional connectivity taking also into account theories about the reflection of modern political boundaries between Turkey and Greece. In contrast to the majority of the previous scholarship on the EBA east Aegean/western Anatolia interactions, this endeavour will base its results on the consideration of how shifts in the archaeological narratives are affected by biases in the modern political borders and changes in the intellectual currents brought about by contemporary socio-political preoccupations.

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Permeability and mutability in indigenous Sicilian borderlands

This paper explores the nature of traditionally defined ethnicities in Sicily of the 7th–early 6th centuries BCE and their evolution in the latter half of the 6th century, proposing that the essential characteristic of the island was not boundaries but complex interaction.

Sicily has traditionally been seen as having three broadly defined cultural groupings (ethne), Sikels, Sikanians, and Elymians, which emerged as groups migrated from mainland Italy and Iberia. Yet while modern authors have attempted to isolate ethnicity and identity beginning in the Prehistoric period, identification of specific Sicilian ethne, especially Bronze Age predecessors, poses serious issues, as does establishing a specific point in time when local populations differentiated into these ethnic groupings. The issue is complicated by the role of Greek settlements, beginning in the 8th century, as pressure from Greek territorial encroachment in fact helped develop indigenous identities.

The conventional viewpoint, as espoused by Herodotus, is that the three indigenous groups and the Greek settlers were all clearly distinguished ethne. I argue that closer analysis – both traditional and statistical – of contexts and their assemblages from a variety of indigenous graves, ritual areas, and habitations, captured in a database of several thousand objects, reveals a more nuanced delineation of ethnic groups in early Archaic Sicily, and a permeability of the supposed boundaries reflecting the importance of non-ethnic factors and networks of trade and gift-exchange throughout the island.

On close examination, regional and social boundaries manifested by sanctuary space and grave group placement do not necessarily reflect cultural groupings. For example, by the late 8th century, object types, assemblages, architectural forms, religious practices, and settlement patterns along the Elymian and Sikanian border demonstrate numerous parallels, with boundaries only vaguely seen; differences are most apparent only on a site-by-site basis. Examples of such parallels are the mutual practice of repurposing round Bronze Age habitation forms into ritual structures and the intentional decirculation of high-quality objects through votive or funerary burial to articulate status.

In fact, analysis demonstrates that often a site or specific assemblage associated with one ethnos will display the greatest similarity, not with others of the same ethnos but with sites associated with completely different cultural groups. Often the assemblage's contextual type – ritual, funerary, or domestic – has a greater bearing on its variability than does the ethnic appellation. This suggests that both indigenous Sicilians and Greek settlers responded to Mediterranean-wide cultural change, investing more heavily in ritual articulation as certain sectors of society – notably the elite – chose to define status in new ways.

Distinct identity does not seem to be particularly pronounced among local populations until the late 6th century, when political forces spurred a divide in populations theretofore not clearly differentiated in practices and material culture. At this time, the use of traditional elements not found in other populations, Greek or non-Greek, becomes important in self-definition in certain regions, though with continued selective adoption of Greek objects, traditions, and architectural elements. There was, however, no strict dichotomy between cultures. “Greekness” was one of several forms of collective identity now emerging, a style rather than an ethnicity wholly separate from material markers of indigenous identity. Both Greek imports and traditional shapes could help legitimize power and authority, with new regional groups gaining power in a Sikanian-Elymian frontier zone, asserting new identities in contrast to both Greek coastal colonies and other indigenous identities. Colonial practices and goods merely made it easier for the newfound elite to adopt these narratives and shape both their role in society and the identity of the region itself.

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A goldmine on the fringe of the Mediterranean world – the Ada Tepe mine and its cultural interrelations in the Late Bronze Age

The discovery of a gold mine in the Southern Rhodopes (excavated by H. Popov, Bulgarian Academy of Science NIAM-BAS) opens new perspectives on the Late Bronze Age relationships between Mediterranean civilizations and their periphery. These contact and interaction networks can be reassessed from the perspective of gold, an engine of economic relations. This is pursued within the project “Bronze Age Gold Road of the Balkans – Ada Tepe mining” (led by Prof. Dr. B. Horejs, Austrian Academy of Science OREA Institute, founded by the FWF, project no. P28451) using various available data. Aegean imports prove that Ada Tepe was connected to the late Bronze Age Mediterranean trading networks – and with the raw material gold we may have a rational motive for this connection.

This presentation will discuss aspects provided by the researcher’s doctoral thesis which is embedded in the project and focuses on the pottery of the settlement of the gold mine and related supra-regional and contextualized comparative studies of pottery from northern Greece and the Balkans. A new perspective that now represents an everyday world with daily practices complements the old debate about imported Mycenaean swords and other prestige objects found in the Balkans. It sheds a new light on the complexity and multidimensionality of the Late Bronze Age networks of contacts between the Balkans and Greece, which worked simultaneously at different socio-economic levels. On the basis of this complexity, theoretical considerations are made about entangled networks in order to gain a better picture of their social implications.

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SESSION IV: ANCIENT WORLD

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Late Antique Gaul – Borderland of Romanitas?

Defining border, borderland, boundaries or frontier is a difficult inquiry – even for today's world. These intricate concepts become even more difficult to grasp, when we consider not only their physical aspect, but also their mental one, reflecting the line between the self and the other.

In looking back at the Roman Empire, its borders seemed clearly defined; as many sources suggest, the *limes* separated the “civilized Roman” world from the “uncivilized Barbaricum”, a persisting vision that modern-day historians followed for a long time. Not only is this assumption highly questionable, but also does it assert a form of purity and divide in the establishment of the sociocultural entities in place. Nowadays, we know that the borders of the Roman Empire were more zones of interaction and social exchange than a clear separation line.

The end of the Roman holds on the Gallic regions, during the fifth century, redefined the dynamic of interaction between Romans and “barbarians”. The settlements of non-roman groups not only had a strong impact on the daily life of the local population, but also questioned their own identities. Through the investigation of letters from the local aristocracy, one realizes that mental borders between the self and the other became essential, as a form of cultural security or self-protection. The authors of this time highlighted the importance to protect Roman culture, classical traditions and *paideia*, which they described as threatened by “barbarians”. For them, Romanitas presented a mental frontier that dictated who belongs within the limits of their life-world, the community of local aristocrats, and who does not.

This paper aims to deconstruct the dichotomy between Roman and “barbarian” and follows the hypothesis that fifth century Gaul was neither a borderland nor a frontier zone of Romanitas, but rather a region where new identities were shaped through human interactions.

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1 + 1 = 2? The transition of the landscape along the Lower Rhine into a part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire

According to Roman written sources, the military advance to the Lower Rhine area under Caesar changed the socio-political situation in that region dramatically: after defeating and annihilating the Eburones, new groups of people originating from the right bank of the river occupied the depopulated lands. The change in population structure also must have led to alterations in the previous settlement structure. The collapse of existing elite networks shifted the system of political relationships. Barely one generation later, in a phase that lasted almost thirty years, Rome tried to subdue areas to the east under Roman hegemony by political and military means. After not succeeding in this, at least the left bank was occupied permanently. A “frontier zone” was installed along the river Rhine and its respective hinterlands, which was affected by alternating phases of war and peace for the next five hundred years. But what did this “frontier zone” actually represent?

Borders are social constructs. In the words of Georg Simmel, a border “is not a spatial fact with sociological impact, but a sociological fact that takes shape spatially” (Simmel 1908, 623). Establishing and sustaining a border is a social act as respecting or crossing and refusing it are as well. As a product of human agency, borders have a meaning and more importantly an effect. They define who is inside and who is outside; who belongs to a group and who does not. But as being part of a dynamic, long-term historical formation process, they also change over time, even if they do not change their spatial position. Thus, they have to be understood within their respective context. However, our current picture of the “frontier zone” is rather static. For example, although the Lower Rhine region belongs to one of the best researched in Roman archaeology, studies which take both sides of the border into account are lacking. A strong dichotomy between ‘Romans’ and ‘Barbarians’ is still a recurring feature of Roman frontier studies.

The paper represents a work in progress insight in my ongoing PhD project on the landscape along the Lower Rhine between 50 BC and AD 500. The study aims at analysing the dynamic landscape up the River Maas and down the

River IJssel as a case study to contextualise the frontier and its socio-political changes as a whole. For this reason, the study area is designed as a transect which includes regions inside and outside the Roman Empire. It also crosses the modern-day border between the Netherlands and Germany and interrelates data from four state heritage agencies. With its focus lying on alterations within the settlement pattern, the project explores how the “frontier zone” emerged, persisted and changed. This perspective will hopefully contribute to a more reflected picture of the “frontier zone” in general. However, the questions and problems that will be addressed in this study do not only concern Roman archaeology or Roman frontier studies – they are relevant for narratives connected to borders in cultural history in general. The paper itself will therefore focus on the theoretical and methodological approach of the study.

SESSION V: NETWORKS

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From diffusion to transculturality – The case study of the Late Neolithic collective gallery graves of western Germany and the Paris Basin

Amidst the pan-European phenomenon of the rise of numerous collective burials in the second half of the 4th millennium BC appear so-called gallery graves in two geographically and culturally distinct regions, notably in Hessia and Westphalia, in the Paris Basin, and in very scarce numbers also in Belgium and the Netherlands. These collective burial vaults of diverse construction materials and of rectangular shape are organised in a short antechamber reserved to the deposit of collective grave good assemblages and in a long chamber sheltering numerous deceased individuals, which were deposited successively. The similarities of the structures of the main study regions in terms of architecture were already noted since the 20th century and the nature of the ties binding latter have since then been interrogated in the line of diffusionist approaches. The resulting presumptions of the direction of unilinear diffusionist processes changed according to the progress of dating methods and processing of radiocarbon samples. In the scope of a Phd-thesis, the issue was revived anew, and this time via a twofold comparative analysis: A first, empirical comparative analysis is destined to check at what level the collective structures correspond to a structural stereotype and to inform us in terms of potentially regional variations. A second, qualitative comparison included nine gallery graves in order to determine to what degree their spatial uses conferred or differed according to distinct architectural and regional features.

This approach, allowing for the zooming in and out on the material remains of these Late Neolithic collective burials at a local, regional and supra-regional level, finally allowed to argue in favour of the presence of a common ideology of death in both, western Germany and the Paris Basin. Surprisingly, potential symbols of distinction (i.e. variable architectural or use-related elements) were visible not at a supra-regional, but already at a local level. The resulting observations further allowed to reject previous assumptions of a progressive and unilinear spread of the gallery grave innovation from one region to another, as well as those considering that the intermediate zones

played a key role in the diffusion process. Parallels in burial practices and structural changes over several centuries rather point to direct, mutual and sustainable communication between the two regions.

The case study of the gallery graves of western Germany and the Paris Basin is, finally, a suitable example to show the limits of interpretation set by concepts implying the presence of clear-cut cores, peripheries and boundaries. It further shows the necessity of developing analytical tools allowing to better grasp and understand complex communication and exchange networks of likely variable intensity within more flexible sets of boundaries, and which can also take into account the generative aspect of processes in which structures and practices were constantly reproduced, negotiated and transformed throughout both time and space.

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The Araxes River in Late Prehistory: Bridge or Border? North-Western Iran and Southern Caucasus Interaction during 6th to 3rd Millennium B.C.

The Aras or Araxes is a river flowing through Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. It drains the south side of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains and then joins the Kura River, which drains the north side of Lesser Caucasus Mountains. Its total length is 1,072 kilometers, covering an area of 102,000 square kilometers. The Araxes River is one of the largest rivers in NW Iran and the Caucasus. The Araxes River forms the international boundary between northwest Iran, Azerbaijan (Nakhchivan) and Armenia. Today this boundary controlled by official border police by the whole border line. What about the prehistory? Is it considered as a border or a bridge? Can we consider Araxes archaeological cultural zone as a borderland or as an area of communication and mobility? What's Araxes frontier role as an interaction zone?

North-Western Iran's prehistoric archaeology from Neolithic period (Hajji-Firuz period) to the end of Early Bronze Age (Kura-Araxes culture) considered as one of the important but very enigmatic periods. There are substantial questions concerning exact time span, the nature of this culture, regional and inter-regional interactions and expansion of widespread Hajji Firuz or Hassuna-Sammara related, Dalma and Dalma related and Post Ubaid, Kura-Araxes sites.

Northern parts of north-western Iran that considered as borderlands (Jolfa, Khoy, Marand, Khadafarin) are famous because of very fertile plains specially intermountain intensive plains that is surrounded by high mountains from several sides. Seasonal rivers flow in the plains was one of the main factor of archaeological sites formation here. This border region or interaction zone is located next to a broad valley, at the core of the highlands and the crossroads of major routes linking the Iranian plateau to Anatolia and the Caucasus to Northern Mesopotamia. The Araxes River frontier is only way to passing from the Caucasus to northern parts of the Lake Urmia to west of the Lake Urmia. This strategic location is further enhanced by the region's wealth in natural resources, which include rich salt deposits (Douzdagi Mine is 10 km NW of the site). The border interaction zone of the Araxes basin between the Southern

Caucasus and the Lake Urmia in the lowlands give very special position for some agro-pastoral groups to spend cold season as a winter lands. Existence of very fertile agricultural land on one hand and vast mountainous pastures for livestock and animal husbandry on the other hand doubled the importance of this region.

A comparative analysis of archaeological data demonstrates that this region had broad interregional relations with southern Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia), Northern Mesopotamia and Eastern Turkey, during the 6th–4th millennium BC. Specially, in the Early Bronze Age Kura-Araxes culture (3rd millennium BC), there are indications that this region had cultural relations with sites in the Trans-Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia on the one hand and Lake Urmia Basin and Zagros on the other.

There was close relation and interaction between NW Iran and southern Caucasus during 6th–3rd millennium BC specially for transferring some raw material from the Lake Urmia to the Southern Caucasus and vice versa. It seems clear that during Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods they have close relation with south Caucasian people in local and long-term trade especially in obsidian, metal and salt.

During this research the role of transhumant in breaking the border (!!!!) for transferring raw material from southern Caucasus to Iran and vice-versa will discuss along with the effect of this frontier zone in cultural interaction of prehistoric settlements of this region to better understanding the importance of Araxes River as a bridge not as a border in prehistory of NW Iran and southern Caucasus. During all this period, the Araxes valley remained an important highway for international trade arriving from across the Caspian and through northern Iran.

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Interaction Zones of the Northern Neolithic People of Kashmir

Early work in the mid-20th century yielded information on the remarkable prehistory of Kashmir, recognised as one of the richest Neolithic cultures in South Asia. Due to an unfortunate history of conflict and unrest since the 1980s, little work has been carried out since. Here I revisit the so-called Northern Neolithic of Kashmir, a complex that holds surprising keys to early cultural transmissions between east and west Asia.

Two Neolithic sites, Burzahom and Gufkral, have been studied in depth by local scholars. Regional survey has also been conducted in selected areas (Yattoo, 2005, 2012), but the internal chronology and regional variability of the Northern Neolithic is still not well documented (Yattoo, 2012; Yattoo & Bandey, 2014). While the Kashmiri Northern Neolithic is in some senses almost unique to the local region, similar sites have been found in the Swat Valley in Pakistan and looser parallels may be made with sites further afield, predominantly to the southwest Asia.

A recent systematic field survey of Baramulla District (northwestern Kashmir, India), led to the discovery of six hitherto unknown Neolithic sites dating to between c. 3150–1550 BC. These new Neolithic sites bear common features and similarities in material culture with Burzahom and Gufkral, the key excavated Neolithic sites in Kashmir. Moreover, similarities in material culture were also found with Neolithic sites in northern Pakistan, China and Central Asia. The similarities found in this material culture included pottery vessels (design and decoration), stone tools, pieces of wattle and daub plaster with reed impressions (thought to be part of what have been interpreted as Neolithic dwelling pits) and environmental data.

The evidence from Baramulla District adds substantial new artefactual and botanical data to a growing body of studies in South and Central Asia. The botanical evidence points to the growth of a diverse agricultural system in Kashmir from at least 4th millennium BP, and compliments well with the contemporary mixed botanical assemblages at Begash in southeast Kazakhstan and Adji Kui 1 in southern Turkmenistan (Spate et al., 2017). The location of the Baramulla District on the crossroads of ancient communication/migration

routes suggests that a wider system of regional exchange happened between agro-pastoral communities of the Inner Asian mountains and Kashmir region. The stratified nature of the materials give insight into long term settlement practices within the valley, from sealed and well dated archaeological contexts. The evidence suggests that the farming villages of Kashmir had multiple and varying routes of exchange with South, East and Central Asia. The pervasiveness of botanical materials from the deposits within the pit deposits and their association with stratified mud brick like surfaces suggests that the structures were used for food storage or other kind of processing activity. As such, pit evidence may also help to resolve the long standing debate regarding the nature of use of these structures, though raises further questions as to the nature of permanent or seasonal dwellings in Kashmir during the Neolithic.

Through the kind of research carried in Baramulla District, it was learnt that similarities in material culture between the new sites and the know sites in Kashmir, South and Central Asia are considerable. The geographic position of Baramulla District at a cross roads of communication routes is important, perhaps allowing it to act as a hub between the northern regions of Pakistan and Central Asia on the north western side, and rest of Kashmir on south eastern side (Burzahom, Gufkral and Kanispora). This centrality of Baramulla District is supported by the presence of the key Jhelum Valley route that passes through Baramulla and connects Kashmir with the northern areas of Pakistan and Central Asia.

Lattimore (1962: 470–71) said “mountain chains have often been the means for integration rather than isolation among the people from their facing slopes”. It is known that Baramulla District is surrounded by Himalayan mountains towards the north west and the Pir Panjal mountain range towards the south. The Neolithic period material remains indicate that there are similarities and interactions between Baramulla District and northern Pakistan (Swat) in South Asia, and also with northern regions of Central Asia. Scholars who studied Burzahom and Gufkral in Kashmir, the Swat sites in Pakistan and

Yangshao and Lungshan in China called this the 'Northern Neolithic Complex' or 'Inner Asian Complex' due to significant similarities in the material culture for each area, suggesting that such similarities were due to trade and interactions between these regions.

The discovery of the new sites in Baramulla District which have homologous material (such as ceramics, stone and environmental data) to that found among the Neolithic sites of the surrounding north western and north eastern regions of South and Central Asia, raises the question of the integration of Baramulla District into, and its role within the so-called 'Northern Neolithic Complex'. The similarities possibly suggest that Baramulla District formed a part of a trade network or other communication link along with Burzahom and Gufkral during the Neolithic period in Kashmir. The similarities found in material culture, therefore, could possibly be the result of interactions due to long distance trade/migrations through Baramulla District as is evident at new sites in northwest Kashmir. This paper will discuss this possibility, and suggest other interpretations as well.

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