



“Ethnoarchaeology of Fire” International Workshop

Although fire is ubiquitous among humans and it appears to have been so for at least hundreds of thousands of years, its study as an artifact is relatively recent due to its sedimentary nature. Archaeologists are only now beginning to properly document and sample combustion residues for their study as artifacts and to realize their potential as sinks of behavioral information. Thus, nowadays archaeological combustion features are analyzed at different scales using a variety of techniques to explore their spatial distribution, formation and composition. As a result, we are beginning to document functional, technological and other behavioral aspects of fire in archaeological hunter-gatherer contexts from different regions and time periods. As we advance in this direction, it is important to assess the potential of ethnoarchaeological investigations as important sources of analogy to approach anthropogenic fire. Thus, it appears necessary to expand the ethnoarchaeological analytic methodology toward the documentation of traditional fire-related behavior in ways that are comparable to the archaeological sedimentary record.

The aim of the meeting “Ethnoarchaeology of Fire” is to offer an open space for discussion and exchange, under the form of invited lectures, poster presentations and general discussions. We will present case studies and lay out the main avenues of ethnoarchaeological research that is currently being carried out relating to anthropogenic fire. Ethnoarchaeological case-studies on anthropogenic fire in subarctic and tropical environments will address different questions such as quantitative aspects of fire management, seasonality, site-formation processes, and fuel and heat use through the lens of different analytical methods (microparticles and macroremains, stable isotopes, organic chemistry, microstratigraphy and micromorphology).

In addition to our invited guest lectures, we will include several poster sessions illustrative of current research on the topic of anthropogenic fire in ethnographic/archaeological contexts worldwide. The call for posters is now open for anyone willing to present their work in one of three sessions (described in the next page): 1) “Anthropogenic fire in the ethnographic record”, 2) “Archaeology of fire” and 3) “Hunter-gatherer ethnoarchaeology and fire”. During the poster sessions, each participant will have a time slot of 5-10 minutes to do a formal presentation of his/her work.

Discussion sessions will be open to all attending the meeting. We invite participants to volunteer as moderators and propose discussion topics.

Registration is free for all participants and assistants. To register, please fill in the attached form and send it to: aureade.henry@cepam.cnrs.fr

Looking forward to hearing from you!

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Official deadlines:

Symposium date: 9-11 February, 2017

Registration and poster abstract submission (<200 words) deadline: 1 December, 2016

NOTE: We can only schedule up to 24 posters to be presented orally, and these will be selected by the organizers. The rest of the posters will be exhibited in the poster session.

Poster Session 1: Anthropogenic fire in the ethnographic record

The collaboration between ethnographers and archaeologists has always been key to the successful outcome of ethnoarchaeological approaches and, most of the time, enriching for both disciplines. However, true interdisciplinary work is not (yet) the norm, mostly because each community is unaware of the other's research fields and interests, which we believe share common ground since their approaches and study objects are complementary.

This session represents an opportunity for social anthropologists to share their observations of the use of fire among nomadic or semi-nomadic communities, in order to bring to light the variability of fire-related practices and their potential visibility in the archaeological record. Poster proposals may include general observations about the role and use of fire in regard of spatial, seasonal, territorial and/or mobility patterns, but also more specific data on techniques of fire production and use for the transformation/treatment of different natural resources, fuel management, or social or symbolic aspects linked to fire or fireplaces.

Poster Session 2: Archaeology of fire

Archaeological combustion structures are increasingly being investigated through multi-proxy and multiscale approaches destined to better understand site formation processes and gain access to prehistoric life ways and behaviours. In this session, we welcome posters focusing on what archaeological combustion features and remains "as artifacts" can actually tell us about taphonomy, technology, diet, settlement patterns and/or functionality. Contributions should involve current or new research focusing on macro- or micro-analytical techniques applied to archaeological combustion features or material remains testifying of direct or indirect heat transformation (organic materials, lithics, bone, etc.). The approaches may include geoarchaeology/microstratigraphy, physico-chemical analyses, reflectance and/or multi-proxy fuel studies or spatial analyses.

Poster Session 3: Hunter-gatherer ethnoarchaeology and fire

Ethnoarchaeological studies contribute in different ways to the central archaeological question of the relationships between people and things. However, the recording and analytical methods employed by ethnoarchaeologists from the field to data interpretation vary significantly, reflecting the wide array of questions, research contexts and schools. Thus, this session particularly welcomes poster presentations dealing with practical and methodological issues one is confronted to when practicing ethnoarchaeology, particularly focusing on how to include fire as an object of study. Topics may include fieldwork methodology, data reliability and treatment, limitations of an actualistic approach for the study of past behaviour, guidelines for ethnoarchaeological modelling and theory-building.