

*Transversal seminar of the UMR 7209 AASPE*

# **ANIMALS AND PLANTS FAMILIAR TO HUMANS**

## **Anthropozoology and Anthropobotany**

*Organized by Aline Averbouh, Marjan Mashkour & Marie-Pierre Ruas*



### **Session n° 2**

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND DEER (*CERVUS*) AND THEIR MATERIAL AND SYMBOLIC EXPRESSIONS**



*Cernunnos, Celtic god with deer antlers, Gundestrup cauldron, Museum of Denmark*

**October 10, 2022 - 10am-6pm**

Organization of the session: A. Averbouh, M. Mashkour (AASPE, MNHN, Paris)

Auditorium de la Grande Galerie de l'Evolution, MNHN

(36 rue Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire, 75005, Paris)

Session in person and by videoconference

<https://cnrs.zoom.us/j/94234067851?pwd=OXZlVStlPVS9CTE1iSC84Nk9Yb3ArUT09>

Placed under the sponsorship of F. Poplin (Honorary Director of UMR 7209 AASPE - Archaeozoology, Archaeobotany: societies, practices and environments) who lead for several years the seminar of Anthropozoology at the MNHN.

This new transversal seminar of the UMR AASPE is built on the deep knowledge about the relations that structure the construction and the evolution of human societies and their interactions with their animal and plant environment.

The seminar began in 2021 with a session devoted to the material and symbolic relations between humans and ibex. It will continue this year with a second session, devoted to the relations between humans and red deer (male and females).

The close interactions between Animals, Plants and Humans will be apprehended from their often founding roles both on the material level (food, medicine, crafts, transformation and production of equipment), socio-economic (form of acquisition - hunting, fishing, collection/gathering, breeding, agro-horticulture...), organization [notion of territory, collective or individual action, sedentary vs. nomadic life...] as well as symbolic (integration to the mythologies/cosmogony of the societies, cultural/ritual practices and interaction with other practices) and in the field of popular or learned knowledge. All these interactions will be evoked through the presentation of specific cases or in the framework of an analytical synthesis. The chronological scale is open to all periods (from prehistory to the present day) and, as a result, opens the seminar to all the disciplinary fields whose subject of study is human societies and their and their environments.

## Program (english version)

**10:00 a.m. – Reception of the participants**

**10.10 - 10.20 a.m. – General introduction and introduction to the session** by Aline Averbouh & Marjan Mashkour

**10.20 - 10.50 a.m. – From the continents to the islands, on the tracks of *Cervus elaphus* and the "troublesome cousin" *Cervus canadensis*** by Évelyne Crégut-Bonnoure (Curator, Honorary Director of the Requien Avignon Museum, UMR 5608 TRACES, Toulouse).

**10:50 - 11:20 a.m. – The Crowned King (on the ethology of *Cervus elaphus*)** by Évelyne Crégut-Bonnoure (Curator, Honorary Director of the Requien Avignon Museum, UMR 5608 TRACES, Toulouse) and Julien Canet (PNR Ariège).

**coffee break 10 mn**

**11:30 - 12:00 noon – Did hunters collect deer antlers at Soucy 3? Antler "accumulations": a recurrent question in the Pleistocene.** Videoconference, by Céline Bemilli (Inrap Grand Ouest, AASPE UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris)

**12:00 - 12:30 p.m. – Neolithic antler tools: a first insight into the exploitation of red deer of the Iranian Plateau.** Videoconference & in person by Laura Manca (Dr., Associate researcher AASPE UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris) et Marjan Mashkour (DR2 CNRS, AASPE UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris)

## LUNCH BREAK

**2:15 - 2:45 p.m. – Overview of the relationship between societies and deer (*Cervus elaphus*) during Antiquity and the Middle Ages in France** by Isabelle Rodet-Bélarbi (Inrap, Côte d'Azur University, CNRS, CEPAM, Nice).

**2:45 - 3:15 p.m. – To run with the deer and hunt with the stag. Origins and spread of the hunt with a calling stag** by Rémi Berthon (Senior Lecturer MNHN, AASPE UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris)

**3:15 - 3:45 p.m - Stags and hinds in two scenes of the sculptures of the basilica of Vézelay (Yonne).** Videoconference by François Poplin (Honorary Director of AASPE, UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris)

## coffee break 10 mn

**4:00 - 4:30 p.m – The deer in the daily life of the Byzantines** by Stavros Lazaris (CR CNRS UMR 8167 "Orient & Méditerranée" & Professor of Byzantine History, Institut Catholique de Paris, EA 7403 "Religion, Culture and Society).

**4:30 - 5:00 p.m – The deer in Tibet, reflections on representations and mythology** by Amy Heller (University of Bern, Institute for the Science of Religion & Centre for Research on East Asian Civilizations, Swiss Confederation).

**5:00 - 5:30 p.m – Is it permissible to eat deer meat?** by Charles Stépanoff (Dir. Etudes EHESS, Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, Paris).

**5:30-6:00 p.m. – Outcome of the session**

**From the continents to the islands, on the tracks of *Cervus elaphus* and the "troublesome cousin" *Cervus canadensis*** by Évelyne Crégut-Bonnoure (Curator, Honorary Director of the Requien Avignon Museum, UMR 5608 TRACES, Toulouse). [evelyne.cregut1313@orange.fr](mailto:evelyne.cregut1313@orange.fr)

*Key words:* Cervids, morphology, current and Pleistocene biodiversity.

Cervids are a very diverse group of ungulates occupying a variety of environments in Eurasia, Malaysia, North Africa and the Americas. They are characterized by a wide range of body mass which is a response to the diversity of ecological niches they have colonized. There are 47 species and 17 genera divided into two subfamilies: Capreolines and Cervines.

The males have deciduous frontal appendages carried by a pedicle: the antlers with variable ramifications depending on the species. Exceptions are the reindeer in which the females also have these expansions, the Andean deer, the pudu and the muntjac with reduced antlers, as well as the water deer or hydropot which is devoid of them. Canines are sometimes present in the upper dental arch in males, which can be atrophied (spits of deer) or very developed (Chinese water deer, elaphid, muntjac).

In Western Europe, the beginning of the Middle Pleistocene is marked by the arrival of the deer with a subspecies with antlers without crown: *Cervus elaphus acoronatus*. Later, around 400,000 years ago, *C. elaphus* of the "modern" type took over. Of great plasticity, it diversifies and gives birth throughout the Upper Pleistocene to several subspecies. The most recent revisions on a European scale are at the origin of the discovery of the presence of the elk, *Cervus canadensis*, whose current populations cover North America and Asia. From the Crimea to Sweden, several subspecies attributed to the deer are reinterpreted and related to the elk. One of them, which arrived in Italy at the end of the Upper Pleistocene, is the origin of the dwarf deer of the island of Capri.

**The Crowned King (on the ethology of *Cervus elaphus*)** by Évelyne Crégut-Bonnoure (Curator, Honorary Director of the Requien Avignon Museum, UMR 5608 TRACES, Toulouse) and Julien Canet (PNR Ariège). [evelyne.cregut1313@orange.fr](mailto:evelyne.cregut1313@orange.fr), [juliencanet09@gmail.com](mailto:juliencanet09@gmail.com)

*Keywords :* *Cervus*, ethology, antlers, ecosystems, Yellowstone

The family of Cervids is defined by the presence of antlers that are annually deciduous bony cranial protuberances worn only by males. Antlers represent the deer in the imagination of human societies but also play a social role within the herd. We will discuss the morphology and the development of the antlers of the red deer before addressing its behavior and habits. Finally, we will present examples of interaction between red deer and western societies, especially in terms of impact on the ecosystems.

**Did hunters collect deer antlers at Soucy 3? Antler "accumulations": a recurrent question in the Pleistocene.** In visioconference, by Céline Bemilli (Inrap Grand Ouest, AASPE UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris). [celine.bemilli@mnhn.fr](mailto:celine.bemilli@mnhn.fr)

*Keywords :* Red deer, antler, Middle Pleistocene, collect

The presence of antlers, sometimes in large numbers, is a recurrent phenomenon observed on Middle and upper Pleistocene sites. Based on the middle Pleistocene of Soucy 3 (Yonne, France) example, we present our thoughts about this question. This site, dated MIS10 presents a human occupation with a important exploitation of cervids and in particular of deer. This animal was clearly hunted and consumed. The site delivered also some forty shed antlers on which no modification could be observed. Nevertheless, their presence on the occupation levels by hunter gatherers raises questions. The taphonomic analysis tends to point towards an anthropogenic origin however with an unknown purpose. The comparison of this set with the cases reported on few other sites, including Tourville (Seine-Maritime, France, MIS8 à 6) studied by the authors, allows the consideration of several hypotheses.

**Neolithic antler tools: a first insight into the exploitation of red deer of the Iranian Plateau.** Videoconference & in person by Laura Manca (Dr., Associate researcher AASPE UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris) et Marjan Mashkour (DR2 CNRS, AASPE UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris) [laura.manca@mnhn.fr](mailto:laura.manca@mnhn.fr); [mashkour@mnhn.fr](mailto:mashkour@mnhn.fr)

*Keywords:* Antler production, Iran, Neolithic, technology, function.

Prehistoric societies exploited antlers to produce their equipment from very ancient periods (Middle Palaeolithic). After a very intense use during the Upper Palaeolithic, antlers are generally less used during the Neolithic, with the emergence of domestic practices and the increased availability of bone material from domesticated animals. Nevertheless, antler remains one of the elements of material culture that helps to characterise the relationship between early pastoral societies and wild animals, their environment, and its evolution during the Neolithic. On the Iranian Plateau, a key region for understanding the mechanisms of emergence and diffusion of domestication, antler production is poorly known from both a morpho-typological and techno-functional point of view. In the framework of the EXAMS project, we have carried out a first census of antler tools used by Iranian Neolithic groups. In this presentation, we will illustrate the results of this research as well as the first data from the techno-functional study of three series from Iranian sites (Tepe Abdul Hosein, Sang-e Chakhmaq and Tepe Zagheh).

**Overview of the relationship between societies and deer (*Cervus elaphus*) during Antiquity and the Middle Ages in France** by Isabelle Rodet-Blarbi ((Inrap, Côte d'Azur University, CNRS, CEPAM, Nice). [isabelle.rodet-belarbi@inrap.fr](mailto:isabelle.rodet-belarbi@inrap.fr)

*Key words:* Antlers, Craftsmanship, Hunting, Historical periods, Prophylaxis

During Roman Antiquity and the Middle Ages in France, the deer was very present in society both because of its strong symbolic value and because of the raw materials it provided, particularly its meat and antlers.

Several themes will be addressed in order to illustrate the richness of the relationship between this deer and humans during these chronological periods:

- The deer and the prophylactic virtues of its antlers in Roman times;
- The deer and hunting in Roman and medieval times;
- Wood as a raw material: exploitation and supply in the Gallo-Roman and medieval periods;
- The cutting of the stag's body according to medieval hunting treatises and archaeozoology
- The antlers of the stag: diachronic census of their measurements.

**To run with the deer and hunt with the stag. Origins and spread of the hunt with a calling stag** by Rémi Berthon (MC MNHN, AASPE UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris). [remi.berthon@mnhn.fr](mailto:remi.berthon@mnhn.fr)

*Keywords:* Stag, hunt, bellow, Gaul, Anatolia, Caucasus

Archaeological researches in France have yielded in the last decades several osteological and iconographical evidence for the use of a tamed stag as a decoy for hunting during the mating season. That implies a very specific relationship between the hunter and a stag that is not a completely wild animal anymore, nor a domestic individual. This peculiar hunting practice is well known in Gaul in the first centuries of the Common Era. Its use is more difficult to evidence in other regions of Europe. Its origin remains unclear also. We propose in this presentation that such a hunting practice was already in use in Anatolia at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC. We will also discuss the modalities of its spread towards Western Europe.

### **Deer and hinds in two scenes of the sculptures in the basilica of Vézelay (Yonne).**

Videoconference, by François Poplin (Honorary Director of AASPE UMR 7209, MNHN, CNRS, Paris). [francois.poplin@mnhn.fr](mailto:francois.poplin@mnhn.fr)

*Keywords:* Vézelay, stag & hind, sculpture, Christian art

Two scenes in the sculptures of Vézelay illustrate the legend of Saint Eustace in the Romanesque period and that of Saint Hubert in the Renaissance period, which is a good opening to deal with deer through the ages. It was chosen to do so by way of the saints and their attributes. For this, Louis Réau's monumental Iconography of Christian Art is a mine to which this work pays tribute.

The species concerned are very close in the choices that have been made: that of the stag prevails in a preeminent way, and next to the buck whose antlers call for the antlers of the Cross, the hind takes on considerable importance in its dairy, nourishing function. The roe deer is non-existent and the fallow deer sporadic and distant. The disappearance of the roe deer is important in understanding the friction with the goats, which can be seen in the vocabulary, with the proximity of "biche" and "bique", for example, or the synonymy of the instrument *pied-de-biche* alias *pied-de-chèvre*, or of *Hindin* and *Hirschkuh* in German

**The deer in the daily life of the Byzantines** by Stavros Lazaris (CR CNRS UMR 8167 "Orient & Méditerranée" and Professor of Byzantine History, Institut Catholique de Paris, EA 7403 "Religion, Culture and Society"). [stavros.lazaris@outlook.com](mailto:stavros.lazaris@outlook.com)

*Keywords:* Hunting, Pharmacopoeia, Food, Symbolism, Christian morality, Byzantium

This paper will review the use of deer by the Byzantines in both their medicinal recipes and their diet, as well as the symbolism it assumed in Christian texts. Through the example of this animal, I will propose some more general considerations on the place of animals in Byzantine society and mentality, and we will see that the Christian Middle Ages did not cease to wonder about animals in general and, in so doing, how they were constantly placed in the forefront.

**The deer in Tibet, reflections on representations and mythology** by Amy Heller (University of Bern, Institute for the Science of Religion and Centre de recherche sur les Civilisations de l'Asie Orientale. CH-1260 Nyon, Switzerland). [amy.heller@relwi.unibe.ch](mailto:amy.heller@relwi.unibe.ch)

*Keywords:* Musk deer, Vast antlered deer, Tibet, Himalaya, Art, Mythology

In the context of the research project "Birds and Deer in Tibet and the Himalayas" (University of Bern, Institut für Religionswissenschaft, 2022-2024), I am researching the artistic representations of deer as well as the Tibetan mythological beliefs about the Vast Antlered Deer and the Musk Deer, both of which are native to Tibet and the Himalayas.

Even before the Tibetan Empire in Central Asia (7th-9th century CE), archaeological excavations have brought to light golden masks decorated with deer.

In the imperial period, the practice of burying antlers and deer bones near the treasures that accompany the body has been documented.

In these tombs, the presence of numerous silk hangings and gold and silver ritual tableware decorated with giant deer reflects the importance attributed to deer by the Tibetans.

In particular, the Sogdian and Chinese silks discovered during the excavations underline the role of the Tibetans in the commercial and cultural exchanges on the silk and musk routes.

Historical Tibetan medical and religious literature (9th to 12th centuries) also documents the importance of deer as "ideal prey" in ritual hunting accounts, as well as the powers attributed to deer related to healing with musk.

The deer is also sometimes attributed the role of a guide to the afterlife. As deer antlers grow back each year, by association, the deer represents renewed vitality and a hope for immortality.

**Is it permissible to eat deer meat?** by Charles Stépanoff (Dir. Etudes EHESS, Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, Paris, France). [charles.stepanoff@ehess.fr](mailto:charles.stepanoff@ehess.fr)

*Keywords:* Hunting, Siberia, France, meat consumption

Whether it is permissible to eat deer is a subject of debate in South Siberia. A deer may be a favourite animal of a master spirit or even an incarnation of that spirit in the process of metamorphosis. Although coat anomalies may provide a clue, it is difficult to be certain of a deer's true identity. In order to avoid a mistake, some people refuse to hunt and eat this animal. Their position is based on unfortunate experiences following the consumption of venison: accidents, bad dreams, anxieties. The question is also raised in France, but in different terms. The issue is less about the identity of deer than about the identity of humans defined by this consumption. Under the Ancien Régime, the different parts of the stag were in correspondence with the social order of the court. In the 19th century, the bourgeoisie renounced deer meat in favour of sport hunting. Today, the consumption of hunted deer meat places individuals on a conflicting social and ethical chessboard. This presentation will be based on ethnographic surveys conducted in Siberia and France.