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La saisonnalité des naissances – Maternité, histoires de vie et construction sociales dans les Gorges du Danube au cours des transformations Mésolithiques-Néolithiques

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- 1 Exploring how ancient populations socially acknowledged, experienced, or 'created' biological differences between males and females in everyday life activities and throughout key-periods of the life-cycle has important implications to infer how different aspects of social structuration operated, to reconstruct demographic mechanisms, and sometimes to pinpoint some long-term evolutionary pathways. While there has been a considerable empirical and epistemological attention paid to understand gender relationships these last decades, in western-Eurasia little is still known about females – mothers – women daily experiences and life-long routines before and during the Neolithic agro-pastoral transition, despite their importance to tackle issues of social complexification or of demographic expansion. This gap is partially related to the scarcity of well-contextualized bioarchaeological and bioanthropological remains amongst Late Pleistocene or Early Holocene foragers and incipient farmers. Here we have focused on the Mesolithic-Neolithic sites of the Danube Gorges (9500-5500 BC), where the remains of >500 humans have been discovered in archaeological contexts which document the development of foragers' sedentary niche along the river, with the elaboration of unparalleled architectural and symbolic traditions, and their subsequent biological and cultural interactions with the first Neolithic farmers settled in the Central Balkans. The contextual comparison of various

sets of bioanthropological markers related to nutrition, subsistence activities, mobility and health, including multiple isotopes ($\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{coll}}$, $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{cap}}$, $\delta^{15}\text{N}$, $\delta^{34}\text{S}$, $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$) analysed on tissues formed during different periods of life, have evidenced: patterns of males' and females' differential diet, the adaptations of females nutritional choices over times of pregnancy and lactation, and of particular feeding and mortuary practices jointly associated with specific socio-biological categories. Through this exemple, we discuss the biocultural determinants of motherhood adaptations, we suggest possible patterns of birth seasonality, a variable rarely considered in archaeology despite its importance to the study of human reproductive ecology, and we highlight some bio-social aspects of the multi-faceted construction of personae during the Mesolithic-Neolithic transformations in the Danube Gorges.

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