

## Bodies, houses and gardens: rhythm analysis of Neolithic life-ways

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**ABSTRACT** – *Paper discusses the ways in which rhythmic temporality of yearly course was woven into the way people lived, experienced and transformed their life in the Balkans Neolithic. It examines how routine social and material practices on gardens that were structured within a year extend their duration to the lifecourse of people, objects, generations and historical change. By attending the garden during the year, people not only observe the process of growth, but actively participate in it. The generative and regenerative powers of gardens are maintained through work and accumulation of substances, which originate from elsewhere, house, midden, animal pens. This flow of substances is not only way of linking houses, gardens, animals and people in a web of relations, but also creates the history of the particular plot. Through the agency of gardens, the substances of humans, plants, animals and ancestors become intertwined and feed into each other.*

**IZVLEČEK** – *Članek se ukvarja z ritmi letnega cikla v neolitiku Balkana. Poglavitno vprašanje, s katerim se ukvarjamo je, kako so materialne in družbene prakse letnega cikla postale del življenjskih zgodb ljudi, predmetov, menjav generacij ter tako ustvarjale zgodovino. Skozi delo na vrtu ljudje niso le opazovali procesa rasti, temveč so v njem aktivno sodelovali. Moč vrta, da obrodi in obnovi, so vzdrževali s kopičenjem snovi iz hiš in odpadkov iz živalskih obor. Ta tok snovi ni le povezal hiš in vrtov, ljudi, živali in rastlin v omrežje družbenih odnosov, temveč tako tudi ustvarjal zgodovino posameznega vrta. Vrtovi so tako igrali aktivno vlogo pri prepletanju tokov snovi med ljudmi, živalmi in predniki in pri ustvarjanju povezav med njimi.*

**KEY WORDS** – *time; yearly course; rhythms; gardens; houses; Neolithic; Balkans*

### Introduction

Human activities are not only embedded in long-term historical developments, but also in the more repetitive rhythms of daily and seasonal cycles. Environmental archaeology has developed a number of tools and approaches which may determine the seasonality of a site from organic finds (presence or absence of certain species), physical indices on the bones and teeth of animal remains, or, more recently, stable isotope analysis. Even with these impressive achievements, there have been very few attempts to temporalise this sequence, apart from divisions into well-defined discrete blocks of time and seasons, and the tasks associated with them.

This approach leads to the perspective that the flow of seasons serves only as an ecological backdrop

which structures human activities, and portrays pre-industrial communities as timeless, locked in an ever-recurring agrarian year and living outside history.

But how do repetitive tasks performed within an annual cycle relate to each other? How do they structure relations between people, other social agents and the material world? How does history emerge from these relations?

The main inspiration for this paper is Henri Lefebvre's *rhythmanalysis* project (2004), where he uses rhythm as a tool to analyse daily life. Everyday life is made up of repetitions or recurrences, and for Lefebvre, rhythm is where body, society, time and space come together.

This paper is concerned with how the rhythmic temporality of the annual cycle was woven into the way people lived, experienced and transformed their life. It examines how routine social practices that were structured within a year extend their duration to the life cycle of people, objects, generations and historical change.

### The music of social life

The main point of departure is 'being in the world', or dwelling perspective (*Heidegger 1962; Ingold 2000*), where human experience consists of relationships with other people, other social agents and the material world, and is performed through tasks and activities. These are always material practices and by changing the material world, their effects extend beyond their immediate execution.

Life consists of an uninterrupted flow of daily tasks. People are always already at their task, no matter how insignificant or trivial they might seem. Walking, cooking, caring for children, animals, tending plants, hunting, building, talking are all parts of a flow of activities which carry on life and create time. We are born into this flow of tasks and begin to participate in it from the beginning. But these tasks are not isolated, discrete events, like beads on a string; they are more akin to music. In music, we do not hear isolated tones, but melody, as Husserl (*1964*) illustrated in his highly influential writings on the phenomenology of time consciousness, and melody is created by repeated acts of remembering past tones (retention) and anticipating the next (proten- tion).

Analogously, every task 'has its own thickness and temporal spread' (*Gell 1992.223*). Each makes sense only when related to those already performed and those to be done. Life is thus not merely a succession of isolated seasonal tasks; it is a flow of tasks meaningfully related to one another. Tasks are implicitly or explicitly connected with other tasks, separated in time and space. Each task is made possible by the number of past tasks, and future tasks give it purpose. This network or 'referential system' (*Gosden 1994*) of tasks unfolds over space and time. Thus, Evans-Pritchard (*1940.101–102*) describes the Nuer seasonal round as 'primarily the succession of pastoral tasks and their relation to one another'.

Tasks have their own temporalities, which emerge from interactions between people and the material world around them. The temporality of tasks is inhe-

rently social; it emerges from attending to, adjusting and timing our actions in relation to other agents and the rhythms of the material world (*Ingold 1993; Ingold 2000.196–197*). Tim Ingold (*1993; 2000*) calls this process 'resonance'. Just as music emerges from the interactive attention of musicians to each other and their instruments, social life emerges from the mutual attentive performance of social agents and world around them. But we do not resonate with other human beings only; by performing tasks, we are alert to conditions and changes in the environment and adjust our actions accordingly. We tend animals, and are aware of their own tasks and bodily rhythms; we resonate with plants, their growth cycles, changes in the weather or the ebb and flow of rivers. Plants respond to the actions of people, and animals resonate to the rhythms of other beings, creating a sociality which transcends species boundaries. In this perspective, environmental rhythms are imposed from the outside, but become woven into the melody of social life.

Mark Harris (*1998*) describes the rhythms of sociality in the Amazon floodplain, where not only the flow of tasks and activities, but the whole sociality resonates with the rhythm of the seasonal flood. During the flood season, people are confined to their houses; it is a time of low moods, illness and potential danger. But when the water recedes, there is a burst of social activity and cooperation; people are in a good mood, and this is a time of feasting, but also tension and conflict. The rhythmic temporality of social life is not only a reflection of the seasonality of the Amazon, but emerges from peoples' active engagement with the ebb and flow of the river and each other.

Rhythm is what makes music move on and flow. The same can be said for the flow of life. It is the repetition of tasks that creates time, and gives the pace and tempo to the social life. As Lefebvre (*2004.15*) defines it, "Everywhere where there is an interaction between place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is a rhythm". Thus, rhythm also implies a relation of time to space or place. Lefebvre talks about a localised time, or a temporalised place, to underline the spatio-temporal reality of rhythms and their role in the production of space. But the central theme of rhythm analysis is the body (*Lefebvre 2004.38–45*).

Through rhythmic repetition, tasks can become habitually learned and embodied as practical skills and postures. Through rhythmic patterns of involvement

with their surroundings, routines performed in specific ways, people acquire specific 'dispositions', a 'logic of practice', of knowing how to go on (*Bourdieu 1977*). This entire subjective experience of the world, or *habitus*, does not need discursive formalisation, because it is learned through participation in the flow of life, through being submerged in it.

There is a recursive relation between dwelling perspective and Bourdieu's *habitus*, between event and structure (*Harding 2005*). Persons who skilfully attend to their tasks and each other are always already bodies – focused, gendered. They have learned skills for the practical mastery of the world which they apply to everyday situations and the tasks they perform. Tasks are material practices, involving bodies, things and places. People till gardens with hoes, harvest crops with sickles, store grain in the container in the house, dump refuse on the midden, prepare food in a container, share and eat it, excrete and dispose of substances. They perform these tasks through their bodies. People and things are always conjoined in actions, and there is mutual constitution between people, things and places (*Knappett, 2005; Latour, 2005; Miller 1987*). It is through the performance of tasks that things, places and bodies are changed; and through this mutual constitution, people are also changed.

The material world, landscape, material culture and bodies are vital links between *habitus* and dwelling perspective. Tasks leave traces on matter, tools, places and bodies. Through repetition, these traces accumulate or form layers one upon another. Through layering, a process of creating sediments, assemblages of traces that accrue over time, repair, adapt, modify or curate, life histories become sedimented and layered, and the biographies of objects, bodies, and places are created (*Gosden and Marshall 1999; Knappett 2006*). Things and places change; people become more skilful and older after each performed task, each day and season. Their bodies accumulate traces, skills, knowledge of how to perform movements, gestures and postures, which in turn constitute human beings. The rhythms of daily or yearly engagement with the world are thus 'techniques of the self' (*Foucault 1988; Warnier 2001*), ways through which people constitute themselves, create or maintain their identities.

Mutual making is a continuous historical process. The rhythmic flow of tasks never repeats itself; there can be no cyclical temporalities of task, only rhythms through which people, things and landscape mutu-

ally constitute each other. This is, of course, a result of the inherently material nature of tasks; they always involve and change bodies, objects and substances. In this way, the material world is always in the process of becoming. As Chris Gosden (*1994*) puts it, a "*world created by people will be a world into which their children will be socialised...*". Each action, even if repeated, has potential for change and renewal.

The non-discursive nature of most practices, therefore, does not mean that they cannot create meaning. Routines may be embodied, but they are seldom neutral. The *habitus* has an endless generative capacity. It can produce ideas, perceptions, emotions or actions. The material world has a crucial role in the production of people and fixing the relations between them. The famous example of the Kabyle house, which is a principal locus for the objectification of *habitus*, and gives meaning and significance to daily and seasonal tasks by providing analogies between the spatial division of houses and the arrangement of material culture within it and the agrarian cycle. The Kabyle house brings together both space and the material world with the rhythms of daily life and the agrarian calendar (*Bourdieu 1990*). Meaning is generated at the intersection of the material world with the temporalities of social life.

In discussing the generation of meaning at the interface of space and rhythmic time, one can employ Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the 'chronotope'. Bakhtin, a Russian semiotician and literary theorist, defines chronotopes as "*organising centres for the fundamental narrative events in the novel...*" (*Bakhtin 1981.250*). It is a figure that merges the spatial and temporal; the chronotope generates not only encounters that advance the plot, but also the principal symbolic and metaphorical patterns of a work, potential narrative matrices, performative frameworks and networks of signifiers. Chronotopes are loci "*where time becomes palpable and visible; chronotopes make narrative events concrete, make them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins...*" (*Bakhtin 1981.250*).

Thus the chronotope, as the primary means for bringing together time and space (and one might argue, bodies, tools and persons with their own embodied temporalities), is a both a nexus from where representation can emerge, and a force giving body to the flow of tasks. In chronotopes, abstract aspects of social life – cosmological and social generalisations, ideas and symbols – take on flesh and blood, permit-

ting the imaging power of metaphors to do their work: “every entry into the sphere of meaning is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope” (Bakhtin 1981.258). Chronotopes provide contexts for the creation of meaning through the rhythmic association of objects, persons and places. By bringing objects and incorporating them into places through a rhythmic pattern of activities associated with those objects and places or patterns of encounters at those places, chronotopes mediate the transfer of meanings of places and the material world into temporal relationships. In this way, the flow of tasks and mutuality become vehicles for collective representations such as idealised concepts about society, the past, personal or group identity, or cosmology.

Thus, chronotopes are not only matrices of reproduction, but nexuses where ‘actual historical persons’ emerge in ‘real historical time and space’ through the combined agency of people, places, bodies and material culture.

### Case study: Neolithic gardens

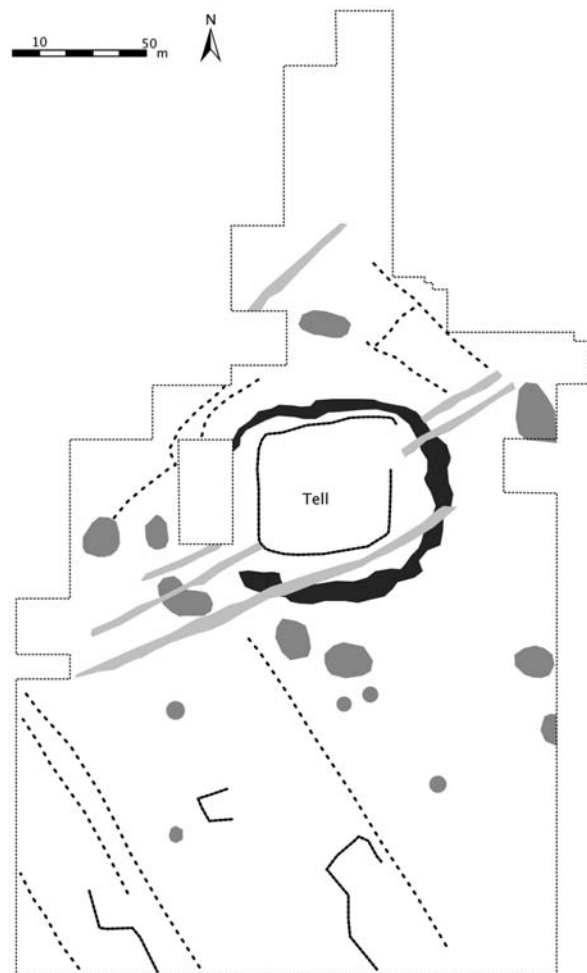
What makes ‘Neolithic’ life-ways different from the life of ‘Mesolithic’ groups is the different quality of their relations with the material world, animals, plants and each other. This difference is played out through daily activities, and tasks and activities associated with material culture, animals, plants, places, the landscape and other people.

In the seventh millennium BC, people in Greece and Balkans created new social settings by selecting particular places in the landscape and erecting durable structures. These places were centres of activity, and they structured the way people interacted with each other, animals and the surrounding landscape (Bailey 2000; Borić 2008). These were the settings for the bulk of activities, daily rounds, seasonal tasks and life-cycles of people. Houses and settlements are places where time and space intersect and fuse, and thus give meaning to the flow of social life.

But there are also marked differences in the way people organised and reproduced their social settings. In some villages, especially in Greece and Bulgaria, houses were close together; people and animals lived together in a cramped social environment. People emphasised the sense of bounded space by digging ditches or erecting palisades around settlements (Fig. 1). Houses were not relocated; instead, they were overlapped, reworked and incorporated

into new buildings. Cycles of destruction, reworking and building over generations created large artificial tells.

In the Northern Balkans, but also Greece, there is evidence of short-lived settlements, consisting of widely spaced wattle and daub houses (Fig. 2). Many houses were (intentionally) burnt down, creating deposits of daub which were moved around or incorporated into pits and other features. New houses were rebuilt elsewhere, and settlements were abandoned after a few generations. There is a general ‘sense of ephemerality’ (Thissen 2005) on extended sites, marked not only by the destruction and displacement of houses, but also of traces of people and animals leaving and coming to the site (Valamoti 2007; Whittle 2007). Evidently, there were other places where



**Fig. 1. Eneolithic tell, Podgoritsa (Bulgaria) with off-site structures. The tell is separated from the surrounding landscape by a ditch. Ditches, other linear features (field boundaries or water management structures) and anomalies which might be rubbish tips or off-site structures can be seen in the area around the tell. Gardens were located outside the tell (redrawn after Bailey et al. 1998.Fig. 4).**

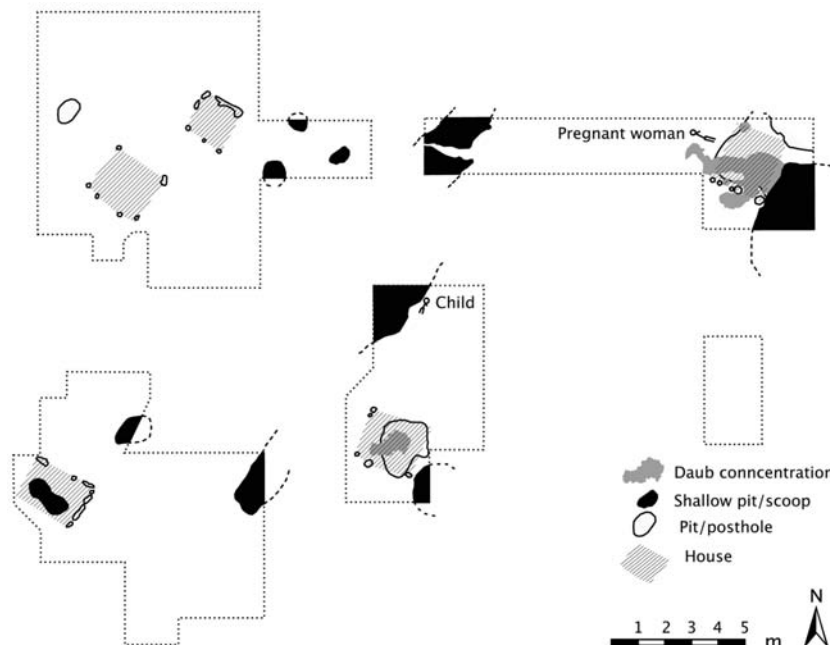


encounters that advanced the flow of social life took place. But villages with their new social setting and intrinsic temporality were not the only new thing that emerged from new associations. New tasks emerged, based on new associations with people, material culture, plants, animals and landscape. These associations were not uniform, part of a totalising and unifying 'package', but patched together from the 'repertoire', from interrelated sets of the 'new' and 'old' material resources available (Thomas 1999; 2003).

The relative importance of specific cereals such as emmer, einkorn and barley, and legumes such as bitter vetch, grass pea, and chickpea (Kreuz et al. 2005; Marinova 2007; Valamoti and Kotsakis 2007), and animals such as goat, sheep, cattle and pig (Halstead 1996) might differ from site to site, but the importance of cereals and legumes and domestic animals can be seen not only in the quantity of charred plant remains and bones, but also in the new social relations which they embody. It seems that not only were raising crops and tending animals the main economic activities of Neolithic communities, but that their whole life revolved around them "growing crops and raising animals are not just ways of producing food; they are forms of life..." (Ingold 1996: 24).

## Gardens

Data from weed composition suggest that intensive garden cultivation was a widespread form of crop production in Neolithic Europe, Greece, the Balkans and Central Europe (Bogaard 2004a; 2004b; 2005). Intensive garden cultivation implies very close relations between people, crops and gardens. It requires a constant human presence, monitoring and working on plots, tilling and protecting crops, manual weeding and manuring. There was a rhythmic flow of substances such as manure and midden deposits to garden plots, and grain, chaff and straw back from the gardens.



**Fig. 2.** *Starčevo phase of the Divostin settlement (Serbia). Houses separated with open areas, surrounded by large, irregular shallow pits filled with daub, ash and bone. The area between the widely spaced houses was probably used for agriculture (gardens), animal pens, paths, rubbish pits, tips and other activity areas. A pregnant woman and a child were buried next to the edges of the shallow pits. (re-drawn after Bogdanović 1988, Plan I, Fig. 5.7).*

This association with plants presupposes strong connections between the rhythms of animals, gardens and people, including grazing fallow land, grazing young cereals to prevent lodging, and protecting ripening crops from animals (Halstead 1996; 2006).

This close association also means the close proximity of garden plots to settlements and houses (Jones 2005). The intensive cultivation of small garden plots can provide enough grain for subsistence (Bogaard 2004b; Halstead 2000; Jones 2005), implying that plots were permanent and not extensive. This is further supported by the lack of evidence of large-scale clearances in the European Neolithic.

On an extended settlement, gardens might be located within the settlement between widely spaced houses (Kotsakis 1999: 73) (Fig. 2). Large shallow features and series of pits filled with domestic debris, including burned cereal processing waste rich in phytoliths, burned bone, fish remains and coprolites, and the burned remains of stock herding (burnt animal fodder, bedding, dung) might be the remains of middens which were spread on gardens (for example at *Ecsegfalva*, Macphail 2007; Whittle and Zalai-Gaál, 2007). At nucleated tell settlements, gardens were located outside the settlement (Fig. 1). Physically demarcated domestic and agricultural spa-

ces in the form of ditches and palisades, as at some nucleated settlements, became a means of creating the identity of households, together with controlling space within the settlements themselves. On the other hand, the close association of gardens and houses at dispersed settlements may have played an active part in the negotiation of social identity within households (*Johnston 2005; Kotsakis 1999*).

Environmental evidence provides a 'synoptic' view of agricultural tasks on gardens in the seasonal cycle: gardens were sown in autumn (*Bogaard 2004b; Bogaard et al. 2007; Marinova 2007*); spring for grazing young cereals, followed by weeding, and as a crop ripened, protecting plots; then followed a flow of dense summer activities, culminating in harvest in July or August, with all the processing and storage of crops, then the grazing of fallow, tilling and manuring, and sowing in September or October.

But gardens were not only places of production, but locales where people and animals and plants interact with each other, where environmental knowledge and skills are learned and controlled, and social roles and identities defined, maintained and contested (*Johnston 2005.212*). Garden plots are places where the rhythmic temporalities of plant growth, the daily and annual rhythms of tasks, people and animals came together and become visible. The rhythm of seasonal tasks associated with tending plants and animals provided a way for people to relate to the garden plots and wider landscape. Through activities and the flow of substances, people and garden plots mutually establish each other.

It is often suggested, based on ethnographic evidence, that gardens were worked and maintained primarily by women, but this might be too simplistic. Following Judith Butler (*1990.25*), we might say that gender identity was performatively constituted through a series of repeated acts performed on gardens. Activities connected with caring for plants evoked connotations which connected gardens, plants, and activities with certain qualities associated with 'women' (*Brück 2005.150-151*) and which might become hegemonic and naturalised.

Annual plants, such as cereals, with rapid life cycles, participate in the social world of interpersonal relations, because people can observe their growth (*Hastrof 1998; Rival 1993*). In this sense, working the garden, caring 'with almost individual attention to crop plants' (*Bogaard 2004b.41*) and 'establishing the conditions for growth' can be related to caring

for children (*Hastrof 1998*). The relation between garden plots and people is mutual; people establish the conditions for the growth of plants by working in the garden, and the garden provides food for the reproduction of humans (*Ingold 2000*).

Gardening tasks are implicitly or explicitly connected with other tasks in the flow of social life; people who work and associate in gardens have patterns of rhythmic movement and association with other people, animals and other places, and these constitute other aspects of their identities. The flow of substances, people and animals links gardens with other places and thus establishes material and conceptual connections between places and activities. The rhythmic temporality of the agrarian cycle can become grounded in different sets of temporalities through complex networks of material, mnemonic and anticipatory relations, which are played out as specific social practices.

In this way, activities performed in gardens acquire their own 'temporal thickness' which extends beyond their duration. Gardens can be described as chronotopes in the same way Keith Basso (*1996*) calls Apache places locales 'where time and space have fused and where, through the agency of historical tales, their intersection is 'made visible for human contemplation'. Gardens were chronotopes, where many sets of temporalities became interwoven into their biographies through the daily maintenance into gardens, the annual growth of plants and indices of the agency of the ancestors, who created and maintained the plot in the past.

### Garden biographies

The biography of a particular clearing begins with the choice of a site for a settlement and the act of making the clearing in the forest and building huts. Clearing, houses and garden plots thus provide durable material evidence, a memory that links the ancestors who created the particular setting with people who live in the clearing, and maintain continuity through the rhythm of seasonal and daily routines.

These people have their own life courses, which are intrinsically connected with the place, houses and gardens. They were socialised in this place, acquired skills and knowledge of how to treat people, crops, animals, and substances. They became skilled individuals, with social knowledge and knowledge of the material world. Their identity was constructed and negotiated through daily and annual rhythms.

Gardens were worked, manipulated, changed and curated, and in this way, their life histories became sedimented and layered. They needed constant daily maintenance and a flow of substances to replenish the nutrients in the soil. By middening a discard from houses, they became incorporated into the matrix of the garden. This changes the properties of the soil, as it becomes organic, fertile and darker in colour (Jones 2005). By accumulating of substances, imprints, residues and traces, the identity of people becomes incorporated into the soil of the plot. These traces can be encountered during daily work; for example, tilling could expose the remains of a midden buried in soil, or pottery or bones. In this way, the agency of the ancestors is exposed and visible. The mnemonic aspects of these locales resided primarily in their constant maintenance, re-building and manipulation as an ongoing flow of agricultural tasks through the seasonal cycle, rather than being complete and finished works (cf. Borić 2002b.50). Their existence was not a given. Left alone for a few months or even weeks, gardens can completely change shape, become overgrown with weeds and abandoned, lacking all sign of human agency.

Laura Rival (1993) writes about Huaorani relations to trees and groves. The slow growth of the trees planted by the ancestors provides a material index of the continuity between generations. Groves provide giving environments, since the people receive nourishment from the past that ensures the feeding of the future through their present practices (Rival 1993). Thus the agency associated with providing the conditions for growth is distributed among ancestors and people.

Gardens, with their accumulated histories, are also media for nurturing the agency of ancestors; but growth and care for annual plants also testifies to the skill, effort and knowledge of the people maintaining them (Malinowski 1965). The rhythmic flows of activities performed in gardens produce and reproduce historical knowledge and moral wisdom (cf. Basso 1996). Gardens exercise their own agency in the process, as they not only provide a context for the growth of plants, but through their material presence, through their continuous transformation during the agrarian cycle, they remind people of the past and serve to shape future conduct.

### Gardens and houses

The agrarian year can be divided into a less labour-intensive, but longer 'production period' of establi-

shing conditions for growth through weeding and protecting plants, and brief, but labour-intensive 'working periods' which includes tilling, sowing and harvesting (Marx 1967.Ch. 12). Grain becomes available only after harvest, which marks the end of a long production period; this temporality of 'delayed return' (Woodburn 1980) means that grain must be stored for future use.

After harvesting, grain becomes incorporated into a house – in storage bins, vessels on the floor, bags, and baskets hanging from the ceiling, or stored as sheaves in the rafters (Marinova 2007) and storage pits around the houses. Stored, seeds are dormant, waiting to be consumed, or planted back to the gardens.

Controlling the flow of materials from gardens to storage is an important way of maintaining the identity and coherence of the 'house' (sensu Borić 2008). In her approach to storage, Julia Hendon writes, "storage, whether utilitarian or ritual raises issues of secrecy, memory, prestige and knowledge that help construct the moral system where people live in..." (Hendon 2000.50). Control over the flow of substances and storage is a material embodiment of the ties and claims of houses over gardens. In this way, stored grain not only embodies labour through the agrarian year, but is also the agency and work of the ancestors.

Houses embody a different kind of sociality from gardens. A house is a focus for the accumulation, preparation and distribution of food. It is a place of mutual obligations between its residents; but this also true for whole community, which oversees the whole production process. Thus the house is not necessarily opposed to the community, but is rather an embodiment of various relations expressed at different times in the annual cycle (Harris 1998.78). The transfer of grain to a house and its storage is a period when different relations between people become explicit and identities are contested and negotiated. If the 'production period' is a time of shared work and free association in the open space of the garden, then after the harvest, tasks are confined to the house and focus on storing substances. Thus the seasonal rhythm of agrarian tasks associated with tending annual plants also embodies contradictory social relations of production: one based on collective production, the generalised sharing of work on the gardens, conviviality; the other on the appropriation of crops and their accumulation by houses.



Obviously, there were different ways in which houses were connected with gardens through the flow of substances and people. Soutlana Valamoti (2005) noticed that nucleated sites appear to be rich in grain, cereals and pulses, while extended sites are rich in chaff. This is the result of a different flow of substances through tasks in which plants were being used and deposited, the storage of grain in houses and the (intentional?) destruction of houses with storage, and the deposition of burned chaff in pits, hearths, ditches and floors. While burnt grain is an index of storage, chaff is a result of husking, a time-consuming process which was part of the preparation and consumption of grain.

Thus, on nucleated sites, with a clear demarcation of space between settlements and surroundings, and between the houses themselves, the flow of substances between houses and gardens was tightly controlled. An absence of chaff at these sites means that it was disposed of outside the settlement, on gardens or refuse areas.

Domestic waste is not necessarily neutral refuse, but can be invested with vitality (Douny 2007). The flow of refuse from houses to gardens may be part of the 'economy of vitality', where substances are exchanged between gardens and houses, not only establishing conceptual relations between both, but playing an active role in the renewal of both.

On extended settlements, where houses were located amidst the gardens, house refuse was routinely spread on the gardens, blurring the border between gardens and houses (Valamoti 2005). The remains of deliberately burnt houses – daub – was also incorporated into storage pits or spread around the house, and possibly on gardens (Bogaard et al. 2007; Macphail 2007).

In this way, different temporalities were conceptually woven together through the power of metaphor. The rhythmic temporalities of house histories and the cycles of residents become connected with the visible growth of annual plants. Burnt daub was 'stored' in storage pits, lying dormant in anticipation of new growth, or 'sown' on gardens.

In the same way as grain was stored, the bodies of children were deposited in storage pits, a practice common in Starčevo and Körös villages; or the bodies of women were deposited in shallow pits and scoops around houses (Leković 1985), and possibly in gardens. Thus, for example, in Divostin, a preg-

nant female was found associated with the edge of a daub concentration, and a child was deposited near a shallow pit filled with chaff (Fig. 2). The fact that the bodies had not been disturbed means that they were deposited at the end of an occupational cycle (Bogdanović 1988). Bodies were therefore 'sown' in gardens, or 'stored' in pits in the same way as daub from a burnt house and seeds from gardens. This is almost a literal citation (cf. Borić 2002a; Fowler 2001) of the activities of the agrarian cycle, which evokes the agency of gardens to provide a caring environment for new growth.

Thus, the rhythmic temporality of plant growth that is embodied in grain becomes linked with the temporality of the human life cycle, as grain provides 'conditions for growth' for humans in the same way as humans take care of plants. In this way, the boundaries between temporalities become blurred, and fused, as the garden "*fuses the cradle and the grave (the same little corner, the same earth), and brings together, as well as childhood and old age (the same grove, stream, the same lime trees, the same house), the life of the various generations who had also lived in that same place, under the same conditions, and who had seen the same things.*" (Bakhtin 1981. 210)

The metonymic connections between houses and garden plots would be strengthened by using chaff, chopped straw or even wheat grains as temper for the daub or mud bricks, and possibly straw for roof thatch, a common feature of Neolithic houses in the Balkans and Greece. Through the incorporation of substances imbued with the vitality of the garden, houses might have acquired their powers. The quantities of plant material incorporated into houses were considerable (Stevanović 1997.358-359). House construction was therefore embedded in the agricultural year. It took place after the harvest, when chaff and straw were available in large quantities; but this was also a potentially dangerous time, when there was an opposition between a period of intensive inter-house cooperation during the growing season and a period of appropriation of crops by individual houses.

Peter Gose (1991) describes a house re-thatching ritual in the Andes, where house re-thatching creates more than just a new roof; it is also a festive and even carnivalesque (*sensu Bakhtin 1984*) ritual, held during the seasonal shift from private appropriation to collective production, which plays out the opposing moralities, whose intersection and strug-



gle animate the symbolism of the act and provide its practical grounding.

Social practices are an extension of the body. This also means that the body is also a site of resistance and active struggle against hegemony and hierarchical power. Lefebvre (1991.384) located this struggle in the 'festival', the site of participation and of the possibility of creating new situations from desire and enjoyment. The festival, carnival, is always related to time, either to the recurrence of an event in the rhythmic temporality of the agrarian cycle – such as the harvest – but also to moments of crisis, breaking points and points of transformation (Bakhtin 1984). The carnival, with its emphasis on 'the material bodily lower stratum' (Bakhtin 1984; see also Bailey 2005), on ambiguities of identity, the openness of the body, the fluidity of its borders with the world, its potential to absorb, eject and transform substances, often in a grotesque way (excessive eating, sex, excretion) is a process of transformation of substances through and into bodies and objects. Death, birth, revival and change lead to a carnivalesque, festive perception of the world through affirmations of becoming, ecstatic collectivity, through superseding the individual principle, the demystification of social roles, relations of power, creative growth and flexibility performed through speeches, songs, dances, feasts and profanities.

There is evidence that large-scale feasts were recurrent events in at least the Neolithic of Greece (Halstead 2004), if not elsewhere. In Makriyalos, a massive deposit of animal remains was found that probably derive from large-scale feasting on domestic animals (Pappa et al. 2004). There is evidence that slaughter took place especially in the autumn (Pappa et al. 2004), which was also when the majority of animals returned to the site from summer pasture (Valamoti 2007).

Harvest is a time of abundance, but it also marks a shift of activities and flow of substances from gardens to houses, with a corresponding negotiation of social relations and identities. This is a time when ambiguities embodied in the agricultural year become exposed, celebrated, mocked and subverted through the carnival, with its emphasis on the grotesque, and the body and its transformative powers. It is a time of transformation.

However, a strict structure and tradition always dominates this creativity, and the carnivalesque feast, while it celebrates ambiguities, subverts and renews,

also retains, reinvents and restores the past (cf. Borrić 2002b.59–60).

## Conclusion

Gardens are places where the rhythmic temporality of annual plants is clearly visible and palatable. By tending a garden during the year, people not only observe the process of growth, but actively participate in it. The generative and regenerative powers of gardens are maintained through work and the accumulation of substances which originate from elsewhere – the house, midden, animal pens. This flow of substances is not only a way of linking houses, gardens, animals and people in a web of relations, but also creates the history of a particular plot. Through the agency of gardens, the substances of humans, plants, animals and ancestors become intertwined and feed into each other. Gardens become imbued with the vital essence of the people, houses, while the animals and substances that originate from the gardens are inalienable to the process of renewing society (cf. Fowler 2004.108). Gardens thus form a complex amalgam of temporalities and relations created through rhythmic flows of substances. Here, temporalities acquire a material presence through the agency of the garden. Gardens provide 'material metaphors' (Brück 2004), which are used to produce analogical relations between different tasks and temporalities, woven together by the tasks performed during the year, the movement of people and the flow of substances. Gardens are chronotopes, places where time become palatable and observable.

But the rhythm of seasonal tasks associated with tending annual plants has a breaking point, the harvest, which marks the period of a shift in the flow of activities and substances, with corresponding change in social relations. This transition is associated with a special time, the carnival. Carnival implies change from stability to a state of new possibilities, and is thus an integral part of the year. It is time 'out of time', when substances acquire new forms, and the carnivalesque power of undermining and forgetting through laughter and parody provides the potential for renewal, new growth, change and reproduction.

Seasonal material rhythms not only carried on time and created new material things and substances, but also created new persons. Neolithic persons emerged from a mutual rhythmic engagement between people, animals, gardens and material culture, thus making the 'Neolithic' a historical process.

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