1.1. Consumption of wood, energy transitions and woodland management from a historical perspective. Part I

The use of wood as fuel has been essential throughout the course of history. Heat, food and the development of numerous activities such as mining largely depended on the supplies of wood available in preindustrial societies. This dependence gradually diminished as industrialising countries increasingly used fossil fuels. However, today, according to the FAO, 47% of wood production in the world is still used as fuel and this percentage is considerably higher in less developed countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where it reaches 90%. The aim of this session is to analyse the consumption of wood in different historical and geographical contexts, linking it with energy needs and its effect on the management of forests, woodlands and areas where the wood was obtained. The chief interest here is to detect different transitions which affected the consumption of wood (either increasing or decreasing it) in a bid to find the causes associated with these changes and trace the environmental effects that changes in consumption can generate. Which factors have historically had the greatest influence on changes in the consumption of wood? What were the effects of increasing or decreasing consumption in environmental terms? How were the approaches to woodland and territorial management adapted in accordance with changes in demand for organic fuels? The session is open to researchers of any historical period or geographical area. There are new lines of research looking at the industrial energy transition process which are providing new details about the spatial and historical peculiarities of change, noting that it did not consistently occur as a process of energy transition which radically changed the consumption of wood for coal. Note, for example, the consumption of woody crops in the Mediterranean or hedgerows in central Europe. The very nature of forest and woodland in the world means that supply differs greatly (scrubland, forest, savannah usage). This session aims to shed light on the nature of a phenomenon which is still occurring in much of the world and which brought about major changes in the management of woodland and rural life in industrialised countries.

Chair: Schwarz, Ulrich, Institute of Rural History, St. Pölten, Austria


1.1.1. The exploitation of wood resources from the wood-pasture commons of Shropshire between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries

Bowen, James, Lancaster University, UK

Common land has significance historically as a valued agrarian resource, its communal nature making it a focus for study of the interaction between past human societies and their evolving environment. Globally there is a substantial literature stressing the enduring and sustainable management of common land as a property regime. The CORN (Comparative Rural History of the North Sea Area) study of common land management in Western Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries proposed a nuanced empirical and comparative methodology in order to incorporate understanding and economic and social explanations. This paper explores the exploitation of wood-pasture resources which common wasteland provided, namely timber, which was widely exploited by rural communities on a formal legal and/or informal customary basis. This included wood for domestic fuel consumption or increasingly for industrial purposes, but also a wide variety of other uses.

1.1.2. Effects on vegetation of historical charcoal making in Central Spain: The „Montes de Toledo” Case

González y González de Linarens, Víctor, Technical University of Madrid, Spain

González-Vidales, Juan Ignacio, Technical University of Madrid, Spain

Carrero Díez, Leticia, School of Forestry, Technical University, Madrid, Spain

Cuevas Moreno, Jorge, School of Forestry, Technical University, Madrid, Spain

González-Doncel, Inés, School of Forestry, Technical University, Madrid, Spain

GIL Sánchez, Luis, Technical University of Madrid, Spain

A compared analysis of the vegetation from 1830 to date in 5000 ha of Montes de Toledo region (Central Spain) is made based on historical documents and GIS applications. The changes are bounded up to charcoal making in the area, as this region was a key provider of charcoal to Toledo and Madrid towns from the XIXth century onwards, decreasing the harvesting of fuel wood gradually along the XIXth century. After establishing the level of degradation in the existing plant stands in 1830, different historical maps and handwritten documents from 1859, 1862, 1870, 1884 and 1915 are analysed to obtain a sequence of the evolution of tree and bush species in the area and their coverage of the terrain. This information is compared to existing aerial photographs from 1956 and data from the latest National Forest Map (1997-2006). The methodology provides a good description of the landscape and a proper estimation of the plant stand evolution, as well as its link to the intensity of fuel wood harvesting. A very intense degradation in the woods in 1830 is detected as a consequence of the previous charcoal making. The property changes that have occurred in the last two centuries have not affected significantly the land uses or the dominant tree species composition during the studied period, being Quercus ilex, Quercus faginea and Pinus pinaster the most common ones. But the area covered by coppice forest or bushes has increased regularly until 1956.

1.1.3. Are rural women to blame for missing wood for livelihood and household use in Burnt Forest Area, Kenya

Chabeda-Barthe, Jemalayo, Graduate Institute of Geneva, Switzerland

This paper will analyse the consumption of wood by women in rural Kenya, specifically in the Rift Valley, I choose to concentrate on the Burnt Forest area in Rift Valley because it is the study area for my PhD research. The Burnt Forest area is situated in Ol’Keregei, Kenya, which is still occurring in much of the world and which brought about major changes in the management of woodland and rural life in industrialised countries.

Participants

Bowen, James
Research interests include the rural agrarian history of the British Isles, landscape studies and local and regional history. James’ doctoral thesis, supervised by Professor A.G. Whittingham, recorded the internal management and management of common land in Shropshire from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. He is currently the Economic History Society’s Early Career Research Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London.

Chabeda-Barthe, Jemalayo
Ms Jemalayo Chabeda-Barthe is a PhD Candidate whose research interest is on Gender, ethnic conflict and Land Reform in Kenya. She holds a Masters in Development Studies from University of Nairobi in Kenya. In addition, she has worked for United Nations Development Programme in Kenya from 2004 to June 2010. She contributed in the implementation and evaluation of government and nongovernmental interventions projects to increase awareness on Gender and environment. In 2012, she worked as liaison officer for a Community Based Natural Resource Management project for the Community.

González y González de Linarens, Víctor
Mr. González y González de Linarens is a professor in Forest Engineering, School of Forestry, Technical University, Madrid, Spain. Mr. González y González de Linarens has focused on different aspects of forest management, in particular forest products market. He expanded of wood production from the XIX century onwards, decreasing the harvesting of fuel wood gradually along the XIXth century. This knowledge generated regularity until 1830.

González-Doncel, Inés
Inés González-Doncel is an Associate in the School of Forestry, Technical University, Madrid, Spain. Ms Gonzalez-Doncel has worked in different forest companies for more than 20 years.

GIL Sánchez, Luis
Luis Gil Sánchez is a professor in the School of Forestry, Technical University of Madrid, Spain. He has been working as a professor in different universities in Spain.

Carrero Díez, Leticia
Leticia Carrero Díez is a researcher in the School of Forestry, Technical University, Madrid, Spain. Ms. Carrero Díez has worked in research projects in the field of forestry.

Cuevas Moreno, Jorge
Jorge Cuevas Moreno is a professor in the School of Forestry, Technical University of Madrid, Spain. He has been working in different universities in Spain.

Schwarz, Ulrich
Ulrich Schwarz is PhD-Student in history at the University of Vienna, member of the Institute of Rural History (RHN). Currently he is Junior Fellow at the IFK Internationales Forschungszenrum Kulturwissenschaften in Vienna.

In 2012, she worked as liaison officer for a Community Based Natural Resource Management project for the Community.

Ulrich Schwarz is PhD-Student in history at the University of Vienna, member of the Institute of Rural History (RHN). Currently he is Junior Fellow at the IFK Internationales Forschungszenrum Kulturwissenschaften in Vienna.