



NEWSLETTER



SOMMERSEMESTER 2022 – NR. 5

With spring in the air and the pandemic seemingly coming to an end at last, we are delighted to announce that a number of new fellows will be joining us in person during the summer semester of 2022. Despite the many lockdowns and long months of uncertainty, we have had plenty of fruitful academic endeavours over the past two years, including new projects, publications and grants, online conferences and colloquia, hybrid events, and even virtual fellowships. Last year's annual symposium on "Biocultural Implications: An Agenda for Integrative Approaches", which took place predominantly online, was a success, and we will continue our innovative approach to academic presentations and collaborations in the coming years.

Grants and Achievements

Dr. Katerina Harvati has been awarded an ERC Advanced Grant for the project "FIRSTSTEPS", which commenced on 1st April 2022. In the autumn of 2021, internal member Dr. El Zaatari started the project REVIVE under an ERC Consolidator Grant. More information about both projects can be found on the following page: <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/fakultaeten/mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche-fakultaet/fachbereiche/geowissenschaften/arbeitsgruppen/urgeschichte-naturwissenschaftliche-archaeologie/ina/palaeoanthropologie/research/#c1555826>

Additionally, the closing symposium of Dr. Katerina Harvati's ERC project CROSSROADS took place in February 2022 as a hybrid event: http://www.crossroads.ifu.uni-tuebingen.de/?page_id=425

Fellowships

Renowned Professor Rainer Grün will be re-joining us this semester to continue his research on chronometric dating and its implications for the timeline of human evolution. We will also be joined by paleoanthropologist Professor April Nowell from the University of Victoria, who will be a fellow here for two weeks in July.

In late June, we will be joined by Dr. Gereon Kaiping from the University of Zürich. He will be working on phylogeographic methods for the estimation of linguistic homelands and examining these in light of archaeological findings.

In August, anthropologist Professor Gustavo Politis from the Universidad del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires will also arrive to begin a fellowship at the Center. His research will focus on the first peopling of the Americas.

Seventh annual symposium: Evolutionary Perspectives on Tool Manipulation and Gestural Communication

When you think of language, what characteristics come to mind? Perhaps you think of words, of grammatical structures like morphology, or of recursion. If gestures were not on the list, this is not uncommon. For years, gestures have been relegated to the realm of the extra-linguistic, falling somewhere outside common conceptions of "proper language". However, this



is changing slowly, with more and more researchers recognising the multimodality of human language as one of its central features. But how did this capacity evolve? What form did early language take – gestural, vocal, or a combination of both? These are still open questions in the study of language evolution. In order to approach an answer to these questions, we can look for clues in present-day languages, the archaeological record – and the brain.

This will be the focus of our seventh annual symposium, “Evolutionary Perspectives on Tool Manipulation and Gestural Communication”, to take place on the 13th and 14th October. A speaker list and program will be announced closer to the time of the event.



New PhD candidate: Tim Wientzek

Tim Wientzek has joined the DFG Center as a PhD student in linguistics after having received his MA in General Linguistics at the University of Tübingen in 2022. His previous research focused on inferring the stability and borrowability of linguistic concepts from both phylogenetic relationships and contact between languages. During the course of his PhD, he will apply Bayesian statistical methods to explore ways of correcting cross-linguistic data and imputing missing data. His other interests include developing and designing psycholinguistic experiments.

Call for fellowship applications

The Center is a forum of interdisciplinary discussion and research. Its fellowship program is a great opportunity to connect with the core staff and associated members to establish new, interdisciplinary ideas and research projects. We would like to invite you to apply for a fellowship to collaborate with us in order to gain more insights in the human past from different research perspectives. The core staff and several local members are open to new collaborations as well as the associated Emmy Noether Junior Research Group “The Language Dynamics of the Ancient Central Andes” lead by Dr. Matthias Urban.

For more information on the Center and the associated members and research groups, please visit our homepage wordsandbones.uni-tuebingen.de.

For more information on the fellowship program, please have a look at the description and information on our webpage (<https://uni-tuebingen.de/forschung/forschungsschwerpunkte/forschungsgruppen/words-bones-genes-tools/fellowships/>) or contact our transitional scientific coordinator Miri Mertner (miri.mertner@uni-tuebingen.de).

We would love to welcome you here in Tübingen at the DFG Center “Words, Bones, Genes, Tools”.

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