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“In Mobility Modes and Scales: Lessons Learned from Highland Northern Albania”

In my presentation I will describe results of the Shala Valley Project (SVP) as they relate to mobility, past and present. The SVP was a multi-year, multidisciplinary landscape-archaeology project focused on the High Mountain region of northern Albania. Our primary unit of study was the modern Shala fs (Alb. ‘tribe’), which occupies the upper reaches of the Shala River valley. Regional ethnographic, ethnohistoric, and archaeological data indicate nested processes of movement and mobility operating at different scales meeting different individual and group needs. These data helped inform study of the valley’s much earlier, Iron Age occupation.

Patterns of mobility continue to exercise great influence on the people of Shala as they seek to negotiate contemporary processes of globalization. For example, recent in-migration has sparked new blood feuds and ecotourism is changing notions and systems of land tenure.

Michael Galaty is Professor of Anthropology and Head of the Department of Anthropology and Middle Eastern Cultures at Mississippi State University. He was recently named Interim Director of the Cobb Institute of Archaeology. He runs research projects in Albania and Greece. His monograph Light and Shadow: Isolation and Interaction in the Shala Valley of Northern Albania (Cotsen UCLA) won the 2014 SAA Book Award.