

Session Proposal

European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) 12th Annual Meeting

Krakow, Poland

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Organizer: Per Cornell, Tove Hjørungdal

Theme:

Archaeology in the Modern World: Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives

Session Title:

The Materialities of Home

Abstract:

“The home is a prime unexcavated site for an archaeology of sociability.”

(Tim Putnam 1999: 144)

This session seeks to explore aspects of the materiality of home in archaeology and in all disciplines aiming to theorize about materiality and sociability with reference in Home, and to focus approaches that are rather new and unexplored to scholars within disciplines in touch of the issue.

What is in the term *Home*, and how can this broad imperative topic be approached by methods and theories significant to archaeology and other academic disciplines with a reference in materiality?

The area of research has a great potential, and aspects mentioned in this abstract are just a few. Disciplines concerned with the materialities of Home may focus on architecture, design, interiors, space, and many other themes. There is however another critical aspect of politics, and questions of identity and belonging, in time, place and space.

Questions of how to approach diversities in the materialities of home can be multidisciplinary with references in selected examples from *prehistory, history, ethnography, sociology, architecture and design history*. Among the questions to be asked are such as how a home can be conceived of in its definitions of spatial aspects; is a home a room, a house, a farm, a village, a cave, a tent, or a space in the scenery? We think that all of these are among the aspects to be considered in a discussion of homes in archaeology. There are however many more, not least such as questions about how materialities and material arrangements of homes affect as well as interplay with different social groups, and the human processes of growing up and growing old.

The term Home also has connotations referring to political conditions with their roots in colonial conditions. A main point of inspiration is found in Iris Marion Young's problematization of the relationship between feminism and connotations of the idiom of home, as well as in her ways of coming to terms with this complex relationship. Another important point of departure is in the material notion of *hybrid interiors*, reaching beyond the

conception of private and public spheres and spaces. Further, Home in Tim Putnam's turn of phrase as *material life support* is a term to be scrutinized by any discipline concerned with materialities and sociability.

Today many persons have a permanent home, but there are a lot of persons who have not. Thus some are bi-domestic, because they belong to a household of one or more commuters; many children are definitely bi-domestic as they live e.g. one week with their biological mother and the next with their biological father. To make this alternation of home, children make extensive material rearrangements of their personal belongings such as clothes, school bags, computer and toys. This practice may influence attitudes to and practices of Homemaking in many aspects, for good and for worse to the practitioners themselves, and to the general context they are a part of.

Many people are homeless today. This does not mean that they live without materialities, as they carry their home with them in bags or in shopping cars, or have set up a more or less permanent material shelter somewhere. Homelessness would rather represent another way of carrying one's material objects needed as life support, or having to lean on other material structures and arrangements than a permanent home to sustain life.

Home can, thus, be approached as,

- A locus for Materiality and Memory,
- A locus of Materiality and Sociability, e.g. as material life support; as hybrid space
- A locus with references in terms of political connotations like
Identity and Marginalization.

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