

Session Proposal

European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) 12th Annual Meeting

Krakow, Poland

19th to 24th September 2006

Chairs/Organizer: Dr. Mary Ann Owoc, Dr. Linda Hurcombe

Theme:

Archaeology and Material Culture: Interpreting the Archaeological Record

Session Title:

European Perishables: Exploring the Potential of an Invisible Material Culture

Abstract:

Perishables, despite being one of the most common categories of material culture items amongst past populations, have received little attention in the *mainstream* European archaeological literature. Poor preservation conditions in most areas, coupled with a disciplinary and practical separation between archaeological analysts and basketry/cordage/textile analysts and basket makers have largely confined the discourse of European perishable items to specialist reports. Further, despite limited collaborative exchanges between European archaeological perishable analysts and their American counterparts to date, the potential of a cross Atlantic perishable discourse has yet to be realized. These circumstances have contributed to a situation in which the study and discussion of prehistoric European basketry, cordage, and textiles has been largely removed from the growing interpretative discourse surrounding archaeological material culture.

This session aims to begin to redress these problems by bringing together a diverse group of participants to discuss (1) the range of current European approaches to perishable material culture (2) the range and nature of collaboration between European and US perishable researchers and (3) the potential of archaeological perishable studies to contribute to the mainstream material culture discourse. Contributors to the session are encouraged to address any or all of these issues. Theoretical/interpretative approaches and more material centered contributions are equally welcome. Work focused on prehistoric basketry and cordage is particularly encouraged.

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