

Session Proposal

European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) 12th Annual Meeting

Krakow, Poland

19th to 24th September 2006

Organizer: Marianne Rasmussen PhD (chairman), Martin Schmidt MA, Roeland Paardekooper MA

Theme:

Managing the Archaeological Record and the Cultural Heritage

Session Title:

Experimental Archaeology – goals & (im)possibilities

Abstract:

Experimental archaeology, if undertaken in a serious way and using basic scientific methods, can establish high quality insight in archaeological research. The limitations of this instrument will be equally stressed as well as which activities can be seen as experimental archaeology and which should be abandoned.

During this session, we would like **to show examples highlighting the latest developments** by means of which it will be made clear where the qualities lie for using this instrument in archaeology. Examples will serve the **discussion on theory and methodology** of experimental programs as executed in collaboration with scientific institutes all over Europe.

In Kraków, some of those involved in European experimental archaeology will be invited to share their experience in the past and viewpoints **in the future in this specific field**. We encourage self-criticism as well as a combination of short speeches and a good discussion.

Experimental archaeology is more and more **misunderstood** as living archaeology, hands on archaeological activities or education. The goal of the session, however, is to get **an overview of trends** in experimental archaeology, to be able to bend the future of the profession towards a **more quality** based approach. For this it is inevitable for all professionals to get involved into a European Network on this subject, initiatives to this are sprouting in different regions of Europe already, some of which will be clearly established in September 2005 or will be clearly encouraged by this session.

This session will focus on the theoretical aspects and problems of experimental archaeology. Specific experimental results and case studies can of course be presented as example, but they can not be the main purpose or content of a whole presentation.

Questions that might serve as inspiration for the speakers

- The future development of experimental archaeology. How do we do about our heritage in processualistic archaeology? Does such a thing as a post-processual experimental archaeology exist?
- How can experimental archaeology contribute to archaeological theory-building?
- What are the limitations (if any) to the contributions possible from experimental archaeology?
- What do we do about the confusing concepts? Investigate the limits and overlap of “living archaeology” and “experimental archaeology”.

- The connection and relation between the academic world and the archaeological parks. How do we secure a dialogue for the benefit of both? How can we educate the students to perform experimental archaeology in the best way?
- Do experimental archaeology and archaeological parks have to divorce as archaeological parks becomes an increasing economic interest (the growing economy in tourism)?

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