

Session Proposal

European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) 12th Annual Meeting

Krakow, Poland

19th to 24th September 2006

Organizer: Aarón Alzola Romero

Theme:

Archaeology in the Modern World: Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives

Session Title:

Archaeology for the masses: Theoretical and methodological approaches to a neglected identity category

Abstract:

The individual and society have remained as the two principal characters in the social discourse of most of the twentieth century. Only recently has the hegemony of this bipolar conception been questioned and its problematic nature highlighted. Identity is composed of an innumerable array of manifestations shaped by context and interaction, and the social sciences are becoming increasingly aware that an exclusive individual-society dichotomy is incapable of accounting for such complexity. This session aims to contribute to the construction of broader understandings of identity by inquiring into the notion of the mass, an identity category with traditionally very little presence in the archaeological literature.

Our aim is to address the notion of the mass from various archaeological perspectives, tackling key theoretical and methodological issues regarding the definition, interpretation and excavation of this identity category. Presentations are invited to explore aspects ranging from ethological considerations to technical matters, illustrating the information with case studies from different periods and geographical areas.

‘No historical phenomenon has been as thoroughly neglected by historians as the crowd’, complains Rudé. Archaeology, it would appear, has not done much more justice to this social body. The social sciences, and archaeology in particular, have a lot to gain by acknowledging the dynamic nature and complexity of identity. Doing some archaeology for the masses is now a long-overdue task in our discipline.

Further information has been posted on a dedicated web site:

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~spet1363/masses.htm>

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