# 10th conference, Eindhoven (NL)
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# Feedback to archaeology, the 10th International Conference on Experimental Archaeology

At invitation of the VAEE, the 10th International Conference on Experimental Archaeology ("Tagung") was held in the weekend of October 19th - 21st 2001 in the Historisch Openluchtmuseum in Eindhoven (NL). The goal of this year's theme "the feedback of the experimental results to the archaeological source" was to return to the starting point of this series of conferences. This was the context for which the opening address of *Y. Lammers* and *J. Flamman* was meant. They meant to discuss the "conditions of an archaeological experiment“ based on the theories of the British Peter Reynolds. The lecturers made especially clear, that those should be focused unconditionally on the archaeological material and the hypotheses based upon this material. The lecture was useful as it could urge people to rethink. According to the opinion of the participants it was clearly given too late and very necessary. Unfortunately, during the rest of the conference, there was no exchange of thoughts on this.

The further lectures differed - as usual - very much, both in time as in theme. Many of the speakers presented their work or the results thereof, which we want to mention briefly.
*M.A. Kaiser* treated the use of Neolithic, so called "toothed hoes": tools made of bone and antler. Using his research on known objects from ethnography, history and archaeology he could cut back the possible use of those tools very much. He drew the conclusion that another use must be at the base of these than was assumed until this moment. So rather than being possible cutting weapons they might have been fit for use in agriculture.

*P. Kelterborn* presented a method to make replicative flint working in laboratory-like conditions in mathematic - physic entities measurable, in order to find an objective and exact possibility for reconstructing prehistoric methods and even lifecycles. The experience and feeling which the "craftsman" learnt are not measurable and oft influenced by subjective processes: to be able to reproduce a process of origination, special research to individual parameters like for example applied force and direction in which it is applied necessary. However, the question remains, in how far these results will help the research into prehistory further?

In the recently begun series of cremating experiments of *R. Leineweber* based on cremation graves of the Roman Era in the *Barbaricum*, the focus lied on fire determined changes in the artefacts added to the pyre. The results could flow back directly to archaeology as the experiments gave direct information on the whereabouts of the artefacts. A very important result is, that the noble metals only remained as microscopically small smelted drips and are at archaeological excavations unseen i.e. lost. Possible declarations on the social structure of a society or group based on "poverty" or "wealth" of cremation graves become impossible or need a renewed orientation.

In his lecture, which included a short demonstration, *J.-L. Ringot* discussed his hypothesis of using a apparatus comparable to modern spray cans for adding colours to Stone Age paintings. This lecture, probably like no other, caused discussion among the participants. A few criticised Mr Ringot's "unscientific" approach (Lecture and Work), others however found it not that "unscientific" at all; a claim to science he clearly did not cover. In this discussion, the very vehemently lead discourse within "experimental archaeology" was shown again. The authors have in these controverse opinions.

The last Early Stone Age experiment was presented by *G. Schulte-Dornberg*. She compared use wear traces on recent experimentally used "Magdalenian" tools of rocks by means of statistics to try to

explain the use of the original artefacts. Her sources were Magdalenian sites. Her conclusion is, that there were hardly any tools with one specific function in those days; however, functional groups could be recognised and brought into relation with one another. A critical remark can be, that Mrs Schulte-Dornberg only made a short series of tests. A continuation, also with consideration to how use wear traces change over the years or even disappear would be desirable.

The maritime experiments of *R. Tichý*, the authors can only describe on the basis of the written summary as they did not understand the lecturer acoustically nor verbally. In this area, experiments are extremely expensive, both in money as in time. That is why it hardly leads to a real "reconstruction" or a phase of using under experimental archaeological view points. Tichý reported on the building on the base of information from two wrecks of canoes from the Neolithic, which were tried out in the Mediterranean, once in 1995, once in 1998. One conclusion was to declare them seaworthy. We hope for a more detailled publication of the paper in the next Proceedings.

*E.Jochum Zimmermann* 's lecture (for the Swiss workgroup by the name of ExperimentA) on the influence of the mould material on the microstructure of a cast bronze object was very special. Tinbronze was cast into moulds of different material and the casts were investigated on their microstructure. Mrs Zimmermann came to the result that the different types of material have an important influence on the microstructure. A preceding heating up of the moulds results in a quite negligible result. This paper should as well be published as soon as possible to result in further consequences for the archaeological research into bronze.

*D. Vorlauf* rebuilt with a work group in 1988 at the Lahnbergen near Marburg a "grave hill of the Urn field Era". The data have not yet been completely worked. However, some preliminary results could already be presented. The in the hypothesis determined and accounted parameters moved, respectively shortened, like for example the time effort to build a hill and the size of the hill. As a result of this, Vorlauf concluded that the effort in making such a hill grave must have been far less then expected until recently. These observations however must be continued over a longer time in order -- according to Vorlauf -- "...to grasp the universal character of this test".

*M. Trachsel* (also member of the Swiss ExperimentA group) gave an overview over a series of bronze casting experiments which lasts already for more than a decade. On the basis of these longer running experiences, it is possible to make more clear statements of archaeological finds and data, especially in the range of oven finds. Bronze ovens of prehistory or not lush nor depended on a fixed position. In researching, one has to leave the image of gigantic solid installed bronze casting installations. As a consequence of this, it is hardly possible (or only with much experience and care) to excavate bronze ovens or casting areas.

About his experiments in York with reconstructed weaving looms, *A. Jones* from York reported. This presentation belonged to the most impressing of the conference, even when the results of the lecturer on unfired loom weights were not necessarily new. Jones engaged very much in working with youth. His observations are interdisciplinary usable, as he described the social relations of people of the 21st century. As we do not have any better sources, they can be a start of our interpretation of the social relations in prehistory.

A hardly described aspect of ship archaeology was the subject of *L. Williams*. Certain wood finds in wrecks are designed the function of paddle. Staring with this interpretation, she had some reconstructions made and tried them out in a modern canoe. Her conclusion is that many were not usable as a paddle. It is maybe not impossible to use modern materials for such an experiment, however, it is very doubtful to try out oars or paddles which were designed for very different boat- and ship shapes, solely on a canoe to test them on their function. That is why the results are very doubtful.

Unfortunately, the authors were not able to hear the last presentation on Sunday of *A. Tamboer* on the reconstruction of music instruments. Summarising, the lecturer wrote that the point with reconstructing instruments on the basis of very different sources was to stronger reanimate the past. All in all, this theme is unknown in Germany and we wait in tension on the publication.

The other half of the speeches concerned mainly problems in museum education.
*U. Drews* of the Viking museum in Haithabu explained how one tried there to illustrate the past as closely as possible. This was as well the subject of *T. Bader* (Keltenmuseum Hochdorf) and *W. Piotrowski* and *W. Zajaczkowski* (Polish archaeological open air museum Biskupin). *W. Lobisser* (Freilichtmuseum Elsarn) explained the participants about the possibilities to connect constructing an open air museum with new results in the research of constructing houses and experimental archaeology. *P. Gonzalez Marcén* (Spain), *O. Tikovský*, *R. Tichý* & *R. Thér* (Czechia), *C. Sestier* (France) and *I. Poroszlai* (Hungary) offered an overview over the museum landscape respective experimental archaeology in their respective home countries.

The latter shortly described lectures contained -- in contrast to the published theme "back to archaeology" -- mainly statements on the mediation of archaeology or museums pedagogics with help or based on "experimental archaeology". Here is also the necessary mission of a science, to keep in touch with the visitors of museums. That is why a continuous exchange with the museum pedagogics is unavoidable. However, with regard to the heaviness of the program with countless lectures, we think it advisable to make a more strict selection based upon the yearly theme of the conference. Maybe it would even be useful to split the conference in a experimental archaeological and a museum pedagogical session. This would account for the necessity for discussion between the two areas and in the same moment it would relax to sometimes almost hostile atmosphere.

As for the first time a larger number of international participants were present, about half of the lectures were held in English. This attempt of internationalising brought some problems to this conference which up to now was mainly focussed on the German speaking part of Europe. These problems were not only connected to the aspect of understanding. The organisers, for example, had to face the problem to push 22 lectures into two days. In respect to this, it was astonishing to see there was hardly any delay. Unfortunately, the victim of this was the discussion, which according to us should have followed every lecture instead of first at the end of the conference, when some people had already left.
This was however easily compensated by the well organised frame program at the HOME. The participants had the possibility to sleep in one of the houses, reconstructed for the Iron Age. At almost all evenings, there was a vivid exchange near the camp fires. Also the unusual presentations in iron technology at the Saturday evening will remain in the memory of many participants for a long time.
The number of participants has risen as well in comparison to the former conference. That meant, however every now and then some delays in the catering.

In conclusion and in spite of the critical remarks, this 10th Conference will remain long in the memory of the participants. This is not only a result of the up to now unusual ambiance of the site of the conference but as well the very good care and organisation of the members of the VAEE and their hospitality.
The Conference itself brought many and important results, not only in experimental archaeological sense, but as well for archaeology itself. That is why we hope that these inspirations to thinking will not go down but will be carried further by the participants to the Conference. Thinking of this, we look forward to new encounters in 2002 in Oldenburg.