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Experimental archaeology with our neighbours in the east

In October 1997 the Conference of the 'Arbeitsgruppe Experimentelle Archäologie' took place in Oerlinghausen (Germany). About 60 specialists on experimental archaeology and archaeological education were present. The lectures of these two days are presented in the proceedings, the so called 'Bilanz', Bilanz 1998.

The nature of experiment of archaeology

The opening lecture was presented by *Peter Reynolds* (GB) of the Butser Ancient Farm (see for 'the Farm': Bulletin jrg 3, nr 3 (1998)). To understand his point, a division has to be made between experiment, education and experience. The only activities which, according to Reynolds could be called 'experiment' are meant to test excavation techniques and the interpretation of the data which are related to it. The meaning for archaeology consists mainly of the soil and the processes which take place in it because of which the archaeological archive is influenced. Reynolds sees archaeology by experiment as a school example of applying the empiric cycle. A hypothesis is posed, than an experiment is conducted to get data which are comparable to the original data. After this, these two are compared (the hypothesis is tested) after which the hypothesis is accepted or rejected.

Presentations

- Dr. Andreas Kurzweil* (D) gave an exposé on measuring of temperatures during experiments. If you know what you want to measure before you start, you are already much better off;
- Dr. Ing. Bernd Lyschatz* (D) of the "Institut für Eisen und Stahltechnologie in Freiburg" explained about eight years of experimenting with iron production in prehistoric fashion;
- Martin Trachsel* (CH) held a lecture on the standard production of moulds of wax for decoration plates of the Hallstatt-C period in Southern Germany;
- Klaus Hirsch* (D) had attempted to reproduce the arsenic-bronze axe of Ötzi and to use it;
- Gunther Modrey* (D) made a copy of the South-Danish Hjortspringboat on a scale 1:2;
- Wolfgang Lobisser* (A) from Vienna told about attempts to build a bandceramic well in the open air museum at Asparn a.d. Zaya;
- Wulf Hein* (D) focused on the arrows of Ötzi;
- In the kiln belonging to *Felix Biermann* (D) from Brandenburg, similar to a medieval example, '12th century' pots were fired with success;
- Günter Böttcher* (D) from Berlin mixed clay with wool and animal hairs. Next to that, he as well used threads and fibres of flax and hemp;
- Kay-Uwe Uschmann* (D, Berlin) fired chalk in the traditional way;
- Prof. Dr. Werner Plarre* (D) told about experiences over the years with "breeding back" of pigs and sheep in the open air museum Düppel;
- Anneliese Goldmann* (D), from the Düppel-project as well, gave a speech on the origins of the Skude-scheep, a race from Lithuania;
- Dieter Todtenhaupt* (D) summarised a conference from 1997. Different subjects were treated like an analysis of the pitch on the arrowheads of Ötzi, an investigation into tar on textiles from medieval Norwegian merchants' graves, chewing traces and tooth imprints on tar and pitch lumps, the production of bark pitch without using a ceramic container;
- After this summary, *Prof. Dr. Clemens Eibner* (D) shared a hypothesis on the use of an Italian wooden stick. It could have been part of a balance;
- Michael Stichert* (D), of the "Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte from Oldenburg" gave an overview on the origins of museum education in Germany. In Oldenburg one plans to make an exhibition on this theme.