

The Mettmann-Proceedings

Experimental archaeology in 2000-2001

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Maybe it is not completely fair to describe the latest issue in the series "Experimentelle Archäologie, Bilanz" as the second part of the Proceedings of the October 2000 Conference in the Neanderthalmuseum in Mettmann, Germany, but it does seem to be the case.

Theme of the then 8th international convention abroad known as "*Tagung*" was : "*experimental archaeology and education*". This was as well the theme of a special exhibition by the *Landesmuseum für Natur und Mensch* and the (first) publication in these: "Experimentelle Archäologie und Museumspädagogik". This latter publication will be referred to as "the yellow book" in contrast to the new Proceedings, which will be referred to as "the green book".

As much as two third of the 14 articles of the green book is based on lectures, presented in Mettmann. Clearly, not all lecturers had been able to publish in the yellow book already. Still, in retrospect, there are many lectures which are still not published at all, not in "yellow" nor in "green".

Language

We keep making it clear: most articles in this series (9 or more issues already!) are in German. Of the 14 articles in this Green Book, one single article is in English. Only two others have an English abstract, as added by the writers themselves. It would be very important to get these articles summarised in English inside the volumes themselves. If all titles are added here in English, please bear in mind, the originals are in German. We can however always get people in touch with the original writers who most often do speak or understand English.

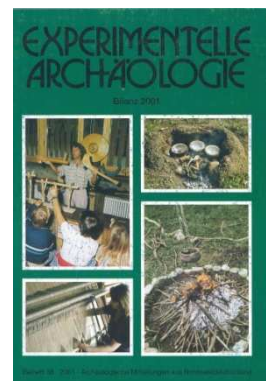
We do realise, the summaries of our reviews on the web might be too concise, but for the moment, we do not have the possibilities of presenting the full length reviews as they are not ready translated.

Those articles with clearly both an educational as an experimental character have already been published in the yellow book. In "*Bilanz 2001*", a cutting edge becomes clear between an experimental focal point and a viewpoint on the educational side of activities. This is even been made more clear by putting the "*experimental*" articles at the beginning, separate from the rest. With the closing article in the end, "*experimental archaeology' with musical instruments*" the editors in Germany might have the same goals as the organisers of the last *Tagung* in Holland, October 2001: to still try to bridge between experiment and education. It is a pity that to this "*Bilanz 2001*" no editorial has been added in which one could have accounted for the choices made and to link this green book with the yellow one.

Experiments

In this green book, three "new" articles on experiments are gathered: never a lecture of this was presented at the *Tagung*. It is an encouraging sign, to see that even this seems to be possible.

The experiments of Rudolf Walter ("*Magdalénien bone needles from Baden-Württemberg*"), Martin Hees ("*New experiments on Latène salt production. The Briquetage from Schwäbisch Hall*"), Gunter Böttcher ("*New attempts to the photogene additions in the work mass when producing and using early Germanic ceramic rounded cooking pots*") and Dieter Todtenhaupt & Andreas Kurzweil ("*Report of the Workgroup 'Chemical Processes' at the 8th *Tagung* experimental Archaeology at the Neanderthalmuseum*") have been reviewed in a way when we described the *Tagung* itself. The overview article by Gudrun Böttcher ("*Needle binding - report of multiannual textile research in the frame of 'experimental archaeology'*") is the result of a lecture a year before at the *Tagung* in Berlin and was described before as well.



In the category "experiments" among others, an article was published by Max Zurbuchen (CH) ("*Stone Age tool technology*"). Here he describes some techniques to make stone axes, but does not present any experiments. Unfortunately he keeps hanging in a technical approach, without any account or deeper level.

Bettina Göttke-Krogmann ("*the Pracht-cloak from the Vehne bog*") describes her experiences and obtained understandings when reproducing an Iron Age cloak, comparable to the well known Thorsberger Pracht-cloak from Schleswich. The Vehne Bog Pracht-cloak measures 150x250cm and is woven as a so called diamond twill (if I am not mistaken, please correct me if I am wrong in translating) with an extraordinary wide card woven band. For the writer, one of the main goals of reproducing the cloak was to get to a good, detailed description of the production process. Such a complicated cloak could surely not be reconstructed in the drawing room alone. In the very practice of weaving, one encounters detailed problems which one has to solve, problems, "on paper" were never thought of. Maybe for the non-textile readers, this is the most important message, besides the from other publications familiar illustrations from different weaving activities. Maybe, reproduction like this is no experiment. Surely, a reconstruction is produced, but the product is a goal in itself, not a means with which questions, arisen from the original artefact, could be answered (better). However, the original cloak gets renewed attention and the reconstruction becomes for the public a "carrier of information" about the Iron Age as probably the original could never do this because of its assumed fragile and incomplete character.

The ladies Hajnalka Herold and Karina Grömer ("*Early medieval ceramic vessels as tools for textile handwork?*") have used the possibility and submitted a description of their experimental study project to the board of editors. Especially from the angle of students and universities more contributions might be expected in the future as this is a perfect platform to publish. Such contributions are to be expected to show how a consistent application of scientific techniques can lead to valuable results.

Education

All educational presentations in these Proceedings have been reviewed before in a way, when reviewing the conference itself. To mention them shortly: Karin Weiner ("*Where we come from, what we are. On the history of educational mediation of archaeological contents*" - a story which is surely worth while reading or getting translated), Giorgio Chelidonio ("*Flaking of .. the line of time: school experiences in north-eastern Italy and method of using experimental stone knapping in teaching main steps in human adaptive evolution*"), Jean-Loup Ringot ("*My profession: Stone Age man. Independence in the fields of experimental archaeology and education*"), Max Zurbuchen ("*Mediation of experimental archaeological experiences and adventures over 30 years*") and Marcel El-Kassem & Wolfgang Welker ("*The Hunsrück Archaeology Days. A concept of active mediation of archaeology, history, culture and nature*").

Anette Ottersted ("*'experimental archaeology' with musical instruments*") does her best for the emancipation of musical archaeology in general. It is clear, attention for old or even possible prehistoric music is not limited to a description of old musical instruments or rests of them. One of the problems, the musical archaeologist realises about is the heavy emphasis in modern society on information which is visible and readable, in contrast to those data which are perceptible by other senses, which is often described as subjective perception. The writer is a little disgruntled about the bad treatment of music, understandable, seen from her own profession, but she is pushing this a little far. A very well remark, however, as quoted by others before as well, is the conclusion that educational programs are often prepared for the abilities of school children and less demanding adults (often at the most simple level "so everybody can get along") and seldom or never for those who really are willing and interested to learn something, to those who are looking for a challenge in intellect or craft, during which in the end important information can be transferred.

Fun first is all right, as long as it is closely followed by some well funded educational targets.

The "green" book:

Fansa, M. (editor) (2002): Experimentelle Archäologie Bilanz 2001. Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Nordwestdeutschland: Beiheft 38, Isensee Verlag, Oldenburg, 184 pp, ISBN 3-89598-843-X.

The "yellow" book:

Fansa, M. (editor) (2000): Experimentelle Archäologie und Museumspädagogik, Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Nordwestdeutschland, Beiheft 29, Isensee Verlag, Oldenburg, 128 pp, ISBN 3-89598-721-2.

