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Margarita Gleba

Purpureae Vestes III

13-15 November 2008, Naples, Italy

With its third instalment, the Purpureae Vestes symposium has now established itself as a major forum for scholars investigating aspects of textiles, dyes and their production and use in the ancient Mediterranean area. This year, the conference was generously hosted by the Centre Jean Bérard in Naples, Italy, co-organised together with the Università Federico II di Napoli and Universidad de València. The paper presentations occupied the first two days of the conference. Of particular interest were papers on unpublished material from Italy. Maria Teresa Pappalardo, Natascia Pizzano and Claude Albore Livadie (CNRS, Centre Camille Jullian, Naples) presented results of the ongoing research on the textile tools (including wooden and bone implements) preserved at a unique waterlogged site of Longola di Poggiomarino, which will soon be published. Philippe Borgard, Fabienne Médard and Christophe Moulherat (CNRS) described another ongoing project by the Centre Camille Jullian, investigating textiles, textile tools and production areas of Pompeii. Luigia Melillo (Soprintendenza Napoli e Pompeii) presented some of the textile finds from the Vesuvius area from the collection of the National Museum of Naples, including spectacular knitted silk fragments and numerous gold textiles. The collection of over 150 fragments is currently undergoing analysis and conservation. Vincenza Morizio (Foggia University) spoke about the sources of evidence for textile

production in ancient Daunia, while Elena Di Filippo Balestrazzi (Padova University) addressed the question of purple production in the Venezia area. Angela Caspio and Stefano Musco (Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma) presented a discovery of a very large fullonica, uncovered during urban excavation for railway construction in Casal Bertone area of Rome. Miko Flohr (Radboud University Nijmegen) argued that commercial fullonicae of Pompeii present more evidence for the patterns of consumption rather than production, especially in comparison to much larger fullonicae of Ostia. Margarita Gleba spoke about textile production in pre-Roman Italy.

Areas of the Mediterranean outside Italy were also amply represented. Ricardo González Villaescusa (Université de Reims) discussed the role of Reims (*Durocortorum*) in textile production of Gallia Belgica. Carmen Alfaro Giner (Universidad de València) gave an overview of the economic role of textile production in Saetabis. Hero Granger-Taylor (UK) and Dominique Cardon (CNRS) spoke about the textile finds from Didymoi in Egypt, including the ways of identifying the garments from fragments and the evidence for change in tunic style and construction over time. Lilian Karali and Dora Constantinidis (University of Athens) presented a proposal for a survey of East Mediterranean Murex heaps using GIS. Youlie Spantidaki and Christophe Moulherat (ARTEX, Athens) dis-

cussed purple-dyed textile remains from ancient Greece. Kordula Gostenčnik (Magdalensberg Project) gave an overview of evidence for textile production from the Roman town at Magdalensberg, focusing on tools. John Peter and Felicity Wild (University of Manchester) discussed textile production at Vindolanda. The paper by Ivan Radman-Livaja (Archaeological Museum of Zagreb) dealt with an important collection of lead tags of Siscia.

In addition to the papers, nine posters were presented, topics ranging from amphorae used for alum transport (Stefania de Majo, Pisa), to colour spectrometry as a non-destructive method of dye analysis (Robert

Fuchs, Annette Paetz gen. Schieck and Sylvia Mitschke, Mannheim), to new textile finds from Fagel-Gamus in the Egyptian Fayum (Kristin South, USA).

The last day of the conference, the participants were taken by a bus to Pompeii, where experimental dyeing took place in a vat reconstructed inside one of the ancient dyeing shops (V I, 4). The efficient and high quality publication of the proceedings by Carmen Alfaro (the *Purpureae Vestes II* volume was presented at the conference) has guaranteed not only a quick dissemination of the results presented but also the success of the conferences. We look forward to the third volume and the next conference!

Marianne Vedeler

Workshop on the textiles from Oseberg

**20-21 November 2008, The Museum
of Cultural History, University of
Oslo, Norway**

This November, the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo invited 19 scholars from 6 countries to have a closer look at the textiles from Oseberg. New archaeological research on the Viking Age will be a priority for the Museum of Cultural History in the years to come. The aim of the workshop was to discuss possibilities for new research on the textiles. The textiles from Oseberg have been known for over a hundred years. One day in August 1903, a farmer named Knut Rom came to the museum to report that he had found a Viking ship on his farm. This was the start of the fantastic history of the Oseberg find in Norway. The grave, in which two women were buried, contained among other finds a great variety of textiles and textile tools. The first catalogue of the Oseberg textile collection has recently been published (see

review in *ATN* 46, 30) and provides a new generation of textile researchers with a starting point for new research. The workshop started with a tour of the Viking Ship Museum guided by Jan Bill. This was followed by lectures on the research history of the Oseberg textiles by Lise Bender Jørgensen and on conservational challenges to research on the textiles by conservator Margunn Veseth. Then it was time to study a representative selection of the textiles themselves. The workshop continued the day after by dividing the participants into four groups and discussing how to reach a common platform for further research on the collection. This section was followed by a short presentation by each of the groups. The result turned out to be very interesting. Some of the groups primarily discussed basic questions concerning public and scientific

agenda, while others discussed the potential for specific analytical methods such as DNA analysis, isotopic tracing or digital reconstruction. One of the perspectives discussed was the social and cosmological basis for the production and use of the textiles, and their role in the funerary ritual, providing a starting

point for further research. In this perspective, identity studies and studies on provenience will be important. The workshop was very fruitful and will hopefully provide a platform for a new interdisciplinary research project on the Oseberg collection.

Eva Andersson Strand

Experimental Archaeology Research – new Approaches

**1-3 October 2008, Jamtli Museum,
Östersund, Sweden**

Experimental archaeology is often used in textile research and has recently been gaining interest among the university educators and students. The focus of the workshop organised in October in Östersund was on the latest developments in the field of experimental archaeology, both theoretical and practical. It was also discussed how experimental archaeology can develop further and how it can contribute to archaeological theory building. The participants agreed that a combination of craft knowledge with experimental archaeology has already proven to be an important method that allows new interpretations and gives new perspectives on the archaeologically invisible aspects of ancient societies. However, it is important to discuss not only the potential of the method, but also its limitations.

Another important topic is the differentiation between experience and experimental archaeology. Scholars have tested traditional textile techniques and tools to find out if and how they could be used. This acquired experience and knowledge has given information and insights, on which research builds but they often need to be addressed more source-critically.

Nineteenth and twentieth century ethnographic studies of textile craft have played a vital role for the understanding of ancient spinning and weaving techniques and the revitalisation of ancient textile technol-

ogy. Experimental archaeology traditionally drew extensively on the use of ethnographic parallels. However, in my opinion, the tests were neither controlled nor conducted with the aim to interpret the textile production of the past. Furthermore, it is important to relate the results from an experiment to the archaeological context. It is not only the results of an experiment that are interesting: how these results may be used and interpreted in an archaeological context is also of the highest importance.

Finally, the use of experimental archaeology in museums, especially in open air museums was also discussed. Unfortunately, there is still a tendency to mix experimental archaeology with experience archaeology and sometimes pure guessing. Reconstructions of archaeological artefacts are not always based on scientific research, although they are presented to the public as objects produced exactly the same way as they would have been 1000 or 2000 years ago. It is very costly to produce, for example, a costume as an exact replica and other solutions may fulfil the purpose in a very good way. A copy of an artefact does not necessary have to be an outcome of an experiment and/or produced the same way its original was, in order to be suitable in an exhibition or in an open air museum. It is important, however, not to mix experimental archaeology with reconstructions of artefacts