

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

for an exhibition. When using copies/reconstructions in a exhibition, it is also essential to explain to the public how the reconstructions are made, and that the knowledge of the public should never be underestimated.

For the abstracts of papers, consult <http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/conferences/>

Margarita Gleba

Dyes in History and Archaeology 27

8-11 October 2008, Istanbul, Turkey

The 27th Meeting of Dyes in History and Archaeology (DHA) took place in October 2008 in Istanbul, Turkey, hosted by the Marmara University. DHA, an international group of experts with multi-disciplinary background, meets every year since 1982 to discuss chemical, analytical, biological, historical and technological aspects of natural and synthetic dyestuffs. This year, over 30 papers and 21 posters were presented ranging in subject from discussions of particular dyestuffs to overviews of early synthetic dyes. While some of the

participants dealt with the historical and archaeological issues related to dyes, the majority of the presentations were quite technical, making the non-chemists in the audience wish that in the future there should be more presentations relevant to the topic of the meeting.

More information on this and the preceding DHA meetings and publications can be found at <http://www.chriscooksey.demon.co.uk/dha/meetings.html>

Recent Publications

Ursprünge der Seidenstraße: Sensationelle Neufunde aus Xinjiang, China, edited by Alfred Wiczorek and Christoph Lind. Stuttgart, Theiss, 2007 (in German) ISBN 978-3-8062-2160-2

Sie ist die älteste Handelsverbindung der Welt – die legendäre Seidenstraße. Bereits seit der Bronzezeit – vor etwa 4000 Jahren – trieben die Menschen hier lebhaften Handel. Die besonderen klimatischen Bedingungen in der extrem trockenen Taklamakan, jener berühmten Sandwüste im Tarimbecken, haben uns sensationell gut erhaltene Funde überliefert. Walnüsse und Hirseplätzchen, die aussehen, als hätte man sie

eben erst als Grabbeigaben niedergelegt, Textilien, deren Farben kräftig leuchten, und mumifizierte Tote faszinieren uns. Niemals zuvor sah man außerhalb Chinas eine solch umfangreiche Präsentation eindrucksvoller Fundobjekte, die von den weit reichenden kulturellen Beziehungen der Bewohner entlang der Seidenstraße zeugen. Das zeitliche Spektrum der Funde reicht von der Bronzezeit bis ins sechste nachchristliche Jahrhundert. Der umfangreich bebilderte Begleitband vertieft anschaulich die zentralen Themen der Ausstellung.

Price Euro 34.90 <http://www.theiss.de/>