thinking about animal skins as a human covering in her lucid examination of examples from 14th century BC across Europe.
Conceptual approaches to wrapping the body, space and landscapes were raised in other presentations: talismanic Islamic motifs on woolen weavings from Niger Bend, Mali (Claude Ardouin); the process of producing raw silk "tun-tun" indigo textiles in Mali and Burkina Faso, which are then made into objects of prestige worn as signs of identity (Laurence Douny); flags and costly textiles as signs of political and diplomatic power in 19th century West Africa (Fiona Sheales); and the "wrapping" of the spatial environment on Easter Island (Karina Croucher).
The problem of textiles and how human bodies are wrapped was also discussed from the perspective of art history, fashion and conservation: an art historical tour of cloth in paintings and prints (Liz Rideal); lace production and the body (Nicolette Makovicky); and the conservation process of an English court mantua at the V&A (Titika Malkogeorgou). How babies are wrapped at the beginning of life (Nancy Ukai Russell) brought full circle the discussion of textiles used to wrap the human body, which had begun with an examination of the wrappings of the dead.
The conference organizers intend to publish an edited volume of selected papers from this conference and the "Wrapping Objects" session organized in December 2009 (see review in *ATN* 50).

Margarita Gleba and Susanna Harris

European Archaeologists Association: Threads to the Past

1-5 September 2010, The Hague, The Netherlands

The aim of the interdisciplinary session "Threads to the past: novel methods for investigation of archaeological textiles and other organic materials", organised by Margarita Gleba and Susanna Harris (Institute of Archaeology, University College London, UK) was to discuss new methods that can be applied to the investigation of archaeological textiles and demonstrate their potential for the investigation of ancient economy, technology and agriculture. The papers demonstrated how scientific methods that have been or are being developed within archaeology (such as ancient DNA studies, isotopic tracing, laboratory excavation, experimental archaeology) can be incorporated into this field.
Susanna Harris in her paper "Investigating the material properties of archaeological textiles" demonstrated quantitative and qualitative methods used in textile engineering and industrial textile design to investigate the material properties of archaeological textiles through examples from the Neolithic to Bronze Age textiles in Western Europe.
Eva Andersson Strand presented experimental tests and discussed the limitations and possibilities of a new method of textile tool data analysis in her paper

"Loom weights and weaving, textiles and production in the ancient Mediterranean". These results can help us to visualise textiles in situations where none have been preserved and furthermore allow a discussion of textile production, its complexity and impact on society.

Margarita Gleba and Tom Gilbert discussing "Textiles, wool, DNA and sheep domestication", gave an overview of the possibilities of DNA analysis for the studies of sheep domestication and presented the results of a pilot project which aims at developing the methodology for wool textile use in ancient DNA sequencing by analysing modern sheep wool of different types (variation in pigmentation, fibre size, presence of dyes *etc*.), which subsequently can be applied to the archaeological material.

In her paper "Weaving invisible' - looking for earliest traces of plant fibre use and weaving through phytoliths analysis", Liliana Janik suggested an innovative science based approach of using the phytolith extraction and sample analysis for identifying potential presence of plant material.

Karin Margarita Frei presented the method based on the strontium isotopic system, which has been developed in order to address questions regarding the provenance of ancient textiles. Presently, this method is being applied to Danish Iron Age garments, which represent one of the best preserved textile collections from European prehistory.

Bodil Holst and Christian Bergfjord in their paper "Identifying archaeological textile fibres using modern analysis techniques" presented a novel method for identifying nettle fibres based on polarisation microscopy using x-ray microdiffraction. The method relies on measuring very slight species-dependent differences in the cell wall structure and can be applied both to animal and plant fibres. It often works well even on damaged fibres with degraded surface features which may obscure the results of light and electron microscopy.

Finally, Tereza Štolcová's presentation "Latest results of the laboratory research of in situ blocks with organic materials from the Early Migration Period chieftain's grave in Poprad-Matejovce, Slovakia" demonstrated that successful laboratory and experimental methods are highly dependent on good excavation and documentation practice.

These papers demonstrate not only that the field holds great potential in elucidating many aspects of past cultures, such as economy, technology, trade, fashion and religion, but also that at the moment there is a developing energy and expertise in this research. Such advances are only possible by building on the solid foundation of several decades of high quality, dedicated scholarship that have developed standard recording, identification and classification practices.

The session was standing room only and attracted EAA attendees from a variety of fields, who provided pertinent and searching questions following each paper. Some of the exchanges became quite heated, as scholars debated to clarify their methods, results and positions. The atmosphere of the session is best summarised by the comments of a session attendee who said they "felt genuinely excited" at several points in the session due to the accumulation of new ideas, new data and debate.