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Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

Book Review: "Experiments Past" Edited by Jodi Reeves Flores & Roeland P. Paardekooper

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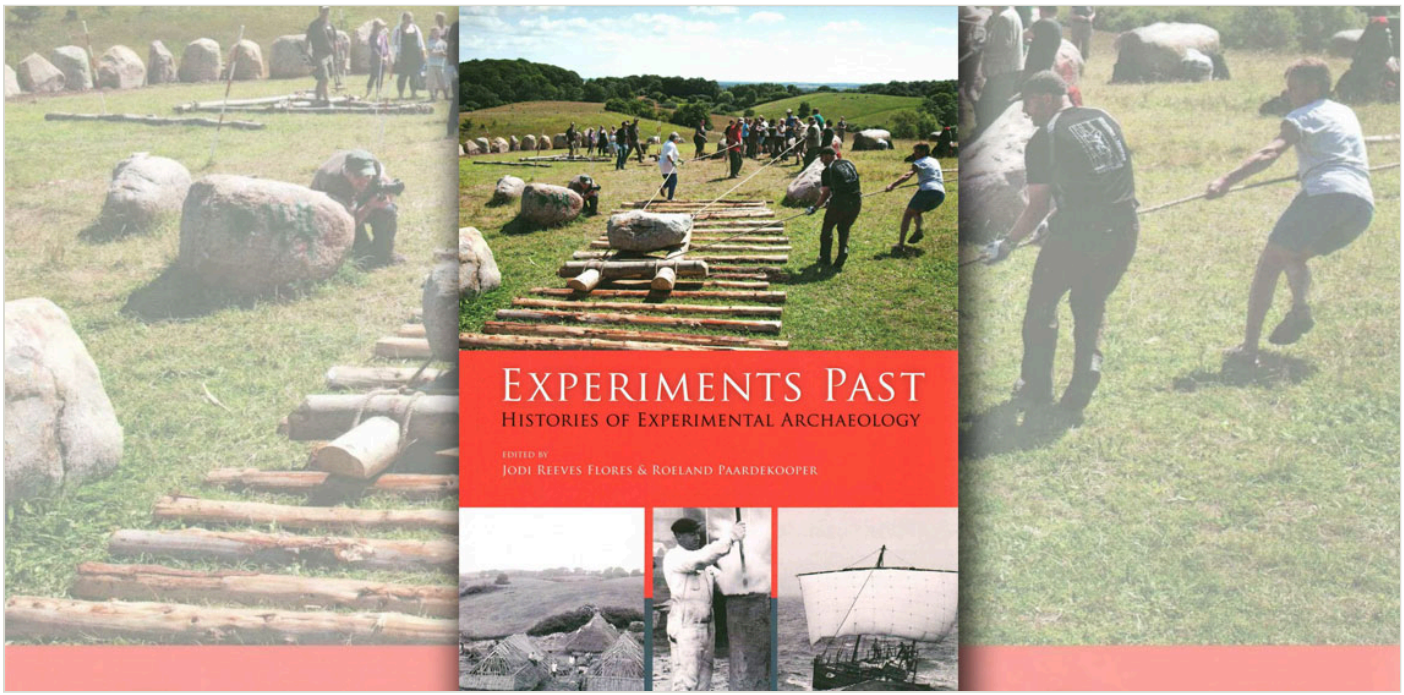

The publication in 1979 of the John Coles' book *Experimental Archaeology* can be called the vademecum of the experimental archaeology. Many particular experiments have been published since then, such as *A Bibliography of Replicative Experiments in Archaeology* (Graham et al. 1972) and *Bibliography of Archaeology I: experiments, lithic technology and petrography* (Hester and Heizer 1973), among others, but there was a need in the field of

experimental archaeology to update and to put together new experiences and new realms of research. This is what Jodi Reeves Flores and Roeland Paardekooper have done in the book Experiments Past published by Sidestone Press in Leiden.

> “This book is about (…) to give voice to non-visualised countries in the field of experimental archaeology and to establish bridges among countries in Europe and between Europe and US.

The publication of this book began its path in the conference organised by EXARC on the history of experimental archaeology in Sagnlandet Lejre (Denmark) in April 2013 and finishes now with its edition in 2014. The philosophy behind it lies on the recognition of a lack of current works dealing in depth with the history of experimental archaeology since Coles' book in 1979, but also on the necessity to overcome existing language barriers to approach non-speaking English or German countries, as well as France. Europe shows two basic trends in experimental archaeology, the Anglo-Saxon and the French one. At present, not much has been done for unifying the whole existing traditions in Europe, but the inclusion of Guillaume Reich and Damien Linder's paper *Experimental Archaeology in France. A History of the Discipline* in this volume is an example of future ways of intra-European communication in this field. Another handicap that experimental archaeology can begin to overcome with the help of books like this, is the publication of the big amount of relevant experiments that have been carried out in local settings, since most of them have never been written down and/or published before.

Very briefly, what can be found in this book is a compilation of eighteen micro-stories written by other archaeologists, mainly national histories, that can be classified territorially or thematically, and can be tentatively divided in:

- **National Histories:** Croatia, Latvia, Ireland, France, Spain, Greece, Western Germany.
- **Method and materials:** papers about experimental archaeology and archaeological open air museums in Europe
- **Biographies and Project Histories** such as the ones about Lejre (Denmark), Robert Thomsen (Denmark), Peter Reynolds in L'Esquerda (UK and Catalonia), Romanian prehistoric dwellings (RO), ship reconstruction in Roskilde (Denmark) and iron smelting experiments (Poland)

Therefore, this book is not about developing an interpretative or methodologically substantial contribution to the subject of experimental archaeology beyond John Coles' *Experimental Archaeology* (1979) or Peter J. Reynolds' *Arqueologia experimental. Una perspectiva de futur* (1988), but to overcome language barriers, to give voice to non-visualised countries in the field of experimental archaeology and to establish bridges among countries in Europe and between Europe and US. To achieve this much needed aim the contribution done by EXARC, and particularly by Jodi Reeves and Roeland Paardekooper, is enormous and needs to be

recognized by researchers, professionals and experts in the field of experimental archaeology.

Book information:

REEVES FLORES, J., PAARDEKOOPER, R.P. (eds), 2014. *Experiments Past*. Histories of Experimental Archaeology, Leiden: Sagnlandet Lejre & EXARC, 248 pages, ISBN 978-9088902512

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