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Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

Book Review: Archaeology and Crafts edited by Rüdiger Kelm

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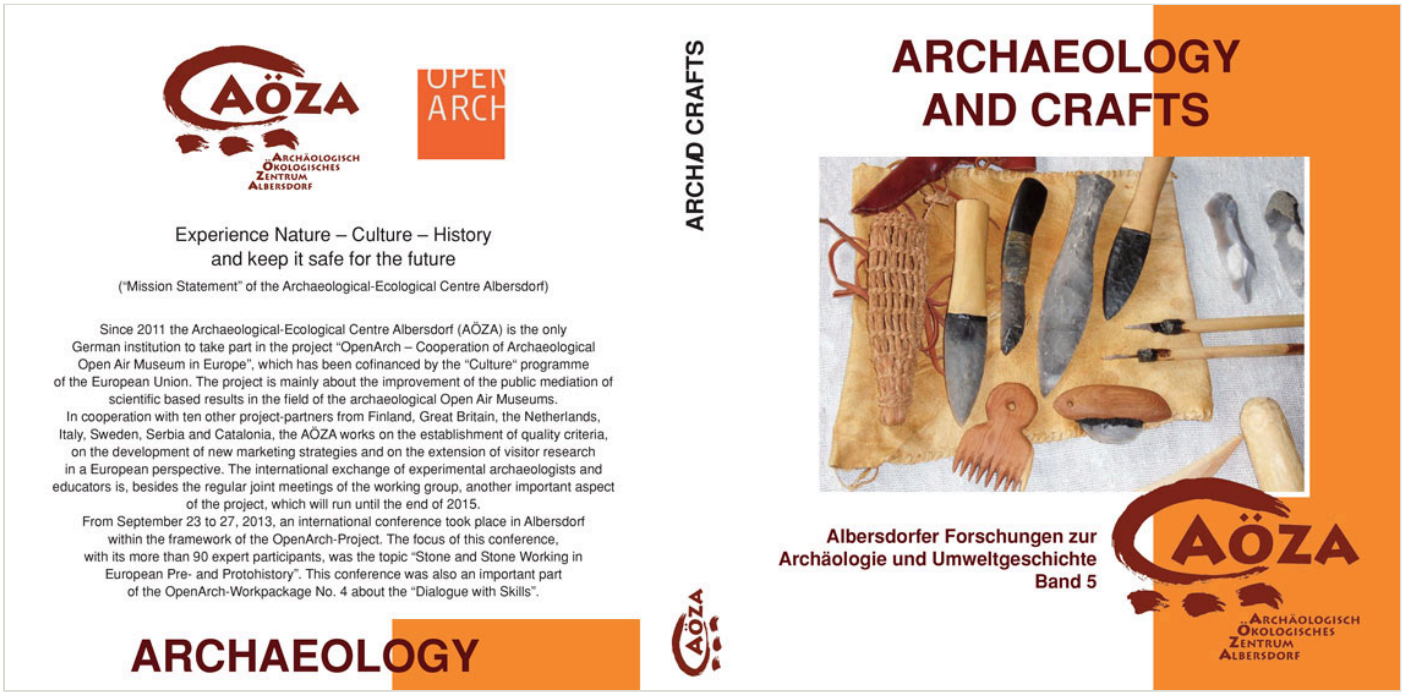

The book "Archaeology and Crafts" is a transcript of the proceedings of the VI OpenArch-Conference held in Albersdorf, Germany, on the 23-27 September 2013. The conference was an activity of the OpenArch project –a cooperation of Archaeological Open-Air Museums across Europe of which the AOZA (The Archaeological –Ecological Centre Albersdorf) is the only German institution to take part alongside those in Finland, Great Britain, the

Netherlands, Italy, etc. It focussed on the topic “Stone and stone working in European Pre and Protohistory” and was attended by more than 90 experts in the field.

> This book helped me understand interpretation in Open-Air Museums and showed how a combination of archaeology, experimental archaeology and primitive technology are changing Open-Air Museums. I found the book to be well edited and written with a fresh perspective.

by Dr. Arati Deshpande-Mukherjee, India

The recovery of artefacts from archaeological excavations and their analysis is routinely carried out in order to reconstruct past cultural life ways. However with the advent of ‘New archaeology’ in the 1960’s, the application of experimental and actualistic studies in archaeological research has provided fresh insights into many ancient crafts; including their origins, technology, social significance, etc. In recent years museum displays have evolved from static exhibits to those that are more interactive, educational and informative. Experimental archaeological projects in Open-Air Museums in Europe are giving people a chance to experience the past in an educational environment; which is a novel way of popularising archaeology through their well researched experimental projects and programmes these museums are providing a suitable platform for the study of many prehistoric technologies .

The book *Archaeology and Crafts* is a transcript of the proceedings of the VI OpenArch-Conference held in Albersdorf, Germany, on the 23-27 September 2013. The conference was an activity of the OpenArch project –a cooperation of Archaeological Open-Air Museums across Europe of which the AOZA (The Archaeological –Ecological Centre Albersdorf) is the only German institution to take part alongside those in Finland, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, etc. It focussed on the topic “Stone and stone working in European Pre and Protohistory” and was attended by more than 90 experts in the field. It dealt with the experience gained from experiments carried out on traditional skills and handicrafts in some pen Air Museums across Europe. The book is edited by Rüdiger Kelm and was published in 2015 by AOZA gGhmbh and Husum Druck as a collection of 16 papers covering 184 pages. The papers are presented in both English and Dutch/German under three broad themes: 1. Research and cooperation in Albersdorf, 2. Prehistoric skills with a European Perspective and 3. Archaeological Open-Air Museums – International Aspects. They are well illustrated with black and white photographs though coloured images would have further enhanced the quality of the publication, especially those of the experiments and Open-Air Museums.

The first paper on the Stone Age Park, Dithmarschen in Albersdorf by Rüdiger Kelm (originally written in German) tells us about the origins of this Open-Air Museum and how it was originally developed around nine archaeological monuments in an attempt to reconstruct a Neolithic cultural landscape. This park aims to work towards lasting ecological, cultural and

business development as a certified educational centre in the Albersdorf region. Since 2009 the park has been extensively redeveloped with a number of exhibits and building reconstructions where visitors are able to experience certain aspects of Stone Age life. Through its continuous interaction with various specialised institutions and initiatives; such as the Open–Arch project, conferences and publications, the museum continues to be built upon support from local and regional populations. The success of the Steinzeitpark has been attributed to its scientific basis, use of innovative approaches with a willingness to initiate them and enthusiasm.

The second paper "Living in the Neolithic" by Tosca Friedrich and Birte Meller is based on a joint project entitled "Transferring science from University to museum –experimental archaeology and visitor focussed praxis within the museum" by AOZA and the archaeological institute of the University of Hamburg. About 30 students and four children participated in a week long workshop at the Stone Age Park and were introduced to the basics of experimental archaeology. A slight diversion from the other papers presented in this section is by H.D Kiel on the recent excavations carried out at three archaeological sites in and around Albersdorf. These excavations have provided insights into the ritual world of Neolithic societies, the development history of its monuments and changes in human interaction with them over time. The other two papers by Schilling et al and Grundlage et al in German have not been reviewed here due to language constraints.

In the second theme -"Prehistoric skills in European perspective" five papers deal with the experimental manufacture and use of stone, bone and metal tools. Bradley and Khreisheh's paper presents results of a long term experimental study in stone knapping and the assessment of its skills for interpreting hominin behaviour, cognition, etc. Eburg et al through a series of experiments demonstrated and tested the ability of Neolithic stone tools in felling large trees. These experiments have shown that although Neolithic stone tools have been identified as ploughs, hoes, etc it is now considered possible that some stone implements were specialised woodworking tools used in building construction.

The papers by Cristiano et al and Barbieri et al are related to the reconstruction of metal technology at the Bronze Age site of Terramare in Northern Italy. These have revealed that the metal technology at Terramarre can be traced to the Neolithic, before attaining high complexity in the Bronze Age suggesting a technological transformation. Wolfgang et al discussed the results of their reconstruction project of a fortification and gateway of the Terramara culture at the Archaeological Open-Air Museum in Montale, northern Italy. For this reconstruction modern bronze tools (replicated from those found at the Terramare site) were used to accurately reconstruct the gateways through study of the archaeological counterparts. An important aspect of the study of any past subsistence economy is the reconstruction of food processing techniques and culinary practices which are demonstrated in the paper by R. Kelm. The paper summarises the results of the workshop which included

food preparation skills and techniques used in pre and protohistoric times from different areas of Europe. Some interesting recipes made during the workshops based on those from different cultural periods were tested and tasted.

The third theme – "Archaeological Open-Air Museums –International aspects" begins with a paper by R. Paardekooper, which gives an introduction to such museums in Europe. The paper explains their history, designations in different countries, their goals, contents and activities.. It also outlines the activities of EXARC; an ICOM affiliated organisation with over 220 members in 30+ countries. While S. Wellmer writes about the development of Stone Age Open-Air Museums in German speaking countries there are two papers which discuss Open-Air Museums elsewhere. The one by R. Kelm talks about one of the oldest Open-Air Museums: Skansen in Stockholm, Sweden which has one of the widest range of programmes in preserving traditional and ancient handicraft skills. The other paper is by W.Pfeifer on the living museums in Namibia; the only museum reviewed outside Europe in this book.

The paper by Hein Klompmaker on the use of emphatic archaeology in creating a profile of the Hunebed builders of the Funnel beaker culture is an interesting one. An idea seldom applied and very theoretical, which may pose difficulties when practical demonstration is required. If successful this could be applied to other cultures around the world.

Overall this book has demonstrated the potential of both experimental archaeology Open-Air Museums in archaeological interpretations. Although all answers to the past cannot be revealed by experimental studies alone, their application alongside other research methodologies would provide us with great insights. The book has very succinctly provided us with results of many experiments carried out in various Open-Air Museums through well executed workshops. It also calls for setting up many more such Open-Air Museums world over for preservation of tangible and intangible heritage. The AOZA's participation in the OpenArch project from 2011 to 2015, having workshops, a conference in 2013 at Albersdorf and publishing its proceedings truly reflects its mission statement of experiencing nature-culture-history and keeping it safe for the future.

By Doug Meyer, USA

Archaeology and Crafts is a collection of articles that were the result of an International Conference that took place in Albersdorf, Germany in September 2013. The Archaeological-Ecological Centre Albersdorf is the only institution in Germany that takes part in OpenArch, a cooperation of Archaeological Open-Air Museums in Europe. As an American who has been practicing primitive technology for over twenty five years, I was impressed by the Open-Air Museums I visited the last two years in Europe. The house reproductions, skilled interpreters and replica tools and experiments that I saw were top notch. This book only reinforces my

desire to travel and visit more Open-Air Museums in Europe. These museums and experiments are way ahead of most things done in the United States.

With a book that is a collection of articles by different authors, the reader sometimes cringes because not everyone's writing style is the same. A good editor who lays out the book properly will solve this problem. Fortunately, this book had a great editor and the book flowed from article to article and was an enjoyable book to read. As an American, I am always impressed because I realize that most of the articles are written by authors not writing in their native tongue or that the article is being translated and might not convey the author's thoughts completely. A few of the articles are written in German and my inability to read German was my fault and not the author's. I found all of the articles to be well written in English and the translations were great because I could only tell that the book was from German because of the few German articles.

The articles are a collection of different perspectives on Open-Air Museums. The articles started out with specific Albersdorf articles, moving through primitive technology and finally concluded with international aspects of Open-Air Museums. There were great articles on primitive technology including flintknapping, stone and bronze axe replication and use and prehistoric food. These articles were informative and will be of interest to primitive technologist and experimental archaeologists. The information about Open-Air Museums were informative because the authors realized the balance of an interpreter between being an actor and open to the public and not just a skilled practitioner because making money keeps these museums open. People that work at museums and management of these museums will gain insight from these articles.

The big surprise of this book for me was Hein Klompmaker's article in which he describes empathic archaeology. When I saw this title I thought that this was going to be the bad article of the bunch, but after reading the article I found it to be my favorite in the book. This article helped me understand interpretation in Open-Air Museums and getting the public to understand and feel like they have something in common with the interpreters. Our needs today are the same as in the past and by realizing this connection we can reconnect with our past better.

This book helped me understand interpretation in Open-Air Museums and showed how a combination of archaeology, experimental archaeology and primitive technology are changing Open-Air Museums. I found the book to be well edited and written with a fresh perspective. There were many skills and ideals presented to me that were new because in America, we go from the stone age to contact and miss so many rich cultural periods like the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Viking Age and Roman expansion. All of the periods and skills are new to me and spark new interests. The book had different axe articles, but there were two different mediums, stone and bronze. The technology presented to create both of these

axes and their use gave me insight into modern axes of today. The Open-Air Museums create the need for these experiments because they want proper presentation to the public and museum personnel have time to do experiments during interpretation. The Albersdorf staff show how they are on the front of these experiments with Werner Pfeifer's Living Museums in Namibia and their recent Living Mesolithic experiments. These presentations to the public are lacking in the United States. This book was well rounded and an enjoyable read.

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