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Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

Event Review: Experimental Archaeology in Denmark 2021

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The meeting for *Experimental Archaeology in Denmark* (EAD) 2021 (*Eksperimentel Arkæologi i Danmark*) was held between the 5th and 7th of November 2021 at the Medieval Centre at Lolland in Denmark. The Medieval Centre focusses on living history in their museum with houses, staff, and volunteers recreating the environment of the time around the year 1395.

“
Until now
researchers, museum

Recently Roeland Paardekooper was chosen as the new director of the Medieval Centre and intends to maintain the great experience you get when visiting the Centre, but also

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encourage more experimental archaeology to take place both at the Medieval Centre and in Denmark in general.

Until now researchers, museum workers, craftspeople and practitioners of experimental archaeology in Denmark have not had common ground. They need a place to meet and exchange experiences, ideas, and challenges related to experimental archaeology, although experimental archaeology takes place in many forms in different places in Denmark. This meeting, therefore, planned to be the start of a network initiated by Thit Birk Petersen (the Medieval Centre, DK), Roeland Paardekooper (the Medieval Centre, DK), Triona Sørensen (the Viking Ship Museum, DK), and Jannie Marie Christensen (author of this review).

Anybody with an interest in experimental archaeology in Denmark was welcome regardless of their academic or practical experience. Despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, around 25 people from Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Germany participated in the formation and development of this network.

The program started on Friday 5th at 6 pm at the Medieval Centre, followed by a full day of discussion, theoretical and practical presentations, and a medieval inspired dinner on the second day. The third day continued with various displays of experimental archaeology projects currently being carried out in Denmark or discussion of challenges related to these.

The first day

During the first day of the EAD, the participants met over dinner at the Medieval Centre, which also provided sleeping facilities throughout the meet. The evening had a relaxed atmosphere with loose conversations and discussions of participants' reasons for attending the meeting, and what they hoped to gain from it.

The second day

Saturday was dedicated to several presentations held both indoors and outside at the Medieval Centre. Thit Birk Petersen, Roeland Paardekooper, Triona Sørensen, and Jannie Marie Christensen welcomed everybody to the event with a presentation, which was followed by an introductory session. After this the beginnings of a discussion of what EAD should represent and contain took place and flowed by lunch.

The second part of the day focused on practical demonstrations and project displays. Thit Birk Petersen started with a tour of the grounds of the Medieval Centre including their medieval town Sundkøbing built around the year 1395, followed by a practical demonstration

of the trebuchet. Thereafter Søren Lise gave a presentation on the practice of rope making. Different rope-making equipment and types of rope were presented as well as how to make these. Due to rain the actual rope making could not take place, but everybody was invited to make rope with him at another time. The next presentation was held by Dorte Kampp, who presented the new loom at the Medieval Centre. It was built using medieval tools and set up as it is believed to have been originally. Textiles made on the loom were presented as well as a practical demonstration of the loom working.

After a coffee break Joakim Løvgren held a workshop about historical fencing. He presented the problems of our loss of knowledge of medieval fencing, but also on his attempts to recreate the skill from descriptions from the period. The participants were then invited to reenact fencing with wooden swords based on a short demonstration by Joakim and copies of German medieval descriptions. After this Kari Marie Helland held a workshop on nettle fibres, cord, and net binding, demonstrating a wide variety of crafts made from nettles including their archaeological contexts. The participants themselves were given the opportunity to try techniques of making cord from nettles that Kari had brought along.

Several participants continued their work with the nettles while further discussing the future for EAD. Here it was clear that the need for a network for both practitioners and theorists has been longstanding. A network would enable the exchange of ideas and experiences, but also create a way for people to contact each other when, for example, someone has a hypothesis or idea and needs someone with practical experience in the field for the experiment, guidance for different methods of documentation or fundraising for a project. It was decided that there will not be a chair for EAD, it will be a free network for anyone interested in experimental archaeology in Denmark and that an internet forum will be established. On the internet forum anyone will be able to share their work or ideas and contact information and details of future meetings will be available. Monthly themed Zoom meetings will be held at the start of each month, open to anyone, and a yearly physical meeting will be arranged at different locations. Besides creating a network for anyone interested in experimental archaeology in Denmark and hopefully reaching those who, prior to this meet, had not heard of EAD, it is also hoped that experimental archaeology can once again bloom in Denmark and play a larger role in museums and universities.

After this discussion the Medieval Centre hosted an impressive medieval inspired dinner ending the official part of the day although discussions continued.

The third day

The third day was reserved for presentation of current experimental archaeology projects taking place in Denmark. Joakim Løvgren started out by explaining the difficulties of recreating the use and movements on a horse from pictures of knights in the medieval

period. He showed recordings of his own experiments with recreating the exact moves riding a horse.

Emil Kjær followed this by presenting his experiences from *Vikings on a journey* (Vikinger på rejse). In this project participants travel through Denmark using horses, wagon, tents, and other equipment used on journeys in the Viking age. In this way they experience the difficulties this can present and find new problems to investigate. The project is currently working on a new wagon and plans to continue their journey in the spring.

Solveig Liv Chaudesaigues-Clausen is currently doing a PhD experimenting on funnel cup tools and trying to figure out the function of certain archaeological finds made of bone. During the presentation she set out her own theories, and experiences with the finds and recreations of them, but also asked for help to solve problems related to the topic.

Meinrad Pohl presented issues relating to millstones and their use with different types of grain, especially malt for brewing. He displayed several experiments with the millstone in different setups; among them citizen science at museums, where the public were invited to participate in grinding, while timing, measuring, and recording the results.

Sabine Karg has worked with different prehistoric combs both theoretically and practically, in relation to combing wool and plant fibers. She presented her experiences and experiments, encouraging participants to share theirs, resulting in a more diverse perception of the use of the combs. She also spoke of the problems of having a hypothesis for the use of a certain type of comb, but not having the practical experience or access to a network of practitioners to make a copy and therefore not being able to test her theory in practice.

Lilith Andersen shared her experiences with experimental archaeology, living history, and volunteers emphasising how important it is to be passionate about the work that you do. With your own enthusiasm you can provide a more inspiring experience both for the public but also for the volunteers, who need this to carry out their work as well. This was clear, when she allowed participants to share their strongest memories of experimental archaeology in small groups, showing exactly how important experimental archaeology, networking, and exchange of ideas are.

To conclude, EAD 2021 was a successful event, and clearly showed that a network for researchers, craftspeople, and museum workers with an interest in experimental archaeology has been missing. The newly created EAD, and its online forum is still being formed by the participants, and other interested people, with an aim to reach anyone interested in experimental archaeology in Denmark.

If you are interested in EAD please go to www.eksperimentelarkaeologi.dk for more information, to share experiments, to participate in the themed Zoom meetings, if you wish

to host a themed Zoom meeting/have ideas for a theme, or wish to participate in EAD 2022.

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| Gallery Image



LECTURE AT THE EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY WEEKEND. PHOTO BY MIDDELALDERCENTRET



THE TREBUCHET AT THE MIDDELALDERCENTRET. PHOTO BY MIDDELALDERCENTRET



TEXTILE WORKSHOP. PHOTO BY MIDDELALDERCENTRET



ROPE MAKING WORKSHOP. PHOTO BY JANNIE MARIE CHRISTENSEN



SWORD FIGHTING WORKSHOP. PHOTO BY JANNIE MARIE CHRISTENSEN



ROPE MAKING WORKSHOP. PHOTO BY KARI MARIE HELLAND



ROPES MADE AT THE MIDDELALDERCENTRET. PHOTO BY KARI MARIE HELLAND



TEXTILE WORKSHOP AT THE MIDDELALDERCENTRET. PHOTO BY KARI MARIE HELLAND