



Dr. Sabine Karg, Scientific Employee, Free University of Berlin

Dr. Susanna Harris, Lecturer in Archaeology, University of Glasgow

Dr. Otto Brinkkemper, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands

Session 56 at the EAA 2017 conference in Maastricht:

Plants as fibre resources: approaches from the science and arts perspectives

Numerous objects of utility made of plant fibres were abundant in the past. According to the specific preservation condition such objects are preserved in the archaeological record. Examples for excellently preserved threads, textiles, shoes, sieves, and fishing nets are the Neolithic and Bronze Age wetland sites in the circum-alpine region of Europe. In the salt mines of Austria that date to the Iron Age period perfectly preserved ropes and clothing are found. **In our session we would like to focus on the question of the techniques that were applied to produce such objects, the know-how of exploiting and processing plant fibres and the question how these activities can be traced in the archaeological and palaeo-ecological record.**

Still today traditional societies produce strings, ropes, containers, netting, textiles from appropriate natural material as tree bast fibres, grasses/sedges, roots, etc. that need to be collected in the wild, or cultivated on fields. Such ethnographic paradigm stimulates the interpretation of yet unrecognized archaeological objects and can help to reconstruct the function of plant fibre technology.

Our session aims to stimulate discussion on the interrelationship of prehistoric raw material procurement strategies with a focus on plants as fibre resources, and the know-how of the technologies of plant fibre production. Impact of plant fibre exploitation on the prehistoric landscape by applying modern scientific methods, as well as use-wear analysis on archaeological artefacts that were used for fibre production will be discussed.