

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Central European Theoretical Archaeology Group meeting – Central European TAG

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## PROGRAMME and ABSTRACTS

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**Date: Tuesday 12th May 2015**

**Venue: Academic Conference Centre (Akademické konferenční centrum)**

Husova 4a, 110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

(website and map of the Centre: <http://www.akc-avcr.cz/>)

**Organizing institution:** Center for Theoretical Study, Charles University in Prague and the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

**Organizers:**

Monika Baumanova – President of the Czech National chapter of TAG (University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czech Republic)

&

Karolína Pauknerová – Main organiser 2015 (Center for Theoretical Study, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic)

## **PROGRAMME**

(Each paper presentation should be 20 minutes long with additional 10 minutes for discussion.)

*Welcome coffee and registration: 10:00-10:45*

### **Theme 1: Thinking culture through things; theorizing physical evidence of a culture**

10:45-11:15 An Ontological Perspective on the Emergence of Stamps during the Neolithic  
Çiğdem Atakuman (Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey)

11:15-11:45 The origins of the Warrior Culture - Warriorhood and its material manifestations in European prehistory.

Rafał Skrzyniecki and Robert Staniuk (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland)

*Lunch: 11:45-12:30*

**12:30-13:15 KEYNOTE LECTURE**

**When is contemporary archaeology?**

**Dan Hicks (University of Oxford, UK)**

**Theme 1 (continued): Thinking culture through things; theorizing physical evidence of a culture**

13:15-13:45

Situated Cognition and the *Chaîne Opératoire*

Matthew Walls (University of Oxford, UK; Visiting fellow at Center for Theoretical Study, Czech Republic)

13:45 - 14:15

A behavioral approach to soil as material culture

Roderick B. Salisbury (Vienna Institute for Archaeological Science, University of Vienna, Austria)

14:15-14:45

Materiality in human ecology

Ladislav Šmejda (Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic) and Monika Baumanova (University of West Bohemia, Pilsen, Czech Republic)

14:45-15:15

Reflexive side of archaeological data: why to seek it?

Karolína Pauknerová (Center for Theoretical Study, Charles University in Prague), Czech Republic)

*15:15-15:45 coffee break*

**THEME 2: Fieldwork and collecting; things in motion, materiality and lifecycles of people and things**

15:45-16:15

Archaeology without Nations

Thea De Armond (Stanford University, USA)

16:15-16:45

Breaking the Piñatas

Mehmet Kaya Yaylali (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ankara, Turkey)

16:45-17:15

Filling the gap – the change of perception on deserted villages through perspective of remote sensing data in Poland and Czech Republic

Mikolaj Kostyrko (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland), Piotr Wroniecki (Independent researcher), Roman Brejcha (Academy of Science of the Czech Republic)

**THEME 3: Cultural heritage; exhibiting things – theories beyond the museum display**

17:15-17:45

Moving Forward by Looking Back: The Archaeology of Identity and Analysis of the Cucuteni-Trypillia Cultural Complex

Kathryn M. Hudson and Sarunas Milisauskas (University at Buffalo, USA)

## ABSTRACTS

### KEYNOTE LECTURE

#### **When is contemporary archaeology?**

**Dan Hicks** (University of Oxford, UK)

A common contention of the post-processual archaeology was that archaeology is conducted in the present. This lecture will explore the history of the idea of the contemporary in archaeology, with specific reference to current thinking in the field of contemporary archaeology, and to conceptions of time in 19<sup>th</sup>-century archaeology, in order to explore current status of the idea of the present in archaeological theory.

### Theme 1

#### **Thinking culture through things; theorizing physical evidence of a culture**

#### **An Ontological Perspective on the Emergence of Stamps during the Neolithic**

**Çiğdem Atakuman** (Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey)

An assemblage of portable objects, such as figurines, stamps and pottery, began to be popularly used within a wide geography extending from south-west Asia to south-east Europe, during the time period between 7000-5000 BC. Among these items, stamps have often been perceived as products of a primitive type of administrative control that flourished in early agricultural communities prior to the emergence of writing. Taking an ontological perspective, this study argues that stamps are figurines of a highly abstract nature.

In the south-west Asian context, both figurines and stamps would appear to have emerged from a conceptual domain within which interlinked imagery of phallus-body-animals were used as founding elements of an overarching narrative of regeneration and social continuity. However, the “gender” or social significance of images and forms may not be interpreted on the basis of their incorporation of sexual signifiers alone. Instead, the emergence of stamps may be approached by paying attention to the structured use of certain types of images on certain types of raw materials which culminated in the proliferation of a number of miniature objects, such as clay figurines and ceramics as well as stamps. Considering these dimensions, I suggest that clay figurines may have appropriated persons in the domestic sphere, whereas stamps may have been instrumental in shaping the identity of their users at interlinked spheres, from personal to communal. The underlining social process in articulation of these social spheres may be associated with the spreading rules and regulations of appropriating body and food in the context of a new politics of reproduction which flourished with “house” communities. However, in order to understand the range of variety in constitution of “house” and “personhood” from one community to another, one should focus on intimate discourses between miniature objects in their local contexts.

## **The origins of the Warrior Culture – Warriorhood and its material manifestations in European prehistory**

**Rafał Skrzyniecki and Robert Staniuk** (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland)

The so-called Warrior Culture - a Pan-European phenomenon, which spread through the continent at the end of the EBA, is widely recognized as a cultural package consisting of particular forms of weaponry, vehicles (especially war chariots) and outfit. In addition, preserved iconographic evidence clearly shows that the process of creating individual's identity, in this case the warrior identity, was only partially achieved by means of possession. A specific image, created in detail even through haircut, was a powerful medium, through which the warrior's affiliation was displayed and perceived by others. It is believed that this phenomenon reached its developed form somewhere around the transition from the EBA to the MBA. Nevertheless, some material findings indicate that the origins of the warrior culture should be sought deeper into the past, in idea allowing a further investigation into its genesis. The strongest emphasis should be put particularly on the issues of Warrior Culture's material determinants, its actual chronology and the choice of relevant theoretical platform, best suited for theorising material aspects of being a warrior. The main idea of this paper is to discuss not only the evolution of Warrior Culture itself, but also its socio-economical background, from Mesolithic to the final Neolithic, when the consolidation of elements shaping the warrior's cultural package accelerated drastically.

## **Situated Cognition and the *Chaîne Opératoire***

**Matthew Walls** (University of Oxford, UK; Visiting fellow at Center for Theoretical Study, Czech Republic)

In many applications, archaeological interpretations developed through the use of the *chaîne opératoire* are based on the idea that patterned gestures are guided by a representational/schematic knowledge that exists prior and separate to activity involved in making. In contrast, the growing interdisciplinary field of situated cognition sees knowing as an ecological question involving a developmental interdependence of the body, materials, social relations, and the environment. Through ethnoarchaeological observations of Inuit kayak making in Greenland, I will explore the implications of this field for how archaeologists construe technical activity. Illustrative episodes demonstrate that: 1) the knowledge involved in kayak making is fundamentally sensorimotor and kinaesthetic in nature, and can only exist between generations through a process of co-construction; 2) this co-construction of knowledge takes place through environmentally and materially situated practice; and 3) the question of knowing how to make a kayak is not separate from the life process of becoming a skilled kayaker. For Greenlandic kayakers, making a kayak is not the acting out of an internalized script for enchainment, but a didactic process that cultivates capacities for awareness and response that are critical to becoming a skilled hunter.

## **A behavioral approach to soil as material culture**

**Roderick B. Salisbury** (Vienna Institute for Archaeological Science, University of Vienna, Austria)

This paper sets out a theoretical framework for understanding soil as material culture, as a product of human behavior. As part of a theoretically informed geoarchaeology, this approach is grounded on the fact that archaeological soils and sediments are underutilized archives of human behavior. When sediment is treated as a category of archaeological material, informative and interesting in and of itself, we gain new perspectives on prehistoric life. Behavioral archaeology adds insight into the chains of

behaviors that involve soil in everyday activities, and that contribute to the formation of cultural soilscares.

A behavioral approach focuses on the interactions of people, artifacts and the environment in all times and all places, and builds on the work of Michael Schiffer. Although best known for site formation processes, behavioral archaeology is also widely used for studying life histories and technological change. A further behavioral insight is consideration of the performance characteristics of soil and the role that these characteristics play in both the technological and social functions of soil and soilscares. Anthropogenic soils and soilscares are the result of human activity, and as such are important archaeological materials. Cultural beliefs and traditions about soil inform behavior, and have the potential to influence the formation of cultural soilscares. Using a behavioral archaeology approach, we begin to be more aware of human-soil interactions and of the potential significance of soil itself – soil as material culture.

### **Materiality in human ecology**

**Ladislav Šmejda** (Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic) and **Monika Baumanová** (University of West Bohemia, Pilsen, Czech Republic)

This paper deals with the artefactual nature of human ecology, which can be broadly defined as the study of continuous systemic interaction and mutual redefinition of human groups and their natural, social and built environment. Human ecology is traditionally inspired by the natural sciences, taking the sometimes deterministic perspective that natural world greatly shapes and channels the development of human cultures. However, we would like to review how this field has developed and how it should incorporate the theoretical advances in social sciences during the past three decades. These recent trends have largely erased the formerly emphasised divide between people and things.

We argue that the human world is fully composed of products of human creativity. We can analyse how their agency affects their function in the human world. The effects of their materiality, however, are less often discussed. To demonstrate this on an example, we look at space which can be seen as a type of artefact, although otherwise it is a rather abstract concept. Analysing space as an artefact can help us to consider social landscapes of variable extent, social reproduction and levels of exchange between humans and the environment.

### **Reflexive side of archaeological data: why to seek it?**

**Karolína Pauknerová** (Center for Theoretical Study, Charles University in Prague)

Archaeological data (i.e. descriptions and drawings of artefacts and stratigraphy, data from fieldwork measuring or LiDAR data) seems to be truly objective for the first sight. However, the data are not material remains and measurements themselves, but their imprint in research evidence. Archaeological data we deal with are interpretations. Connoisseur's eye, various conditions like weather, time, psychological or social conditions, all these influence the data. Data are constructed in the research, under particular conditions, and thus have their reflexive side; however in an ordinary fieldwork and later analyses, we are mostly silent on these issues.

Taking into account the reflexive side of archaeological data, does not, as I will argue, belittle the scientificity of archaeology, but it gives the data a new dimension of engagement into the lived world. The task of archaeology is to present the best possible insight into the past reality in the given moment, than the consideration should also be given to the mechanisms of data construction, reflexivity and its connection to interpretation and translation of the Other. For thinking about reflexivity of

archaeological data and dealing with it I seek an inspiration in anthropology. For my argument I will use examples from two projects I have participated in recently: Mesolithic settlement along the Modrava Stream in the Bohemian Forest, Czech Republic, led by K. Čuláková and East Devon Pebblebeds Project, UK, led by C. Tilley.

## **THEME 2: Fieldwork and collecting; things in motion, materiality and lifecycles of people and things**

### **Archaeology without Nations**

**Thea De Armond** (Stanford University, USA)

Much of the history of archaeology has been structured by contemporary geopolitics. Those who recount these histories often do so with the aim of destabilizing the taken-for-granted of archaeological practice, especially by exposing the effects of the distorting lens of imperialism and its counter, nationalism. But imperialism and nationalism have not merely deformed archaeology – they have actually, materially, *formed* archaeology. In particular, archaeology's relationship to place has been shaped by the requirements of empires and nations – the most valorised archaeological material gravitates toward empires, material culture groups are suspiciously respectful of contemporary borders, and so on. Thus, in a post-colonial world, with – according to some – the decline of the nation-state already upon us, archaeology's *raison d'être* merits reconsideration. How might changing political / conceptual borders restructure archaeological practice? Or, more succinctly, does archaeology need the nation? In this paper, I consider archaeology's relationship to geopolitics, particularly with reference to its status as a fieldwork-reliant (and, thus, place-specific) discipline. I will compare archaeological practice with that of other fieldwork-reliant disciplines, like ethnobotany and geology, which are not so closely intertwined with contemporary political narratives as is archaeology. Finally, I will draw out archaeology's particular conception of materiality, one that – in conjuncture with its attachment to place – has allowed for its co-optation in geopolitical conflicts.

### **Breaking the Piñatas**

**Mehmet Kaya Yaylali** (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ankara, Turkey)

Because of the excavation methods applied, archaeology can be defined as the science of systematic destruction. The excavated areas cannot be identified as the artificially constructed environment like laboratory and they are often highly variable. Therefore archaeological researches don't take place in a controlled laboratory conditions and are not repeatable.

In this sense, interpretation of the remains from archaeological excavations represents the meaningful reconstruction of systematic and irreversible destruction in a holistic manner. The remains from archaeological sites consist of a range of anthropogenic objects (artefacts) (fragments of tools such as daggers, arrows, ceramic vessels in general pottery etc.), ecofacts (the remains of plants, animals and natural deposits) and geological materials (geofacts) in a context of soil and landscape which provides us information for solving the puzzle of the archaeological labyrinth by degradation.

Within the theoretical framework defined, the first moment that the pickaxe hit the excavation ground (archaeological site) can be defined as breaking the Piñata. At this point an archaeologist plans to extract raw material including the remains of the past and his main goal is to turn them into classified data. This synchronic process can also be explained as the transition of in situ hidden past to ex situ past by pulling all of the information together like a diorama or portrayal of the past.

The following step is bringing back the Piñata by converting the archaeological raw data into a more significant form in order to set forth the meaning together with its contents in holistic and diachronic approach. In diachronic process, the thousands years old history unearthed from the archaeological excavation spread its speechless subjects, stories and thoughts around just like the candies or gifts blown onto the ground from the piñata.

At this stage, archaeologists are concerned with the comprehension of the ancient society behind the material evidence and try to bring the past back to life. Because of this sophisticated purpose, ingredients of the Pinata symbolize the archaeological remains and each one of the extracted artefacts represent the keyword for the lock in the minds of archaeologists. Throughout these synchronic and diachronic processes mentioned above, the eyes of the archaeologists are wide shut like the child breaking the Piñata and the sleep mask of the child represents the scientific objectivity of archaeologists.

In addition to the facts that mentioned before there are questions should have to be asked. Why do we make science? Why do we make archaeological researches? In other words, why do we break the Piñata? With this article, the arguments, questions and the subjects will be examined under the framework of the impact they have on scientific activities such as museology and archaeology via the observable results of the scientific discipline remaining in the periphery.

#### **Filling the gap – the change of perception on deserted villages through perspective of remote sensing data in Poland and Czech Republic**

**Mikolaj Kostyrko** (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland), **Piotr Wroniecki** (Independent researcher), **Roman Brejcha** (Academy of Science of the Czech Republic)

The change from writing holistic histories to presenting micro pasts (Domańska 2005), is not a new one. In our opinion it did not change the perspective of archaeological studies. Prehistory is still written by the winners. Although this time the winners are things not humans. Those features that seem to be not interesting are omitted in the grand narratives of prehistories. One of the marginalized perspective of studies are the landscape of villages and farm lives. We would like to present a brief comparison of landscape studies on this subject from Poland and Czech Republic, focusing only on medieval and later rural settlements. From the perspective of these is seem like we are living in a different world, were in the Czech Republic the landscape is full of the past traces of farming activities in opposition to Polish territory, where only few such places are currently known. Are we living in a different landscape or perhaps it is the effect of different perspectives on landscape studies? The second topic that we would like to stress out is how the perception of studying such places can be changed through applying remote sensing data, especially LiDAR-derivatives.

### **THEME 3: Cultural heritage; exhibiting things – theories beyond the museum display**

#### **Moving Forward by Looking Back: The Archaeology of Identity and Analysis of the Cucuteni-Trypillia Cultural Complex**

**Kathryn M. Hudson and Sarunas Milisauskas** (University at Buffalo, USA)

Archaeological research has an undeniable affect on contemporary perceptions of culture, but the mechanisms by which the past gives birth to modern notions of identity are rarely explicitly considered. This oversight is particularly apparent in regions where a single cultural tradition dominates the archaeological discourse, since social status and economic/political power in these territories is often rooted in association with the dominant cultural inheritance at the expense of local distinctiveness. Taking the Cucuteni-Trypillia cultural complex of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine as its case study, this paper presents a contextualized exploration of the tension that frequently exists between grand narratives of cultural homogeneity and localized discussions of distinctiveness. This division is particularly salient in analyses of the Cucuteni-Trypillia complex, since popular interest has reinforced its dominance for both researchers and the general public. We do not suggest that a generalized Cucuteni-Trypillia identity has no utility but instead argue that the social and political implications of different analytical levels must be critically considered, particularly in relation to the nationalism that emerged in association with the collapse of the region's socialist regimes. Such reflection facilitates consideration of how identity construction can mobilize archaeological analysis at different levels to create a dualistic approach to heritage that allows for the simultaneous emphasis of pan-cultural associations and localized distinctiveness. The result is a simultaneously broad and narrow interpretive frame that accommodates both popular and scholarly interests while creating a more robust view of ancient cultural traditions and the contemporary heritages based on them.