Programme
Ancient Landscapes of Textile Production

27 May

09:00 - 09:15 **Welcome by Eva Andersson Strand**

09:15 - 09:45 **Tim Flohr Sørensen (keynote) - Terrain Vague: Landscapes after Production**

***Terrain vague* : Landscapes after production**

By *Tim Flohr Sørensen.*

Abstract:

In archaeology, landscapes have been studied intensely from the perspective of human perception and human needs; as a resource in terms of economy, habitation and political projects. Studies of landscapes as spaces to be settled, defined and exploited by humans have resulted in valuable archaeological knowledge of the interplay and symbiosis of landscapes and production (at least according to human understandings of symbiosis). In this paper, I turn to a specific landscape in Copenhagen, Denmark, to explore the more-than-human, multispecies ecologies that arise *after* production. I turn to the species that may emerge when anthropogenic landscapes turn into wasteland, dereliction zones and sites of abandonment. Such post-productive landscapes are entangled in capricious ecologies, politics and ethics that do not always correspond with established taxonomies, identities and regimes of naming. Rather, these forms of *terrain vague* call for a different mode of narrative, foregrounding the different forms of life – and death – that occur in exemption zones.

Short bio:

Tim Flohr Sørensen is Associate Professor of Contemporary Archaeology at the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen. He has previously been employed at Aarhus University and the University of Cambridge. His research centres on archaeological epistemology with a focus on posthumanism and feminism, addressing neglectable objects that seem to be culture historically insignificant, being inconsequential, impotent, or meaningless, but nevertheless present in contemporary landscapes. He is the director of the *Hub for Speculative Fabulations on Incidental Observations*

09:45 - 10:15 **Bo Fritzbøger (keynote) - Verbal Landscapes: Historical Translation of Textual Landscape Representations**

Verbal Landscapes. Historical Translation of Textual Landscape Representations

By *Bo Fritzbøger* - associate professor, dr. phil., in *Centre for Sustainable Futures* at the Saxo Institute, UCPH.

Abstract:

Until the late Eighteenth Century AD, most textual landscape representations did not actually describe landscape structures or appearances but land use. Further, they were mostly produced by authorities with various power or money-related vested interests. And by the time landscape descriptions began appearing in non-fiction writings, they were frequently heavily affected by ideological preferences. Based on Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad, the presentation will discuss how it is after all possible to use textual analysis to characterize historical landscapes.

Short bio:

Bo Fritzbøger is associate professor, dr. phil., in *Centre for Sustainable Futures* at the Saxo Institute, UCPH. He has for the last four decades done extensive research in the landscape and environmental history of Denmark from the Middle Ages to present time.

10:15 - 10:45 **Coffee break**

10:45 - 11:15

Mette Løvschal (keynote) - Anthropogenic heathlands: The coming into being of a ‘textile landscape’ in prehistoric Southern Scandinavia

Anthropogenic heathlands: The coming into being of a ‘textile landscape’ in prehistoric Southern Scandinavia

By *Mette Løvschal* - professor of archaeology at Aarhus University and Moesgaard.

Abstract:

Anthropogenic heathlands are open landscapes, dominated by *Calluna* (heather) and dwarf shrubs, that once connected extensive areas of northern Europe. Heathlands occur naturally on acidic, nutrient-poor soils in regions of cool-temperate oceanic climate but can also emerge through sustained human management. These landscapes played a key, still somewhat underestimated role, in the textile production in southern Scandinavia, providing a year-round, in situ pasture for sheep. Especially when managed with frequent burning, heathland produce young, digestible, and nutritious heather, which is preferred for grazing livestock. The nutritional value of heather drastically falls already after five years, becoming less attractive to most grazers. This short window of optimal nutritional value incentivizes pastoralists to burn more and more frequently to maintain heather in its young stages. Over time, managed fires, grazing and other rejuvenation and extraction practices would have manipulated heather in particular ways and directions, ultimately fostering a specific social life within the heathlands. *Both* humans and the landscape changed due to their close interaction. – As specific grazing qualities were promoted and others disappeared, these highly human modified landscapes tended to lead heathlands and humans into deep-time trajectories, limiting alternative social and ecological pathways.

Short Bio:

Mette Løvschal is a professor of archaeology at Aarhus University and Moesgaard. She investigates landscape changes and the deep time shaping of anthropogenic nature, including how extensive, communally owned landscapes such as heathlands and pastures emerged and were maintained throughout prehistory. She is included in Krak's Blue Book and has received Queen Margrethe II's Science Prize for her transdisciplinary research.

11:15 - 11:35

Ole Kastholm - With timely care? The ’sail-introduction paradox’ in Scandinavia

With timely care? The ’sail-introduction paradox’ in Scandinavia

By *Ole Kastholm, s*enior researcher at Roskilde Museum.

Abstract:

The introduction of sail technology in Scandinavia during the Late Germanic Iron Age is often referred to as inexplicably late. However, this transition was likely the result of a deliberate strategic shift by the societal elite, rather than reflecting a purely functional evolution. Beyond propulsion, the sail functioned as "power architecture," transforming open rowboats into towering vertical monuments that signalled royal presence and prestige from a distance. This transition required significant economic mobilization, as evidenced by the rise of specialized coastal sites for textile production. The mastery of wind power – an exotic and complex skill likely imported through elite networks – served to consolidate centralized royal power. By controlling the specialized knowledge and resources needed for sailing, early Scandinavian kings staged their authority through technological monumentality. This maritime breakthrough was fundamentally linked to the formative phase of the state, where the sail became a tangible expression of sovereign control and social hierarchy.

Short bio:

Ole Kastholm is a prehistoric archaeologist and senior researcher at ROMU – Roskilde Museum. His research spans the Late Iron Age and Bronze Age, with a special focus on maritime cultural landscapes, seafaring and boats. Furthermore, he works on the Late Iron Age elite residence of Lejre and its hinterland, currently through the research project “The Royal Residence of Lejre – Outside the Palisade”.

11:35 - 11:55

Jens Ulriksen - Landscapes of Production

Landscapes of Production

By *Jens Ulriksen.*

Abstract:

From the Germanic Iron Age and onwards the manufacturing of different types of materials and goods were not only practiced at rural farms and villages. Non-ferrous metal casting, bone-and-antler working, iron smithing and textile production were performed at specialized sites increasing in numbers during the second half of the 1. Millennium AD. While iron smithing and textile production continuously had a firm base in rural environments other crafts tended to be connected to specialized sites. Here, the archaeological evidence points to a specialization of iron working and textile production regarding both the quality and the scale during the Late Germanic Iron Age and the Viking Age. The specialized craftmanship was performed at coastal landing places, inland production sites and magnate´s residences reflecting a situation where exclusive craftmanship and specific raw materials were controlled by an elite.

Short bio:

Leder af Center for Vikingetidsstudier

Forskningsleder. Ph.D., Mag.art., forhistorisk arkæologi

Museum Sydøstdanmark

11:55 - 12:15

Laurine Albris - Landscape perceptions in a diachronic perspective - archaeology and toponymy

Landscape perceptions in a diachronic perspective - archaeology and toponymy

By *Sofie Laurine Albris.*

Abstract:

How were ideas, beliefs, and cultural practices connected to the landscape in prehistoric societies? These relationships can be studied through both archaeology and toponymy, disciplines that offer different perspectives on past landscapes. Archaeology informs us about the practical and material engagements while place names provide insights into communications about perceptions of areas and localities.

While each material presents their own methodological challenges, both are spatially anchored and thus allow us to gain locally founded perspectives on the ways people related to their surroundings.

Chronology remains a central issue: the ability to date both place names and archaeological contexts is critical for understanding activities at a site and reconstructing long-term developments. Terminology is another challenge, since associations between words and particular kinds of locations are seldom clear: Terminologies differed across regions and were subject to change over time. Many sites that appear significant in the archaeological record lack corresponding names, reflecting that a large number of names must have been lost.

Over the past three decades, archaeological discoveries have continuously offered evidence that inspire new understandings of toponymy. Sites and structures identified, especially through metal detecting and rescue excavations, increase possibilities for connecting onomastic and archaeological records.

Short bio:

Sofie Laurine Albris is tenure track assistant professor at the Saxo-Institute, University of Copenhagen. Her research engages with a range of themes related to social and cognitive aspects of past landscapes, and she has a PhD in the combination of archaeology and toponymy. She is PI of DFF Sapere Aude FORTIS-project, investigating fortifications and social organisation on Iron Age Bornholm.

12:15 - 12:35

Reflections and discussion

12:35 - 13:35

Lunch

13:35 - 14:05

Nicolo Dell’Unto (keynote) - From Digitisation to Interpretation: The Role of 3D Spatial Analysis in Archaeology

From Digitisation to Interpretation: The Role of 3D Spatial Analysis in Archaeology

By *Nicoló Dell’Unto* - Professor of Digital Archaeology at Lund University.

Abstract:

The past decade has been marked by a gradual yet profound transformation that continues to reshape archaeological practice. Well-financed digitisation campaigns, the creation of large-scale archives, and the proliferation of analytical tools have collectively generated unprecedented archaeological datasets. This transformation has been particularly evident in the field of archaeological spatial analysis, where advances in geospatial technologies and 3D visualisation have opened new interpretative pathways.

This presentation will reflect on the evolution of 3D spatial analysis in archaeology, examining how it has progressed from experimental applications to an indispensable part of archaeological research. Today, 3D recording and visualisation technologies are not only used in synergy with traditional archaeological methods but, in some cases, represent the primary means of developing archaeological interpretations.

Through a series of case studies, I will reflect upon the diverse ways in which 3D technologies are applied to document, analyse, and contextualise archaeological materials, sites, and landscapes. These examples will serve as a basis to discuss how digital approaches are transforming archaeological practice, while also inviting reflection on the challenges of sustaining and reusing archaeological data.

Short Bio:

Nicoló Dell’Unto is Professor of Digital Archaeology at Lund University, where he directs the Lund University Digital Archaeology Laboratory (DARKLab). His research focuses on 3D documentation and visualisation methods for archaeological field practice, data curation, and knowledge production. He has coordinated and contributed to numerous international and national research projects on digital archaeology, including the development of platforms for 3D data reuse, FAIR data practices, innovative digital infrastructures, as well as projects on landscape analysis and the use of AI in archaeology.

14:05 - 14:25

Greer Jarret - Textile seascapes - wool, sailmaking, and multiscalar mobility networks in the Viking Age

Textile seascapes - wool, sailmaking, and multiscalar mobility networks in the Viking Age

by *Greer Jarret*

Abstract:
Textile resources and crafts were an essential affordance of the viking diaspora. In Norway, sheep flocks used in wool production were often kept on small islands along the outer coast, requiring small-scale seafaring networks to access and transport textile resources. In this presentation, an example of such a network will be discussed in relation to broader mobility patterns during the Viking Age, and the role that the former had in shaping the latter. An experiment conducted in 2021-2022 investigating the assembling and transport of a flock old Norwegian sheep (*villsau*) will be recounted, and related to the broader networks of economy and power in Viking Age Trøndelag. Such nested systems serve as excellent case studies for understanding economic and social development during this period, creating practices, knowledge, and relationships that spanned the North Atlantic.

14:25 - 14:45

Morten Fischer Mortensen - Sailing through Time – Tracing the Roots of Nordic Seafaring through a Pollen Perspective

Sailing through Time – Tracing the Roots of Nordic Seafaring through a Pollen Perspective

By Morten Fischer Mortensen.

Abstract:

The origins of Nordic seafaring remain difficult to trace due to the fragmentary nature of direct archaeological evidence for early sailing vessels. To approach this question, we turn to the material foundations of seafaring technology — with a particular focus on *Cannabis sativa*, the key plant fibre used for ropes and rigging, which has so far received only limited attention in discussions of early Nordic seafaring, alongside timber for hulls and wool for sails.

Abundant *Cannabis* pollen in lake sediments is a well-established proxy for hemp retting, reflecting local use of hemp in rope and textile production. When found in well-dated sediment sequences, such pollen records provide unique insights into the timing, duration, and intensity of hemp-related activities.

In this study, we analyse a suite of pollen records from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark to identify periods of intensified hemp retting and to explore their potential correlation with the emergence and development of sailing technology in the Nordic region.

Short Bio:

Morten Fischer Mortensen is Professor MSO at the National Museum of Denmark, Department of Environmental Archaeology and Materials Science. His work explores the environments that have shaped human life and the resource areas available to past societies — what resources were present, how they were utilised, and how people engaged with their surrounding landscapes. Combining palaeoenvironmental data, archaeology, and natural science methods, his research seeks to understand how environmental change influenced subsistence, mobility, and cultural transformation in Northern Europe.

14:45 - 15:05

Morten Fischer Mortensen and Mette Marie Hald - Flax in Prehistoric Denmark – cultivation, use, and cultural significancea

Flax in Prehistoric Denmark – cultivation, use, and cultural significance

By Morten Fischer Mortensen and Mette Marie Hald

Archaeobotanical and archaeological evidence shows that flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) was cultivated in Denmark as early as the Neolithic period. The plant's versatility made it useful for food, oil production, and textile manufacture. A review of Danish finds reveals when and where flax was cultivated and, in some cases, how it was utilized.

From the beginning of the Pre-Roman Iron Age onwards, flax appears to have gained increasing importance as a textile crop and likely formed a key component of clothing and textile production. Finds of bundles of cleaned flax deposited in bogs also point to a ritual dimension in which textile production and sacrifice were intertwined. Altogether, the material indicates that flax was a central resource in prehistoric Denmark, where economy, technology, and symbolism were closely interwoven.

Short Bio:

Morten Fischer Mortensen is Professor MSO at the National Museum of Denmark, Department of Environmental Archaeology and Materials Science. His work explores the environments that have shaped human life and the resource areas available to past societies — what resources were present, how they were utilised, and how people engaged with their surrounding landscapes. Combining palaeoenvironmental data, archaeology, and natural science methods, his research seeks to understand how environmental change influenced subsistence, mobility, and cultural transformation in Northern Europe.

15:05 - 15:35

Coffee break

15:35 - 15:55

Martin Theuerkauf - Modelling Viking Age Landscapes from Pollen Data

Modelling Viking Age Landscapes from Pollen Data

By *Martin Theuerkauf.*

Abstract :

Pollen diagrams from lakes and peatlands can very well inform us about the timing and direction of vegetation changes in the past. They also can provide rough estimates about the overall vegetation composition in a region. However, because pollen is so well dispersed, even multiple pollen records cannot inform us about the pattern of the past vegetation and plant communities that existed. The Extended Downscaling Approach (EDA) addresses this limitation by testing for links between stable patterns in the landscape, such as the soil or relief pattern, and pollen data. It hence can reveal whether different plant species have been arranged in past landscapes in a similar pattern. Within the TRiVAL project, the approach has been applied in two different study regions in Denmark, Northern Zealand and the Limfjord area, and for multiple time slices if the Viking age and beyond. Particularly for the northern Zealand, the result show that land use intensity has not been uniform, but differed substantially across that region, partly in relation to soil patterns. Moreover, EDA application shows the overall degree of open versus forested vegetation, and changes in that ratio over time.

Short bio :

Martin Theuerkauf is a biologist and trained palynologist with a particular interest in an improved understanding and interpretation of pollen data. To this end Martin Theuerkauf uses and has developed quantitative approaches that aim to translate pollen data into past plant abundances. Within TRiVAL, his particular focus is on the reconstruction of patterns of the Viking age vegetation in r

15:55 - 16:25

Laura Viñas Caron (keynote) - Clothomics as a new approach to the study of archaeological textiles, raw materials and landscapes

Clothomics as a new approach to the study of archaeological textiles, raw materials and landscapes

By *Laura Viñas Caron*, postdoctoral researcher at the Globe Institute, UCPH.

Abstract:

Over the past decades, the range of scientific methods that contribute to the study of textile production has expanded dramatically. The emerging field of clothomics uses biomolecular techniques such as proteomics and genomics to study the raw materials used in textile production to further develop our knowledge about textiles, animal economies, trade routes or landscape use. By analysing ancient DNA and proteins, which generally survive better in the archaeological record, we can identify animal fibres but also provide new information on the domestication, management and refinement of animal species employed in textile production, like sheep. In combination with other methodologies like pollen or isotope analysis, we can shine light into past landscapes and their potential use for local animal herding and crop cultivation, as well as determine the provenance of raw materials and/or textiles. In all, clothomics offers the possibility to complement current methodologies and expand the questions that can be answered.

Short Bio:

Laura Viñas Caron is a postdoctoral researcher at the Globe Institute - University of Copenhagen - specialised in biomolecular archaeology. She combines ancient DNA, protein and isotope analysis to understand human-animal-environment interactions. Her work has revolved around the evolutionary history of domestic sheep, wool development and the use of animal products such as textiles, leather, fur and parchment in past societies.

16:25 - 16:45

Jonas Holm Jæger - Shearing through time: biomolecular perspectives on Late Iron Age and Viking Age sheep husbandry in Denmark

Shearing through time: biomolecular perspectives on Late Iron Age and Viking Age sheep husbandry in Denmark

By *Jonas Holm Jæger.*

Abstract:

In recent years, biomolecular archaeology has provided unique insights into past animal husbandry practices, offering new possibilities for exploring how people managed and exploited sheep. In this talk, I wish to present the results of a multiproxy study of Late Iron Age and Viking Age sheep husbandry in Denmark by integrating zooarchaeology, palaeoproteomics, ancient DNA, and stable isotope analyses of sheep remains from archaeological sites in Northern Jutland and Western Zealand. Together, these different lines of evidence point to a complex and regionally diverse picture of sheep husbandry practices. This study highlights the value of integrated biomolecular approaches for reconstructing the complex narratives of sheep husbandry, landscape, and craft production during the latter half of the first millennium AD.

Introduction:

Jonas Holm Jæger is a biomolecular archaeologist studying sheep husbandry during the Late Iron Age and Viking Age. His research combines zooarchaeology, palaeoproteomics, ancient DNA, and isotopic data to explore how people managed and exploited sheep. He is particularly interested in the connections between animal management, landscape use, and textile production.

16:45 - 17:05

Reflections and discussion

28 May

09:00 - 09:30

Morten Ravn (keynote) - Experimental Archaeology and the Mapping of Resource Landscapes: Shipbuilding in Late Viking Age Denmark

Experimental Archaeology and the Mapping of Resource Landscapes: Shipbuilding in Late Viking Age Denmark

By *Morten Ravn*, PhD - Senior researcher at the Viking Ship Museum in Denmark.

Abstract:

This keynote presentation examines how experimental archaeology can illuminate the resource landscapes that underpinned late Viking Age shipbuilding in Denmark. The construction and maintenance of ships—central to the authority of kings and magnates—depended on access to carefully selected raw materials. Oak was the dominant timber, yet its usefulness varied: tall, straight trees were needed for planking, while naturally curved wood was preferred for frame components. Such stringent requirements made suitable woodland resources highly valuable, requiring protection, regulation, and in some cases maybe even deliberate cultivation.

Resource procurement was deeply embedded within social and economic frameworks. Patron–client relations and local communities played essential roles in ensuring access, reflecting decentralized but cooperative systems of management. Place-names such as “snekke” suggest areas where timber was reserved specifically for shipbuilding, while pollen analyses and clearing-related names indicate landscapes where woodland was both exploited and preserved to secure appropriate materials.

By combining archaeological evidence, written sources, environmental data, and insights from ship reconstruction experiments, this study demonstrates how resource management strategies shaped not only the scale of shipbuilding but also the organization of war fleets. Shipbuilding thus offers a window into interactions between environment, society, and political power in the Viking Age.

Short bio:

Morten Ravn holds a Master’s degree in Archaeology from the University of Copenhagen (2008) and earned his PhD in 2014. He has been affiliated with the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde since 2002, where he currently serves as Senior Researcher. His research focuses primarily on naval warfare in the Viking Age, as well as on Viking Age shipbuilding and seafaring.

09:30 - 09:50

Pernille Foss and Eva Andersson Strand - How to study textile tools

What can textile tools tell us about textile production?

By *Eva Andersson* and *Pernille Foss.*

Abstract:

Textile tools are among the most frequent artefacts found in Viking Age settlement excavations. Previous studies of textile tools from this period show an increase in both the number and variety of wool combs, spindles with spindle whorls, and loom weights from warp-weighted looms.

Within the TRiVAL project, we have recorded more than 2,000 textile tools from 24 different sites, mainly spindle whorls and loom weights. Our focus has been on the function of the tools, as analyses can indicate what types of textiles were produced using specific tools. Furthermore, several new experiments have been carried out with reconstructed tools, focusing on plant fibres, which have provided new insights and perspectives on textile production.

Analyses of both textiles and tools suggest a shift in production practices, the creation of many new types of textiles, as well as the standardised production of high-quality textiles. The recording of the tools also demonstrates that not only the weaver or spinner, but also the toolmaker, possessed excellent skills and knowledge of how the tools should be made and used.

However, the experiments highlight the importance of incorporating craftspeople’ s skills and knowledge, their choices and traditions in using specific tools, as well as access to well-prepared raw materials. It is also clear that an induvial textile tool can generally be used to produce slightly different qualities of textiles, meaning that the analyses can only indicate a range of possible outcomes.

The question remains **,** what can textile tools tell us about textile production at a particular site and within a specific time, if all types of textiles can potentially be produced using all types of tools? To open this discussion, we will first present how the tools have been recorded in the TRiVAL project and then explore how they can be interpreted and why. Finally, we will include the role of the Viking Age spinner and weaver in the discussion.

09:50 - 10:10

Charlotte Rimstad - Viking Age textiles: Raw material, Production, Landscape

Viking Age textiles: Raw material, Production, Landscape

By *Charlotte Rimstad* - Project Senior Researcher, The National Museum of Denmark.

Abstract:

The Danish prehistoric material is favoured with many amazing textile finds, right from the complete outfits from the Bronze Age to garments of wool and skin from the Iron Age bog finds, which are easily recognized and understood. As opposed to this, Viking Age textiles are small and poorly preserved and need to be analysed from many different angles to make sense. Methods such as textile analysis, analyses of fibres, dyes and pollen and microstratigraphic analyses can help us determine which raw materials that were needed in the production, how these were prepared, spun and woven and perhaps even let us get a glimpse of how the textiles were used – either as clothing, household textiles or maybe sails. Also, experimental archaeology has helped us through the years to get a better understanding of the tactile and visual aspects of the Viking Age textiles. With a starting point in the textiles recorded in the TRiVAL project, *Textile Resources in Viking Age Landscapes*(TRiVAL), based at Centre for Textile Research (CTR), University of Copenhagen, this presentation will shed light on the possibilities and limitations of the Viking Age textile material in relation to the landscape resources of the period.

Short bio:

Charlotte Rimstad is an archaeologist and Project Senior Researcher at the National Museum of Denmark. She has worked primarily with Viking Age textiles, but also with textiles from the Medieval and Early modern Periods. Her focus is on analysis, textile biographies, clothing and identity.

10:10 - 10:30

Reflections and discussion

10:30 - 11:00

Coffee break

11:00 - 11:30

Ragnheiður Traustadóttir (keynote) - Economic Surplus and Trade at Viking Age Farms in Iceland

Economic Surplus and Trade at Viking Age Farms in Iceland

By *Ragnheiður Traustadóttir.*

Abstract:

This paper examines how textile production, resource management, and economic organisation were expressed across rural settlements in the Viking Age. By exploring the relationship between household production, surplus generation, and exchange, it reconsiders the economic foundations of Norse society and the role of farmsteads as dynamic units within wider trade networks.

The Viking Age farm at **Fjörður in Seyðisfjörður, East Iceland** , serves as a central case study. Recent excavations have revealed an exceptionally rich assemblage of artefacts, such as spindle whorls, loom weights, textile tools, imported goods, and substantial storage features, which offer new insights into the scale and character of production. Few contemporary Icelandic farms display comparable material wealth, or such a concentration of textile equipment, suggesting that Fjörður's output exceeded domestic needs and thus generated an economic surplus.

In comparison with newly excavated Icelandic farmsteads, Fjörður highlights the significant variation in production strategies and household economies during the Viking Age. When placed within the broader Norse world of the North Atlantic and Scandinavia, these discoveries contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how textile production, livestock management, and exchange systems shaped rural wealth and regional connectivity.

By foregrounding new archaeological data over later literary traditions, this study demonstrates how material evidence can reshape our understanding of the Viking Age economy. Fjörður is both distinctive and representative, and illustrates the central role of textile production in creating surplus, social distinction, and interregional interaction within the landscapes of Viking Age farming.

Short bio:

Ragnheiður Traustadóttir (RT) is an archaeologist and director of Antikva ehf. She has worked with the National Museum of Iceland and led major excavations across the country since the 1990s. From 2002 to 2013, she directed the Hólar Project, which included excavations at the bishop's seat, Kolkuós, and Keldudalur, while also running the archaeological field school at Hólar. The project was a collaboration between Hólar University College, the Skagafjörður Heritage Museum, and the National Museum of Iceland. Her current research at Fjörður in Seyðisfjörður, conducted under Antikva ehf., involves major excavations that have revealed Viking Age structures, burials, and remains extending up to the early 20th century, offering valuable insights into long-term settlement and production in the North Atlantic.

11:30 - 11:50

Nikolaj Wiuff Kristensen - Entrepreneurial villagers at Kirstinehøj, Amager: Flax, farming, fishing, foreign relations and hunting at sea

Entrepreneurial villagers at Kirstinehøj, Amager: Flax, farming, fishing, foreign relations and hunting at sea

By *Nikolaj Wulff Kristensen* - Archaeologist and curator at Kroppedal Museum.

Abstract:

Excavations at the site of Kirstinehøj revealed a Pre-Roman/Late Bronze Age settlement with large scale flax production, represented by 80-90 flax drying pits. Although the flax production was of great importance at the site, it was only part of a quite diverse production, which included common agriculture and animal husbandry, fishing, in addition to hunting at sea, for seals, swans and possibly even whales. Small scale iron handling has presumably taken place as well.

In addition to a quite extensive use of the surroundings for subsistence economical purposes, the vicinity to the Øresund Strait seems to have been advantageous for trading purposes.

In the vicinity of the village, a kettle hole revealed c. 25 flax retting pits, dendrochronological dated to the 9th and early 10th century AD. According to a row of datings, a new pit was dug each year. A significant effort was thus made to do the retting in pits instead of the much easier retting at a field. A number of wooden artifacts found at the site were interpreted as tools used in the flax production. These retting pits were likely dug by villagers from the nearby village called Tumi's Torp (Tømmerup), which might origin in the Viking Age, according to the place name.

Traces of flax production have now been recorded at 4-5 archaeological sites at Amager and flax production is also known from later historical sources. Generally flax production seems to have been relatively common in the Copenhagen region, through the ages. The production at the Pre-Roman/Late Bronze Age settlement of Kirstinehøj was, however, of an unusual extent.

Short Bio:

Nikolaj Wiuff Kristensen, archaeologist and curator at Kroppedal Museum. I am field leader of the excavations at Kirstinehøj. I primarily work in rescue archaeology, but have a strong interest in Viking Age research, especially subjects such as 'Conflict', 'Religion' and 'Production'.

11:50 - 12:10

Lone Gebauer Thomsen - Textile production at the coastal landing place Næs in Southern Zealand – an evaluation based on tool studies.

Textile production at the coastal landing place Næs in Southern Zealand – an evaluation based on tool studies.

By *Lone Gebauer Thomsen* - The Museum of Copenhagen.

Abstract:

The coastal landing place Næs, situated in a natural harbour on the east coast of Southern Zealand, was excavated more than 25 years ago, however, it is still one of the best documented sites with evidence of large-scale flax processing in the Late Iron Age and Viking Period in Denmark. A farm site consisting of a longhouse, smaller warehouses and pit houses was documented, but the most spectacular find was 57 wells and pits, of which most may have been used for retting flax, hemp and other plant fibers. An analysis of the textile tools such as needles, spindle whorls and loom weights also indicates that the production of textiles was on a much bigger scale than for the farm's own use. The results of the study lead to new questions: How was the textile production organized, who took part in the work and for how long, and who benefited from the surplus? And did all processes in the textile work chain from the growing of flax to the finished cloth take place at Næs?

Short bio:

Lone Gebauer Thomsen is a Danish archaeologist specialized in Iron and Viking Age studies with a special focus on tool studies, textile processing and the economic aspects of agrarian and workshop production in prehistoric societies. She works at the Museum of Copenhagen as find's coordinator at the Amaliegade project in charge of registering archaeological textiles dating to the 18th century.

12:10 - 12:30

Stella Macheridis - Zooarchaeological perspectives on sheep management and wool production in Viking Age Scania

Zooarchaeological perspectives on sheep management and wool production in Viking Age Scania
By *Stella Macheridis* - Researcher in Historical Osteology at Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University.

Abstract:

Sheep and their wool constituted resources of vital importance in Viking Age Scandinavia. How the sheep management was organised in relation to wool production is underexplored from a zooarchaeological perspective. With a focus on Scania in present-day southern Sweden, this presentation investigates the scale and focus of sheep husbandry in the Viking Age. Based on caprine bone frequencies and death age data from mandibles and teeth, it is argued that the general sheep management strategies were small-scale and that sheep products, including wool, meat and milk, were produced on a domestic level. Most sites probably produced excess meat, and probably also wool. Still, the wool production was not large-scale nor on a high level of specialisation, but made in conjunction to other production. It was smaller flocks with varying grazing backgrounds that contributed with wool to the wider socio-economic and political system. To contextualise the discussion, the Viking Age marketplace site Löddeköpinge acts as case study. Textile production was a key activity at this site. Multi-isotopic analyses on sheep mandibles show that sheep grazed on inland pastures of different kinds. Some graze on manured fields, while some may have grazed on meadows along rivers and lakes. The sheep derived from different flocks in the areas north and east of the site. Considering the marketplace function of Löddeköpinge, at least for the immediate region, the results show that sheep, and most likely also in vivo products as wool, were imported to the site and exchanged there, indicating the extent of the re-distributional system in this region.

Short bio:

Docent Stella Macheridis's research focusses on human-animal relationships on multiple scales from a zooarchaeological perspective. She has during the recent years delved in to animal husbandry in the Iron Age, with specific emphasis on sheep management and wool production. As a researcher, Stella is affiliated to the department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University. She holds a position as specialist in osteology at the contract archaeology firm Sydsvensk Arkeologi in Scania since 2021.

12:30 - 13:30

Lunch

13:30 - 13:50

Ulla Mannering - The Danish Iron and Viking Age Cloth Culture

The Danish Iron and Viking Age Cloth Culture

By *Ulla Mannering.*

Abstract:

The National Museum of Denmark possesses a very rich collection of almost intact prehistoric textiles made of wool and in few cases also plant fibres, and a variety of animal skin and leather objects retrieved from Danish burials and bogs. The largest and most complete collection of clothing items in skin materials and textiles belongs to the Early Iron Age (500 BCE to 400 CE). The finds from the Late Iron and Viking Ages (400 to 1050 CE) on the other hand reveals despite poorer preservation conditions important information about a new world of exotic and imported colorants and textile materials. The unique and comprehensive registration of almost 1500 years of prehistoric textile production and the development of the clothing design gives us an invaluable tool to describe and understand the Scandinavian Iron Age cloth culture.

Short bio:

Ulla Mannering holds a position as Research Professor MSO at the National Museum of Denmark and has responsibility for the unique Danish collection of archaeological textiles. UM has dedicated her research to the study of prehistoric cloth cultures, textile and clothing design and visual appearance, clothing iconography and reconstruction. Currently UM is PI of the research project, Textile Colours of the Viking Age, funded by the Independent Research Fund Denmark.

13:50 - 14:10

Tríona Sørensen - All in the same boat? Exploring sailing textiles from an experimental archaeological perspective

All in the same boat? Exploring sailing textiles from an experimental archaeological perspective

By *Tríona Sørensen* - Dr.phil and curator at the Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde.

Abstract:

Ships and boats represent the end product of the Viking Age landscapes of maritime production. From the wood, iron, tar and ropes, to the textiles required for the sails, and, not least, the clothing which protected people on board from the elements, ensuring survival at sea.

The issue of the material resources required to build these ships has long been a subject of experimental archaeological research at the Viking Ship Museum. To date, however, limited research has been conducted on the clothing required when sailing open vessels with little to no shelter on board, on the challenging waters of the Viking Age maritime routeways.

On the open sea, the individual ship becomes a physical landscape of its own and the practical insights which sailing them affords us can both illuminate the practicalities of Viking Age travel and identify areas for future research.

This paper will therefore investigate the issue of seafaring clothing from a slightly unusual perspective. Rather than focusing on archaeological textiles or historical sources, instead, the embodied knowledge acquired while sailing a 30m long reconstructed warship from Roskilde to Dublin will be applied to identifying and exploring the physical conditions faced when sailing an open vessel.

Short biography:

Tríona Sørensen is an Irish archaeologist educated at University College Dublin, where she specialised in experimental archaeology for both her MA and PhD. She has been working as a curator at the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde since 2014, with a focus on inter-disciplinary approaches to the full-scale reconstruction of Viking Age ship-finds, craft science and digital dissemination of experimental archaeological research.

14:10 - 14:30

Marianne Vedeler and Jan Bill - Woolen textiles and rope from Gokstad - tent or sail?

TBA

14:30 - 14:50

Eva Andersson Strand - Textile Resources in Viking Age Landscapes, TRiVAL

Textile Resources in Viking Age Landscapes, TRiVAL

By *Eva Andersson Strand* - PI in TRiVAL project, professor in Archaeology at the Saxo institute, UCPH and head of the UCPH School of Archaeology.

Abstract :

Understanding textile history is important for understanding how societies develop. Recently, scholars have shown more interest in how Viking Age landscapes were used, especially for production and trade. Additionally, during this period textile research has indicate that there was a growing need for sail cloth and sails, along with changes in the types of textiles and clothing made, as well as in the techniques and tools used.

To better understand the demand for textiles and how this affected the use of Danish landscapes and settlement patterns, 24 case studies have been carried out in Limfjorden and Zealand as part of the DFF project *Textile Resources in Viking Age Landscapes*. Furthermore, in the project, studies of animal remains, together with plant remains used for textiles and dyes, have provided new insights into how land was used in both farming and outland areas. Combined with new analyses of textiles, tools, and production sites, as well as results from tests of reconstructed textile tools, this research offers fresh perspectives on Viking Age textile craft, its organisation, and specialisation.

This presentation will outline the results and conclusions from the TRiVAL project. It will also discuss whether textiles or textile resources can be seen as indicators of large-scale production and land use, giving us new insights into the development of Viking Age society.

Short bio:

My research focuses on the economic, social, and cultural significance of textiles in ancient societies. I explore this by combining textile craft, analysis, and the study of tools and production processes, often in collaboration with craft specialists. My work also includes contextual studies, experimental archaeology, and digital approaches. By examining periods such as Viking Age Scandinavia, I aim to deepen our understanding of textiles, their production, and the people behind them, and to show how textile resources and production can provide new insights into the development of Viking Age society.

14:50 - 15:10

Reflections and discussion

15:10 - 15:40

Coffee Break

15:40 - 16:40

Step into the Landscapes of Textile Production – A Unique Fashion Show

Today, there is a clear focus on the sustainability of textiles and textile production, as well as the resources consumed in the process. For example, it is calculated how much water is required to cultivate cotton, and we are increasingly aware that materials such as polyester are harmful to the environment, chemical dyes pollute our water systems and fast fashion is a major problem for the world.

But how much do we know about the use of resources and materials in the ancient past? How much can we calculate from the evidence available to us? How can this knowledge be used in an interpretation of past societies

In this Fashion Show, we will present ancient costumes representing Bronze Age Egypt/Sudan, Hallstatt, Austria, as well as prehistoric Denmark including the Viking Age. These garments have been reconstructed by textile archaeologists and crafted by skilled textile craftspeople. During the event, we will not only showcase the design of these costumes but also share insights into the time and material consumption, resources and tools required, and the skills and expertise needed to produce them.

17:00 - 18:30

Textile hands on activities at Centre for Textile Research UCPH

Following the Fashion Show, we will demonstrate various textile techniques which have been used to produce the costumes, and all participants will have the opportunity to try them for themselves.

19:00 - 21:00

Conference dinner

Please remember to register.

29 May

09:00 - 09:30

Susanna Harris (keynote) - Must Farm: textile production landscapes of the Late Bronze Age

Must Farm: textile production landscapes of the Late Bronze Age

By *Susanna Harris*, University of Glasgow

Abstract:

The fibres and fabrics of Must Farm pile-dwelling settlement provide a unique insight into textile production landscapes of the Late Bronze Age in Britain. Caught in the blaze when the settlement burnt down in 850 BCE, charred stores of plant fibre, prepared yarn, cordage, folded textiles, twining, nets, loom weights and spindles all fell into the water channel beneath the pile-dwelling platform. To investigate the significance of these finds the post-excavation project combined artefact studies, textile analysis, fibre characterisation, spatial distribution plots, dye analysis, technical illustration, digital imaging, functional analysis of textiles tools, botanical studies and visual reconstructions. The research team's skills enabled a detailed analysis of the excavation site to understand the *chaîne opératoire* of the plant fibre assemblage at a household and settlement level. The remarkable preservation at Must Farm site provides the opportunity to reconsider Late Bronze Age sites across Britain without organic remains, where textile production is represented by ceramic tools and fibre agriculture. In this way, the interdisciplinary results of Must Farm allow a wider revaluation of landscapes of fibre and textile production in the Late Bronze Age.

Short bio:

Dr Susanna Harris is Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Glasgow. A specialist in archaeological textiles, her aim is to raise the profile of textile evidence to a level comparable with their social importance, rather than with their rare survival. Harris has published widely on ancient textiles. She recently led the fibre and fabric analysis of Must Farm, Bronze Age pile-dwelling settlement with Cambridge Archaeological Unit, Forterra and Historic England. Harris is Co-Investigator on the AHRC Project 'Unwrapping the Galloway Hoard' Award Reference AH/T012218/1. PI Dr Martin Goldberg, National Museums Scotland. She holds Royal Society of Edinburgh Personal Fellowship 3733 'Uncovering Scotland's Earliest Textiles'.

09:30 - 09:50

Louise Felding - Landscapes of Textile Production in the Nordic Bronze Age – a South Jutland Perspective

Landscapes of Textile Production in the Nordic Bronze Age – a South Jutland Perspective

By *Louise Felding,* Vejlemuseerne (presenter), *Laura Vinas Caron*, Globe - UCPH and Lilian Matthes, Museum Sønderjylland.

Abstract:

Through a multi-proxy approach, we seek to explore sheep husbandry in South Jutland in the Bronze Age (c. 1700 – 500 BCE) with the overall aim to investigate when domestic wool production began in Denmark. We combine landscape studies with contextual archaeological data and cutting-edge molecular analyses such as proteomics and a-dna of sheep bone.

In our landscape study we apply the principles of Historic Landscape Characterisation in which data from historical maps, archaeological records, geological models, pollen and palaeobotanical analyses are synthesised into GIS layers, enabling an assessment of the conditions for settlement, cultivation, and animal husbandry in South Jutland. In addition to this, we integrate the genomic results of bronze age sheep bone with existing fibre analyses of Nordic Bronze Age textiles and in this way seek to assess whether a local wool production is likely and if Nordic Bronze Age sheep could have produced wool of the quality we see in the oak-coffin garments. Overall, we wish to address the question: *Does the nature of the landscape in combination with archaeological and molecular data from the period support the likelihood that local sheep husbandry with significant wool production existed in Southern Jutland during the Bronze Age?*

(The presented work is part of the project Får, dragt og landskab // Sheep Wool and Landscape, supported by the Augustinus Kulturarvspulje and Brdr. Hartmann Fond).

Short Bio:

Louise Felding's research focus lies within the Nordic Bronze Age, especially the topics of gender, mobility, and landscapes. She is employed at Vejlemuseerne where she is currently PI on two research projects. One investigating gender ideology and power in the Nordic Bronze Age and another investigating the origins of domestic wool production.

09:50 - 10:10

Sigrid Vinje-Christensen - Textile production in Migration Period Rogaland

Textile production in Migration Period Rogaland
by *Sigrid Vinje-Christensen*, PhD Candidate at the Museum of Archaeology in Stavanger

Abstract:

The region of Rogaland on the West coast of Norway is rich in archaeological finds from Migration Period (c. 400-550 CE). Amongst these finds are settlement sites, textile tools and a few unique textiles. During this period, there is an expansion in both population growth and landscape use. For this reason, this area and period is well suited for studying the link between textile production and farming society.

It is important to study the distribution of textile tools in the landscape because this can inform on the landscape use. The study of landscape use can subsequently inform on sheep husbandry practices. Both landscape use and sheep husbandry are important factors of the textile production. Underpinning good quality textiles is high quality wool, produced by well bred, well fed and well-treated sheep.

In this talk I will present an overview of textiles, tools and settlements found in Rogaland and present some preliminary results in my work to connect sheep husbandry and textile production in Migration Period Rogaland.

Short bio:

Sigrid Vinje-Christensen is a PhD candidate at the Museum of Archaeology in Stavanger. Her work is on the textile production in Early Iron Age Rogaland, with a focus on Migration Period. In addition to textile research, she is interested in Human-Animal Studies and multispecies interactions in archaeology.

10:10 - 10:40 **Coffee break**

10:40 - 11:10 **Karina Grömer and Kayleigh Saunderson (keynote) - Understanding textile landscapes. Case studies from Iron Age and Early Medieval Central Europe**

Understanding textile landscapes. Case studies from Iron Age and Early Medieval Central Europe

By *Karina Grömer* and *Kayleigh Saunderson*, ArchTextLab, Natural History Museum Vienna

Abstract:

Research on textiles, textile tools and items of clothing generally focuses on the social, economic and cultural relevance of textiles and textile production for the respective societies in different time periods. In the last decades, textile archaeology was among the fields of research in archaeology, that was fostered in the course of large international, interdisciplinary and innovative research projects. Thus, the collection of basic data, and the abundance of publications on archaeological textiles from Europe also demonstrates the high level of standardisation of methods, innovative approaches and integration of the latest interdisciplinary methodologies.

At the Textile Research Group at the Natural History Museum studies in an interdisciplinary and integrative approach, textile landscapes and textile cultures – such as the Iron Age, the Roman Period and the Early Middle Ages in Central Europe. On-site studies, regional and supra-regional research with big data analysis results in long-duree views and changes over time, but also on our understanding of regional differences within a certain time-slice. What are the textile techniques and the textile design principles in certain geographical regions and time periods? For this, the case studies on Iron Age and Migration period textile landscapes in Europe are of interest, e.g. discussion different “textile expressions” e.g. by Bajuvarians and Avars in the 6^{th} and 7^{th} century CE.

11:10 - 11:30 **Tereza Stolcová - Textile finds and tools from Iron Age Slovakia: Evidence from the Hallstatt and La Tène periods**

Textile finds and tools from Iron Age Slovakia: Evidence from the Hallstatt and La Tène periods

By *Tereza Štolcová*, Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Nitra, Slovakia.

Abstract:

The territory of Slovakia offers important yet limited evidence for textile production during the Iron Age. In the Hallstatt period (ca. 8th–5th cent. BC), direct textile remains are rare, but large assemblages of spindle whorls and loom weights from fortified and lowland settlements such as Smolenice-Molpír and Dunajská Lužná provide insights into organised household and possibly specialised spinning and weaving activities. Interdisciplinary reconstructions of warp-weighted looms based on these finds demonstrate the technical possibilities and scale of production.

By contrast, the La Tène period (ca. 5th–1st cent. BC) yields a richer corpus of mineralised textiles preserved on metal grave goods, especially in south-western Slovakia. These include tabbies and twills, as well as unique embroidered fragments from Nové Zámky, which provide rare insights into decoration and clothing codes of Celtic communities. Textiles were used not only for garments and ritual wrappings, but also reused and recycled, indicating multiple functions.

The combined study of textile remains and tools highlights technological choices, cultural contacts, and the social role of textiles in Iron Age Central Europe. This presentation summarises results of the past two decades, placing Slovak finds within a broader European framework.

Short bio:

Mgr. Tereza Štolcová, PhD. specialises in prehistoric and early medieval textiles and textile tools from Slovakia in a broader European context, with a focus on interdisciplinarity and modern methods. Since 2006, she has studied the textile and leather finds from the 4th-century Germanic princely tomb at Poprad-Matejovce, co-authored the exhibition The Prince of Poprad and His Tomb, and has been contributing to its monographic series.

11:30 - 12:00 **Margarita Gleba (keynote) - Continuity and Change in Textile Landscapes of Italy from prehistory to the Roman Era**

Continuity and Change in Textile Landscapes of Italy from prehistory to the Roman Era

By *Margarita Gleba* (Department of Cultural Heritage, University of Padua, Italy)

Abstract :

Drawing on the recent and ongoing interdisciplinary projects investigating prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman textile production across Italy, the paper aims to explore textile landscapes of the Apennine Peninsula across time and space. The focus will be in flax and sheep wool as the two major textile fibres that impacted the past Italian landscape since prehistory. Various case studies taking advantage of the combined use of archaeology, archaeological science, landscape studies and experimental approaches will be used to trace the landscape impact of these two fundamental textile fibres from the Neolithic period until the Roman era. Among the major transformations that would have had an impact on the landscape are the transition from flax to wool during the Bronze Age and the change from splicing to spinning flax in the middle of the Iron Age.

Short bio :

Margarita Gleba is an archaeologist specialising in pre- and protohistory of the Mediterranean region, archaeology of textiles and other organic materials, and the use of scientific methods in archaeology. She has a PhD in Classical and Near eastern Archaeology from Bryn Mawr College (USA) and has worked at the Centre for Textile Research at the University Copenhagen, the Institute of Archaeology at the University College London, the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the Cambridge University in the UK, and Institut für Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie und Provinzialrömische Archäologie at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in Germany. She is currently an Associate Professor in Archaeological research methodologies at the Department of Cultural Heritage, University of Padua.

12:00 - 12:10 **Reflections and discussion**

12:10 - 13:00 **Lunch**

13:00 - 13:30 **Marie-Louise Nosch (keynote) - Landscapes of Textile Production in Mycenaean Greece according to the Toponyms and Ethnic Designations**

Landscapes of Textile Production in Mycenaean Greece according to the Toponyms and Ethnic Designations

By *Marie-Louise Nosch*

Abstract:

The Linear B tablets in Mycenaean Greek contain rich data on Bronze Age textile production, from animal husbandry of sheep and goats, cultivation of flax, madder, safflower, and saffron, to villages and workgroups engaged in textile production for the Mycenaean palaces. All these activities are associated with a toponym or an ethnic designation. Some of them are well-known, such as Amnisos, Kydonia, or Knossos in Crete, or Pylos in Messenia; others are unknown and may designate small localities or villages. It was observed a generation ago that these toponyms appear in clusters and that there is a partial overlap with other clusters of toponyms related to grain cultivation. It seems, therefore, that the clustering of toponyms mirrors both the administrative organization as well as agricultural and environmental conditions for shepherding and crops. The toponyms mirror the landscapes of textile production. Women and children engaged in the palace-controlled textile manufacture are also designated by place-names, mostly places within the kingdom, but some are also designated by ethnic designations from Asia Minor, which suggest migrant textile workers.

Short Bio:

Marie-Louise Nosch is a professor in ancient Greek history at the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen and former director of the Centre for Textile Research. She carries out research on textiles and clothing in the ancient economy and society.

13:30 - 13:50 **Chiara Spinazzi-Luchesi - Deir el-Medina in Context: Textile Production in Egypt during the New Kingdom**

Deir el-Medina in Context: Textile Production in Egypt during the New Kingdom

By *Chiara Spinazzi-Lucchesi*

Abstract:

Deir el-Medina represents a unique case study for investigating textile production in New Kingdom Egypt. Archaeological evidence from the site includes a remarkable number of spinning tools, suggesting that textile work played a significant role in the daily lives of its inhabitants. At the same time, the corpus of preserved textiles associated with the village is surprisingly homogeneous, raising questions about the nature and scope of production, and about the relationship between tools, practices, and material output. This apparent discrepancy provides an opportunity to reassess textile activities within the broader economic and social framework of the community.

By considering both the archaeological remains and the socio-economic context of Deir el-Medina, this paper explores whether textile work was primarily domestic, supplementary to other forms of labour, or connected to wider redistributive systems of the New Kingdom state. Situating the evidence in its context highlights the need to integrate material culture, textual sources, and experimental archaeology in order to understand not only how textiles were produced, but also how they contributed to the construction of social and economic landscapes.

Short Bio:

Chiara Spinazzi-Lucchesi is a researcher specialised in textile tools and textiles from Ancient Egypt. She worked on textile tools from Egypt and the Levant for her PhD and conducted a Marie Sklodowska Curie project at the Centre for Textile Research on textile production in New Kingdom Egypt and a postdoc on a unique assemblage of textiles in the National Museum of Denmark.

13:50 - 14:10

Elsa Yvanez - Reconstructing the botanical landscape of textile production along the Middle Nile valley

Reconstructing the botanical landscape of textile production along the Middle Nile valley

By *Elsa Yvanez, Mohammed Nasreldein,* and *Magdalena M. Wozniak*

Abstract:

Sudan has long been considered as a “corridor to Africa”, connecting the Mediterranean basin to sub-Saharan Africa. This holds true in terms of textile production, which displays at different periods a blend of raw materials and techniques known from the Levant to the Horn of Africa. However, more than the sum of outside influences, textile production in Sudan was embedded in truly local dynamics that combined the demands of a unique environment with specific social imperatives.

Attention has been given in the past few years to animal resources and associated pastoralist practices, but little is known about plant resources beyond the use of domestic flax and cotton. Could this be hiding a wider range of plant fibres, gathered in different regions and/or ecosystems? Beyond fibres, how can we add information about local tinctorial plants? This paper will present the ongoing work of the Fashioning Sudan project* on the plant resources harnessed to produce textiles and garments. To build our reference collection for the Middle Nile valley, we are collecting data from a wider range of local plants, with nearly forty cultivated and wild species newly identified as possible purveyors of weaving fibres among rural communities. Merging this ethnobotanical approach with textile archaeology, we will attempt to reconstruct the ancient botanical landscape of textile production and advocate for the necessity to extend our enquiries to wild plants and traditional crafts to build more representative knowledge.

*Fashioning Sudan. Archaeology of dress along the Middle Nile (ERC StG 101039416)

Short bio:

Elsa Yvanez is associate professor of textile archaeology at the University of Copenhagen and head of the Centre for Textile Research, where she is currently leading the ERC project Fashioning Sudan, archaeology of dress along the Middle Nile.

Magdalena M. Wozniak is an archaeologist specialized in the textile production and dress practices of Medieval Nubia. She is participating in several projects and excavation teams, including the Fashioning Sudan (CTR/UCPH) and Costumes of Authority projects (PCMA/University of Warsaw).

Mohammed Nasreldein is an archaeobotanist who recently obtained his PhD from Tübingen university. He specializes in the use of plants during the Medieval and Early Modern periods in Sudan, highlighting how cultural, religious, and economic shifts impacted usage of both wild and domesticated crops.

14:10 - 14:30

Final discussion

14:30 - 16:00

After Conference Bar