

TEA

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dedicated to

Willem J. H. Willems

(19 July 1950 – 13 December 2014)



expression of concerns occupying varied social fields. Three strategies were identified as being maintained across the LBK: internal complexity, monumentalization and lack of variation.

Penny Bickle ended the session by returning to Levi-Strauss's concept of house societies and debated its applicability to early and middle Neolithic contexts. After evaluating the context in which 'house societies' was first conceived, the author argued that the model has useful potential for reframing households as a dynamic and varied part of social organization in the Neolithic, rather than static and unchanging.

The session presented not only new directions for research, but also a number of particular themes arose that warrant further discussion. Two particular themes stood out: the significant variability between households in LBK and post-LBK contexts, and in what way the relationships between material remains and the practices from which they arose can be adequately modelled. We hope to continue discussion at the EAA conference in Glasgow, but widening the scope to other regions of Europe during the Neolithic, with a view to publishing an edited volume on the topic.

Textiles in a social context. Textile production in Europe and the Mediterranean in the 4th and 3rd millennia BCE

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VOR- UND
FRÜHGESCHICHTLICHE
ARCHÄOLOGIE

Research on prehistoric and ancient textiles has recently gained increasing interest in the scholarship and by now it belongs to one of the most rapidly developing research fields. While the main focus has frequently been put on technical analyses of ancient textile remains and on typological aspects of textile tools, the main aim of the session was to explore the social context and cultural aspects of the textile manufacture by presenting new research on textiles in various areas of Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, based on archaeological, ethnographical, textual, iconographic, and experimental evidence.

The focus was on the 4th and 3rd millennia in Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. During this period crucial developments and changes in fibre use occurred, notably the animal fibres, like the so-called hairy and woolly sheep wool, goat hair, and others, which in turn influenced changes in textile tools and techniques. During the Late Neolithic, Copper and especially the Early Bronze Age (EBA), textile production achieved a considerably high level of advanced craftsmanship and local standardization, with a wide range of spun fibres and fabrics woven in various techniques. Stone and clay loom weights, spindle whorls and other textile implements, like metal and bone needles, became common and widespread, but some fundamental improvements and changes continued to occur. Influences and adaptations from neighbouring and distant areas and cultures can also be traced in textile industries during the EBA. This subsequently had a strong impact on social and economic aspects of textile production. By this point, textile industry seems to already belong to the most important activities in the Near East, while raw materials and finished products became main products of exchange and trade, as is evident for example in the archives in Ebla and Ur. New adopted fibres, as well as techniques of spinning and weaving, must have been of

fundamental importance for both local communities and external contacts, as they directly influenced the quality and quantities of produced textiles and cloths.

The session comprised eighteen oral and three poster presentations. Altogether, 25 authors from 14 countries were involved in the session. It was divided into five sections: Methodology; Anatolia and the Levant; the Aegean; the Carpathian Basin and the Balkans; Poster session.

Session co-organiser Lorenz Rahmstorf began with an introduction summarizing various approaches used to investigate ancient textile production: ethnographic, iconographic, textual, material-topologic, contextual and experimental. These approaches should be combined in order to explore this ancient craft. In the Methodology section, Eva Andersson Strand discussed ways of approaching textile production without preserved textiles or tools. We can better assess textile production and seek new interpretations about this invisible ancient craft with the help of archaeological, ethnographic and experimental studies. Susan Möller-Wiering presented the important, yet still understudied research field of textile impressions and imprints. Impressions of textiles are frequently the only visible traces of prehistoric cloth and basketry. Tests including different variables, and evaluating processes based on comparing the impressions with the original textiles, offer a very useful and practical tool for studying prehistoric textile imprints. Eva Wigforss confronted us with the famous find of the Iceman from the Ötztal Alps, who surprisingly did not wear any woven textiles, but only skins and plant cloth. She used this example as a starting point for a discussion about regional and social variations in plant fibre technology, and the spread of textile techniques in Europe around 3500 BC.

In the section on Anatolia and Levant Ali Umut Türkcan presented Neolithic Anatolian stamp “seals” (mainly from Çatalhöyük) and their possible use in textile production. The small sizes of the objects would fit well with the production of narrow linen strips and decorative borders on larger textiles. They were found in contexts with spindle whorls indicating domestic activities associated with textile production. Orit Shamir presented textiles and textile tools from the Chalcolithic Southern Levant. Many examples of textiles superbly preserved in natural caves in the Judean Desert show that textile craft achieved a high level of craftsmanship already in the 5th-4th millennia BC. The only fibre used in this area until the Middle Bronze Age was flax. The splicing technique was common in the Neolithic and the EBA. Christopher Britsch and Barbara Horejs explored textile production in Western Anatolia in the 4th and 3rd millennia BC. They focused on spindle whorls, loom weights, needles, awls and combs from the still ongoing excavations at Çukuriçi Höyük, and from other contemporary sites in Western Anatolia and the Eastern Aegean. They analysed changes and continuities in tool inventories, in order to demonstrate the importance and the social impact of textile production. The paper of Romina Laurito was devoted to textile manufacture at Arslantepe in Turkey during the 4th and 3rd millennia BC. Precisely dated textile tools from various archaeological contexts allow us to investigate specialized textile crafts. Spinning and weaving tools and techniques were discussed to conclude that absence of textile implements and the appearance of new tools are always related to specific social and cultural contexts. Luca Peyronel dedicated his contribution to secondary urbanisation and textile industry in the EBA Northern Levant. Using epigraphic and archaeological evidence from Ebla, the manufacture of textiles from various socio-economic contexts was discussed. Both in large urban centres, where textile production was controlled by the public administration, and in smaller communities, woollen textiles were essential everyday-live products and important means of exchange at various socio-economic levels.

In the third section, on the Aegean, Kalliope Sarri focused on iconographic evidence from Neolithic Greece. She argued that geometric patterns depicted on vessels, seals and figurines reflect actual woven patterns, and that they represent a mutual transfer between various media of household crafts. Joanne Cutler examined the Cretan Neolithic and EBA evidence for the production of cloth. She discussed both technological and social aspects using archaeological evidence (textile tools) supported by recent advances in experimental archaeology to reconstruct the types of textiles made with specific tools. Małgorzata Siennicka presented archaeological evidence from the EBA Southern Greece. Textile tools reflect broader cultural changes during this period visible in the assemblages from Lerna and

Tiryns. Various kinds of plant and animal fibres, and a broad range of yarns and textiles that could have been produced in prehistoric Greece were discussed. The contribution of Sophia Vakritzi was devoted to yarn production on the Aegean islands in the EBA. According to her, spindle whorls can be interpreted as technological and cultural markers of yarn and textile production. Moreover, they can provide evidence for the organization and the scale of production on the local level. In the last paper of the section, Agata Ulanowska discussed the use of specialized band looms for weaving bands and starting borders in the Aegean. She investigated iconographical evidence, like wall paintings and glyptics, which she compared with technical analyses of patterned bands and starting borders made on a loom with a rigid heddle. She suggested that this implement, though not materially preserved, may have been used as one of the band looms as early as the Bronze Age.

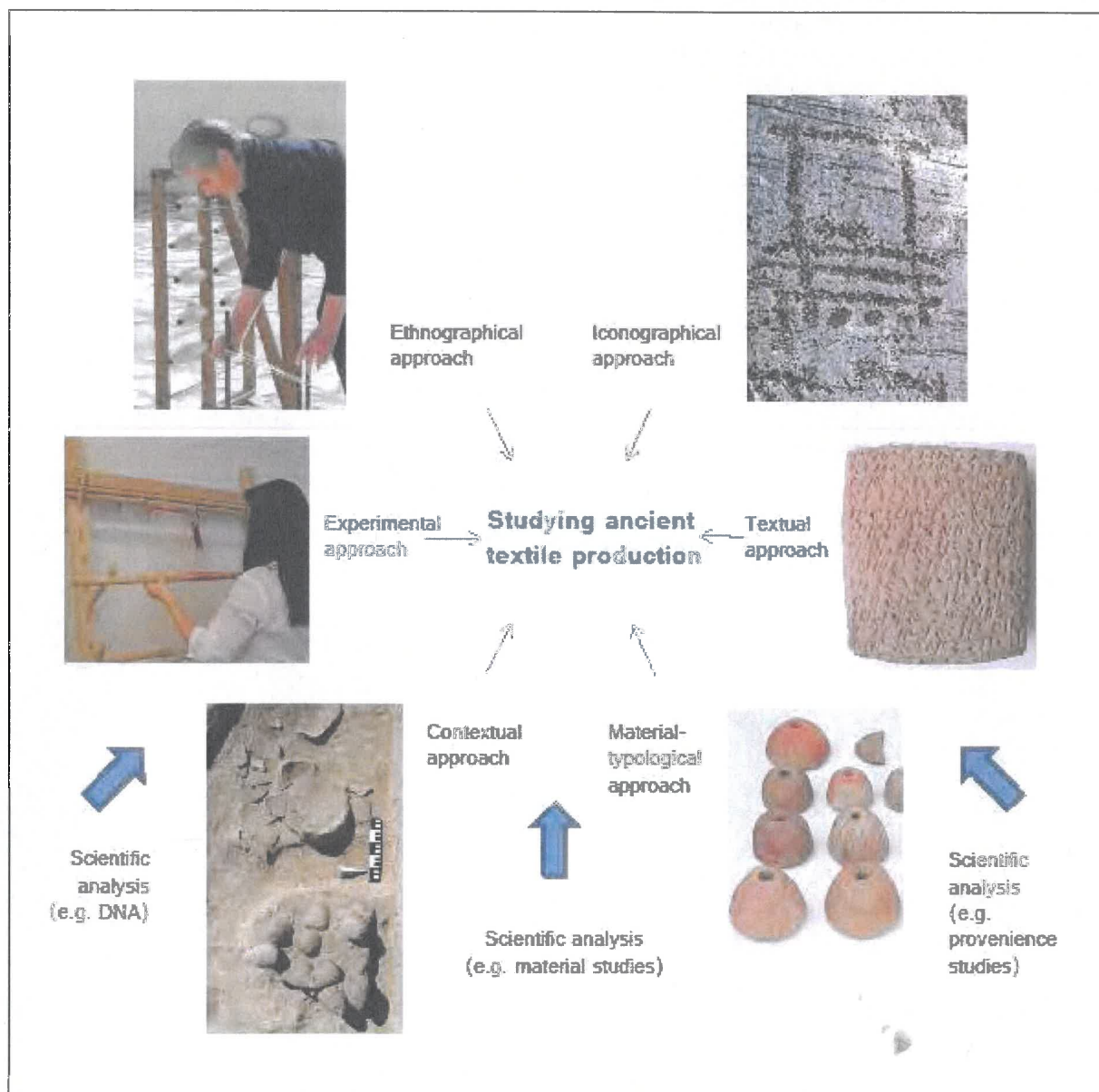


Fig. 1: Approaches to the study of ancient textile production according to Lorenz Rahmstorf (Credits: Ethnographic Museum of Arachova, Greece; Archive of the Italian Archaeological Excavation in Eastern Anatolia – Sapienza University of Rome; Katarzyna Żebrowska; Lorenz Rahmstorf; Małgorzata Siennicka).

The last section of the session considered the evidence for textile production in the Carpathian Basin and the Balkans. Tomasz Jacek Chmielewski suggested that the major Eneolithic innovations in textile manufacture in South-Eastern and Central Europe occurred

in the Sălcuța-Krivodol-Bubanji Hum-Maliq complex of the 5th and 4th millennia BC. In the initial phase, spinning and weaving belonged to an array of prestigious technologies. He suggested a spread to Central Europe during this period. The paper of Petya Hristova discussed textile tools and other implements possibly associated with textile manufacture during the Late Neolithic and EBA in Bulgaria. She argued that at that time multimedia workshops and cross-craft interaction emerged, with textiles playing a crucial role. Ana Grabundzija presented preliminary results of her on-going Ph.D. project on textile tools and the introduction of the woolly sheep in the Central and South-East Europe, where she focuses on the question to what extent technological changes in textile tools and techniques mirror the introduction and use of new raw materials. In a joint paper Neculai Bolohan, Cirpian Lazanu and Paula Mazăre introduced the extraordinary find of a mineralized woven structure (dimensions: 4.90 x 2.90 m) from a burial tumulus of the EBA in Eastern Romania, possibly remains of a burial veil. The last paper of the session by Vanya Petrova was devoted to important changes in technology (weaving on a warp-weighted loom) and the organisation of textile production in the EBA, which were associated with major cultural and social transformations during the 3rd millennium BC.

Three posters were presented in a short poster session. Untypical textile tools from Bulgaria (Todor Valchev), woven fabrics in the Andronov costume (Emma Usmanova) and semantic web ontologies for ancient textile production (Frank Lynam) were introduced.

The papers presented in the session covered a large number of themes and approaches displaying the many so far still understudied topics of prehistoric textile production. The session achieved its main goal of bringing together textile researchers working on different regions to discuss the social context of this fundamental craft.

The session organizers would like to thank all speakers and session participants for presenting exciting new research and engaging in inspiring discussion. We plan to publish the papers from the session (with the proceedings of the forthcoming conference *First Textiles* http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/economy/first_textiles/) in a peer-reviewed volume in the *Ancient Textiles Series*, Oxbow.

“A crystal formed of necessity” – Gifts, goods and money: The role of exchange in processes of social transformation

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This morning session explored the role of exchange networks as an agent of social change: what happens when new objects are introduced into a system, or when existing objects go out of use? Can we tell whether objects shifted between different spheres of exchange, for instance from commodity to prestige item? And how does this relate to situations of change and upheaval in general, such as collapses, crises or the emergence of new polities and social constellations?

Arne Windler (Bochum) began the session with a general overview of exchange systems as described and modelled in social anthropology. He usefully reminded us that celebrated case studies, such as the oft-quoted Kula exchange, are only ever parts of much larger sets of relations, which include commercial aspects as well as highly formalised encounters. For his case study of *Spondylus* exchange in the Neolithic of south-eastern Europe, Windler could show a trend towards progressive commodification at sites like Durankulak, where the ‘prestige’ function of shells was increasingly taken on by new goods such as metal ornaments.