

Enclosed and buried surfaces as key sources of information in Archaeology and Earth Sciences applied to Archaeology

The session “From microprobe to spatial analysis – Enclosed and buried surfaces as key sources in Archaeology and Pedology” was organized by Prof. Dr. J. Völkel (Universität Regensburg¹), Dr. M. Leopold (Universität Regensburg²), Drs. K. Fechner (RooTS³/ INRAP⁴) & Y. Devos (RooTS/ Université libre de Bruxelles⁵) in the context of the general theme “Archaeology and Material Culture: Interpreting the Archaeological Culture” of this year’s EAA annual meeting.

It was motivated by recent successful collaborations between archaeologists and soil scientists on enclosures of proto- and historical sites. Besides purely archaeological presentations on enclosures or other well delimited anthropogenic contexts, the session has focused on the results of analyses of sediments and soils (field parameter, physico-chemical analysis, micromorphology, scanning electron microscopy, geophysics, etc.).

On one hand the talks and posters concerned walls, ramparts or burial mounds that can protect the soils and the surfaces over long periods, as illustrated e.g. by the sites of Mansching, Sallach and Poign in southern Germany (Leopold & Völkel; Hoffmann *et al.*). As the general cultural development often destroys parts of the original surface by erosion, overbuilding or forcible demolition, well defined and unaffected activity zones (agrarian, funeral, sacred, etc.) within sites are heavily searched by archaeology and soil science and deliver important changes in the archaeological interpretation of the concerned sites.

On the other hand, scraped surfaces of enclosures of Neolithic to Roman houses and enclosures, without such exceptional protection, can under some conditions also be better interpreted by special approaches as mapping by phosphate-analyses (talk of Fechner *et al.*; Rouppert *et al.*) or by geophysics (e.g. Sallach & Poign in Southern Germany: Leopold & Völkel, Hoffmann *et al.*; Besançon in Eastern France and different sites in the Paris Basin: David & Fechner).

The interest of paralysing archaeological results and natural sciences including, especially, pollen analyses, was discussed by Raab *et al.* and by Fercoq du Leslay. This gave birth to further discussions on how to differentiate natural and man-made impacts in the results provided by pollen data.

A special focus was put on the so-called “Viereckschanzen”, here all associated with settlement sites, with the exception of the cultural site of Ribemont-sur-Ancre (Fercoq du Leslay). But presentations also concerned the research of the precise setting and recognition of gardens, cattle spaces, as well as particular domestic, handicraft, sacral and funerary micro-zones, in rural and (proto-) urban contexts (especially in Northern France: Malrain & Blancquaert; Prilau & Jacques; Rouppert *et al.*, for both La Tène and Roman enclosures; two posters of Fechner *et al.*, for Neolithic to Roman buildings; posters of Devos *et al.* and David & Fechner for Bronze Age to Modern agricultural and settlement contexts).

This multi-proxy session with contributions from Germany, Belgium, France and Great Britain and methodological contributions from many other countries (e.g. by Helen Lewis and discussions with people in the assembly) permitted to confront different results and approaches (talk of Devos *et al.*). So did the discussions that showed that there was until now a certain lack of homogenisation between different approaches to identical problems. It seems that the session succeeded in - at least- initiating a deeper knowledge of different possible approaches and interpretations, so as to better differentiate different types of protohistoric and

historic human occupations, their buildings, their surfaces and soils. A publication as a volume of the British Archaeological Report has been decided and launched. In the meantime, one can refer to the extensive summaries in the abstracts' volume of the congress of Cracow.

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