

## Call for papers EAA 2015:

### Consumption Preferences and Agricultural Choices: an economic approach to identity in archaeobotany

The session will be held at the EAA 2015 conference in Glasgow, 2.-5. September. Papers can be submitted via the EAA website (<http://eaaglasgow2015.com/>) from the 19<sup>th</sup> December on.

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Archaeobotany focuses foremost on production and consumption of all kinds of plants. Two concepts borrowed from economic anthropology promise new insights: agricultural choices and consumption preferences.

What archaeologists see as markers of identity are traces of consumption practices which can also be interpreted in terms of consumption preferences: individuals sharing material culture may often consume the same things. Actual consumption is what an agent may practice under the given natural and societal circumstances. A hierarchical order represents the agent's priorities of goods according to their assumed utility, for instance preferring white flour to rye porridge, and porridge to acorn.

Agricultural choices aim at evaluating the efficacy of producing certain cultigens. The choice is always from practices pooled from a societal repository. The assumed utility of the choice depends on one's consumption preferences.

These preferences and practices form identity, be it of internal or external origins. This is obvious for food preferences: high prestige as well as daily food is used to make clear social distinctions, communities are created and maintained by ritual food sharing, and ethno-linguistic groups may be defined by an actual or assumed fondness for certain foods. Fibre and dyeing plants are essential for costume and for adding paint to the body as well as to artefacts; these important consumption preferences are thus closely linked to notions of identity. Agricultural practices reproduce identities through associated daily activities: there is often no real difference in the performance of various harvesting techniques, whilst several practices may exist side by side. Some tasks may be taboo for one group or another according to gender, age, religion or ethnicity. Classes may be divided by consumption. Invited are all contributions to issues of identity in archaeobotany. We invite especially evidence-based papers focused on consumption preferences and agricultural choices. Please feel free to contact Jutta Lechterbeck.