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Food, Drink and Culinary Practices in ancient times

WP 4 – Dialogue with skills

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Introduction and Evaluation

- Welcome and Thank you!
- The Workshop is divided into a practical part (outside, with the possibility for discussions and tasting) and into a more theoretical part (with presentations and discussions; first version of a recipe book)

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Introduction and Evaluation

- The workshop includes food-preparation skills and techniques in different ancient times (Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman Times, Medieval Times) in Europe
- All information is linked to our recent food-practices, modern attitudes and behaviour

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- A questionnaire for experts in prehistoric cooking has been sent round before the workshop (we got 7 answers from OpenArch-partners and external experts)
- In Albersdorf we have also experiences with food-preparation (bread-baking, tea-making, use of herbs, external courses etc.)

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Introduction and Evaluation

Results of the Evaluation of the Questionnaire:

1. What are the specifics?
 - Mostly only as demonstrations,
 - Often on special occasions,
 - Cooking with different foods (than usual),
 - Cooking in temporary „kitchens“/displays

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Introduction and Evaluation

1. What are the specifics?
 - The results are focused on dissemination and effectiveness (not the whole long-lasting process demonstrated),
 - The recipes are generally taken from the period presented in the OAM

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2. Which problems are existing (preparation)?

- Getting the „correct“ ingredients,
- Very little knowledge about „real“ menus,
- Cooking takes a lot of time,
- A lot of work has to be prepared before,
- Hygienic control

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2. Which problems are existing (practical)?
- Visitors are interested in tasting (generally not allowed for hygienic reasons in all countries/possibility: do not sell the food, but make it a private event, like birthday);
 - Preparing and cooking is (generally) not very interesting for the audience

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2. Which problems are existing (practical)?

- Running several different activities at the same time (good organisation),
- Having time control on it (good timing as key issue),
- Different expectations of visitors
- Weather (...)

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3. Health and safety?

- Freshness of the (rare/expensive) ingredients,
- In most OAM's the food is not (officially) offered because of law restrictions,
- Mark out a clear boundary for the public (dangerous fire place, hot stones etc.)

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3. Health and safety?

- Safety measures limit the scientific rigor (fireproof-gloves, plastic bowls etc.),
- Sometimes the work for the educational staff is very unhealthy (smoke, sharp tools etc.)

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4. Difficulties to get ingredients?

- This is a question for all OAM's
(rare, expensive, time consuming – not a problem when using modern ingredients),
- Sometimes the usable food makes the theme of the presentation (esp. with meat).

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5. Obligations and Restrictions?

- Very strict laws in all (European) Countries, you have to prepare food in professional kitchens

(so it is more or less impossible to offer a real prehistoric menu ...)

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6. Relation to nowadays food (sustainability)?
- Question of rubbish „now and then“,
 - (complete) Use of animal and plant material,
 - Discussion about the differences between ancient and modern times (technologies, ingredients, bread-shape etc.),

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6. Relation to nowadays food (sustainability)?
- Little information/discussion about sustainability questions at OAM's
(exception in Great Britain: meat, indigenous communities, sustainable harvesting of wild resources, import/export, seasonality, slave trade, spice routes, idea of „fair trade“ etc.)

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7. Other special problems/items?

- Lack of information about ancient food (exception: Roman times),
- Prehistoric cooking is a way to get more aware about your own food and its healthiness (incl. sicknesses etc.)

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7. Other special problems/items?

- Prehistoric cooking is a good way to explain research on archaeobotanics and archaeozoology;
- „Isolation“ of cooking-staff in AOAM´s (sometimes no help from colleagues, „not serious“, „women´s work“, ...).

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Concluding remarks:

- The ideas, problems and restrictions about prehistoric cooking in AOAM's are comparable in all European countries
- The database for every prehistoric period is not good (exception: Roman times).

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Results from the questions:

1. Practical and interesting Demonstrations from the presented period (authenticity, special regional features, key strength); prehistoric cooking is useful and important for mediation to the public!

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Results from the questions:

2. Prehistoric cooking is very time consuming, needs a lot of (time) management and is (sometimes) expensive; it can – in most cases – only be used for demonstrations.

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Introduction and Evaluation

Results from the questions:

3. and 5. Health and safety (for the audience and for the educational staff) has to be handled very strict (by law) – it is important to communicate this to the visitors;
conclusion: a „real prehistoric“ menu is not possible to make (and especially to offer).

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Introduction and Evaluation

Results from the questions:

4. There are difficulties to get the correct ingredients; the use of modern ingredients can make it easier – but this has to be communicated (openly) to the public!

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Results from the questions:

6. Great possibilities for the AOAM's to get in actual discussions in their work, which are extremely relevant for the public – sustainability in all its facets!

(Here we can learn obviously from the British colleagues!)

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Introduction and Evaluation

Results from the questions:

7. Prehistoric cooking give a practical possibility to explain scientific research in a vivid and easy understandable way; in some AOAM's the difficulties and challenges of this important educational work has to be explained for the colleagues (more internal communication needed!)

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**Thank you very much
for your attention!**

Are there any questions?

Dr. Rüdiger Kelm

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