



EAA Theme 1. The Material Record: Current Trends and Future Directions

Session #932 Continuity and change in the wagons and chariots of later prehistoric Europe and Eurasia

Session organizers: Sabine REINHOLD (Germany) sabine_reinhold@dainst.de

Co-Organisers: Nathalie-Cécile GINOUX (France) nathalie.ginoux@sorbonne-universite.fr, Benik Vardanyan (Armenia), vbenik@yahoo.com, Laurent Olivier (France), laurent.olivier@culture.gouv.fr, Melanie Giles (United Kingdom), Melanie.Giles@manchester.ac.uk

Chariotry is a daring and dramatic aspect of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age life which emerges out of a much longer tradition of wagonry. These captivating assemblages offer unique insights into the transformation of relationships between people, animals and material culture: transforming speed and mobility by compressing time and space. They also quickly become a symbol not just of socio-political power but ritual authority.

This session encourages speakers to present old and new case studies, particularly from the last 25 years, which expand our knowledge of wheeled vehicles. It will include the uniquely preserved chariots found together with four-wheeled wagons in the Late Bronze Age necropolis of Lchashen (Armenia): a watershed moment in the history of wheeled transport. It will also present examples from Iron Age Europe, where two-wheeled chariots began to replace the Hallstatt traditions of four-wheeled wagons by the 5th-early 4th century BCE. Yet our session will argue for a more polychronic approach to wheeled vehicles that challenges neat sequences of cultural change in terms of 'transformission' effects: legacies and traditions that are passed on while being transformed, rather than representing a linear continuum of practice. We thus welcome papers that examine wagons and chariots from different perspectives: co-existence and persistence of technical knowledge, changes in social meaning and value, critically exploring both long distance cultural contacts as well as local craft traditions.

We also encourage presentations on the representation and symbolism of wheeled vehicles, with examples that encompass not just spectacular burials but 'everyday' wagons and draught vehicles. Our session thus aims to debate the ways in which wheeled vehicles transformed agricultural as well as socio-political practice, empowering and distilling fundamental ideas about prestige and personality but also shaping deeper cosmological and eschatological beliefs, including journeys into death.