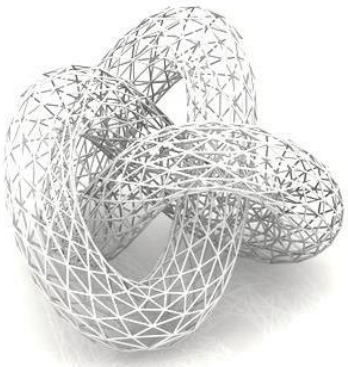

SESSION AT THE 22ND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EAA

31ST AUGUST – 4TH SEPTEMBER 2016, VILNIUS

UNTOLD STORIES: TECHNOLOGY, LINEARITY AND COMPLEXITY IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL THOUGHT

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SESSION ABSTRACT

The material record naturally lends itself to long-term perspectives. In few areas is this as apparent as the study of technology, which has historically been closely intertwined with the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology. But has our focus on the long-term caused us to unwittingly shape a unilinear, technologically deterministic picture of the past? And is there something to be learnt from the parts of the story which have been pruned from this evolutionist model?

The papers presented in this session will explore examples of how our pattern-seeking approaches have excluded interesting aspects of the story of the relationship between humanity and technology, and the methods by which we can reinstate these. We argue in favour of complexity (but not as a rule); of the little details which can enrich or subvert archaeological grand narratives, while acknowledging that the latter are also an integral part of our discipline.

This session is intended to stimulate discussion of our current approaches to the archaeology of technology, and to consider ways in which they can be developed in order to inform broader theoretical and methodological developments.

PAPERS COULD:

- Focus on specific case studies, examples of technological 'dead-ends' or of seemingly surprising archaeological findings, which might alter the dominant picture of technology
- Be broader, theoretical papers which attempt to grapple with one or more aspect of the session theme, from any position (i.e. we are happy to consider papers which disagree with our suggestions!)
- Be methodological in bent. For example, different ways of interpreting 'traditional' chemical or archaeological datasets
- Examine the question of technology from philosophical, or theoretical archaeological perspectives

Deadline 15th Feb 2016. Submit an abstract at http://eaavilnius2016.lt/