

AU ARTS

MCH SEMINAR

Thursday September 8th

Phytoliths in Archaeology:

case studies from Neolithic Sudan and Viking Age Denmark. Lecture by Dr. Welmoed Out (Moesgård Museum), with comments by René Enevold and/or Felix Riede. – AU Moesgård, Foredragssalen 14.00-16.00 (4206-139).

What are phytoliths? How can they be used in Archaeology, and how can they complement other archaeobotanical methods? This lecture will start with an introduction about phytoliths, followed by two case studies. The first case study concerns an example from Neolithic Sudan. Because of the scarcity of seeds and fruits in the archaeological record and the availability of a more solid archaeozoological data set, the Neolithic in the Sudanese Nile valley (ca. 6000/5000-3000 cal BC), following non-agricultural, ceramic Mesolithic societies is often characterized as having been

centred on pastoralism. Recently, phytolith and starch data from the Early and Middle Neolithic cemeteries of R12 and Ghaba have however been able to provide a new perspective on the plant subsistence and burial ceremony of the relevant communities. The second case study concerns phytoliths from a Viking age horse burial (ryttergrav) at Fregerslev, excavated by Skanderborg Museum in cooperation with Moesgaard Museum.