

Zeitschrift: Itinera : Beiheft zur Schweizerischen Zeitschrift für Geschichte = supplément de la Revue suisse d'histoire = supplemento della Rivista storica svizzera

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Geschichte

Band: 39 (2016)

Vorwort: Foreword

Autor: Sørensen, Claus Frederik

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 01.10.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Foreword

Claus Frederik Sørensen

The goal of experimental research has always been to use the static data of artifacts, written sources and pictorial evidence to create a dynamic interpretation of their function and use. In other words: we strive for knowledge that broadens our understanding of the past's material culture. It is therefore also of great importance for the field of research in general that such results are published.

The main themes of this book: martial arts, weapons and horsemanship may on paper seem like niche research that only is of interest for a few specialized researchers and enthusiasts. Such is however not the case as long as the process includes serious contextual analysis of both the objects and results. It then becomes clear that the results can deepen our understanding of society's social issues, trends and developments. The results will thus be important pieces in the puzzle posed by past societies.

Among people working with history, both in museums and universities, the value of experimental research is being acknowledged more and more. To better understand the source material/material culture historians and archaeologists are now beginning to work seriously with the subject and also work together with some of the enthusiastic people that have been doing such for many years. In combining practical experience and craftsmanship with archaeological/historical hypotheses, theory and method, the experiments are finally beginning to gain ground as serious scientific knowledge building.

The fascination of material culture, artifacts and how they were used and functioned in the past is not something new and has fascinated people for many centuries. What is new is a scientific approach to the many projects being conducted. These were often undertaken out of simple curiosity without serious data gathering and analyzes combined with hypothetical questions. However, in combination with lacking of written record of the projects or proper publication of the results (if any), it is often so, that far too many projects have been forgotten or made inaccessible.

As experimental research slowly becomes more and more recognized within academic circles so does the need for theory and method. There can be no doubt that these experiments will always be considered testable hypotheses and that one can never achieve a 100% proof match replication of the past. But as more and more applies theory and method, it becomes easier to recognize the difference between strong and weak research experiments.

It must also be recognized that when one talks about experimental research, it is not something that one can just do. It is often a necessity that the actors have worked with the subject for many years and have extensive practical experience with the artifacts used in order to perform the experiments properly. This is perhaps the area where academic researchers and enthusiasts can learn the most from each other and together create cutting-edge research.