

Editorial

This item is almost otiose in an issue which should appear together with at least one other.

May we remind you, *however*, that material for subsequent issues is always welcome. We no longer have 'copy deadlines'—it's easier for us to deal with papers as they come in and produce an issue when there is enough material to fill it.

The copy in this and issue 8(2) has nearly all been provided on computer floppy-disk and it has made production very much easier. Files were sent on Amstrad PCW disks in LocoScript, and on PC 3.5" and 5.25" disks in WordStar and WordPerfect. We should be able to read documents written in Word and some other word-processing formats; the most intractable problem is the format of the disk which (apart from Amstrad PCW) must be readable on an IBM-compatible PC. It should also be possible for us to read documents from Macintosh computers, but it is probably best to confirm with the Editors before sending electronic copy to us. We still need hard copy, of course, for reading and refereeing.

Readers may have noticed the insinuation into *Circaea* of a *Short Contributions* section. This has been adopted in order to encourage the submission of short or rather informal pieces which would not sit happily elsewhere, but which merit publication for some reason or another. We will be fairly catholic with regard to the content, but note that we also intend to introduce a *Notes and Queries* section. This should be a place for simple announcements of the discovery of unusual taxa or the illustration of mystery objects. Items of this kind have been published in *Circaea* in the past under the now defunct *Miscellany* heading.

On the subject of past issues, may we advise that some are now effectively out of print, especially vol. 2 (2) and (3) and the whole of vol. 3? Although we reprinted some parts of vol. 1 many years ago, the cost of reprinting early issues would now be prohibitive unless we were assured of a substantial demand.

This issue includes two short contributions arising from a bone taphonomy workshop held at the University of York in September 1991; further papers will appear in the next issue of *Circaea*.

Conference Reports

The wetland revolution in prehistory

This was the title given to a conference held at Exeter University under the auspices of the Prehistoric Society and WARP (Wetland Archaeology Research Project) on April 5–7th, 1991. First of all, full marks to Bryony Coles and her team for organisation, accurate maps, spot-on timing, very comfortable and supportive hall of residence, etc. All the speakers turned up, with the exception of two Estonians, and they ranged from the interesting to the fascinating. It was exceedingly international, with only five British speakers, and the subjects of two of these were early agriculture in Latin America and New Guinea (Professor Harris and Dr Bayliss-Smith). John Evans had a more theoretical subject and John Coles summed up, leaving only Francis Pryor with a British site (he was the only speaker common to this and the AEA's wetland conference held in Norwich in 1986).

Some people objected to the conference title, pointing out that wetland archaeology really started a long time ago in Switzerland, but the only reference to this came in the account of a commemorative exhibition held in Zurich, given by Dr Ruoff in a suitable post-prandial style. There were two major fires at this exhibition which defeated the local fire brigade, but it was well insured and the accidents converted into useful experiments.

North America was well represented (particularly at question time). On the north-west coast they excavate by power-hose, revealing villages completely buried by mud-slides (Professor Croes). In Florida they have to contend with site developers who make ours in Britain seem like angelic conservationists; one of them thought it a huge joke to have the bulldozed bodies (not just skeletons, whole bodies) of 58 individuals in his spoil heap. Other, more conscientious citizens, who offer recently unearthed canoes and the like to Dr Purdy and her team at the University of Florida, can only be asked to put them back where they found them, as conservation funds will only cover the superb carved wooden works of art which are also found in large quantities.

Finance is a problem nearly everywhere. Dr Goren-Inbar struggles on a hand-to-mouth

basis with an Acheulian site on the River Jordan, complete with *Elephas antiquus*, which has strata tilted to 45° by subsequent tectonic movements. There is little prospect of further work, let alone publication, in Poland, apart from the tourist attraction of Biskupin (Drs Brzezinski, Piotowski and Newiarowski). Dr Andersen is fortunate to have the services of amateur divers in Denmark (sounds of approval from Andrew Selkirk). Dr Andersen trained the only speaker with adequate finance, Mr Matsui from Japan, where there is a full-time team carrying out rescue excavations by the thousand. A coffer-dam has been built to allow the excavation of a lake-bed site at Asoka, where there are many tons of food deposits.

Wetland excavators must, of necessity, pay more attention to the environmental sciences than some of their dry-land colleagues. However, they remind me of Winston Churchill's dictum that scientists should be on tap and not on top when they casually refer to 'our botanist' and 'getting the dendro done' (an honourable exception was Francis Pryor).

Europe did get a bit of a look in. There were interesting sites in North Germany (Dr Gramsch) and on the Seine (double act by the brothers Mourant). Dr Dolukanov demonstrated the coincidence of many Russian epipalaeolithic sites with the shores of glacial lakes, in a paper which I thought the most impressive of the meeting. The Irish have formed their own wetland group, and have found a number of trackways (Dr Rafferty), but whatever happened to the Dutch, who only managed to field a chairman of a session?

All in all, this was a most enjoyable and informative weekend. AEA members were not in evidence, though some Sheffield students were. WARP is an interesting organisation; some of its members are WAVES (Wetland Archaeology Volunteer Environmental ... I didn't get what the S stood for!). They seem to take life less seriously than the Prehistoric Society, to judge by their logo, a delightful little man in a coracle, with a basketwork hat, drawn by John Coles.

Reviewer: **Barbara Noddle**
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Biological anthropology and the study of ancient Egypt

This colloquium, held at the British Museum, London, in July 1990, was sponsored by the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at the museum and the Bioanthropology Foundation, Sausalito, California. The first two days covered a variety of topics concerned with physical anthropology, while the final day was devoted to bioarchaeology (zoology and botany). Although the geographic and cultural theme was ancient Egypt, studies from other regions illustrated approaches which could be usefully applied. The final session was an appraisal of bioanthropology in general for the study of ancient Egypt.

Groups of human remains

The first papers discussed skeletons, from whole populations of varying dates in Sudanese Nubia (Prof. George Armelagos, University of Florida), to a specific group of four skeletons buried close together in Abusir (Eugen Strouhal, National Museum, Prague). These studies concentrated on the relationships between individuals, using the information which each yielded to make broader deductions about the group. Comparisons between skeletal material and grave goods from Naga-ed-Dêr were made to discuss burial practices (Patricia Podzorski, Lowie Museum). Dr Simon Hillson and W. A. Scott (Institute of Archaeology, London) illustrated a new statistical model for describing the range of variation within a population, using ancient skulls from Sedment (9th Dynasty) and Badari (predynastic).

Incidence of disease and injury and their effect on individuals and populations was discussed by several participants. The diseases looked at in detail were: tuberculosis (Dr Jane Buikstra, University of Chicago), schistosomiasis (Dr Robert Miller, University of Cambridge), and cranial injuries of Canary Islanders (Drs Martin, Anton and Gonzalez, Tenerife), while a survey of incomplete ancient Nubian remains excavated early this century from Aswan covered a variety of rather gruesome ills and injuries (Theya Molleson, Natural History Museum, London). In the course of this session, Corinne Duhig described the very large collection of ancient Egyptian human remains held at Cambridge, and appealed for investigators to come forward to study them.

Categories of evidence from human remains

Dr Benson Harer (San Bernadino) began the second day with a well-presented overview of health in ancient Egypt. The next two papers dealt with dental evidence. These were a general discussion of dental anthropology (Prof. Jerome Rose, University of Arkansas), and an interesting study relating tooth development to growth (Simon Hillson, again). Prof. Fawzia Hussein (National Research Centre, Cairo) presented a reassessment of the controversial skeletal remains which some have thought to be those of Akhnaten (tomb 55, Valley of the Kings). She concluded that the bones are not those of the so-called heretic pharaoh.

The remainder of the day was given over to Dr Svante Pääbo (University of California), Drs Robert Hedges and Robin Sykes (University of Oxford) and J. H. Goudsmit (University of Amsterdam) who discussed a (then) relatively new field: the study of ancient DNA. These were challenging presentations for the non-specialist. Nonetheless, the speakers made clear both that this technique is still very much in the process of development, and that DNA analysis will be a valuable tool for many of the questions which are asked about human remains.

Zooarchaeology and archaeobotany

The first session on the last day illustrated the range of techniques which can be applied to the study of archaeobotany. Taking advantage of the excellent preservation in Egypt, combined with modern collecting work, a survey is being compiled of the development of Egypt's flora, through the Holocene to the present day. This valuable work is under the direction of Dr Nabil el-Hadidi (Herbarium, University of Cairo). Drs John Edmonson and Piotr Bienkowski (Liverpool Museum) followed with the results of a chemical analysis, a technique only recently used in archaeobotany, to identify essential oils from a Graeco-Roman funeral wreath. The final paper of the morning was presented by Alan Clapham (University of Cambridge) on the wide-ranging goals for archaeobotanical research which can be applied to a settlement site.

Bioarchaeological case studies made up the second session. A wealth of animal remains in graves and village contexts from Kerma has

allowed some fascinating cultural conclusions (Dr Louis Chaix, Natural History Museum, Geneva). The next two papers looked at the preliminary work on the archaeobotany (Mary Ann Murray) and zooarchaeology (Dr Barbara Ghaleb, both Institute of Archaeology, London) of Memphis. Finally, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of bread and beer in ancient Egypt was described by this reviewer (University of Cambridge).

Final appraisal

A theoretical paper (Friedrich Rösing, University of Ulm) and a deliberately provocative discussion by field director Dr Mark Horton (University of Oxford) presented two very different overviews. As with all the papers, these provoked questions and comments, although Horton's sparked particularly lively debate.

Several themes emerged over the three days of presentation, and these were further developed during the final discussion. Many people emphasised the need to apply standards to data recovery, recording and analysis. This is a prerequisite for cross-comparison between sites, otherwise it is difficult for any individual study to be set in a wider context. However, before broad comparisons can be made, it is essential to establish the range of variability within populations or assemblages of biological material. It was suggested that physical anthropologists should concentrate on small local populations, before trying to compare widely-dispersed individuals or groups. Much attention was given to the problem of ageing human remains, and the desirability of conducting a study of an ancient and documented population as was done for bodies in the crypt at Christchurch Spitalfields, London. However, this leads to another problem: the frequent lack of suitable material available for study and the difficulty of post-excavation research on Egyptian material.

It is unusual to find the broad spectrum of bioanthropology presented in one conference, and valuable for those attending to hear of work which is normally outside their immediate reference. As the colloquium progressed, it became clear that information exchange amongst project participants is crucial. Breadth of outlook was strongly advocated throughout the meeting. After such

a stimulating discussion, it is good to hear that the colloquium will be published. Speed is aimed for, particularly because the field is changing so rapidly.

Reviewer: **Delwen Samuel**, Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3DZ, U.K.

Review of the fifth Institute of Field Archaeologists Conference, April 1991

This was my inaugural IFA meeting. It promised a range of papers on diverse subjects from the traditional (the Iron Age) through methodology (research design and report preparation) to the more ethereal (visions of archaeology). The meeting was, as always, held in the University of Birmingham, this time concurrently with major structural repairs to the Howarth building, where most sessions were given.

Inevitably only a selection of sessions could be attended and, failing to discover the role of archaeology in Green politics during the first session of the trendily titled 'The Green Debate: What Place Archaeology?', I moved to the pertinent session on research designs in archaeology. Coming from the relatively protected environment of archaeology in York I had been under the illusion that most projects were preceded by at least a rudimentary research design, based on discussion with specialists and subject to reappraisal as necessary. Apparently not so, as Andrew Lawson, speaking in place of Peter Chowne, illustrated. Most speakers stressed the importance of planning for contingencies, and retaining an element of fluidity and formulation of appropriate questions for post-excavation analysis. It was gratifying to find that at last the importance of assessment of material during excavation, and immediately subsequent to it, is being recognised as important by the archaeological community. *Archaeology and Planning* (DoE 1990; 'PPG 16') was recognised as the document providing the impetus for the rationalisation and improved presentation of research designs. Research Priority, it seems, has replaced Rescue as the catch phrase for the 1990s.

Sir David Wilson gave the requisite witty post-dinner speech, accompanied by

unspeakable wine (where do some universities buy their wine from?), and alcohol flowed freely afterwards (to drown out the earlier sample). Rumour has it that in past years the bars have run dry early, but fortunately a contingency bar was set up. Despite the brisk walk from the hall of residence to the lecture theatres next morning, the session (on burial archaeology) was entirely appropriate to the fragile condition of the participants.

The attitudes and roles of the Home Office, church, coroner, and the law to the discovery, study and disposal of skeletal remains were discussed by representatives from the various bodies. The results of a questionnaire circulated by Charlotte Roberts and Jacquie McKinley had shown how woefully ignorant of the procedures most archaeologists were. It was refreshing to see non-archaeologists contributing to an archaeological conference, and all speakers were entertaining. Francis Green ended the session with a paper on the ramifications following on from his father being buried beneath a tandoori restaurant!

Perhaps it was the hangover, but the session on the Iron Age seemed to the uninitiated to say very little new, several papers reworking old interpretations concerning hillforts and their role in society. J. D. Hill provided the only contentious paper in the sessions I attended, attacking Cunliffe's interpretation of Danebury. Unfortunately Professor Cunliffe was not present to enliven the debate. Are archaeologists becoming more conventional?

The evening's drink and disco entertainment followed an evening dinner up to the usual University of Birmingham catering standard. All conference attendees should be warned about the food and advised to seek an alternative venue, unless nostalgic to relive the experience of school dinners. For the price charged for over-salted and over-cooked offerings one could enjoy a three-course restaurant meal either locally or in the centre of Birmingham itself.

The session on 'Environmental Archaeology: Integration or Specialisation?' began at 9.00 am on the final morning. Admirably organised and chaired by Mark Maltby and Mike Allen, questions of how to integrate environmental reports with other aspects of archaeology, and what audience to target, were addressed.

Although it was encouraging to see environmental archaeology assume a frontline

role in an archaeological conference, the subject matter was equally relevant to all aspects of archaeological publication. Papers by Mike Allen and Sebastian Payne emphasised the need to target reports to the intended audience. Successful integration requires continuous involvement of all participants in the report from the conception of the research design through to final production of the report. Selectivity of information for publication was stressed by a number of speakers, along with the need to resist urges to impress colleagues with one's grasp of up-to-the-minute jargon and terminology, and by presenting pages of raw data. Sebastian Payne argued for presentation of only as much data as was required for the validity of interpretations to be judged. Julie Gardener, for the Council for British Archaeology, aimed to curb over-enthusiastic report writers by pointing out the costs of producing data-heavy reports, and of correcting errors spotted after submission. Technical terminology and Latin names are clearly a turn-off as far as publishers and the wider British audience are concerned. However as Martin Jones pointed out, reports should also be understandable to an international audience, to whom imprecise common equivalents to scientific names may be incomprehensible. The problem of where to store the raw data and results which were not required in the text was discussed at length, but not surprisingly no firm conclusions were reached. As a first move—at least for those working for/with English Heritage—it was suggested that cheap paper copies of technical reports not submitted as Ancient Monuments Laboratory reports could be circulated to interested colleagues. Perhaps the Association for Environmental Archaeology could support this move and circulate lists of available reports?

One of the highlights of the conference was meant to be a session on 'Archaeology and Politicians'. Being politicians, the speakers did not turn up at the originally specified time, so the session was moved to a slot running parallel with that on Environmental Archaeology. Consequently most AEA members present, including myself, did not attend, so I cannot report.

The IFA, unlike the AEA, does not arrange site trips for its members. Perhaps it should be suggested?

The IFA annual conference is not just open to members and, to judge from the badges worn (red = member, blue = non-member) a fairly even mix attended. The cost ranges according to income and, of course, residential status. Assuming non-residential status, it can work out reasonably cheap. If nothing else it provides a useful way of meeting a wide range of archaeologists informally, and contacts between different sub-disciplines can only be a 'good thing'. Sessions concerning biological concerns within archaeology must help erode traditionally perceived barriers between specialists and field archaeologists, and I hope that environmental archaeology will assume an increasingly high profile.

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Short contributions

A question of scale: Material in cave ash from Arene Candide, Italy, was not textile

Introduction

Meetings of the Association for Environmental Archaeology provide a useful means of contact between specialists from diverse fields. At the Butser meeting in July 1990, Richard Macphail drew my attention to some shrunken material in Neolithic cave ash from Arene Candide, Italy, which the excavators thought was knitted wool textile. I subsequently received photographic transparencies of the material, from which I was able to report that it was almost certainly not textile. My report was too late to allow alteration of the paper by Macphail *et al.* (1990), which was already in the press. The present note is a repeat of my correction for a wider readership.

Material and methods

Two transparencies taken under plane polarised light were supplied of a 25 µm thick cross-section of the material (one is reproduced in the figure here). They had frame sizes of 0.33 mm and 0.116 mm, indicating the width of the field of view in each case and therefore calculation of the magnification. The material had a mesh-like