



# Association for Environmental Archaeology

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## Edited by Wendy Carruthers and Vanessa Straker

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AEA website <http://www.envarch.net/>

## Contents

Editorial.....	1
News from the Committee.....	1
Conferences & Meetings.....	2
Conference Report.....	3
Journal of Quaternary Science.....	5
Request for Help.....	6
Publications.....	6

## EDITORIAL

In this edition of the Newsletter we would like to draw your attention to the request for nominations for the AEA Managing Committee outlined below. We would be grateful if nominations could be submitted before the deadline for the next Newsletter (20<sup>th</sup> July) so that personal statements by the nominees can be published in the August Newsletter. The elections will take place at the one-day AEA meeting in York in September (see p.2 for information about the York meeting).

## NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

### NOMINATIONS TO THE AEA MANAGING COMMITTEE

The AEA Managing Committee seeks nominations for **three ordinary committee members** and **the position of Chair** (four vacancies altogether, each a three-year position). Elections will be held at the one-day autumn meeting in York on the **29<sup>th</sup> September**.

The AEA Managing Committee meets four times a year (usually in March, June, September and December). The main items of business discussed are the organisation of conferences and publication of conference proceedings, and publication of the journal, as well as issues relating to the Newsletter, Webpage maintenance, and membership. In addition to elected office of Chair, we are also looking for candidates interested in taking on the roles of Membership Secretary and Conference Officer, each of which is performed by an ordinary committee member. We particularly encourage candidates who are prepared to take on one of these specific jobs of the AEA Managing Committee. The committee would also like to encourage nominations from members based in the south of England, for example, from

London and the South-West, as this area is currently under-represented on the committee. Nominees must be current AEA members.

#### **The role of Chair (elected post)**

Allan Hall, the current AEA Chair, retires in autumn 2003. The Chair of the Managing Committee's role is largely to chair meetings of the committee and to chair the AGM of the Association. He/she checks and agrees the minutes of meetings prepared by the Secretary and is also involved in agreeing agendas for forthcoming meetings. He/she acts as a channel for many communications to/from the Association (although the division of labour between Chair and Secretary in this respect is sometimes a little blurred).

#### **The role of Membership Secretary (ordinary committee member)**

Ruth Pelling, the current AEA Membership Secretary, is retiring from this post in order to concentrate wholly on completing her PhD at UCL Institute of Archaeology. The AEA Membership Secretary has the most dealings with individual AEA members and maintains the membership database, including keeping members' e-mail addresses up to date for circulation of the Newsletter and postal addresses for circulation of the Journal. Although Ruth is retiring from the office of AEA Membership Secretary, she does not formally retire from the committee until 2004 and has kindly agreed to assist the new Membership Secretary with the transfer of this important role.

#### **To make your nomination**

Any AEA member can make a nomination, but this must be seconded. Please state whether you are nominating a candidate for one of the three ordinary positions or the position of Chair. A brief personal statement from the nominee (which implicitly indicates the nominee's willingness to stand) should accompany nominations. This can be received by e-mail or regular mail. This statement will be published in the August Newsletter or, if received afterwards, read at the AGM.

Nominations can be received up to the time of the AGM, although the committee would like to encourage members to submit nominations **before the August Newsletter deadline (20<sup>th</sup> July)**. Nominations and personal statements can be e-mailed or posted to:

Carol Palmer, AEA Secretary, Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield, Northgate House, West Street, Sheffield, S1 4ET, UK

E-mail: [c.palmer@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:c.palmer@sheffield.ac.uk)

Elections will be held at the one-day autumn meeting in York (see below).

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## **CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS**

### **ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY ONE-DAY MEETING WITH THE CENTRE FOR HUMAN PALAEOECOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF YORK. Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2003 Tempest Anderson Hall, Museum Gardens, York**

Contributions are invited for the AEA one-day meeting, to be held in York on 29<sup>th</sup> September. Short papers on any current aspect of environmental archaeology are welcome, though we would particularly encourage reports on work in progress, thematic papers intended to stimulate debate, and papers from younger colleagues.

For further details and offers of papers please contact :

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## CONFERENCE REPORT

Association for Environmental Archaeology Annual Symposium  
Worlds apart? Human settlement and biota of Islands, 24th-25th April 2003. School of  
Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Report by Charlotte O'Brien (University of Exeter).

The AEA two-day annual symposium was held in the attractive setting of Queen's University Belfast, and was well-attended by over 80 delegates from Ireland, Britain, France, Australia and U.S.A.

**Finbar Mc Cormick** opened the meeting with a few words of welcome, and chaired the first session 'Dry land' Islands: colonisation, isolation and adaptation. In the first paper, **Peter Woodman** (University College Cork), compared the factors influencing the initial human settlement of Corsica and Ireland. The geographical and ecological similarities of the two regions were highlighted and it was shown how important marine and riverine sources were during the Mesolithic. **David Bukach** (Oxford University) followed this with a discussion of the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition in the Channel Islands. He explored the role of island biogeography and insularity in the adoption of agriculture, and pointed out how the topography of the islands may also have influenced the transition to agriculture. **Gabriel Cooney** (University College Dublin) presented recent work on Lambay Island off the Dublin coast. Examples of Neolithic working of the local porphyry into stone tools were shown, and it was suggested that this material was chosen because of its attractive colour when polished, rather than for its workability.

After coffee, **James Barrett** (University of York) spoke about the socio-economic trends in Westray, Orkney during the Viking Age, drawing on evidence from plaggen soils. He brought attention to the increasing importance of the maritime economy over the terrestrial at this time. **Jacqui Mulville** (Cardiff University) gave a lively discussion of the cultural histories of the Hebridean Islands compared to the mainland of Scotland. Archaeological and environmental evidence from South Uist, were used to show that the Outer Hebrides should not be seen as a single cultural unit but that distinct styles of architecture and agricultural practice can be observed. However, similarities between South Uist and the mainland were also noted. In the last paper of the session, **Stephen Royle** (Queen's University Belfast) examined the effects of human interference on Ascension Island. He described how the native fauna (particularly birds) has been severely damaged by human introductions, especially goats, rats, cats, donkeys and hundreds of alien plant species e.g. prickly pear and Mexican thorn. The morning session was rounded off with a lively debate which ranged from discussions on the extinction and reintroduction of the red deer in Ireland to precise definitions of plaggen soils.

The afternoon session on 'Island Resources' was chaired by **Don Brothwell**. **Everett Bassett** (University of Utah) opened with an entertaining and thought-provoking paper on the logic of cold water foraging. Using the example of several high latitude islands, he presented a model which considered the costs/benefits of cold water exposure and the levels of technology necessary to sustain it. This was followed by **Rick Schulting** (Queen's University Belfast) who compared the diets of Mesolithic and Neolithic settlers of small islands off north-western France and northern Scotland. Isotopic analysis of bone fragments suggests that during the Mesolithic marine resources were heavily relied on, while during the Neolithic terrestrial resources dominated. He highlighted the problem of when sheep, which have eaten seaweed, are consumed by humans. The isotopic signal from these human bones can be mistakenly interpreted as a marine diet. **Jacqui Huntley** (University of Durham) discussed the diet and economy of St Kilda (Outer Hebrides) as shown by pollen, plant macrofossil analysis and documentary evidence. Cereals appear to have been an important part of the diet and barley was exported from the islands during the 18th century reflecting the high levels of production. **Ian Armit** (Queens University Belfast) discussed Neolithic fuel exploitation and its environmental impact at North Uist, Scotland. Evidence from the study of soil micromorphology, suggests that top-soil stripping for fuel was practised which probably contributed to an accelerated erosion of the land surfaces at the Neolithic islet settlement in Loch Olabhat.

After coffee, **Mike Baillie** (Queens University Belfast) stepped in at short notice to fill a last minute cancellation. Using the example of the Dover boat, he gave a brief but entertaining presentation on the limitations of using tree-ring dated artefacts to elucidate past climatic shifts. A few tongue-in-cheek lessons on the art of presenting a talk with very little data were also thrown in! **Robert Marchant** (Trinity College Dublin) presented the Late Holocene vegetation dynamics of the Rukiga Highlands, southwest Uganda based on pollen data. The creation of forest 'islands' as a result of human-induced clearance was discussed. **Finbar Mc Cormick** (Queens University Belfast) gave a presentation outlining the many reasons why islands were popular places of settlement in Early Ireland. The economic basis for choosing islands was explored through faunal evidence. **Everett Bassett** returned to the podium, this time to contest the assumption that the levels of innovation in pre-contact Tasmania were slowed due to the island's isolation and low population. He argued that the climate and natural resources available to

Tasmanians promoted a mobile foraging lifestyle which did not require an increase in technological innovation. **Wes Forsythe** (University of Ulster) battled with an obstinate projector to, nevertheless, present the history of the 18th century fishing complex on Inishmacduirn, a small island off north-west Donegal. Discussion encompassing the difficulties of herding Soay sheep and ways of controlling the spread of Mexican thorn followed. The day was rounded off with a well-resourced wine reception in the university, followed by the usual unofficial tour of the nearby pubs.

The first session of the following morning, 'Island Biogeography and populations', was chaired by **Jacqui Huntley**. **Sam Berry** (University College, London) opened with a discussion of the effect of initial founding populations in relation to the Theory of Island Biogeography using examples of mouse populations on islands such as Skokholm, St. Kilda and Great Skellig. This was followed by a presentation by **Mark Dinnin** (University of Exeter) on the origins and development of the biota of the Outer Hebrides using fossil beetle evidence. The Outer Hebrides are virtually treeless today and have a limited insect fauna. However, the fossil record demonstrates that relatively complex woodland communities existed, which have now been extirpated as a result of forest destruction. **Philippa Tomlinson** (Centre for Manx Studies) reviewed the Holocene botanical history of the Isle of Man. Grazing by the Irish Elk was suggested to have affected the early flora, in particular to have delayed the rise of birch woodland. **Nicki Whitehouse** (Queens University, Belfast) discussed the complexity of woodland ecosystem dynamics. Using fossil beetle evidence, she laid weight to the argument that primeval woodland in Europe may have been quite open and she highlighted the role of large herbivores, wind-throw and fire in maintaining this landscape of forest 'islands'.

After the coffee break, **Derek Yalden** (University of Manchester) showed how fossil records and place-name evidence are being used to establish the past bird fauna of Ireland and Britain. **Freddy Gatherne-Hardy** (University of Sheffield) discussed the effects of the Norse Lándnam on the arthropod fauna of the Faroe Islands. Preliminary results indicate that the greatest effects were at highly managed, farmstead sites where species diversity increased markedly, whereas limited changes occurred at outfield sites. **Eileen Murphy** (Queens University, Belfast) presented the results of excavations and conceptual ideas of unconsecrated burial sites (Cillíní) in Ireland. She argued that rather than having been marginalised sites, these were important and respected 'religious islands'. **Don Brothwell** (University of York) compared the results of dental decay in population samples from a range of island groups with those from the British mainland. He suggested that this was a useful means of indicating dietary contrasts and found that many island communities had better dental health than the mainland, perhaps due to a reliance on a meat and dairy diet. He concluded by encouraging us to continue to nurture our own endemic dental bacteria! The discussion which followed raised the issue of the use of bones as archaeological markers. Peter Woodman made the point that very small bones are often under-represented in the archaeological record as they have been missed or sieved out, and it was agreed that more rigorous searches should be made in the future.

The session after lunch, entitled 'Catastrophes and abandonment' was chaired by **Mike Baillie** and began with a second presentation by **Freddy Gatherne-Hardy**. This time he discussed his reasons for believing that the super-eruption of Toba, Indonesia, was not the catastrophe that has been suggested. Faunal, archaeological and genetic data were used to show that it was unlikely that it caused a human bottleneck (all of which pleased Mike Baillie no end!). **Robin Sim** (Australian National University) followed this with an interesting talk on the reasons why the southern islands of Australia were devoid of Aboriginal populations when they were first explored by Europeans. Archaeological evidence showed that islands such as Kangaroo and Flinders were inhabited for about 5,000 years before disappearing from the archaeological record in the mid-Holocene. Changes in climate and biodiversity were cited as the main reasons. **Ian Meighan** (Queens University Belfast) described attempts to source Easter Island's Trachyte Statues. Although trachyte domes are present on the eastern side of the island, analysis to date shows that material from the statues are incompatible with this and consequently further sampling is necessary to precisely establish the source of the artefacts. **John O'Neill** (Queens University Belfast) rounded off the penultimate session with a timely discussion of the potential impacts of disease spread by colonists during the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition in Ireland.

The last session, entitled 'Wetland settlement and exploitation of 'islands'', was chaired by **Mark Dinnin**. **Ben Gearey** (University of Hull) used the results of pollen and testate amoebae work from a number of sites in England and Ireland to explain the interactions between raised mires and human populations. He showed the complexity of this relationship and how the development of mire systems can be driven in part by human disturbance of the hydrology. **Aidan O'Sullivan** (University College Dublin) discussed the perceptions of early Medieval Irish people to islands and crannógs, and showed how they were used by many different social groups. **Christina Fredengren** (The Discovery Programme) followed on from this to discuss the results of an excavation of a crannóg in Lough Gara, Co. Sligo. The evidence recovered suggested it was a 'low-status' site, which reiterated the conclusions of the previous speaker that crannógs were not exclusively the domain of the social elite. **Meriel McClatchie** (University College London) presented the results of plant macrofossil analysis at the site and discussed the role of

archaeological plant remains in establishing the social status of sites. **Katherine Selby** (University of Exeter) presented the results of multi-proxy analysis of a lake core taken from beside a crannóg in Lough Kinale, Irish Midlands. This integrated approach allowed the reconstruction of the history of the lake system and the surrounding vegetation from the Mesolithic onwards. It also provided important information regarding the time of construction, settlement and uses of the crannóg. **Rachel Ballantyne** (University of Cambridge) rounded off the talks with a discussion of the settlement of the East Anglian fens and the relationship between environment and changing cultural identity.

**Allan Hall** summed up what had been a memorable and informative two days and highlighted the increasingly seamless link between archaeology and environmental evidence. The discussions continued over the conference dinner which was held in the austere setting of the Great Hall. Thanks are due to Nicki Whitehouse, Eileen Murphy, Gill Plunkett and Finbar McCormick for such a well-organised meeting.

A number of posters were also on display throughout the conference. These included a study by **Joanna Bending** (University of Sheffield) of the archaeobotanical evidence of the effects of the Norse settlement of the Faroe Islands; a presentation of the Holocene Coleoptera of the Faroe Islands with reference to the impact of human settlement by **Kim Burrows** (University of Sheffield); a discussion of the fuel supply and woodland management associated with ironworking at Rievaulx and Bilsdale by **Jane Wheeler** (University of Bradford), and a study of the potential of Midge larvae for characterising urban and rural human activities by Zoë Ruiz (University of Exeter).

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*We are grateful to Tim Mighall for the following Table of Contents – further information of this nature from other relevant journals would be appreciated.*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS – JOURNAL OF QUATERNARY SCIENCE**  
**Volume 18, Issue 2, 2003**

**Online ISSN: 1099-1417 ; Print ISSN: 0267-8179      Abstracts and PDF files published online**

Rapid Communication

- 101- River sediments, great floods and centennial-scale Holocene climate change  
105 Mark G. Macklin, John Lewin

Research Article

- 107- Preservation potential for Late Quaternary river alluvium  
120 John Lewin, Mark G. Macklin
- 121- Holocene molluscan faunal history and environmental change at Kloster Mühle, Rheinland-Pfalz,  
132 western Germany  
R. A. Meyrick
- 133- Relict mountain slope deposits of northern Portugal: facies, sedimentogenesis and environmental  
150 implications  
Jean-Pierre Texier, José Meireles
- 151- Multiproxy Devensian Late-glacial and Holocene environmental records at an Atlantic coastal site  
168 in Shetland  
Graeme Whittington, Paul Buckland, Kevin. J. Edwards, Malcolm Greenwood, Adrian M. Hall,  
Marie Robinson
- 169- Modelling the southern extent of the last Icelandic ice-sheet  
181 Robert G. Bingham, Nicholas R. J. Hulton, Andrew J. Dugmore
- 183- Evidence for a mid-Pleistocene shift of ice-drift pattern in the Nordic seas  
191 Jan P. Helmke, Henning A. Bauch, Alain Mazaud

Book Review

- 193- Flood and megaflood processes and deposits: recent and ancient examples, I. P. Martini, V. R.  
194 Baker and G. Garzón (eds), Special Publication 32, of the International Association of  
Sedimentologists, Blackwell Science, Oxford 2002 (312 pp) ISBN 0 632 06404 8  
Fiona S. Tweed

## REQUEST FOR HELP

### THE DOMESTICATION OF EUROPE

Prof. Martin Jones (Dept. Archaeology, Cambridge) and myself, together with a group from the National Institute of Agricultural Botany, Cambridge, a group of archaeobotanists from Sheffield University, UK headed up by Dr Glynis Jones, and a group led by Prof. Terry Brown (UMIST), specialising in ancient DNA from charred cereals are setting up a project to explore the initial spread of agriculture from the Levant across Northern Europe into the British Isles in prehistory.

The way we are planning to do this is by exploring a collection of genetic markers in current germplasm collections of barley and emmer wheat, and by exploring the same markers in DNA from archaeologically preserved wheat and barley to give time depth to the study, filling in the temporal gap with a genetic study of old herbarium material, museum collections of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century wheats and barleys, historic seed collections and incidental material such as desiccated seeds preserved in thatch or daub, for example.

I am currently researching how much of this 'old' (i.e. 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century, or even earlier if possible) seed material is available and from what accessional areas in the UK and Europe. Mark Nesbitt of Kew Gardens has suggested that there are collections of European wheats and barleys from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries preserved in a number of institutions, museums and universities all over Europe and the US and I would very much like to trace as many of these collections, however small, as possible. I am also interested in getting hold of as much 'incidental' material as possible. So if you have desiccated seeds preserved in daub or other building materials from old houses or sites I would be very grateful if you got in touch.

I am particularly keen to expand my search into Europe and beyond. The species we are particularly interested in locating 'old' specimens of are Emmer wheat, *Triticum dicoccoides* (*T. turgidum* L. var *dicoccoides*) and Barley, *Hordeum vulgare*. I greatly appreciate your taking time to give your attention to this. Any help you can give us will be most gratefully received.

I do hope you find the project interesting. We are extremely excited about the kind of results we might generate and especially excited because this will be a unique and ground-breaking project, which will not only interest archaeologists, but may well provide information on some of the genetic diversity lost from modern wheat and barley over the past several thousand years.

I look forward to hearing from you all, thanks again,  
Mim Bower

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## PUBLICATIONS

***We apologise to Edith Schmidt for the mistakes in the last Newsletter. Here is the corrected version of her reference and information about a more recent publication – many thanks, Edith.***

Schmidt (1998): E.Schmidt, Der Kornkäfer *Sitophilus granarius* Schoen. Curculionidae aus der Schuttschicht des bandkeramischen Brunnens von Erkelenz-Kückhoven. –aus: Rhein. Amt für Bodendenkmalpflege (Hg.) (1998): Brunnen der Jungsteinzeit. Internat. Symposium Erkelenz 27.-29. Okt. 1997, Materialien zur Bodendenkmalpflege Bd. 11:261-269. Rheinland-Verlag, Köln.

Schmidt (2002): E.Schmidt, Wirbellosenreste aus einer jünger-latènezeitlichen Siedlungsstelle in Porz-Lind (b.Köln). – in: H.E. Joachim, Porz-Lind, Ein mittel- bis spätlatènezeitlicher Siedlungsplatz im 'Linder Bruch' (Stadt Köln) RA 47: S.209-250 (Mainz 2002).

**We are very grateful to James Greig for the following information:**

**James writes;**

"Many thanks to Otto Brinkkemper, René Cappers, Brigitte Cooremans, Roel Lauwerier, Julian Wiethold, Derek Yalden and others who have sent in references that would otherwise have been omitted. Further references to jimie.greig@virgin.net"

**BOOKS**

K. Alm Kubler (2001) *Holocene environmental change of southern Öland, Sweden*. (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 28) Uppsala University, Uppsala.

R.T.J. Cappers and S. Bottema (2002) *The dawn of farming in the Near East*. (Studies in early Near Eastern Production, Subsistence and Environment, 6) ex Oriente, Berlin, 189 pp.

N.F. Miller (2002) *Drawing on the past; an archaeobotanist's sketchbook*. University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia, 112 pp. ISBN 1 931 707 27 8, \$US 19.95

A. Stirland (2001) *Raising the dead; the skeleton crew of King Henry VIII's great ship, the Mary Rose*. Wiley, Chichester, 184 pp. ISBN 0 471 984 485

**THESES**

M. Andric (2001) *Transition to farming and human impact on the Slovenian landscape*. doctoral thesis, University of Oxford

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R. Thomas (2002) *Animals, economy and status: the integration of historical and zooarchaeological evidence in the study of a medieval castle*. doctoral thesis, Birmingham university

**CHAPTERS**

I.L. Baxter (2002) Animal bone. In D. Hurst (ed.), *Castle Moat, Leominster. Excavation by Margaret Jones in 1962*. Leominster Historical Society, pp. 36-40.

O. Brinkkemper, H.van Haaster, P.van Rijn, et al. (2002) Archeobotanie. In P. F. B. Jongste and G. J. van Wijngaarden (eds.), *Het erfgoed van eigenblock; nederzettingsterrein uit de Bronstijd te Rumppt (gemeente Gedermalsen)* [The inheritance of property; Bronze Age settlement at Rumppt]. (Rapportage Archeologische Monumentenzorg 86) ROB, Amersfoort pp. 439-557.

M. Ciaraldi (2002) plant macroremains. In G. Coates (ed.), *A prehistoric and Romano-British landscape. Excavations at Whitemoor Haye quarry, Staffordshire 1997-1999*. (BAR 340) Tempus Reparatum, Oxford pp. 62-66.

M. Emanuelsson, S. Nilsson and J.E. Wallin (2001) Land use dynamics during 2000 years - a case study of agrarian land use in a forest landscape, west-central Sweden. In M. Emanuelsson (ed.), *Settlement and land-use history in the central Swedish forest region. The use of pollen analysis in interdisciplinary studies: appendix 1*. (Sylvestria 223), Umeå .

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- S. Karg and D.E. Robinson (2002) Secondary food plants from medieval sites in Denmark: fruits, nuts, vegetables, herbs and spices. In K. Viklund and R. Engelmark (eds.), *Nordic archaeobotany - NAG 2000 in Umeå*. (Archaeology and Environment 15), pp. 133-142.
- R. Lauwerier (2001) Archeozoölogie. In R. M. van Heeringen and E. M. Theunissen (eds.), *Kwaliteitsbepalend onderzoek ten behoeve van duurzaam behoud van Neolithische terreinen in West-Friesland en de Kop van Noord-Holland*, Deel 1 Waardstelling. (Nederlandse Archaeologische Rapporten 21) ROB, Amersfoort pp. 117-126, 174-210.
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- R. Lauwerier (2002b) De archeozoölogie van de Middeleeuwen: balans en perspectief [Medieval archaeozoology, balance and perspective]. In (eds), *Middeleeuwse toestanden: archeologie, geschiedenis en monumentenzorg*, Amersfoort & Hilversum pp. 225-233.
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- J. Wiethold (2001) Recherches archéobotaniques in France Centre-Est. Campagne 2001. In V. Guichard (ed.), *Rapport annuel d'activité scientifique 2001 de Centre archéologique européen du Mont Beuvray*, Glux-en-Glenne pp. 245-256.
- J. Wiethold (2002) Giff in de schottele. Strowe dar peper up ...botanische Funde als Quellen zur mittelalterlichen Ernährungs- und Umweltgeschichte in Einbeck [Botanical finds as information sources on medieval nutrition and environment development in Einbeck]. In A. Heege (ed.), *Einbeck im Mittelalter; eine archäologische-historische Spurensuche*. (Studien zur Einbecker Geschichte 17), Oldenburg pp. 240-246.
- J. Wiethold and J.M. Treffort (2002) Archäobotanische Funde als Hinweis auf Handels- und Kulturkontakte zum Mittelmeergebiet in der Hallstattzeit? Das Beispiel des Fundplatzes von "Roche Noire", Montagnieu (Aisne), Frankreich [Archaeobotanical finds as evidence for trade and cultural contacts with the Mediterranean region in the Iron Age; the example from the site "Roche Moire" (Ain), France]. In A. Lang and V. Salac (eds.), *Fernkontakte in der Eisenzeit*, Praha pp. 379-394.

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