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## **Bookmarks to the Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Discovery of the "Lake-Dwellings"**

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Two years ago, the *BHA* (13/2: 22–23) announced the jubilee to be celebrated in 2004 for the 150th anniversary of the discovery of the Neolithic and Bronze Age "lake-dwellings". This was an appropriate time to stress the significant role this field of inquiry has played in the methodological and epistemological development of prehistoric archaeology, from the second half of the 19th century up to present-day.

As planned, this celebration has led to many scientific and public events (conferences, publications, exhibitions, etc.)<sup>1</sup>. As many of these tackled the history of research, it is useful to gather some bibliographical notes on the recent publications for the readers of the *BHA*. As I was involved with several of the publications mentioned below, I won't indulge a subjective

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<sup>1</sup> The list of the main public events is still available on the homepage of the Lake-Dwelling Exhibition of the Swiss National Museum: <http://www.diepfahlbauer.ch/> ("Kalender Pfahlbaujubiläum" button).

appreciation of the books reviewed, and simply seek to be strictly informative. This bibliographical review might prove all the more helpful, since, regretfully, this celebration was mainly concentrated in Switzerland and the neighboring areas (southern Germany and the French Jura), and might therefore have escaped notice of people further away from the Alpine region.

From a general point of view, the two periodicals *Archéologie Suisse/Archäologie in der Schweiz* (**Collective** 2004a) and *Archäologie in Deutschland* (**Schlichtherle & al.** 2004) each dedicated a special issue, respectively a special section, to the theme of wetland settlements in the Alpine region, offering a broad overview on the current state of research (cf. also **Collective** 2004b). Such is also the purpose of **Bölliger Schreyer** 2004, as well as that of a wide range of richly illustrated exhibition catalogues designed for the general public, which tackle the subject from various perspectives. While **Collective** 2004c and **Della Casa** 2004 remain most general (cf. besides **Kaeser & van Willigen** 2004a, 2004b), other catalogues also offer particular focus on specific evidence: **Hafner & Suter** 2004 on the two last decades of underwater exploration of Lake Biel; **Kaenel & Crotti** 2004 on the research conducted on the Vaud and Fribourg waters of Lake Neuchatel and Lake Morat. **Fatzer & Leuzinger** 2004 draw mainly on the evidence gathered on Lake Constance (Switzerland and Germany) according to four main themes (habitat, economy, humanity and mobility), while **Roulière-Lambert** 2004 presents the development of research on Lake Chalain (France) starting from the case of a pirogue discovered there a hundred years ago.

The Jubilee received considerable media attention, especially in Switzerland. For a critical appraisal from the scientific side, cf. however **Bailly** 2004, who discusses three exhibitions: those of the Museums of Biel and Lons-le-Saunier, as well as that of the Swiss National Museum – the latter being the subject of a harsh critique (for a response: **Kaeser** 2004a).

For the scientific readership, **Menotti** 2004 deserves special attention, since this collective undertaking, which has a truly international character, offers the well grounded synthesis which the theme has needed for a long time. Seven papers present case studies from across Europe (Switzerland, Germany, France, Austria, Slovenia, Italy, and Britain); others focus on methodological questions (dendrochronology, palaeoclimatology, etc.) which have been and remain decisive for the exploration and understanding of lakeshore settlements, while the book closes with contributions considering the relations between archaeological research and the needs and expectations of the general public. Insofar as this publication aims at the assessment of new perspectives for lake-dwelling research, we welcome the fact that all the contributions are based on a thorough account of the history of research, or at least on retrospective considerations related to the theme under study. From that point of view, we might point out in particular the article by A. Sherratt, who underlines the historic importance of lake-dwellings in the broad scope of European pre- and protohistoric studies, introducing to a stimulating reflection on the present state and needs of the archaeological research.

Considering current research perspectives, archaeologists will look forward to the forthcoming proceedings of two ambitious international conferences held last year in Zurich and Ruschlikon/Zurich: *WES'04 Wetland Economies and Societies* (**Della Casa & Trachsel** forthcoming), and *IKUWA 2nd International Congress on Underwater Archaeology* (**Collective** forthcoming; cf. already **Ruoff** 2004). Dealing with the crucial problem of erosion and its impact on wetland heritage, a third international meeting was organized in Neuchatel last year: **Roulière-Lambert** forthcoming (cf. already **Constandache** 2005).

Although it is touched upon in most of these publications, one way or another, the history of

research has been discussed for its own sake in only a few books. In this respect, **Collective** 2004d presents a wide range of timely contributions based on the accurate study of historical evidence. Following the biographical path of the “discoverer” Ferdinand Keller, M. Trachsel develops a detailed chronicle of the exploration of the lake-dwellings undertaken during the second half of the 19th century, which he sets in the general context of contemporary antiquarian research in Switzerland. In three subsequent chapters, K. Altorfer illustrates the heuristic advantages which prehistoric archaeology could derive from the study of the well-preserved organic remains, discusses how the lakeshore sites became a “touristic” attraction, and describes the blossoming of the antiquity market – a topic also analyzed by D. Kauz, but from the standpoint of the sociology of science. M.-A. Kaeser examines the national role and the international influence of the Antiquarian Society of Zurich, which had been founded by Ferdinand Keller in 1832 and presided over by him for half a century. A. M. Rückert presents the use of lake-dwelling materials and references at National Exhibitions and International Fairs (1867–1939)<sup>2</sup>, while B. Helbling-Gloor looks at the place granted to the “lake-dwelling past” in schoolbooks and teenager literature up to the second half of the 20th century (on a similar topic, cf. also **Tobler** 2004). A. Mathis analyzes the development of drawing techniques, which he confronts with the changing aims of archaeological work since the middle of the 19th century. While the book closes on a conclusive article by B. Eberschweiler stating the assets and the future priorities of underwater archaeology, a somewhat surprising contribution may deserve a particular mention. As a matter of fact, the professor of architecture A. M. Vogt demonstrates that the collective representation of the lake-dwellings were a source of inspiration for Le Corbusier — archaeology having thus exerted a strong and certainly unexpected influence on the establishment of modern architecture and design<sup>3</sup>.

Since many of these contributions develop a “Swiss-German” focus of the history of research, **Corboud** 2004 offers a useful counterbalance. Retracing the archaeological surveys undertaken in Lake Geneva, the author starts with the first underwater diving experience in the bay of Morges (1854), and recalls the important role played by personalities like Adolphe Morlot, Frédéric Troyon, and François-Alfonse Forel in the history of lake-dwelling archaeology, stressing the scientific contacts shared by these with some French scholars<sup>4</sup>.

**Kaeser** 2004b having been reviewed in the *BHA* (14/2: 36), I will simply reiterate that this little book gives a summary of 150 years of archaeological explorations, illustrating how the ideological representation of the lake-dwellings developed into a true historical myth, thus influencing the practice and interpretations of archaeological undertakings, up to present-day research.

As Altorfer and Kauz (in above-mentioned **Collective** 2004d) showed, the antiquity market had a considerable impact on the development of wetland archaeology. In this respect, **Kaeser & al.** 2004 draw on the example of the impressive lake-dwelling collection of the Alsatian scholar Paul Wernert, illustrating the functioning of the archaeological collecting activities.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. already N. Müller-Scheessel, „Fair Prehistory: archaeological exhibits at French *Expositions Universelles*“, *Antiquity* 75:391–401.

<sup>3</sup> This article is actually summarizing a book which has already been translated into French and English: A. M. Vogt, *Le Corbusier, the Noble Savage: Toward an Archaeology of Modernism*. Boston: MIT Press, 1998, 365 p.

<sup>4</sup> From the same point of view, the biography of the “international scientist” Edouard Desor assesses the positioning of the archaeological study of the Swiss lake-dwellings within the global framework of emerging prehistoric science: M.-A. Kaeser, *L’Univers du préhistorien. Science, foi et politique dans l’oeuvre et la vie d’Edouard Desor (1811–1882)*. Paris: L’Harmattan, 2004, 622 p. (especially p. 239–312).

Starting from the origins of antiquarian curiosity in the 16th century, they extend discussion up to the present, with the now legally delicate prospection work runned by amateur archaeologists on lake-dwelling sites.

The length of the bibliography inserted below should not mislead the reader: there undoubtedly remains a lot to be done in field. From this perspective I hope that this review might encourage the historians of archaeology to dedicate some renewed attention to the subject – especially for what regards the relations of lake-dwelling research with other realms of archaeological activity, during both the 19th and the 20th centuries. In order to illustrate the diversity of the possible approaches into the past of archaeology, this review should close with yet another publication, of a quite particular nature: von Arx 2004. Depicting the life and work of Ferdinand Keller, this diverting essay is a fictive autobiography (!) of the “father” of lake-dwelling archaeology, published by a rather famous author of historic novels. Even if the historic accuracy of such an investigation is arguable, it remains that von Arx may have perceived, better than a professional historian could, the psychological and ideal key-features of Keller, which were decisive in the leading of his work and career, and which lastly account for the public and scientific success of his interpretation of the prehistoric lakeshore settlements.

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