

IX. Conference reports

Networks, Contacts and Competition in the History of Archaeology – A One Day Research Meeting, Held on Saturday, 15 July 2006 at Durham University

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On 15 July 2006 an international conference on 'Networks, Contacts and Competition in the History of Archaeology' took place in St John's College in Durham, hosted by the Department of Archaeology at Durham in cooperation with the AREA network.

AREA (Archives of European Archaeology) is an international research network, connecting researchers from all over Europe to promote the history of archaeology. Particular emphasis is placed on the preservation, documentation and exploitation of archival materials. Recently, in its fourth phase of activities, twelve partner institutions from eleven countries from across Europe participated in this network. The network is supported by the Culture 2000 Programme of the European Commission. Four working groups – focusing on the themes: 'Antiquarian Traditions', 'Archaeology Abroad', 'Archaeology under Dictatorship' and 'Memory of Sites' – should enliven the cooperation between the partners and assure the involvement of the several researches of each partner in a wider European context.

The topic for discussion at the conference organised in Durham was closely linked to the aims of the working group on 'Archaeology Abroad'. The papers given in Durham presented a broad range of aspects of exchange among antiquarians and archaeologists: travelling antiquarians, different receptions of new methods and theories; international congresses; network theory and analyses of political impacts on international exchange.

The conference was opened by Pam Graves (Durham University, U.K.) with a short introduction into the topic. In the first two papers the important role of exchange between antiquarian researchers in pre-scientific times and their transnational horizon was examined. Alain Schnapp (Sorbonne University, France) talked about the development of the discipline from antiquarian researches since the Renaissance up to the establishment of archaeology around the middle of the 19th century. Schnapp emphasised the transnational character of antiquarian studies, and contrasted this to later developments during the 19th century, when more nationalistic directions in archaeology emerged. Jarl Nordbladh (University of Gothenburg, Sweden) presented the Scandinavian perspective with his paper on internal and continental contacts of the Scandinavian antiquarians. He too pointed out the importance of contacts and exchanges as well as the role of travels for the antiquarians in these times.

Peter Rowley-Conwy (Durham University, U.K.) exemplified in his paper the different reception of the Three Age System in England, Scotland and Ireland. He stated that in all three countries the Three Age System was not accepted until the last decades of the 19th century. He ascribed this to the fact that each of them had its own chronological system, so that there was no need for adopting a new system. The status of those who initially rejected the Three Age System also played a role, as seen in England where opposition was led by influential members of the Royal Academy and the Archaeological Institute in London.

Richard Hingley (Durham University, U.K.) discussed the role of analogies between the Roman and the British Empire in the debate on imperial frontiers in the late 19th and early 20th century. He referred to the example of the Indian Customs Hedge built by the British in 1843 to control the salt trade in India. He pointed out two different views on this analogy: a positive one, emphasising the supremacy of the Roman empire and a negative, warning one, which concentrated on reminding 19th

century British about the defeat and the end of the Roman empire.

Astrid Swenson (University of Cambridge, U.K.) compared in her paper the development of preservation legislation in France, Britain and Germany around the turn of the 19th to 20th century. In this time the basis for modern conservation, mostly including prehistoric monuments, was provided. In her paper Swenson stressed the international dimension of these developments.

Marc-Antoine Kaeser (Université de Neuchâtel, Switzerland) discussed the importance of networks with the example of the Swiss prehistorian Edouard Desor (1811–1882), the founder of the International Congress of Prehistory. Using network-theory as a basis of his explanations, he pointed out that it is not essential to have very many connections. Rather it is more important for an efficient networking to have connections with people from different groups and networks, be it networks of different national traditions or of different disciplines.

Uta Halle (Humboldt-University Berlin, Germany) analysed the international contacts of German archaeologists in the period from 1900 to 1940. She conducted her analysis following five perspectives, exemplifying each one with specific examples: going abroad during study, grants for research abroad, stays abroad of famous German archaeologists, the role of international congresses and the failed, international project on the 'History of prehistoric archaeology'.

Mircea Babes and Catalin Nicholae (University of Bucharest, Rumania) discussed in their paper the role of the international congresses in the inter-war years, a period well suitable to analyse the interaction and competition between rival archaeological congresses. On the examples of the last CIAAP in Bucharest in 1937 and the first CISPP in 1932 in London they analysed the competition between these two congresses, that in the consequently eventually lead to the replacement of the traditional congress by the new one.

Andrzej Prinke (Poznan Archaeological Museum, Poland), who bravely at short notice filled in for a cancelled paper, spoke about the surveys and excavations of the Polish archaeologist Lech Krzyaniak (1940–2004) in north-eastern Africa, mainly in Sudan. Through his work Krzyaniak acquired a good international reputation, which led to different joint research projects with teams from other countries.

The meeting was completed with a paper by Margarita Díaz-Andreu (Durham University, U.K.) about international connections in Cold War Europe. She concentrated on the development of the international congresses and discussed the political impacts of the organisation of these congresses, using sources from the archive of the Spanish prehistorian Lluís Pericot. For a better understanding and contextualisation Díaz-Andreu compared this to the situation before World War II. In her résumé she emphasised that international contacts should have a bigger role in studies of the history of the archaeology.

These concluding remarks summarized again very well the aim of the whole conference, that itself was a further step towards a more international perspective on the development of archaeology. Although in some papers some more far-reaching conclusions would have been desirable, the papers had shown a great variety of aspects and ways, how a more international approach could lead to a deeper understanding of the development of European archaeology.

Pursuits and Joys – Great Victorian Antiquarians and Collectors Guernsey Museum, St Peter Port, Guernsey. 2nd–4th June, 2006

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There has been a recent re-awakening of serious scholarly interest in the history of North-west European archaeology manifest at several stimulating conferences. In Britain there were the