The Institute’s primary Research Groups

The coordinators of each of the Institute’s four primary Research Groups report on their group’s activities during the 1999/2000 academic year.

The Environment and Culture Research Group
Coordinator: Simon Hillson

The Environment and Culture Research Group acts as a focus for the many staff and postgraduate students at the Institute whose interests lie in the interactions between people and their environments. Its members have close research links with other UCL departments in which there are similar interests, particularly Anthropology and Anatomy & Developmental Biology. Since last year, Dorian Fuller, a newly appointed lecturer in archaeobotany, has joined the Group. He has undertaken fieldwork in India, Pakistan and northeastern Africa, and is particularly interested in the beginnings of agriculture in South Asia.

Research projects
Several existing projects involving members of the Group have continued. Post-exavication work on the Boxgrove project (see AI 1997/98, pp. 8–13) has progressed under the direction of Mark Roberts and was marked in 1999 by the publication by English Heritage of a major monograph. This 500,000 year-old Middle Palaeolithic site in Sussex has produced a large assemblage of flint tools, many bone fragments representing a diverse fauna, and the remains of a hominid shin bone (tibia) and two teeth. Dimitri de Loecker has made progress with the immense task of refitting the flint fragments, and Simon Parfitt continues to study the bone remains.

Ken Thomas continues as co-director of the Bannu Archaeological Project in northwestern Pakistan (see pp. 39–42), and has spent part of his sabbatical leave this year carrying out more fieldwork there. He has also continued, with his research student Marcello Mannino, the study he described in AI 1998/99 (pp. 17–19) of Mesolithic shellfish exploitation and the ecology of present-day mollusc populations on the southwestern coasts of England. It includes the isotopic analysis of mollusc shells, carried out at the NERC Isotope Geosciences Laboratory at Keyworth, to try to determine in what season(s) Mesolithic coastal sites were occupied.

Tony Waldron, Louise Martin and I, with the help of students, have continued post-exavication work on the assemblage of human and non-human bones from the late eighteenth-century anatomy school found at 36 Craven Street in London (see AI 1998/99, pp. 14–16).

Louise Martin and James Conolly, assisted by research students, remain committed to the long-term investigation of the early Neolithic site of Caitha Höyük in central Anatolia, where they specialize respectively on study of the animal bones and the stone tools. Andrew Garrard (together with Louise Martin, Sue Colledge and Katherine Wright from the Institute) is currently working on the final monographs on the Azraq project in Jordan, a prime objective of which was to examine the role in the transition from hunting and gathering to cultivation and pastoralism of a region at the arid margins of the Fertile Crescent.

James McGlade has been collaborating with the UCL Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis in the project entitled “Self-organizing networks: historical perspectives on the resilience of societal systems”. With a grant from the UK Economic and Social Research Council, Marcos Llobera has been appointed research fellow on James’s part of this large project and will work in Spain. Mark Lake holds a Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship and is developing simulation models to investigate a range of hypotheses on how people in the past exploited environmental resources. With Stephen Shennan, and Mark Collard of the UCL Department of Anthropology, he is also working on evolutionary models of cultural change.

Delwen Samuel, who is a Wellcome Research Fellow in Bioarchaeology, has continued her investigation of ancient food remains, particularly the technology of cereal production. She describes her work on ancient Egyptian bread on pp. 28–31. David Jeffreys, too, has an article in this issue (pp. 24–27) in which he describes his recent geoarchaeological and survey work at ancient Memphis in Egypt.

My own research in dental anthropology and archaeology continues on several fronts. I am collaborating with Erik Trinkaus of Washington University (St Louis, Missouri) on two projects relating to the earliest modern humans in Europe. One involves a new description and assessment of human remains from the famous Upper Palaeolithic sites of Dolni Vestonice and Pavlov in the Czech Republic. The other is the formal description of the newly discovered child’s burial from the Abrigo do Lagar Velho, in the Lapedo Valley of central Portugal. It has been dated to about 24,000 BP and the human remains are at the centre of a debate about what Erik Trinkaus believes are a mixture of Neanderthal and modern features, suggesting possible hybridization. In both projects I am undertaking the specialized study of the teeth and jaws. I am also now starting a three-year project on the reduction of teeth and jaws as a trend in human evolution over the past 100,000 years, supported by a grant from the Natural Environment Research Council.

In addition to the projects already mentioned, members of the Group are involved in a wide range of other research, in Britain and abroad, in their capacity as individual specialists; for example, Dominique de Moulins in archaeobotany, Richard Macphail in archaeological soil science, Jane Sidell in palaeo-environmental studies, and Pat Wilshire in pollen analysis and forensic investigations.

Seminars and workshops
Like last year, the Group planned its seminars this year in two thematic series. For the autumn term one of our research students, Fiona Haughey, organized an excellent series on “Early prehistoric exploitation of estuarine areas”. It included presentations on the River Thames by Fiona herself, together with Jane Sidell (Institute of Archaeology and English Heritage) and Mike Webber (Museum of London); on the Mesolithic/Neolithic transition in Portugal by João Zilhão (Director of the Instituto Português de Arqueologia, Lisbon); on the prehistoric oystermen of North Carolina by Tom Lofftis (University of North Carolina); on an archaeological survey of the Shannon estuary by Aidan O’Sullivan (Discovery Programme) and on the spectacular intertidal sites in the Severn Estuary by Martin Bell (University of Reading).

The theme for the spring term was “Neanderthals”, a topic that attracted large audiences from other UCL departments and from outside the university, as well as staff and students of the Institute. The series began with an introduction to the Neanderthals by Chris Stringer (Natural History Museum), followed by presentations on the Neanderthal ear and cranial base by Fred Spoor (UCL), on the latest Neanderthals and the spread of modern humans by Marta Lahr (University of Cambridge), on the Lagar Velho child by myself, on Neanderthal culture by Paul Pettit (University of Oxford), on the Neanderthal mind by Steve Mithen (University of Reading), on the environmental context of Neanderthal life by Tjeerd van Andel (University of Cambridge), and on climatic adaptations in Neanderthal biology by Leslie Aiello (UCL).

Note
The Social and Cultural Dynamics Research Group
Coordinator: Jeremy Tanner

The Social and Cultural Dynamics Research Group brings together staff and postgraduate students of the Institute whose primary interest is in anthropological and sociological approaches to the study of material culture, cutting across the regional and chronological boundaries that have traditionally divided archaeology. Its members share the common aim of studying systems of material culture in a comparative perspective.

Research projects
This issue of AI includes articles on four projects led by members of the Group. Sue Hamilton describes her innovative Bronze Age project on Bodmin Moor, conducted in collaboration with Chris Tilley and Barbara Bender of the UCL Department of Anthropology (pp. 13–17). Cyprian Broodbank reports on his first two field seasons of his multidisciplinary Kythera Island Project in the Aegean (pp. 21–23). He explains its aims and methods and describes some of the early results. Vivek Nanda explores the complex ritual topography of the sacred city of Kumbakonam in southern India (pp. 43–48), reporting on the final stages of a major multinational and interdisciplinary project that he directed and will shortly bring to publication with the support of a Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship. And Bill Sillar, who also holds a Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship, describes the aims and early results of his new field project in the Peruvian Andes, which focuses on the spectacular Inka site at Raqchi, between Cuzco and Lake Titicaca (pp. 49–52).

Projects mentioned in last year’s issue of AI continue to make progress. The “Faces across the North Sea” project on Viking art (see AI 1998/99, pp. 27–30) has moved forward with the appointment as research fellow of Andrea Horne, funded by a grant from the Leverhulme Trust. She is a native speaker of Norwegian who holds an MA in art and archaeology and her first task has been to prepare a database for the project. Having started with a systematic collection of faces represented in Anglo-Saxon sculpture in England, she has since made the first of several planned visits to Norway to record material held in museums and collections there. The project has also been advanced by a meeting that was held in Trondheim in February 2000, hosted by our collaborating colleagues at the University of Science and Technology there, with additional speakers from the Cathedral Museum in Trondheim and the University of Oslo.

The “Comparative and scientific approaches to pigment technology and colour symbolism” project, which is a joint initiative with the Complex Societies and Heritage Studies research groups, is also developing. A special grant from the Institute of Archaeology has enabled Helen Glanville, a part-time lecturer on pigment analysis in UCL’s Department of Art History, to conduct a review of the full range of analytical techniques of potential value to the project. Following the appointment of Dr Xing Wen (who visited the Institute last year and lectured on Chinese colour symbolism) to an assistant professorship at Peking University, the East Asian dimension of the colour project has been incorporated in the five-year research plan of Peking University’s Institute for the Comparative Study of Ancient Civilizations, newly established under the leadership of Professor Li Boqian. In another contribution to the project, Professor Vincenz Brinckmann, of the Glyptothek (a museum of classical sculpture) in Munich, lectured at the Institute on the results of his work on the use of colour and painting in archaic and classical Greek sculpture.

Conferences, workshops and seminars
The year has seen an active programme of seminars, workshops and conferences or organized or sponsored by members of the Group. A particularly welcome development is the role increasingly played by our research students in initiating such activities. In February 2000 Danae Fiore and Laura Preston organized a one-day workshop, “Partitioning the past: academic and professional boundaries in archaeology”. Contributions explored the disciplinary framing of archaeology and the nature of cross-disciplinary dialogue across a range of academic fields, from Neolithic western Asia to Renaissance Italy. In addition to members of the Group, participants included colleagues from the UCL departments of history, art history and anthropology. The Group co-sponsored, with the Complex Societies Research Group, the annual national meeting of the Theoretical Roman Archaeology conference, which took place at the Institute in April 2000. It was organized by Kris Lockyear and research students David Clark, Gwyn Davies and Andrew Gardner and included the following sessions: “Representing the Romans”; “Artefacts and identities” and “Centres of power”. The Group also plans to hold a workshop, “Technological innovation and social transformation”, organized by Todd Whitelaw in cooperation with the Material Culture and Technology (secondary) Research Group.

This year the Group sponsored two lectures at the Institute in London by Professors Liu Qinzhu and Wang Wei, Director and Deputy Director of the Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (see Fig. 1 on p. 3 of this issue). Their lectures, respectively, “Excavation and research on the capital of the Chinese Han Dynasty (206 BC to AD 25) ” and “New progress in Shan studies in Chinese archaeology”, were introduced by the Provost of UCL, Professor Christopher Llewellyn Smith. This occasion marked a notable step forwards in the developing programme of cooperation between UCL and Chinese universities and academies, in which the Institute of Archaeology has taken a leading role (see below).

Excerpt from the Provost of UCL’s welcome to Professors Liu Qinzhu and Wang Wei when they visited the Institute of Archaeology on 29 September 1999:

Welcome to the Institute of Archaeology at UCL. I would like to say how glad I am, for the first time in my new role as Provost of UCL, to be able to participate in an event at the Institute, and particularly that it should be one that brings together colleagues from England and China. I am a firm believer in cooperation between leading Western and Chinese research institutions.

In my previous post, I received a much needed tutorial from President Jiang Zemin on East-West exchanges in technology and material culture. Just as we were able to help China in certain areas of contemporary technology, I suggested, so our own technology owed much to China’s, including the early development of metallurgy and ceramics, and, later, printing and gunpowder, those two symbols of the birth of the modern age. ‘But you forget perhaps our greatest contribution to the west’, Jiang chided me, ‘the magnetic compass, to guide passage from East to West’.

Tonight I am glad again to have my knowledge of China’s infinitely rich material and cultural past enriched and expanded under the authoritative and unrerning guidance of Professors Liu Qinzhu and Wang Wei from the Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

It is a privilege to have our guests here as visiting speakers. This occasion marks a significant step in the development of academic relationships between scholars at UCL and our Chinese counterparts. The stunning discoveries made by Chinese archaeologists during the last generation and the wealth of cultural heritage yet to be explored suggest that some of the most exciting prospects for such future collaboration lie in archaeology. It is therefore most appropriate that the Institute of Archaeology has taken the lead among UCL departments in developing a programme of exchanges in teaching, research, conservation and heritage with the foremost archaeologists of China.
The Complex Societies Research Group
Coordinator: James Graham-Campbell

The Complex Societies Research Group is the Institute’s primary Group for many of the academic staff, honorary research staff and postgraduates whose research is concerned with the archaeology of literate societies. It brings together those working on varied aspects of the ancient Near East, Egypt, the Greek and Roman worlds, and medieval Europe. In so doing, it maintains the Institute’s long-standing links with UCL’s Department of History and with both the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), with which UCL has recently entered into a collaborative agreement, and its Institute for Classical Studies, as well as with the London Centre for the Near East. Furthermore, the Group’s many links with the British Museum have been strengthened by the initiation of a joint research seminar in medieval studies (see below). The Group’s secondary members include many other academic and honorary staff of the Institute whose interests and expertise are relevant to archaeological research into complex societies.

During the 1999/2000 academic year the Group has continued both to fulfil its sponsorship role in the organization of conferences and seminar series, and to develop and support research proposals and grant applications in association with the Institute’s Research Committee.

Research projects
Several of the major research projects directed by primary members of the Group, or ones with which they have a major involvement, were mentioned in the first two issues of AI, and on pp. 32–35 of this issue. Roger Matthews reports on his multiperiod regional survey in northern Turkey (Project Paphlagonia). Georgina Herrmann continues to direct the long-term project at Merv (see AI 1997/98, pp. 32–6), for which she has received the accolade of a prestigious Rolex Award, and it is a pleasure also to congratulate her on her recent election to the British Academy. Good progress is being made with the projects that were described in AI last year: the excavations at medieval Novgorod, the Celtic Inscribed Stones Project (CISP), and the Faces across the North Sea project on Viking art. The latter is a joint initiative with the Social and Cultural Dynamics Research Group and the Director of the Institute, in collaboration with the University of Science and Technology at Trondheim, Norway.

Jon Hather and research student Martin Conmy visited Novgorod last summer to continue research into wood use in the medieval town, and a volume of papers is in preparation, co-authored with Russian colleagues. Clive Orton has continued his research on the pottery from Novgorod with David Gaimster (an Institute alumnus) from the British Museum. Both Clive and Jon described their work at Novgorod in AI 1998/99 (pp. 31–33 and 37–38). It is anticipated that next summer the Institute’s most recently appointed professor, Thilo Rehren, will also join the expedition to Novgorod to assess the potential of the finds for the further development of his own archaeometallurgical research into medieval manufacturing processes.

All five current members of the CISP team travelled to Britain in the last June, as planned, to complete the record of the Breton stones, in the course of which a stone bearing a hitherto unpublished inscription was discovered in a private house. The bilingual monograph on the Breton corpus is now in press. Work on its completion delayed release on the Web of the preliminary interactive version of the entire CISP database, the checking of which will soon be completed.

As is also mentioned in this issue of AI in the report by the coordinator of the Social and Cultural Dynamics Research Group, Andrea Horne (who is of Anglo-Norwegian parentage and has degrees from Oslo and SOAS) has been appointed as Leverhulme-funded research fellow for the Faces across the North Sea project. A specially designed database is being compiled and a project seminar was held with our Norwegian collaborators in Trondheim (February 2000). A grant has been obtained from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) to organize a follow-up seminar in London later this year.

Unfortunately, the major grant application to the AHRB for research on London’s medieval churches, as outlined in my report last year, was unsuccessful, but Faces Across the North Sea has been incorporated into a bid from UCL and the University of Westminster for AHRB funding to establish a joint Centre for Visual Culture.

Conferences and workshops
In last year’s issue of AI I mentioned three conferences that were being planned for 1999/2000. The international symposium, “Silver economy in the Viking age”, that I organized with Gareth Williams of the British Museum was held in late May 1999, and it is expected that its proceedings will be published by the Institute. The conference on the theme of encounters with ancient Egypt is now scheduled for 16–19 December 2000 (further information is available from John Tait at the Institute), but that on continuity in the aftermath of conquest will not now take place.

The Group was pleased to co-sponsor, with the Social and Cultural Dynamics Research Group, the annual national meeting of the Theoretical Roman Archaeology conference. It was organized at the Institute by Kris Lockyear and research students David Clark, Gwyn Davies and Andrew Gardner, and took place in April 2000. The Group also sponsored a one-day meeting in May, entitled “Opening the door to ideas”, which was organized by John Wilkes to mark Richard Reece’s retirement.

Seminar series
Members of the Group remained actively involved in the organization of the Classical Archaeology and Mycenaean seminar series of the Institute of Classical Studies and in the seminar programme of the London Centre for the Near East. It is a pleasure to record that this year saw the initiation of a new collaborative seminar series in medieval studies between the Institute (convenor: James Graham-Campbell) and the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities at the British Museum (convenor: Leslie Webster).

In this brief report, only a selection of the main current and planned research and publication projects by members of the Group can be mentioned. Its individual members continue to pursue their particular research interests, while overall the Group seeks to promote the understanding of literate societies by offering encouragement to all its members in their personal research and by supporting the development of new research initiatives.
The Heritage Studies Research Group
Coordinator: Clifford Price

The Heritage Studies Research Group is the primary Group for those staff and postgraduate students whose interests lie in the interpretation, presentation and conservation of the cultural heritage. During 1999/2000 a particular effort was made also to involve in the Group's activities members of the Institute's honorary research staff, and their participation has been very welcome.

The main purpose of the research groups is to facilitate and promote interdisciplinary research. This is achieved mainly through workshops and seminars, some of which lead directly to the initiation of research projects (see below).

Research projects

One of the workshops that the Group held during the 1998/99 academic year has led to the development of a research project. It was concerned with moisture movement and the behaviour of salts in porous materials such as stone, ceramics and wall paintings. Several valuable scientific contacts were made during the course of the workshop, and these have now been developed to the point at which an application is being made for funding to the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Commission. The proposed project is ambitious: its aims are to achieve a better understanding of the rates and mechanisms of salt damage, to improve methodologies for assessing salt deterioration (including the novel use of multispectral time-lapse imaging), and to develop innovative treatments for reducing salt deterioration. The project partners are the University of Hamburg, the University of Münster, Eindhoven University of Technology, BCD GmbH (conservation consultants) in Bern, English Heritage, and the UCL Institute of Archaeology.

The project on the conservation, interpretation and presentation of rock art in the UK that was mentioned in the Group's report last year has been completed. It was carried out in collaboration with Bournemouth University and was funded by English Heritage as a pilot study. Funding is now to be sought for a wider study. At the end of November 1999, the teams from Bournemouth and the Institute presented their draft final report, and a further seminar was held by the Heritage Studies Research Group in order to consider in more detail one of the technical aspects of the project. At the seminar Leoni Blank and Stuart Robson of the UCL Department of Geomatics, Dr Stephen Fowles of the Conservation Centre, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, and Julie Eklund of the Institute of Archaeology, presented their research on the uses of laser scanning and photogrammetry in the recording of rock-art panels. Field trials had been carried out in Yorkshire during the summer, and the laser scanner had revealed details that had not been visible by any other means. It had also permitted the production of a life-size replica panel.

An important role of the Group is to promote links with other UCL departments that may lead to joint interdisciplinary research projects. A novel initiative is now under way with the Bartlett School of Architecture and with the Institute's secondary research group, Computer Applications in Archaeology. Alan Penn and Bill Hillier in the Bartlett are renowned for their work on space syntax: the study of how people use the space around them, consciously or subconsciously. Although there has been some work on the applications of space syntax to archaeology, much remains to be done, and a stimulating meeting was held in December 1999 at which participants shared their visions of the ways in which space syntax could aid the interpretation of archaeological sites. Further collaboration is envisaged in exploring the potential of the Bartlett's virtual-reality chamber which has just been completed.

Another research theme that engages several members of the Group is the interpretation and presentation of archaeological sites and landscapes and their presentation to the public. Some of the issues raised are explored in two articles in this issue of AI: pp. 53–56 Nicholas Stanley-Price discusses three contrasted types of Palaeolithic site (in China, Tanzania and Portugal), and on pp. 57–59 Paulette McManus presents her ideas on what constitutes an archaeological park. Also, on pp. 36-38 is an article by Dafydd Griffiths and research student Ann Feuerbach of how their analysis of fragmentary remains of furnaces and crucibles excavated at Merv in Turkmenistan led to the discovery of a novel method of making steel, practiced there over a thousand years ago.

Seminars and lectures

In November 1999 the Group hosted a one-day seminar, "Herod's northern palace at Masada: conservation and management at Israel's most visited archaeological site". The northern palace at Masada is a spectacular building constructed by Herod the Great in the first century BC on the precipitous northern cliff edge of the Masada plateau. Excavated by Yigael Yadin in the 1960s, it has deteriorated following excavation and intense visitor pressure for more than 30 years. The speakers included John Ashurst (Ingram Consultancy), Ettie Ben-Haim (Israel National Parks Protection Authority, INPPA) and Asa Shalom (consultant to INPPA). They described a project for conserving the Palace's architecture and for training an Israeli team in conservation and maintenance, within the overall context of managing a prime visitor attraction. In a similar vein, Frank Matero, from the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania, gave an evening lecture on "The conservation of an excavated past: Çatal Höyük past, present and future". He examined the role of conservation as an agent of site interpretation by discussing past approaches, current concerns and solutions, and future considerations for the buildings and architectural art of the famous Neolithic site of Çatal Höyük in Turkey. In February the annual Museums Studies Lecture was given by Sir Neil Cossons, Director of the National Museum of Science and Industry and chairman-elect of English Heritage (Fig. 1, opposite). Under the title "Museums for the Millennium", he outlined the opportunities for museums to develop their audiences in a digital and interactive age.

Two meetings were devoted to analytical facilities. At the first, Thilo Rehren and Dafydd Griffiths demonstrated to the uninitiated the capabilities of the Institute's microprobe and, at the second, Marieke Uldriks, an art historian from the Dutch company Art Innovation, demonstrated the MUSIS 2007 multispectral imaging system on a range of paintings that were provided by colleagues in the UCL History of Art Department.

Other seminars included presentations by Catherine Read, Kent County Council Finds Liaison Officer, on "Metal detecting and the portable antiquities scheme"; by Val Kirby on "Aspects of heritage in Antarctica"; and by the Group's research students on their MPhil/PhD research topics.

Policy on antiquities

The Group has also continued to fulfil a role in formulating the Institute's policy on the antiquities trade. Nick Merriman and Kathy Tubb drew up a paper outlining the implications for staff and students of the Institute's support for the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970) and the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen and Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995). After discussion by the Group, an amended version was accepted by the Institute staff meeting in December 1999 and thus became Institute policy. Further publicity was given to this important issue by holding a discussion meeting in February at which Neil Brodie and Jenny Doole from the illicit Antiquities Research Centre at Cambridge and Kathy Tubb from the Institute were the main speakers. This was complemented by a display, "Stealing History", in the foyer of the Institute.
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<td>19. Pickering, Yorkshire</td>
<td>Schadla-Hall: Mesolithic</td>
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*The list includes only the projects involving survey or excavation (or both) run by members of the Institute or to which they make a major contribution (individual research students' field projects are excluded, as are study visits to museum and other collections), and only the main members of the Institute involved in each project are named; staff from other UCL departments and other UK and overseas universities and organizations also participate in many of the projects and in some cases co-direct them.*

*All the overseas projects depend on collaboration with local archaeologists and with the relevant antiquities services, museums or universities, and several of them also involve collaboration with other UK universities, colleges, museums and other organizations, e.g. 11 (English Heritage, Natural History Museum), 16 (Dover Museum), 19 (Cambridge, Durham), 20 (Bournemouth), 35 (Egypt Exploration Society), 37 (Cambridge), 39 (British Museum), 40 (Leicester), 43 (British Museum) and 44 (British Museum).*