

UCL Institute of Archaeology Society of Archaeological
Masters Students (SAMS)

3rd Annual IoA Masters Student Conference

**‘The Human Past: Multidisciplinary and
Global Perspectives on Archaeology and
Heritage’**

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Abstracts

The Human Past: Multidisciplinary and
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World Archaeology I: Ancient Egyptian & Near Eastern Societies

Humour in Ancient Egypt, Ildiko Kalnoky UCL Institute of Archaeology (MA Egyptian Archaeology) illdiko.kalnoky.13@ucl.ac.uk

The ancient Egyptian culture is possibly one of the most well researched ancient civilisations to date. There is now a wealth of information regarding their diet, physical health, religion, politics, language, their attitudes to death and much more. Although a lot of the information available to us is highly limited in the sense that it stems from a very small fragment of Egyptian society, namely the elite, and the ensuing information is undoubtedly often heavily clouded by matters of ideology, decorum, prestige, etc. it is important to remember that the ancient Egyptians were people – people who in many ways were like us. They would have experienced a number of emotions in a way probably not far removed from our own. What this talk examines is the concept of humour in the ancient Egyptian context. What is it that made the ancient Egyptians laugh? What is the type of evidence indicative of humour and what possible implications could this have for the archaeology of ancient Egypt?

Imagery and Iconography of Sasanian Empire as a Reflection of the Political Status and Royal Ideology of the Empire, Meredith Bergen UCL Institute of Archaeology (MA Middle Eastern Archaeology) bergen.meredith@gmail.com

The Sasanian Empire stretching from the plains of Mesopotamia to the mountain plateaus of Iran and Central Asian steppe was characterized by its imagery. This iconography is replete with symbolism conveying messages of royal ideology. In this article I propose that the symbolic nature of this iconography goes a step further, reflecting the political and social status of the royal court and the empire throughout the period. I suggest that the iconography within three themes: continuity and legitimacy of rule, the threat of the Rome, and internal affairs and centrality of Zoroastrianism. And that these themes mirror the chronological evolution of the politics and stability of the Sasanian Empire. Each theme explores the iconography of rock reliefs, coinage and silver vessels. Early iconography of the reliefs, coins and vessels focuses on legitimizing their claim and establishing their divine right to rule. In the middle period iconography of reliefs and coinage echo the shift in the political situation to Rome. By the late period the iconography imitates royal preoccupation with internal conflicts, maintaining royal control and rising centrality of Zoroastrianism. All of these elements combine to create a unique glimpse at the Sasanian Empire's political status and imperial ideology.

Healthcare in New Kingdom Egypt with comparative analysis across the Near East and into Sudan, Louise Atherton UCL Institute of Archaeology (MA Egyptian Archaeology)
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Examinations into ‘Healthcare’ and social response to illness in Egyptian archaeological studies are limited. Instead, we see a trend in highlighting disease and illness through bioarchaeology, paleopathology and also the examination of medical papyri. However, this approach has tended to display the people of ancient Egypt as bearing great suffering whilst playing a passive role without response. Where this research changes the dichotomy between passive and active agency is in qualifying and ascertaining the presence and levels of response to human illness by using the city of Amarna as a case study whilst utilising the bioarchaeological data from the South Tombs Cemetery. The New Kingdom is a well-documented and excavated period, with contemporary relations in the Near East and peripheral settlements in Sudan. This research realises the inherent need for a more socialistic approach to the data, interpreting not what caused people to die, but what helped them to survive in ancient times. By examining bioarchaeological data, settlement archaeology, textual evidence and artefactual remains, this research aims to highlight collective response for the prevention and treatment of diseases as well as individualising professions and micro-environments in understanding insults to health, and looking at access, inclusion and exclusion.

The gifts of the Indus and Saraswati rivers: trades between the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia in the 3rd Millennium BC, Alessandro Ceccarelli, UCL Institute of Archaeology/ SOAS (MA History of Art and Archaeology) alessandro.ceccarelli@hotmail.com

In the third millennium BC a new configuration of socio-political entities came into existence between the Indus and Mediterranean regions. In that fervent horizon of newly borne city-states and empires, long distance interactions became relevant in the development of local economies. Nowadays, the theory regarding the interaction between Mesopotamian city-states and the Harappan Civilisation in modern Pakistan and India, commonly known as Indus Civilisation or Mature Harappan, is still the subject of fervent debates. After briefly describing the historical background of Sumer and the Harappan Civilisation in the third millennium CE, the present paper will try to show how these two cultures were actively involved in inter-regional trade, focusing on three main categories of material evidence that play a fundamental role in the interpretation of Indus-Mesopotamian relationship: (1) cuneiform record from Mesopotamian sites referring to long distance trade; (2) Indus and Indus-type seals from Mesopotamia; (3) carnelian beads, especially etched carnelian beads from Indus sites found in Mesopotamia.

Archaeological Sciences I: Skeletons in Caves and Closets

Analysis of Sexual Dimorphism of Proximal Femur Morphology using 3D Geometric Morphometric Techniques, Kara Carmichael UCL Institute of Archaeology (MSc Bioarchaeological and Forensic Anthropology) kara.carmichael.14@ucl.ac.uk

Estimation of sex from human skeletal remains can often prove difficult due to the poor preservation typically observed in both innominates and crania. The purpose of this study is to assess whether or not sex of individuals can be estimated based on the morphology of the proximal femur. Using laser-scanned skeletal material from the Medieval/post-Medieval Eastgate Square, Chichester collection, landmarks were placed on the digital scans. The Chichester collection lacks known information regarding sex of the remains therefore sex was visually assessed using standard pelvic traits. Only specimens of high male or female probability were included in this study. The sample was further narrowed down to young/middle adults with no signs of pathology in order to eliminate any physical changes that occur with increased age. Fourteen landmarks were chosen that are able to visually represent the torsion of the femoral neck and overall proximal femoral morphology. Generalised Procrustes (GPA) and Principal Components (PCA) analyses were performed to scale and superimpose these landmarks using Morphologika software. Preliminary data suggest that the proximal femora of humans are sexually dimorphic. These results have both forensic anthropological and bioarchaeological applications in the estimation of sex where other elements may be absent or fragmentary.

Morphology and Orientation of the Occipital Condyles in Primates and its Implications for Reconstructing Locomotion in Fossil Taxa, Julia Galway-Witham UCL Institute of Archaeology (MSc Palaeoanthropology and Palaeolithic Archaeology) julia.galway-witham@ucl.ac.uk

The order Primates exhibits a diverse range of locomotor behaviours and postures. This study considers the morphology of the occipital condyles, the points of articulation for the atlas on the cranium, as a potential proxy for inferring locomotion in primates. Additionally, the orientation of the occipital condyles, particularly in relation to the orbital plane, are also considered as these may yield useful information regarding the posture of a species (and therefore its primary form of locomotion) given that the orientation of the orbits have been found to relate to posture. Being able to accurately infer locomotion from the occipital condyles would be particularly valuable in the study of extinct taxa as crania are abundant in the fossil record compared to the postcrania, but have thus far proven contentious in reconstructing locomotion for fossil primates, including hominins. This study hopes to develop a new method to infer locomotion through the morphology and the orientation of the occipital condyles. The sample will largely consist of specimens from the American Museum of Natural History, New York. This will be supplemented by collections in London. The full sample will be represented by 21 taxa, including humans, and 10 adult specimens per taxon.

***Hobbits and dragons: who were the little people of Pleistocene Flores?* Jane Hollingsworth**
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In 2003, excavations on Liang Bua, Flores, Indonesia, revealed the partial skeleton of a small bodied, small brained hominin ('LB1'), dated to only 18,000 years in age. Further research has produced several, similar skeletal remains and artefacts, indicating that these hominins were on the island up to 1 million years ago. These strange creatures shared their island world with pygmy elephants, giant rats and terrifying komodo dragons. How can the apparently unique morphology, location and dating of the Flores hominins be explained? Traditionally, interpretations of the Flores hominin remains focused on whether the LB1 represented *Homo floresiensis*, an insular dwarfed descendent of Asian *Homo erectus*. Several scientists argued that *Homo floresiensis* was not a valid species, believing that LB1 was simply a pathological individual of anatomically modern *Homo sapiens*. Substantial evidence acquired over the course of 10 years of archaeological and palaeontological research now supports the reconsideration and development of the 'Primitive Hobbit Hypothesis'. The diminutive stature, primitive-looking morphology, chimpanzee sized brain and Oldowan style technology of *Homo floresiensis* can be explained by descent from an Australopithecine or *Homo habilis*-like ancestor.

Archaeological Sciences II: Applications of Chemistry in Archaeology and Conservation

***Early Transcaucasian Ware Technology at Shengavit, Armenia and the Origins of the Early Bronze Age Kura-Araxes Culture*, Nyree Manoukian, UCL Institute of Archaeology (MSc Technology and Analysis of Archaeological Materials nyree.manoukian.14@ucl.ac.uk**

This study investigates the unprecedented mode of expansion of the "Kura-Araxes" cultural tradition of the late 4th and 3rd millennia BCE. Found in an area between Northern Israel, Central Iran and the South Caucasus, the extent of this culture rivalled Mesopotamia's largest empires of the time. Kura-Araxes occupation levels are recognised from Early Transcaucasian Ware (ETC), a heavily buff-gray-black burnished pottery type. In light of this, the purpose of this study is to characterise ETC ware from Shengavit, an Early Bronze Age site in Armenia. Samples of ETC ware will be analysed using a combination of thin-section petrography and geochemistry techniques, in order to characterise its technological features, raw materials acquisition, production techniques and provenance. Knowledge of this ware presents an outlook on technological production, exchange and cross-pollination of cultures. Preliminary results have yielded a household industry, hand-made production, and local production centers. This research project has the potential to elucidate knowledge pertaining to the origin and spread of the Kura-Araxes culture, which is integral to our understanding of the socio-economic interactions, trade and exchange of the Ancient Near East in the Early Bronze Age.

Bronze Disease Detection: An FTIR Analysis of Archaeological Copper Alloy Objects Enabling The Burrell Collection Decant, Rebeca Suarez-Ferreira, Department of Archaeology, Durham University (MA Conservation of Archaeological and Museum Objects)
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After 65 archaeological copper alloy objects were deemed to be suffering from ‘bronze disease’ by museum staff at The Burrell Collection, they were separated and categorized as ‘not fit for display’ on the collections management database of Glasgow Museums. This essentially disables their consideration for display, and more importantly, impedes on the probability of their care, preservation, and access. Therefore, an analytical approach to the determination of ‘bronze disease’ was conducted using infrared spectroscopy. It was concluded that, given the condition of the object, the nature of the sample(s), and the FTIR results, only 23 of the objects have copper trihydroxychlorides present within their corrosion products. Recommendations for the safe storage of the objects led to an assessment of storage materials and conditions for all objects within The Burrell Collection. The museum is to be remodelled in 2016; these timely events have provided an opportunity to reassess and implement better conservation-grade storage conditions for this famous Glaswegian collection. The decant procedure necessary during the reconstruction of the building will use the results of this study in relevant decision-making processes and hopefully enable the future display, care, and preservation of the objects studied.

Culture Clash or Art Collaboration? Examining Contemporary Artworks in Historic Sites from the Perspective of a Conservator, Qifan Wang UCL Institute of Archaeology (MSc Conservation for Archaeology and Museums) qifan.wang@ucl.ac.uk

Works of contemporary art are commonly presented in historic location nowadays. The author aims to explore the relationship between contemporary art and historical immovable heritage from the perspective of a conservator, and discover potential problems and solutions when contemporary art is in historic locations, and highlight the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary art conservation. First, through presenting a case of conserving a modern interpretation of a throne displayed at Hampton Court Palace, the decision-making process and complexity of how to conserve works of modern art in historic location will be demonstrated; also potential conflicts between conservators and artists will be discussed. Second, the paper will present the project of creating and installing the first contemporary visual artwork (glass-sculpted pillow) for permanent display in the Site of Execution on Tower Green within the Tower of London. Theoretical and practical issues regarding the historical site and landscape conservation in this project will be discussed. This project may be an example of how to appropriately use contemporary art to interpret and revitalize historic sites, especially in a World Heritage Site. The author will finally summarise the two cases and highlight the role of conservators in addressing issues related to contemporary art in historic sites.

World Archaeology II: Places for People- Landscapes and Identity

***Why do we remember? Commemorating the First World War and British identity.* Amanda Chain, UCL Institute of Archaeology (MA Public Archaeology) amanda.chain.14@ucl.ac.uk**

Every year we observe two minutes of silence and remember those who lost their lives serving their country on Remembrance Sunday. Not always was our behaviour for mourning so codified nor was it always so universal. As we look back at the events that took place in the First World War and the images that commemorating brings to the foreground, we often fail to see the subliminal and the myths that are perpetuated in doing so. This essay looks at how the practice of memorialising war in the twentieth century has changed dramatically and why we continue to form displays public commemoration long after those who served and those who may have known them have passed.

***“Hybridity” Interpreting the cultural identity of Sikels in the Iron Age in Sicily. A way to reconsider the archaeological landscape nowadays.* Lia La Terra UCL Insitute of Archaeology (MA Public Archaeology) lia.terra.14@ucl.ac.uk**

South-Eastern Sicily provides a privileged view for the analysis of the impact on the culture of "Sikels", thanks to its huge variety of indigenous settlements dated to the Iron Age and concentrated around the Ionian coasts, which were early visited and occupied by Greek colonies. Nonetheless, the archaeological debates and researches have been always concentrated in a Greek point of view, leading indigenous archaeology as a *“niche archaeology”*, where sites are even not well preserved and inserted in the archaeological potential resources. For these reasons, I would like to focus on the analysis of the indigenous sites of the Hyblean Area. The portrait that has been revealing forces me to leave the well-known ethnic classifications and characterizations, getting close to the concept of “hybridity”. In fact, Greeks and indigenous people have developed an interactive dialogue that highlights the creation of a "third space" or "middle ground" that is not indigenous nor stranger, rather a cultural melange generated by the meeting between the two parts, well visible in the social exchanges, osmosis of ideas and material culture. Re-centring the specificity of the indigenous archaeology could be an important way to reconsider also the archaeological landscape nowadays and promote new strategies of development of the area.

Reconsidering Oral History in the Archaeology of Australian Rural Landscapes, Sally Maclennan, UCL Institute of Archaeology (MA Cultural Heritage Studies)
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Archaeology and oral history have often been seen as uncomfortable bedfellows, with the effort of collecting oral history far outweighing the yield of partial information or garbled family histories. Alternatively, this paper argues that oral history has an often-unrealized potential to provide additional dimensions to our understanding of archaeological sites and cultural landscapes. This paper discusses how approaches to oral history more commonly employed in Australian Aboriginal cultural heritage were applied in an investigation of a settler-colonial pastoral landscape at Rawdon Vale, in southeastern Australia. This research demonstrated how the careful analysis of oral history combined with conventional approaches to archaeological survey and the historical record revealed a complex cultural landscape inscribed with tangible and intangible features. Various relationships between the oral and archaeological records were revealed, such as how stories become attached to places, or how some places are continuously used and re-used while others are forgotten. These methods and analysis tap into social histories that are not easily accessed via the historical or archaeological record, and allow a more nuanced understanding of the landscape and its development to be established.

Looking for Leporidae: rabbits and people on the Shropshire/Worcestershire border in the Middle Ages and beyond, Murray Andrews, UCL Institute of Archaeology, PhD candidate
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The European rabbit – *Oryctolagus cuniculus* – played an important role in English rural societies and economies throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods as a source of food, fur and social prestige. Yet the evidence for this industry is elusive; most studies have, understandably, focused on those areas where survival of either documentary (East Anglia, south-east England) or archaeological (south-west England, Wales) evidence is most prolific in the present day. But what of rabbits and people in different landscapes? This paper pieces together place-names, historic documents and archaeology to consider the role and significance of rabbit warrening in the vicinity of Cleobury Mortimer, a pastoral landscape along the Shropshire/Worcestershire border. The evidence reveals a surprisingly abundant rural industry of which few traces now remain, intimately tied to rural lords and the gentry and frequently the source and target of social conflict in the medieval and later countryside.

Identities and Spaces beyond: Multiple Functions of Murals in Yuan Dynasty Tombs, Clara Ma,
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Murals inside Yuan Dynasty tombs often depict tomb occupants sitting in front of a screen, drinking and hunting within a contemporary house. The coexistence of both indoor and outdoor scenes leads to the question of the function of murals in these tombs. Previous researches used these murals to identify tomb occupant and studied them as supplement to Yuan Dynasty visual culture. In fact, each tomb is an individual system with murals and material remains operating together to display occupants' personal aspiration. To study such active role of murals, the paper uses anthropologist Alfred Gell's theory of agency to examine how murals are used together with burial goods and human body in Yuan Dynasty tombs in Dongercun, Shaanxi province and Chifeng, Inner Mongolia. Then, it compares the murals to visual art of Yuan Dynasty and explores tomb occupants' intention behind. The paper demonstrates that murals and other material remains in these tombs serve together to reveal occupants as posthumous figures, figures of worship as well as figures in their idealized identity. They also present the tomb as an idealized home, a celestial realm and a ritual space. Although murals in each tomb have similar functions, they manipulate different visual metaphors