




Digital re-colouration of relief BM 124554, from Ashurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace at Nimrud, depicting the king (far right) and the Assyrian army besieging a city (featured in this month's Project Gallery). Torches are thrown against the invaders, but water is piped from the siege engine to quench the fire, whilst soldiers attack the walls. Some of the colours represented have been found on the specified relief features at this site, whilst others are based on later colour schemes on reliefs and wall paintings; the precise hues of the colours shown are unknown. © Li Sou and Trustees of the British Museum.



Aerial view of the main excavation trench at the Ness of Brodgar: an extensive Neolithic walled enclosure that contains a number of well-preserved stone buildings, between which darker 'middens' deposits are found. The site lies between the henge monuments of the Stones of Stennes and the Ring of Brodgar in the middle of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site. Ongoing excavations led by the Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology (featured in this month's Project Gallery) are developing understanding of the nature and development of this complex site within the Orkney landscape. © Hugo Anderson Whymark.

EDITORIAL

 Readers of *Antiquity* will, I hope, excuse me for opening this editorial with yet another reference to Stonehenge. From the very first issue back in March 1927, a Stonehenge vignette has been the *Antiquity* logo, and Stonehenge also featured in the original editorial and within the contents of the journal itself. Colonel Hawley had completed his extensive excavations only the year before, new work was under way at neighbouring Woodhenge (*Antiquity* 1: 92–95)¹ and attention was turning to its neglected but much larger neighbour, Durrington Walls (*Antiquity* 3: 49–59)². *Antiquity* was founded four years too late, however, to report the news that the sources of the famous bluestones had at last been found.

Indeed, it was in 1923 that geologist H.H. Thomas traced the source of the Stonehenge ‘bluestones’ to the Preseli Hills of South Wales. He was not the first to recognise the presence of ‘foreign’ stones at the site: that distinction goes to Edmund Halley (of Halley’s Comet fame), who, in 1720, showed the Royal Society that two distinctly different kinds of stone were present, one of them ‘brought somewhere from the west’. The distant origin of the bluestones has hence long been accepted, but there has been much less agreement about how they came to Salisbury Plain and where exactly they were quarried. Some 25 years ago, *Antiquity* carried a paper challenging the ‘myth’ of long-distance megalithic transport, with the Stonehenge bluestones a particular target (*Antiquity* 65: 64–73)³. Were they really brought all that way (150 miles as the crow flies) by the builders of Stonehenge? Could glacial action provide a better explanation? Some people still hold to that view, and are untroubled by the fact that no litter of Welsh bluestones covers the Wiltshire chalklands. But for most people that debate is now resolved, and it only remains to establish exactly where the stones came from in South Wales. Last year in *Antiquity*, Tim Darvill and Geoff Wainwright described quarrying evidence from Carn Meini, right in the heart of the Preseli Hills, where pillar-like outcrops tower impressively upwards. Recent geochemistry, however, has led researchers to a different location, on the northern slopes of the Preseli Hills facing Cardigan Bay. Here, Mike Parker Pearson and his team have been excavating a bluestone quarry at Craig Rhos-y-Felin.

This is an impressive site, with good evidence for the extraction and removal of megalithic blocks. It is interesting also for its rarity value. Despite the many hundreds of surviving megalithic monuments in western and northern Europe, very few quarries have been located. One such is known from Orkney, and there are others in Brittany and the Alentejo, but they are much rarer than might be expected. Megalithic blocks often appear unshaped, and that might lead us to suppose that the stones were generally collected from surface

¹ Cunnington, M.E. 1927. Prehistoric timber circles. *Antiquity* 1: 92–95.

² Crawford, O.G.S. 1929. Durrington Walls. *Antiquity* 3: 49–59.

³ Thorpe, R.S. & O. Williams-Thorpe. 1991. The myth of long-distance megalith transport. *Antiquity* 65: 64–73.

scatters and detached boulders. It is difficult for us now to visualise the appearance of west European landscapes thousands of years ago, before farmers cleared away the stones. What is surprising, given that detached blocks must have been widely available, is that so many stones, including a good number of the Stonehenge bluestones, were evidently quarried from the bedrock. With sites such as Craig Rhos-y-Felin, we can begin to see exactly how that was done.

Unravelling Angkor Wat

Stonehenge is not the only iconic site to feature in this issue of *Antiquity*. Moving to the opposite side of the world, in mainland Southeast Asia, we find the spectacular remains of Angkor, a dispersed complex of temples and enclosures that flourished as one of the great cities of its day between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. At its heart stands the great twelfth-century temple-mausoleum of Angkor Wat. Our knowledge of Angkor has been revolutionised in recent years via the combined use of LiDAR and GPR by an international team led by Roland Fletcher from the University of Sydney. It is a difficult site for field study, largely cloaked in dense vegetation, and the flamboyant temples appear to rise like islands out of the jungle. We now know, however, that a dense scatter of residential compounds peopled the intervening areas.

Angkor Wat in particular has benefited from this new research. Despite decades of study on the visible structures, it is only now that we can begin to say what went on inside the huge outer enclosure. There is new evidence too for the fortification of the perimeter in the late sixteenth or seventeenth century, long after the centre of the Khmer state had moved southwards away from Angkor towards Phnom Penh. And LiDAR has also unravelled the pattern of fields, farmsteads and canals around the temple, showing that Angkor Wat was embedded within a gridded urban network laid out at the same time as the temple itself. The results of this research are here presented in a special series of papers. They are testimony to the importance of both the new methodologies and the significance of the results, enabling us to grasp the layout and lost detail of a major early temple complex. They also demonstrate the power and potential of complementary approaches—LiDAR and GPR backed up by targeted excavation—especially in challenging terrain such as that encountered here. The outcome does exactly what archaeology should do—it puts an iconic monument back in its world of fields and houses, and reveals its hidden history.

Subfields and specialisms

The archaeology of Angkor is one thing; those who study its inscriptions or its sculptures, or indeed its architecture, on the other hand, would probably call themselves epigraphers or art historians. This is the kind of subdivision that both enriches and bedevils research on past societies. No one would wish to deny or denigrate the sheer dedication that goes into studying a foreign language and its script. We need specialists in Maya hieroglyphics and Assyrian cuneiform, no less than those who analyse stable isotopes or ancient DNA. Yet the history of the subject shows that this has all too easily led to institutional fragmentation. It is paradoxical, for example, that some Classical archaeologists find themselves within a

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Figure 1. The Bridgeness slab © The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, 2015.

Classics department, rubbing shoulders with specialists in languages and texts, but down the road their colleagues might be enrolled among the archaeologists. Archaeology is throwing important new light on societies once known primarily through their texts. But we can hardly hope to understand an ancient society properly if we cannot read the writing it left behind: witness the revolution in Maya studies that has followed the deciphering of their script. At the same time, all research is a socially embedded endeavour, and the way we think about our respective specialisms must be deeply influenced by the social configurations of knowledge. Such a notion would imply that Classical archaeologists in a Classics department might think differently about their subject—and go about their research differently—when compared to those in an archaeology or anthropology department.

This distinction was brought to mind recently by an interview with Chris Naunton, Director of the Egypt Exploration Society based in London, and recently elected president of the International Association of Egyptologists, where he suggested that “many of us would like to see Egyptology integrating better with related disciplines; archaeology in Egypt can sometimes seem a little adrift from the rest of archaeology, for example, and that’s something for the association to work on”⁴. That is a laudable objective, which very much wins our support, and the trend of the times is definitely moving in such a direction. There is a strong case to be made that state formation in Classical Greece, for example, or in ancient Egypt, cannot be properly understood without some knowledge of state formation at other times and places. Comparing and contrasting inevitably confronts us with new questions that we might not otherwise have thought to ask on such topics as the presence or prominence of cities, scripts or state religions. Why, for instance, were there no wealthy graves in the Indus Valley, and no writing in Peru? Looking at one society in isolation is not going to give us those insights, nor explain the mix of regularities and variations that coloured the development of societies and technologies. At the same time, however, specialisms (language specialisms in particular) are an increasingly threatened commodity in the world of the twenty-first century, and one that we must be prepared to defend.

⁴ HE and me. *Times Higher Education* 17 September 2015. Available at: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/people/interview-chris-naunton> (accessed 6 October 2015).

Ancient languages are not, of course, the only kind of subfield within archaeology. Others sit astride the boundary between archaeology and physics, biology or genetics, none more so than ancient DNA. This is a specialism that is making a radical impact on archaeology, bringing back to life some of those movements and migrations that fell so far from favour in the 1970s. It is also enabling us to trace the origins of individual prehistoric humans and resolve old debates. Among these is the hotly disputed Kennewick Man. Discovered beside a river in Washington State in 1996 and shown to be around 8500 years old, there has been ongoing and occasionally heated argument about his relationship to the Native American peoples of the region. Indeed, was he Native American at all? As David Meltzer reports below [pp. 1486–93], an aDNA study published earlier this year appears at last to have settled the matter. We still have to wait to see how the US Army Corps of Engineers, which, under the terms of the NAGPRA, has disposal of the Kennewick Man material, will decide the ownership of the remains.

The European Heritage Prize 2015

☛ The EAA meeting in 2015 moved from the Mediterranean warmth of Istanbul (EAA 2014) to the very different setting of Glasgow. The proceedings were blessed with sunny weather that showed off the city's grandiose architecture to striking effect. Once again, the meeting beat previous records with the number of participants, which was well in excess of 2000 on this occasion. This being Scotland, the conference opened to the sound of bagpipes in the splendid City Halls, with a keynote lecture on archaeological science and the award of the European Heritage Prize. This year's co-recipient deserves particular mention in this editorial as it was none other than *Antiquity's* previous editor, Martin Carver, recognised for his contributions to field archaeology and research, and to the understanding of archaeology as a service to society. We would like here to add our own congratulations to Martin on receipt of this prestigious award.

The EAA meeting provided an excellent opportunity to walk across the hallway to the Hunterian Museum. This takes its name from the collection of the eighteenth-century physician William Hunter, originally housed in his London home but bequeathed to the University of Glasgow on his death. One of the highlights of the current display are the 16 'distance slabs', whereon the Roman legions who built the Antonine Wall (AD 140–142) recorded the completion of the section allotted to them. They show an attention to detail that would warm the heart of any imperial bureaucrat: on the Bridgeness slab, for example, soldiers of the Legion II Augusta record that they have completed 4652 paces of the wall—no more, no less! One cannot help wondering who they were wanting to tell. Not many locals in this remote corner of the Roman empire would have read Latin, although the relief images of triumphing Roman soldiers carry a more immediate message that does not require language skills. It is interesting too that the legions were so proud of their achievements in building the Antonine Wall (of turf) but were much less loquacious about the stone-built Hadrian's Wall, 100 miles to the south. Perhaps in that case the wall itself said all that was required.