

ARTEFACT

Archaeology at the University of Southampton

Summer 2015



From Scandinavia with Leprosy

Scientific studies of a 1500-year-old skeleton curated in Archaeology have revealed insights into the early spread of leprosy. The skeleton comes from the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Great Chesterford in Essex. The bones were of a man who was probably in his twenties when he died, sometime in the 5th or 6th century AD, and showed changes consistent with leprosy, suggesting that here was a very early British case of the disease.

Although leprosy is nowadays a tropical disease, in the past it occurred in Europe. Human migrations probably helped spread the disease, and there are cases in early skeletons from Western Europe, particularly from the 7th century AD onward. Not all cases of leprosy can be identified by changes to the skeleton. Some cases of leprosy may leave no trace on the bones; others will affect bones in a similar way to other diseases. The only way to be sure is to use DNA fingerprinting, or other chemical markers characteristic of the leprosy bacillus. The bacterial DNA and lipid biomarker results confirmed the diagnosis of leprosy, and allowed detailed genetic study of the bacteria that caused the man's disease. The leprosy strain found in the Anglo-Saxon man came from the 3I lineage. It has been found in burials from medieval Scandinavia and southern Britain, but this case is earlier than those. The identification of fatty molecules (lipids) from the bacteria showed that the leprosy was different from later strains, so in the future we may be able to distinguish older leprosy cases from later medieval examples. Isotopes from the man's teeth showed that he probably did not come from Britain, but more likely grew up elsewhere in northern Europe, perhaps southern Scandinavia. This matches the DNA results and means that it is possible that he brought a Scandinavian strain of the leprosy bacterium with him when he migrated to Britain.

The results were published in PLOS ONE:

<http://dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0124282>.

The potential of this work, such as for mapping future disease spread, was picked up by the international press, appearing on the BBC, on Forbes.com, in the NY Times, and various British newspapers including the Guardian and the Daily Mail.

Dr Sonia Zakrzewski, Associate Professor

New programmes

We are excited to announce two new undergraduate programmes, offered from October 2015 and 2016 respectively, to which we will be contributing.

These are BA Archaeology and Anthropology (alongside the newly formed Centre for Anthropology); and BA Ancient History/Ancient History and Archaeology. We look forward to working with our colleagues in Social Sciences and History in making these a great success.

Images

Header artefact: Textile from Myos Hormos, a Roman-/Islamic period Red Sea port excavated by Southampton Archaeology between 1999 and 2003.

Main Image: A leprosy foot from Grave 96 of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Great Chesterford.





A Happy Birthday in Hungary

2015 marks 15 years of fruitful Anglo-Hungarian-Swedish co-operation in the Százhalombatta Archaeological Excavation Project. The settlement at Százhalombatta, Hungary is one of the most important Bronze Age sites in Europe. Over the last 15 years, teams from the Universities of Southampton and Cambridge, UK have been working closely with the Matrica Museum, Hungary and University of Gothenburg, Sweden to excavate the site. This work has shed new light on life in a critical period of human history. We have also trained a new generation of archaeologists by offering an annual practice-based field-school for students from the UK, Hungary and Sweden, and partnering in a series of EC-funded international research and training initiatives. A celebration event will be held on 11th July 2015 at the Archaeological Park, Százhalombatta.

For further details see: <http://szazhalombattaexcavation.info>

Dr Jo Sofaer, Associate Professor

Jane Austen and Geophysics

Over Easter, Archaeology staff and students conducted a geophysical survey at Chawton House Library, recording their achievements and experiences in blog form as they went. Detailing the results both inside and outside the house, as well as the consumption of a great deal of cake, the first four entries were written by our students and the fifth and final one by Timothy Sly. All of the blogs are available here: <http://goo.gl/OevCj7>



Royal Archaeological Institute Conference

The Department will be hosting the major maritime archaeology conference, Ships and Shore-lines, on October 16-18, 2015, in association with the Royal Archaeological Institute. More information here:

www.royalarchinst.org/conferences

Centre for Anthropology

A new Centre for Anthropology has been launched within the University. Its development and aims are explained by Prof. Yannis Hamilakis in his blog:

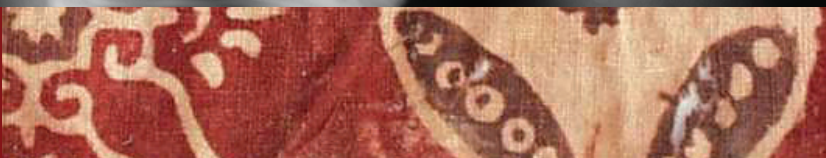
<https://goo.gl/83Kl66>

Images

Main: Excavating a burnt house at Százhalombatta, Hungary.

Above: Southampton staff and students at Chawton House Library during recent fieldwork.

Left: The enigmatic concentric designs recorded from the top of one of the Folkton Drums (more in the next issue).





ROMPing with Southampton

Archaeology

The ERC-funded project Rome's Mediterranean Ports (ROMP), Portus Limen (<http://portuslimen.eu/>), running from 2014 to 2018, is a large and exciting research project directed by Prof. Simon Keay, which aims to develop a systematic and pluridisciplinary approach to the study of Roman ports. It is based at the University of Southampton, collaborating with the Université Lumière Lyon 2, the British School at Rome and a range of universities and research institutes in the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Austria. The project considers Roman ports at different scales, ranging from the harbour infrastructure and the local/regional harbour systems to broader Mediterranean and maritime networks. Two postdocs and three PhD researchers specialising in archaeology, geo-archaeology, epigraphy, iconography, ancient literature and Roman laws are together developing an innovative multidisciplinary approach to this key research area.

Our focus is on 30 Roman ports around the Mediterranean Sea. Among these, Ephesus and Pergamon (Turkey), Tarragona (Spain), Pozzuoli (Italy), Narbonne (France) and Baelo (Spain) will be or have been investigated in the field, using a combination of aerial photographic and satellite imagery, geophysics and deep coring techniques. This project places the University of Southampton at the forefront of research into Roman ports and Roman maritime networks.

Dr Nicolas Carayon, post-doctoral researcher

Festival of British Archaeology

The department will be taking part in the festival of British Archaeology from 11-26 July. The department's excavation project at Basing House in Old Basing (Hants), run by Nicole Beale and Chris Elmer, will be holding a series of open days with excavation visits and hands-on displays throughout the festival.

Similarly, the excavation project at West Kennet, run by Josh Pollard and Alistair Pike, will host an open day on Sunday 26th July.

In the department itself, a series of evening talks will be held, on topics ranging from bones and burials, through virtual reality and lego, to ships and shipwrecks.

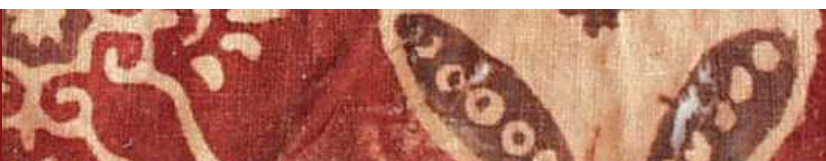
For details see the departmental blog: <http://blog.soton.ac.uk/archaeology/>

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Recent Research Grants

- **Prof. Jon Adams and Southampton's Centre for Maritime Archaeology:** nearly £3 million, from the Expedition and Education Foundation, for a 3-year programme of deep-water archaeology in the Black Sea in collaboration with the Bulgarian Institute of Archaeology and the Bulgarian Centre for Underwater Archaeology. The first field season, a geophysical survey of a large section of the Bulgarian Shelf, will take place this September. This will constitute one of the largest maritime archaeological projects ever undertaken.
- **Dr Andy Jones:** £97, 826 from the Leverhulme Trust for 'Making a Mark: Imagery and process in Neolithic Britain and Ireland', a 2-year project running from 2014-16.
- **Dr Francis Wenban-Smith:** £36,500 from English Heritage for the Baker's Hole Field Survey. The project will undertake field survey and condition assessment at this rare example of a Palaeolithic Scheduled Monument with a view to informing future site management. The project team involves staff and students from Southampton Archaeology, as well as other collaborators.
- **Dr Elaine Morris** and the Nevis Heritage Project Team: £19,000 from the Hubbard Bequest for post-excavation work and publication of the first volume of the *Nevis Heritage Project - Colonial Landscapes* theme. The grant will pay for expert contributions, a website, and assessment of the publication needs of two more sites for the second volume from this Caribbean fieldwork in the Lesser Antilles.
- **Dr Jo Sofaer:** £18,455 from HERA, for Creativity in the Bronze Age (CinBA) Impact and Leverage Study (2014-15).
- **Prof. Yannis Hamilakis:** \$18,000 for the Koutroulou Magoula Project in Greece.
- **Dr Fraser Sturt** (with Dr Duncan Garrow, University of Reading): £9,842 from the British Academy/Honor Frost Foundation for underwater survey, geophysics and remote sensing in Lewis, Outer Hebrides. Divers and local archaeologists from Lewis have found a number of complete Neolithic pots on the bottom of several lochs, which may have come from submerged settlements (dating to c. 4000-2500 BC) preserved under the water. We hope to discover what these settlements looked like, how well preserved they are, and why they became submerged.
- **Fraser Sturt** and colleagues have also been awarded funding by English Heritage to undertake a survey of the North Devon and Cornwall coast (<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/coars/news/2015/03/rapidcoastalassessment.page?>).
- **Dr John McNabb** (with colleagues from Brighton University and the University of Dar-es-Salaam): £5000 from the Society of Antiquaries for fieldwork in Isimila, a handaxe site in Tanzania.
- **Dr Dragana Mladenovic** (with colleagues from Edinburgh and Oxford): \$6,000 from Dumbarton Oaks for a pilot season of survey and geophysics in Macedonia (<http://goo.gl/Xycckc>).

David P. – A view from a desert colleague...

March 15th was a sad day for Archaeology at Southampton when we learnt of the tragic passing of Prof. David Peacock, or David P. as our good colleague and friend was often called. It was also a very shocking day, as only a week before David had been in the department as usual preparing publications for his latest new enterprise, 'Highfield Press', the publishing company that despite its youth was already turning out high quality publications and also of course, a profit! This was one of David's many schemes: he always had a plan up his sleeve, a new idea brewing, another interesting project to organise.

I was fortunate enough to meet David P. when I first started teaching at Southampton. I was delighted when he invited me to join his new project on the Egyptian Red Sea coast to help explore the maritime context of the Roman and Islamic port of Quseir al-Qadim. I went on to help David direct this five-year project that was supported by the Wallenberg Foundation, and a very able and enthusiastic team of archaeologists and trusty Egyptian workmen. Latterly, we co-directed work at a second *Periplus* harbour site, Adulis in Eritrea. David never stayed still for very long. He was always trying to ground-truth new ideas, interpreting landscapes, connecting the sites to their descriptions in ancient texts, making exciting discoveries. He was able to determine the location of an ancient shoreline from a satellite image to within a few feet and spot a piece of obsidian in the desert whilst driving by in a 4X4 from 100 metres. His knowledge of Archaeology and of course Geology was masterful.

David P. was a true inspiration in my life, so supportive throughout our working relationship – I have much to be grateful to David for – he was always willing to lend an ear, equally full of sound ideas, as well as the courage to see them through. He afforded me such opportunities and taught me a range of skills, some not necessarily to be included in my Southampton CV! These included archaeology of course, as well as the importance of publishing promptly and successful grant writing, and critically for my future career how to master the politics of and succeed as an archaeologist in the Arab world. But there are other perhaps more 'transferable' skills that ranged from securing funding and budgeting Aunt Nancy style; knowing what type, colour and number of pairs of leather shoes to buy for the inspector as a 'thank you' present and how many cups of tea to drink whilst making polite conversation with the person who one hopes is about to hand over the project permit; how to set up and wire the electrics on a single circuit for the entire camp; how to manage 50 workmen and how to bail some of them out of the local gaol!; how to forge that necessary signature or write receipts in Arabic; how to avoid the (road) 'bumps'; and most importantly how to keep the team happy: aperitifs before supper, Tuesday quiz night (David and I restricted ourselves to Geography questions only!), and the occasional desert party including the memorable masked ball when David donned a mask and snorkel...

Thank you David for believing in me and providing such support in those early days of my career as you did with many colleagues throughout your life – the department, the discipline and the desert are far less interesting in your absence...

Dr Lucy Blue, Senior Lecturer



Images

Above: The most important meal of the day. David P. ensuring the team gets a good breakfast on route to the site of Adulis in Eritrea during the 2004 season.