

Editorial

CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE

☞ The editorial for the September *ANTIQUITY* is written in July, the English summer and the common season for going out on fieldwork in the British university calendar. That is my own seasonal rhythm, and the reason why the September editorial a year or two back began in praise of fieldwork, and why that special thrill of field excitement is at present in my mind again.

☞ Along with praise of fieldwork should go, and sometimes can go, praise of field-camps and even praise of field-camp cooking — when those are a matter of celebration. The social experience when a mob of (mostly British) students are camped in the primary school of a little Italian hill-town is one that sticks in the mind from more than one season long ago, and the small tensions that follow are not fully forgotten. They seemed large at the time. Twenty (or was it thirty?) sweaty and grubby students, but the water-heater only gives hot water for two warm showers — or for one if an imperative of washing long hair with all the rinses is followed by the first who gets into the shower: and every day it seems to be one of those doing the cool and quiet work on the finds back at the school who gets into the shower first because they don't have to travel back from the site after work ends. Food comes to matter more; is the task of cooking to rotate even amongst those who can't really cook, or is it only those who can who get lumbered with this extra chore? What if the meat for dinner seems to be off? Remember Elizabeth David's dictum: there is no such thing as off meat! If you can still pick the stuff up, then you can cook and eat it; if it has turned to a green liquid and run away, then it isn't meat anymore.

My fieldwork these last six years has addressed rock-art in the Top End of Australia — the country east of Darwin at the top of the middle of the continent — in and around the 'stone country' of the Arnhem Land plateau. This is hot, hard and empty country — remote

beyond most European experience even when you are not many kilometres by the map from a sealed tarmac road in Kakadu National Park. Often it is a long walk in along the creek-lines (no paths whatever in this land): sometimes trudging through sand, sometimes hopping from stone to stone, sometimes scrambling up the boulders and abrupt little cliffs when the creek comes to a 'squeeze', sometimes cutting through the swamp or across the ridge to the next creek-line (may it not be wattle thickets, dissected sandstone pinnacles and gullies, or the waist-deep gripping stickiness of kerosene grass; or, as occasionally and wretchedly it is, all three at once!). Often it is a helicopter job, in which the thrill of the flight is offset by the counting of how many dollars a minute it costs (though Rotor Services are good to us in how they figure the hourly rate): what *do* British funding bodies make of these budgets in which the large items are helicopter charter and payments to traditional owners of country who accompany the researcher? I wanted, and never dared, to reply, when asked if we couldn't instead take a four-wheel-drive in: yes, we could — but taking a 4WD in would mean chartering a heavy-lift helicopter that could carry it in slung underneath, which would cost *much* more than the little Rotor Services' Jet Ranger, and once the 4WD had been lifted in, we wouldn't be able to *use* it on the plateau.

My favourite of the many field-camps Paul Taçon and I have had in our years of working together in western Arnhem Land was our very last, at the end of this June: high on the upper reaches of Deaf Adder Creek, with Meredith Wilson joining us as third archaeologist, and in the company of Mr David Canarri, Gundjeibmi elder in his country, and his wife Rosie. For camping-place there is a spread of sand by a side-creek, still flowing though it is well into the dry season; good-sized good eating fish drift in shoals through the pool alongside camp; a high dead paperbark tree stands opposite where each morning the two sea-eagles, male



“That was incredible. No fur, claws, horns, antlers, or nothin’ . . . Just soft and pink.”

ANTIQUITY reprinted Gary Larson cartoons, until the supply of Far side jokes with an archaeological aspect began to run out. We didn't run this favourite then, of crocodiles relaxing after a meal of surfer, because it didn't qualify as archaeological. Modified by Erle Nelson of Simon Fraser University, it does qualify now. With the soaked lap-top on the bank and the 4WD Nissan in the water, it records the *ANTIQUITY* Editor's folly in trying to cross the East Alligator River (Northern Territory, Australia) on the causeway at Cahill's Crossing, a place famous for its large crocodiles. The water was too high, and the tide was running in too fast. The truck washed off, the engine died, the lap-top drowned, the Editor and his offsider were rescued by a passing boat.

and female, come from their nest downstream to wait for scraps; great crags around us of ancient, pre-Cambrian sandstone, turn from grey-orange to an intenser red in dawn and in evening light. Bush tucker is found: pork from a feral pig roasted in a ground-oven the first night; black bream, short-neck turtle the second night; saratoga (an archaic fish of the Arnhem Land creeks), freshwater crocodile (very good tucker that), sugarbag (wild honey) the third night. We didn't know by then what good thing might not be under the paperbark on the stone by the fireplace when the rock-art party came back to camp after a long day. Fourth night, by request of camp, *balanda* (whitefellas') tucker — curried corned beef, very hot — rather than the freshwater snapper and crayfish we could have had. And bush hazards: quicksand when we cross the main creek; the

brown snake whose tail was seen slipping under a tent (got with the fish spear, not seriously dangerous); the king brown snake, seriously dangerous, that Rosie saw (but it was dead); a wild pig surprised behind a high rock. I had a nasty encounter with a feral water-buffalo, a lone bull, large, his head and body hidden behind a tree, his wide horns catching the glint of the morning sun as we walked due east early in the day; it was that curving glint I spotted (it is hard for a creature to hide completely when he has broad and curving horns that stick out *that far* each side). No saltwater crocodiles up here, as there had been to disconcert us by cruising at night past the sleeping-rock when Ben Smith and I were at Djuwarr, a bigger water-hole downstream from here in Deaf Adder Gorge. One notices how many of the hazards — feral pigs, feral water-buffaloes, feral sting-

ing-bees (which came over us at Djuwarr in a buzzing swarm like a jumbo jet on take-off) — are whitefellas' introductions; which must tell you something about where native nastiness comes from.

☞ The point of this waffling is not to celebrate fieldwork in the most beautiful land on earth, or to show off my luck at experiencing it. Reading *Seven caves*,* Carleton Coon's rattling old tale of excavating Palaeolithic caves in remote regions of western Asia in the post-war years, tells me it is not at all exotic by the broader standards of archaeology; his has its stories of death-threats by the 'accidental' dropping of buckets into the deep sounding, and its photographs of dervishes at the screens sieving for the smaller lithics. But you could not repeat those adventures now, and the fact surely is that fieldwork becomes tamer as the whole world becomes a more homogenized place, more routinely organized, more managed by western models.

What is important is this: working in Arnhem Land still *disconcerts* me, even though I hope I now have the hang of how to do it. The hunter-gatherers whose material remains I study in the painted shelters of western Arnhem Land experienced human lives deeply different from my own, Different with a capital D. The surprises of camping and working in the stone country are an emblem of that, starting with the sun being in a different part of the sky and moving in the wrong direction for someone who lives in the northern hemisphere. So are the hazards of the land, including the obvious one of falling off the cliff below a painting: Paul is cautious, and I am timid as well as clumsy, so neither of us has fallen damagingly yet.

Working in June on the high site at Djuwarr, a long ledge most way up an 80-m cliff, we hear far below the Kunwinjku voices of our Aboriginal colleagues as they move out foraging from camp, and soon see smoke from the fires they lit to clean the country. Down there, hidden in the stringybark forest, is the occupation site of Nauwalabila II; work of the Australian National University's new luminescent dating laboratory makes it for now the old-

est camping-place in all Australia. In this country there are deep continuities in foragers' lifestyles and — we believe we can see in the rock-paintings — in foragers' attitudes.

How is the researcher, leading a conventional *bourgeois* life in a conventional *bourgeois* university in a conventional *bourgeois* city, to make the leap of archaeological imagination that will connect his life to the everyday experiences of, say, foragers of the European Mesolithic? Do you or I know what phase of the moon it is tonight, or are we so insulated in an artificial world of made light we do not know that any more? Spending time in Gundjeibmi country does not, I realize, make this 20th-century Briton into an ancient Arnhem Lander; but it does shake him a little out of the assumption we all tend to take, that the artificial worlds of our cultures we inhabit are somehow 'natural' and 'normal', for all the eccentricities in them we are aware of. I think that is harder to do when the ancient landscapes we try to grasp through our field studies are, in their physical place and in our contemporary cultural attitudes, too close to home. That has always been so, but it becomes harder when even the basics of subsistence are removed from everyday knowledge. Do I know if the last grain harvest in my country was big or small, early or late? I do not. The work of such as Alexander Fenton tells us something: account of the old manners of Scottish peasant life, knowledge of the spade cultivation of old Ireland, record of the old transhumance up to the high summer *hafod* of the Welsh hills, tales from the English wetlands of the mysterious men of the old undrained Fenland and their watery ways — they can connect us a little, if we try to connect. But when all one's subsistence comes the same anonymous way, out of the bin at the supermarket and without regard to what is actually in season, and we live in artificial built environments, it is hard not to be distanced. The average American vegetable, in this absurd world of rational economics, comes not from the ground to hand, but is nowadays trucked hundreds of miles from remote producer to remote consumer.

You can see another side of this in the proposals of the post-modern thinkers who diffuse across the world from my own archaeology department in Cambridge; intended to be self-consciously radical, their visions of what pre-

* CARLETON COON, *Seven caves: archaeological explorations in the Middle East*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1957.

historic worlds might have been like seem too dependent on the encircled ideas of academics in other disciplines who also lead *bourgeois* lives by the fixed conventions of the decade. Inward-looking shall write for inward-looking. If you were to read that work in Arnhem Land, where you may encounter a notice by the roadside announcing 'Diversion, road closed due to ceremonies', it would seem cosy and timid. Frankly, these attempts at different approaches are not *odd* enough: which is a sign that their creators, like all of us, should go more often to Deaf Adder Creek or — better — to somewhere further removed from their home environments (since the last thing Deaf Adder Creek could do with is mobs of archaeologists in search of the exotic).

It is not coincidence that Deaf Adder Creek is in Australia. When Europeans went to the New World of America, expecting it to be the Indies, they found worlds they could for the most part make sense of. There were strange plants, but their cultivation was comparable, which is why Indian corn is grown across the globe and tomatoes seem as if native to Italy. There were strange empires, but they were concerned with gold, with control and with tribute just like ours were; and proof of that congruence was in Europeans being able to lop the tops off their social hierarchies and take colonial command. Reading Bernard Smith's essays *Imagining the Pacific*, coda to his fundamental *European vision and the South Pacific*,* reminds us of the larger difference that is found in the Pacific and, more especially, Australia. Smith's subject is not the people of the Pacific, as Europeans encountered them, but that encounter itself, as made visual in the sketches, drawings and paintings done on the spot, in the ship's cabin, or later in the studio. Here he pays special notice to the transformations of the image, as field-sketch was translated into finished painting and then into published engraving. Intellectual cross-currents — of noble and ignoble savages, of classical and romantic conventions, of sympathy and alienation — push the imagined image to

and fro: the European vision never really got the hang of the South Pacific.

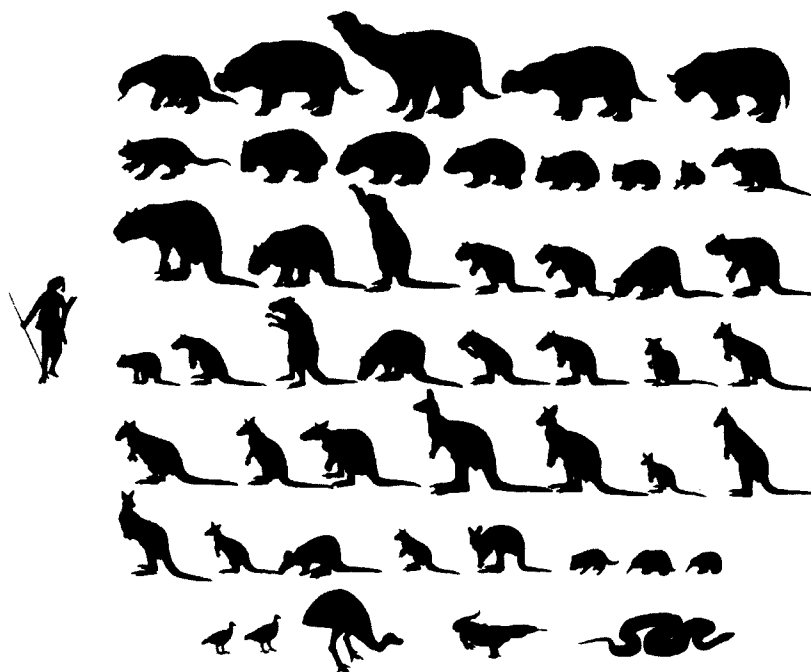
The reality of those distances and differences exists for us in the materials of Australian archaeology. Naturally enough, they are reticent and confusing when explored by our (European-developed) methods of study. Mostly they are lithics, since organic materials perish in acid Australian soils; and they resist the expectations of lithics which our European traditions train us to work with. We may see some pattern, even some progressive change, in the last few thousand years, but what about the fundamentals of deep time? Successive contributions to recent issues of *ANTIQUITY* — and I anticipate more — have debated whether the Aboriginal settlement of the continent is to be dated at 35–40,000 years ago or 55–60,000. Even on the short chronology, that leaves three-quarters of Australian prehistory — surely spanning the creation of its deep distinctive features — in the Pleistocene, where we have not many sites, and lithics that are hard to interpret even by Australian standards.

That again is why Australia is archaeologically Different with a capital D. Even today, our common response is a weak negative: we ask why did Aboriginal Australians *fail to adopt* agriculture, on the model so close to hand of New Guinea, just across the stepping-stone islands of Torres Strait. A strong and a radical account now comes from Tim Flannery, mammal specialist at the Australian Museum in Sydney, in his remarkable book, *The future eaters*,* of why Australia is as it is. By his account, an ecological history of the Australasian lands and people, the Australian megafauna — with its great kangaroos, two-tonne diprotodons, varied marsupials, giant goannas, land crocodiles and outsize birds — developed a patterned relationship with the Australian landscape that accommodated its poor resources and most unpredictable climate. When human beings arrived, they slaughtered the megafauna within a millennium or less — speedily and at some remote date — more completely than the megafauna of other continents were hit. This why we have no archaeological sites, he thinks, that actually relate the human

* BERNARD SMITH, *Imagining the Pacific: in the wake of the Cook voyages*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1992.

BERNARD SMITH, *European vision and the South Pacific*. 2nd edition, New Haven (CT): Yale University Press, 1985.

* TIMOTHY FRIDTJOF FLANNERY, *The future eaters: an ecological history of the Australasian lands and people*. Port Melbourne: Reed, 1994.



Australia's lost and dwarfed fauna: the living world the future eaters ate.

Peter Murray's illustration from Flannery's book draws them in outline with a human hunter for scale.

presence to the megafauna: the affair was a single passing and early flash. With the disappearing of the megafauna went their pattern of mosaic grazing in which different patches were at different stages of growth, and the recycling of nutrients through animal dung. In its place, humans developed the habit of burning the country, to maintain in that way the mosaic pattern of vegetation in the landscape: it worked but it hurt, for nutrients were first locked up in litter and then lost to the air and the water when burning released them. In the final twist of this century, Aboriginals have been pushed off the land and ceased to burn it; instead of a mosaic of frequent patchy fires, there are now occasional giant fires, all-consuming and over a large area. That is why the little marsupials of the desert, the hare-wallabies and the bilbies, continue to tumble to extinction. It is a glum story, written with passion and from field experience: Flannery has himself seen species being driven to recent extinction in New Guinea, and he lost his house and everything in the Sydney bush fires of last year, the most recent occasion that all-consuming fires came to the city.

The pattern of extinction in the island that is Australia simply repeats on a giant scale that extinction of the little endemic creatures, the flightless birds, kangaroo-rats and small specialized marsupials, that one sees on so many Pacific islands when the heavy step of man first crushes an island Eden. There is the same story in New Zealand, where those prodigious birds, the moa, vanished in the first few hundred years after Pacific voyagers found the place and settled there as the Maori. From Easter Island, a yet sadder story, in which not just the conspicuous creatures but the entire vegetation of palm-trees and forest went: after some centuries came the time when there was just the one tree left on Easter Island — and a man cut it down. (After all, if he hadn't, someone else would have.) Flannery's splendid book makes a trilogy with Atholl Anderson's *Prodigious birds** about New Zealand and Paul Bahn & John Flenley's *Easter Island, earth island*.* Bahn & Flenley think of Easter Island as 'Earth island', in a metaphor for the whole globe: inhabiting the most isolated land on earth, without the canoes to reach any other, its people were on their own — their island was the en-

* ATHOLL ANDERSON, *Prodigious birds*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

* PAUL BAHN & JOHN FLENLEY, *Easter Island, earth island*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1992.

tire world — and they still cut that last tree down. Inhabiting the earth as a whole, without the canoes to reach any other, we still cut those last trees down.

📖 ANTIQUITY editorials are written in response to the editorial environment, the journal being to that extent an ecologically determined venture as well as believing in human freedoms: this one is on Australian matters because written from Australia and, specifically, from the new Division of Archaeology & Natural History at the Australian National University, Canberra, where I am a passing guest. This part of the regional research school was reshuffled last year, as ANTIQUITY reported (68 (1994): 485–6). Its name is striking and unusual — who admits to doing ‘natural history’ nowadays? Yet a human kind of natural history is just what the Flannery–Anderson–Bahn & Flenley trilogy offer: the human story over a long time-frame in which neither the human nor the environment is master, but each responds to and directs the other. One could imagine any of the three could have been written from the Canberra department, where Anderson — who wrote his moa book when in New Zealand — is now its head. Start with a solid base in Quaternary studies. Add some Bernard Smith, who in *Imagining the Pacific*, distinguishes ‘imaging’ from ‘imagining’, and reminds us how our image of imagination has changed: from what Thomas Hobbes had called ‘decay’d sense’, the imagination came to be seen as the co-ordinator of those otherwise discrete sensations given by our sensory organs; imagination became linked with sensibility, sensitivity, and sympathy as a dynamic faculty for the apprehension of reality. Connect that with the simple truth that people respond not to the world as it is, but to the world as they perceive it to be — and one can begin to grasp why the last moa was killed, the last Easter island tree cut down, and why fishermen the world over fish and fish and fish (often with government support) until there are no fish left to fish for.

📖 There is another way to grasp the past, by force of imagination. I read novels not often, and historical novels rarely; but I have enjoyed reading some of Mary Renault’s classical (and now classic) historical novels of ancient

Greece, *The last of the wine*, *The king must die*, *The Persian boy*. (Journeys in Australia, a large country, give you the chance to read.) Here is Theseus walking into the labyrinth of the Cretan palace at Knossos, in Renault’s imagining:

I went down the steps, and heard the trap close softly. Around me every way stretched the vaults of the Labyrinth; long pillared passages lined with bins, or shelves for jars and boxes; crooked nooks full of clay-sealed vases with painted sides; tunnels with bays set back for casks and chests; a maze of dim caves, stoppered with darkness. A great grey cat leaped past me, something fell clattering, and a rat gave its furious death-squeal.

I went round the grain-jars, of which each could have held two men standing, and found the pillar. It had a ledge with a little lamp, a twist of wick in a scoop of clay. Joined to the dressed stone was an offering-bowl, smelling of old blood. Black stains with feathers stuck in them ran down to the floor and a shallow drain. It was one of those master-pillars of the house, at which the Cretans offer sacrifice, to strengthen them when the Earth Bull shakes the ground.

The thin cord round it had been tied there lately, for it was clean of blood. When I picked up the slack from the pavement, a house-snake went whipping into its pierced clay pot, not a yard from my hand. I started back with gooseflesh on my arms; but I had the cord, and followed it.

There is now a good biography of this remarkable woman, by David Sweetman.* Mary Renault (1905–1983) grew up in a conventional *bourgeois* English family, with a deal of tension and arguing behind its doors. She trained as a nurse, and did not enjoy the confined life of nursing service and nursing quarters, especially when regulations kept her apart from her lifelong friend Julie Mullard. She wrote novels, and frightened the publishers with their concern for special closeness between women. Then she turned to historical novels of the classical world, written from the foot of Table Mountain, South Africa where the partners moved in 1947. The novels are about man’s business, a masculine world as Mary Renault imagined it, with its affections seen from inside the person out through male eyes. Of *The Persian boy*, she explained:

* DAVID SWEETMAN, *Mary Renault: a biography*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1993.

I wanted Alexander seen through Persian eyes, not through the eyes of a Macedonian who would just have all the Macedonian prejudices against the Persians. I wanted to have some of the prejudices the Persians had against the Macedonians to see how Alexander overcame them, because he did in a most astonishing way.

Sweetman, a loyal biographer, notices how good classicists of her era thought Renault had captured the essence of that lost world. Opinion has probably moved on. The ambition is impossible — for me to become an ancient Arnhem Lander, for Timothy Fridtjof Flannery to be an ancient diprotodon-hunter, for Mary Renault to be great Alexander — yet does not archaeological knowledge depend on that imagined attempt, together with the secure empirical knowledge that comes from fieldwork and from a field-based natural history?

📖 The Director of the London Institute of Archaeology responds to editorial comments on the appointment of his successor which appeared in the June 1995 issue of ANTIQUITY

Having been encouraged by the Editor to contribute to the June issue a short account of academic developments at the London Institute of Archaeology, I was surprised to find, on receiving my copy of *Antiquity* in mid June, that it also contained an extended and highly critical editorial comment on the procedure followed at University College London in appointing my successor as Director. The Editor is of course free to say what he thinks; but I feel obliged to correct, for the record, several factual errors in his account. If he had chosen to check with me the accuracy of his statements relating to the appointment, the need for this response would not have arisen. I very much regret that he did not do so.

The most important general point to make is that, in filling the Directorship, the formal UCL procedure for appointing Heads of Department was followed, i.e. a Working Group chaired by the Provost was set up, the membership of which was approved by the UCL Academic Board. The deliberations of such Working Groups are confidential, and this one consisted (in addition to the Provost) of the Dean of the relevant faculty, four members of the academic staff of the Institute, and two aca-

demically staff from other UCL departments. Retiring Heads of Department are always invited to the first meeting of such Working Groups to give their views on the qualities and experience needed for the job, and to suggest the names of any candidates they regard as particularly suitable. The Working Group also considers whether the Headship should be filled by invitation or advertised. As the retiring Director I attended part of the first meeting of the Working Group, and, having outlined the complex nature of the job, said that I regarded the holder of the established chair of archaeology and Dean of Arts at Southampton, Peter Ucko, as the outstanding candidate. I did *not* then, or later in meetings with the academic staff of the Institute, refer (as the editorial alleges) to Professor Ucko as ‘the only suitable candidate’. Before withdrawing from the meeting, I was asked by the Provost to give my opinion on the potential suitability of 15 possible candidates, from Britain and abroad, whose names had already been suggested by others to members of the Group. The editorial reference to the ‘PD’s list of just 15’ is thus incorrect. It was not ‘my’ list. I offered brief comments, re-affirmed my view that Peter Ucko was the most appropriate choice, and withdrew. The decision to offer the position to him — and, if he declined, to re-convene — was then taken by the Group. It is therefore a distortion to affirm that I recommended to the ‘appointments committee’ . . . ‘who it *must* [my italics] choose’. I agree with the Editor that the present officeholder ‘should *not* direct the succession’, and I reject the implication that I did so. In giving my views to the Working Group I followed correct College procedure and acted quite properly in making a strong recommendation; but the *decision* was not mine.

There are other inaccuracies in the editorial references to the ‘second appointment’. The appointee, Stephen Shennan, was not a lecturer but a reader at the time, and he was subsequently — as reported in the *Antiquity* Noticeboard — promoted to a personal professorship at Southampton. Nor were Institute staff told (by me or anyone else) ‘that FD would bring a “team” with him from Southampton’. The report of Peter Ucko’s election to the Fellowship of UCL is also highly misleading. There was and is absolutely no connection between that and his appointment as the next Director of the

Institute. Fellows of UCL are elected annually by a fully representative committee chaired by the Chairman of the College Council. Peter Ucko's election pre-dated, and was completely independent of, his appointment as Director — nor was I in any way responsible for his nomination. The idea that, because he is a Fellow of UCL, his appointment as Director 'can for that reason be regarded as an internal promotion . . . in the gift of the Provost' is absurd.

Finally, I too am concerned about the increasingly distorting influence on British academia of the Research Assessment Exercises. As we approach the next one, with its 'census date' of 31 March 1996, the flurry of direct recruitment of staff with high research profiles threatens to become a national flood. The challenge that this presents to the mainte-

nance of open appointment procedures by universities is undeniable *and* undesirable. I believe that the rules for research assessment should be altered to defuse this process. At least the quadrennial 'pulse' now built into the entire system for all subjects needs to be staggered. And it is important to emphasize that the aim of recruiting 'academic stars' ahead of the next RAE is *not* behind the two appointments discussed here: both Peter Ucko and Stephen Shennan will remain at Southampton until after 31 March 1996 and only transfer — to (formally refereed) personal professorships — at UCL later in 1996. Proper procedures have been followed by the College in their appointment, and the impression of 'sleaze' created by the *Antiquity* editorial must not be allowed to go uncorrected.

DAVID HARRIS

Christopher Chippindale remarks:

I thank Professor Harris for his account of the new appointments at the London Institute. It is good to know further transfers from Southampton to London are not going to happen by invitation, and that ploys to do with research assessments and with the way UCL appoints Fellows had no part in them. But he does not persuade me the Institute has been wise in appointing its new Director and a new professor privately rather than by an open competition.

Questions remain about Professor Ucko's appointment to the Directorship. How was the list of 15 possible candidates arrived at, beyond their names having been 'suggested by others'? What systematic information about each of the 15 was available to the Working Group, beyond casual knowledge any member chanced to have, so it could make an informed choice? And, a correspondent remarks, 'The most remarkable thing about the sorry story of how Professor Peter Ucko got the Directorship of the Institute of Archaeology, is not that he acceded via private appointment, but that in accepting this unadvertised position, he became complicit in denying access to women and minorities who might otherwise have been considered under the aegis of affirmative action.' Yet Professor Ucko is famous for his damning of the hegemony that structures the world of archaeology to favour the already favoured, and vigorous in asserting — especially in relation to

South Africa during the *apartheid* era — that the way an archaeologist chooses to act in professional affairs is a matter that embodies and expresses personal moral values.

Professor Harris reminds me that the Directorship can rightly be filled by invitation, and confirms proper procedures have been followed for both appointments. Proper procedures at UCL mean that the Provost offers a personal professorship to a prospective member of staff, taking advice from the relevant Head of the department (in this case the Director of the Institute) and other senior colleagues. Afterwards, the proposal must be refereed; for a personal professorship, seven external and one internal referee are needed. A few days before the June editorial was written, and long after Professor Shennan's professorship had been made commonly known at the Institute, the Dean of the Faculty of which the Institute is a part told me she had 'no knowledge' of his chair having been created or of Dr Shennan's appointment to it. This is normal too: the Dean would not necessarily be consulted before an initial offer was made and accepted.

It seems to me that the reasons for senior academic appointments being made by open procedures, rather than by private invitation from the top, stand good for London, as they do for every university, despite the growing fashion in Britain for the private hiring of perceived 'stars'.

Noticeboard*Seminars*

9 October 1995

Finds Research Group AD 700–1700. Autumn meeting. Morning visit to English Heritage's Ancient Monuments Laboratory, afternoon session and AGM, with talk by John Cherry on 'Treasure Trove Reform and Finds Research', followed by tour of the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries at the British Museum.

Justine Bayley, Ancient Monuments Laboratory, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB, England.

Conference

13–14 January 1996

Finds Research Group and Historic Metallurgy Society joint conference on Medieval and Later Urban Metalworking.

British Museum and Museum of London
Geoff Egan, Museum of London Archaeology Service, London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN, England.

Meeting

25 April 1996

Geology and Geochemistry in Archaeology. A one-day meeting sponsored by the Open University, the Mineralogical Society and the Geochemistry Group, which will bring together archaeologists and

geologists to discuss recent applications of geology, geochemistry and mineralogy in archaeology, with emphasis on non-destructive, field-portable methods of artefact characterization.

Olwen Williams-Thorpe, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, England; 01908-655147 tel.; 01908-655151 FAX; O.Williams-Thorpe@Open.ac.uk e-mail.

Call for papers

Finds Research Group Autumn 1996 meeting on the subject of women and objects. This theme is hoped to include identifying women through inscription such as personal seals, objects used by women, objects buried with women and skeletal analysis, objects with symbolic significance for women, and the portrayal of women on objects.

Judy Stevenson, Department of Early London History and Collections, Museum of London, London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN, England.

Exhibition

4 October 1995–21 January 1996

Africa: the Art of a Continent. From 1.6 million BC to the present day in a journey around Africa in seven geographical areas.

Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly, London W1V 0DS, England; 0171-494-5615 tel.; 0171-439-4998 FAX.

MP