

EDITORIAL

Photography is archaeology's partner, not its servant. We grew up together, played together on the sunny slopes of Greece and together explored the fetid jungles of Guatemala. One hundred and fifty years on, has some of the poetry departed from our relationship? Maybe it's become too easy. We are far from the heroic days when finely-jointed wooden cameras, tripods and trunks full of glass plates were lugged across country on the back of a mule. Maybe it's become too cheap. Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre used highly polished silver-coated copper plates and Henry Fox-Talbot (1800-1877) called his negatives *calotypes* – 'beautiful forms'. Even the preparation of a wet-collodion, a syrupy emulsion poured onto the glass plate just before exposure, invokes the joys of a mystic craft. Perhaps photography has stopped being cuisine and turned into tinned food. Nowadays we have colour, we have depth of field, we have precision, we have telephotos, we have panoramic, soft focus, digital, video, we have everything. And yet, how often do we hear expressions of pleasure and amazement at the quality of nineteenth century archaeological photographs, in comparison to our own?

Such pleasure is offered in profusion in a new book of photographs collected by Marion True and Weston Naef of the J. Paul Getty Museum and published by Thames and Hudson*. Archaeology provided some of photography's earliest models. Fox Talbot himself was a physicist with an interest in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, and he pressed archaeologists to use his apparatus in the field: "I should think it would be highly interesting to take a view of each remnant of antiquity *before removing it*," he presciently remarked in 1846. Between 1842 and 1845 Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey produced up to a thousand daguerreotypes of Classical and Egyptian monuments and the *daguerreotypist* Jules Itier travelled as far as China in 1842. From 1860, August Le Plongeon became the first recorder of Inca structures in Peru and went on to make the first panoramic stereographs of Maya temple glyphs at Chichén Itza and Uxmal in the Yucatán of Mexico in 1873. In 1870, William James Stillman, the subject of a special feature in the book by Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, produced his masterpiece *The Acropolis of Athens*.

These beautiful and evocative photographs do give us pause. Perhaps we like them because they are themselves archaeological artefacts. The scratches and blots on the aged prints have the feel of discovery about them. We might leaf rapidly through a glossy magazine of perfect nothings, but these old documents have the whiff of research. Personally, I always find black and white photographs much more interesting than colour. Why? Is it the unstated, the understated or the yet undiscovered that moves us? Perhaps it's just the nostalgia for a lost first love that lets us prefer an old print to a digital – like those lecturers that grumble that PowerPoint does not have the definition (or the comforting clunk) of a projected Kodachrome 64 slide.

The answer surely is much simpler: we have given up composing. The early photographers were emulating paintings, employing the arts of two millennia to compose a landscape in its "Golden Section", those satisfying proportions of visual scale that remain as puzzlingly

* *Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, Claire Lyons, Lindsay Stewart, John K. Papadopoulos* Antiquity and Photography. Early views of ancient Mediterranean sites (*Thames and Hudson; London and New York 2005*)



Interior of the Parthenon, taken from the western gate, 1869. Photographer, William J. Stillman (1828–901). Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum.

fundamental to humans as the scales of music. We are no longer taught how to do this at school, and so it's hardly surprising that the modern archaeologist does not know how to point a camera.

For the last few years I have been wondering how we at *Antiquity* might encourage the archaeological world to enhance its pictures – pictures on which the health and fame of our subject so depends. Thinking that nothing leads better than example, I sent letters to our correspondents asking them to discover the best practitioners in the field, and to beg them to send us their finest photographs. The results have been stupendous, and we will offer a few of them every issue, following the editorial. I have included as much technical detail as the photographer has given me – but do please write for more.

📖 Archaeological consultant Caroline Bird sends me this statement by Tom Perrigo of the National Trust for Australia, sounding new alarm bells about the fate of some very famous rock art. “Dampier Rock Art Precinct, on the north-west coast of Australia, contains what is probably the largest concentration of rock art in the world. Archaeologists estimate that there may be a million individual petroglyphs. The art is extraordinarily diverse both in subject matter and technique, including human and animal figures as well as a wide range of geometric motifs. Some deeply weathered petroglyphs are thought to date back to beyond the Last Glacial Maximum. Others have links to contemporary Aboriginal beliefs and ceremonies. As well as art, there is also a range of other sites including shell middens,

campsites, quarries and workshops, and stone arrangements. Human occupation of the unique environment probably goes back to the beginning of the colonisation of Australia's arid centre, at least 30 000 years ago. Stylistic differences in rock art echo this long history of changing adaptation.

Astonishingly, this is one of the world's most endangered heritage places. The largest land mass in the Archipelago – the Burrup Peninsula – is also the site of one of Australia's largest industrial complexes. Development began in the 1960s and continues to this day. It is difficult to estimate the scale of the destruction. Hundreds of sites are known to have been destroyed since record keeping began in the early 1970s and an unknown number before then. The National Trust of Australia (WA) conservatively estimates that at least 10 000 petroglyphs have already been destroyed. Many decorated boulders have also been moved from their original locations. Those that survive are under threat from future development and emissions from the industrial estate. There is still no proper inventory of the archaeological sites or comprehensive heritage management plan. Almost all archaeological investigation has been carried out in the context of salvage projects associated with industrial development. In 2002 the National Trust of Australia (WA) placed the Dampier Rock Art Precinct on its Endangered Places List and in 2003 the World Monuments Fund included it in its List of Most Endangered Places. One current focus of the campaign to protect the Dampier Rock Art is securing listing on the National Heritage List under new Commonwealth heritage legislation that came into operation in 2004. The Hon. Ian Campbell, Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Heritage, is expected to decide on listing in September 2006. Meanwhile, the State Government of Western Australia has opposed listing and continues to permit destruction of sites under its Aboriginal Heritage Act. The National Trust of Australia (WA) is calling on all parties to respect the scientific values of the Dampier Rock Art Precinct. The Industry sector must show corporate responsibility and the West Australian Government leadership in ensuring that no further material is destroyed or damaged in this wondrous place". Readers will want to support the NTA in their urgent efforts to defend such a globally significant archive of evidence for the history of humanity.

✎ Editors of European archaeology journals met in Stockholm in April to consider the challenges of the next five years – challenges both technical and academic. In the light of the universal distribution allowed by the internet, university and institutional libraries are calling for articles to be placed on *open access* – available for download, free to all. These articles would continue to be refereed and edited in the normal way, but the service would be paid for by *author-fee*, ie by research sponsors, through the author, not by subscribers who buy the journal. This is likely to suit the scientists, with their narrow constituency and even narrower funding. But what about archaeology, which has a polymorphic funding base and likes to address a polymathic public? Unlike many other disciplines, our articles stay usable for decades (like fine wines), but the previous authors can hardly be expected to meet the bill for access to them. The open access and author-fee system means that the national Research Councils (who will largely fund it) and their colleges of referees will have a virtual monopoly in choosing what gets researched and published. Not a healthy prospect. Some of us feel more comfortable relying on readers (that is, subscribers) to decide, over the years, which research worked and which didn't.

Editorial

Antiquity in particular is thinking hard about these challenges. We exist to bring the best research of the day to the widest archaeological audience. Open access may well be an answer – our (open access) Project Gallery (<http://antiquity.ac.uk>) already gets an enormous number of hits. But how can we best continue to serve an ever-narrowing academic profession and an ever-broadening archaeological readership? As always, the views of our readers are the key, and your help is solicited:

- should *Antiquity* carry open access articles (paid for by authors' fees)?
- how can we best serve academic archaeology?
- how can we best serve the broader archaeological family of professionals and non-professionals?

Answers on an e-mail please! (to editor@antiquity.ac.uk)

🔍 The poet Anthony Thwaite likes to study pottery and knows a great deal about it. As a finds assistant on the Euesperides (Libya) expedition directed by Andrew Wilson, he recently observed the diligent Alys Vaughan-Williams at the sieve, and this poem *Flotation* is the felicitous result.

Sifting exactly all the voided seeds
After two and half millennia,
She separates and gives a certain name
To each sieved particle. And so she reads
The menu when the customers have gone
Into the dark, and paid their final bill.

This process- mechanical, meticulous –
Do not despise it: it counts out the stuff
That made them what they were, and gave to us
(Greedy for every scrap) a catalogue
Of how they harvested, and fed, and left
Immortal messages of feasts and fasts.

Anthony Thwaite



Photo Courtesy of Andrew Wilson

🔍 Emily Smyth our excellent editorial assistant left us in May to take up a new post in London. Emily took over as manager of the *Antiquity* Office in 2004, enlivened our website, relaunched the Project Gallery and acted as midwife in the birth of the new online *Antiquity*. It is sad to see her go, but we count it a great success that in three years from her graduation she should have learnt so much about modern academic publishing as to net a job as Publications Manager for the Institute of Historical Research. Our new staff member is Jo Tozer, a classicist with a fondness for lands down under.

Martin Carver
York, 1 September 2006



Horsepower! Excavations in advance of the construction of the Clermont-Ferrand by-pass (France) brought to light exceptional burial practices around the Arveni oppidum of Gondole at the time of the Roman conquest. Here horses alone were buried but eight adult males were excavated nearby. The picture was taken from the arm of a mechanical digger with a Nikon F100s using Kodak Ektachrome 100 at f22. Excavation F. Baucheron Photograph (2003) H. Paitier (Insitut National de recherches archéologiques préventives. For more, see www.inrap.fr). Thanks also to Nathan Schlanger.

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Dreikopseiland is a glacial pavement in the Riet River, South Africa into which over 3000 engravings have been pecked. Previously thought to represent gatherer-hunter or San entoptic phenomena, these geometric images made between 300 and 1500 years ago are probably the product of Khoekhoen herding people for whom water was of practical and symbolic importance. Photograph Sven Ouzman (2001) taken with a Pentax K1000 35mm SLR and 28-80mm lens using 100ASA Fuji Sensia slide film. Picture scanned but not enhanced. ouzman@berkeley.edu.