



Kilise Tepe in western Cilicia (southern) Turkey: Dr Tevfik Emre Serifoglu (right) and Professor Nicholas Postgate, with help from Nebi Meskan from Kisla village, tracing the early Iron Age stratigraphy. This sounding is intended to take the archaeological sequence down from the seventh century BC to reach Late Bronze Age levels when the site was presumably under the control of the Hittite Empire. ©Bob Miller (bob.miller@canberra.edu.au). [Camera Details: 30 July 2009, Canon 450D (12 MegaPixel) Program Exposure mode. 1/250 sec f11 ISO 200. Lens EF-S 18–55 set at 42 mm. Original Camera RAW capture edited in Adobe Lightroom 2.4.



The Perpendicular Style Church of St Andrew Undershaft on St Mary Axe in the City of London, UK, pictured with its looming new companion. Originating at least in 1147 and in this form in 1532, the church survived the Great Fire and the Blitz . . . and most of the IRA bombing of 1992. The latter provided the opportunity for the Baltic Exchange site to be redeveloped for Norman Foster's 'Gherkin' during which a late fourth-century teenage Roman girl's grave was found. The churchyard contains the memorial of the antiquarian John Stow, whose Survey of London (1598) explained the church's name as derived from a nearby Maypole. Stow's will reports bequests to his appropriately named daughters, Julyan Towers and Jone Foster. ©David Kennedy (david.kennedy@uwa.edu.au; EUROPE_20100704_DLK-51.dng).

EDITORIAL

☞ The city of Dakar in Senegal was the venue late last year for the epoch-making joint meeting of the Pan-African Archaeological Association (PAA) and the Society of Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA). In case you are confused, the first holds a series of conferences for archaeologists based in Africa, and meets in Africa about every five years and the second is for archaeologists working *on* Africa, whose conferences are held biennially in the USA and Europe. Together the participants made as friendly and enlightening a gathering of heroic researchers as you would ever wish to meet. Africa is not an easy terrain — that must be the understatement of the year — and participants related how they had wrestled with opaque soils and relentless vegetation to win some remarkable new history, some of which we will hope to feature in future issues.

As a general impression from an outsider, the research profession is thriving, with foreign and African teams increasingly working together and pursuing common agendas. The mitigation scene gives greater cause for concern. Some are struggling against impossible odds — like Jim Denbow evaluating 168 000 acres in advance of eucalyptus planting in the Congo. Others feature western archaeology firms parachuting in to perform professional mitigation services for other western firms, as Jeff Altschul and Gerry Wait in advance of gold mining in the Sabodala on the upper Senegal River. If this is to be the prescription, it is only the beginning; it might be observed that motorway building has hardly commenced.

Of course, Europeans and Americans can be forgiven for thinking that Senegal is the garden of Eden and no more needs a motorway than Adam and Eve did. But after being thrown about in a bus for five hours en route to The Gambia, maybe those long smooth surfaces do have a purpose. The field trip in question took us to rich, beautiful sites: a shell midden in the Saloum Islands about the size of a gasometer with mature baobab trees growing on it; and the stone circles at the Wanar World Heritage site, stately rings of upright ironstone monoliths which appear to have been added round earlier burials. The clever work of Luc Laporte of the University of Rennes and his team is establishing the date and function of these intriguing monuments of the first millennium AD. And not the least interesting aspect of the campaign is the discovery of the quarries from which the monoliths were cut, on the surface a few hundred metres away.

The organisers of PANAF are to be congratulated on providing an unforgettable and instructive experience; no-one who was there could remain indifferent to the attractions of Africa's archaeology and its considerable challenges. For its part, *Antiquity* was proud to be able to support the travel of 11 African students to the Congress: Kolawole Adekola, Bandama Foreman, Pascal Nlend Nlend, and Clement Bakinde from other African countries, and Jean-Marie Djoussou, Bienvenue Gouem Gouem, Dibie Charles Kpra, Alice Mezop, Marie-France Ould-Issa, Abubakar Sule and Ndrukukakhe Ndlovu from outside the continent. SAfA also held an essay competition for students who were there, and we are pleased to announce that the four prize-winning essays by Ashley N. Coutu, Jean-Marie Datouang Djoussou, Cameron D. Gokee and Justin Pargeter, have been accepted for the project gallery (q.v.).

☞ Much anxiety in British universities about the latest round of government tinkering, which proposed raising fees for students and drove large numbers of them onto the streets. In the *London Review of Books* Stefan Collini helpfully explained that increasing fees is neither a new policy nor the important one. ‘*The scale of the report’s dismantling of the public character of higher education is breathtaking*’ he says, ‘*and yet scarcely surprising*’. The mission to privatise the universities has been enthusiastically pursued since 1981 by governments of all colours. By stops and starts it has reduced public maintenance grants and increased student contributions to arrive finally at the prescriptions of the Browne Report (Lord, not Gordon) in 2010. While in Collini’s view the part relating to the rise in fees could actually be judged progressive (‘*better-paid graduates would pay proportionately more, lower-paid graduates proportionately less*’), the real problem was the proposed abolition of the block grant, since it signals the end of a public stake in university education. Browne at last states explicitly what has been the intention all along: universities are to operate in accordance with the tenets of ‘perfect competition theory’, and students (the new clients) are to be given the opportunity to choose between institutions on the basis of price and value for money.¹

If this reading is correct, it blows a chilly wind through those subjects, for example in the humanities, which fear they will not be chosen by prospective students because they lack earning power. On cue from the USA comes a warning signal of the consequences of taking such economic ideology too far. The State University of New York at Albany has decided to drop the humanities (yes, all of them) as potential market losers. In his spirited reprimand to the university’s president, Brandeis scientist Gregory A Petsko points out that the humanities and sciences are interdependent — one can’t function without the other: ‘*Science unleavened by the human heart and the human spirit is sterile, cold, and self-absorbed. It’s also unimaginative: some of my best ideas as a scientist have come from thinking and reading about things that have, superficially, nothing to do with science. If I’m right that what it means to be human is going to be one of the central issues of our time, then universities that are best equipped to deal with it, in all its many facets, will be the most important institutions of higher learning in the future. You’ve just ensured that yours won’t be one of them.*’²

Most of our readers belong to countries that still believe in tertiary education as a public good, and will no doubt be thinking, OK we may have to save the state some money but we’ll never go to the ridiculous extremes of Britain or America in frying our own seed-corn. Possibly not, but there is a matter of more immediate interest to all. In an intellectual free-market, how would archaeology fare? So far in Britain, archaeology departments have been subject to a somewhat arcane rebranding process. In Edinburgh, Birmingham and Bristol they have been brigaded with Classics or Ancient History in a kind of ‘School of Old Stuff’, while in Cambridge, archaeology (but not Classics) is to go into the market as a burly adjunct to the Social Sciences.

These moves are thought to be redeployments in pursuit of economic advantage, but the logic is not obvious. Archaeology is already one of the most successful wealth-creators in British universities, bringing in funds from science, social science and industry, in each of

¹ S. Collini, Browne’s Gamble, reviewing ‘Securing a sustainable future for Higher Education: an independent review of higher education funding and student finance by Lord Browne *et al.*, *London Review of Books* 4 Nov 2010, 23–5. The report itself can be found at www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report.

² <http://genomebiology.com/2010/11/10/138>



African and Africanist archaeologists admire Luc Laporte's excavation at Wanar, in the company of interested local residents, guided by Mamoudou Diallo, a Masters student in archaeology at the University Cheik Anta Diop at Dakar.

which it is highly active, as well as the humanities. For some time, academic archaeologists, in Britain and elsewhere, have seen themselves as a lot more significant than technical assistants to schools of history; and yet the news has not filtered up to the great and the good. Compare prehistory, which is about the whole human experience, with Classics, which represents the fossilised memories of a rather brief, bleak period in a small corner of the world, but which administrators tend to let well alone. It is not the work of J.K. Rowling or even a mastery of common room rhetoric that allows Latin to flourish, but a tradition of deep affection or respect amongst the governing intelligentsia.

We could learn from this. Archaeology has a relevance to modern problems and modern society, and above all to political judgement and ideological serenity. Not only does our subject address the general conundrum of human life on earth, it confronts and explains irrationality and fundamentalism, the principal ailments of our day. Do those that govern countries and universities see it that way? If not, why not? It would be easy to blame the post-modernist *agents provocateurs* for a loss of kudos — and certainly the notion that archaeology is an exploration of personal perception and emotional engagement with landscape has done nothing to increase our standing with politicians, developers or the academy; but every subject has appendages and should be big enough to tolerate them or shrug them off. In my opinion, the fault lies not in internal wrangles about what we say we do, but in our promotional strategy. Archaeology is an experienced media tart that knows how to strut its stuff on the street; but it is failing to woo the upper court of public



Field trip leaders from the Université Cheikh Anta Diop : Moustapha Sall and his assistants.

opinion — the one that makes the decisions. Politicians, like other people, value archaeology for the news it brings back from previous life on earth. But we are not building a usable bridge to them from the scholarly front line. New ideas and discoveries are being published by *Antiquity* at an astonishing rate, but the take-up of press releases is patchy. The German press makes our articles routinely into serious features, but archaeological appearances in *The New York Review of Books* are rare, and rarer still is the adoption of front-line archaeological issues — like the origins of towns or religion — as topics for radio debates. Glyn Daniel declared his mission to be *haute vulgarisation*, but we are now settling for *basse vulgarisation*, *vulgarisation ordinaire* . . .

Thinking about PANAF, readers will be pleased to know we are expanding our distribution of ‘freebies’ so as to help more libraries in countries where archaeology journals are proving hard to afford. Do get in touch if you would like to draw my attention to a worthy cause. *Antiquity* has been steadily enlarging its readership — and many different voices are getting heard. In 2010, you downloaded an average of 10 000 articles each month, and submitted new papers at a rate of five a week. Very few of the new papers were real no-hopers. Although we accept less than 40 per cent of everything that comes in, the others nearly always present important results. In these anxious times, it’s good to note the vigorous and productive state of archaeological research. We must not doubt that people put a value on the human past — and want to know more about it.

Martin Carver
York 1 March 2011