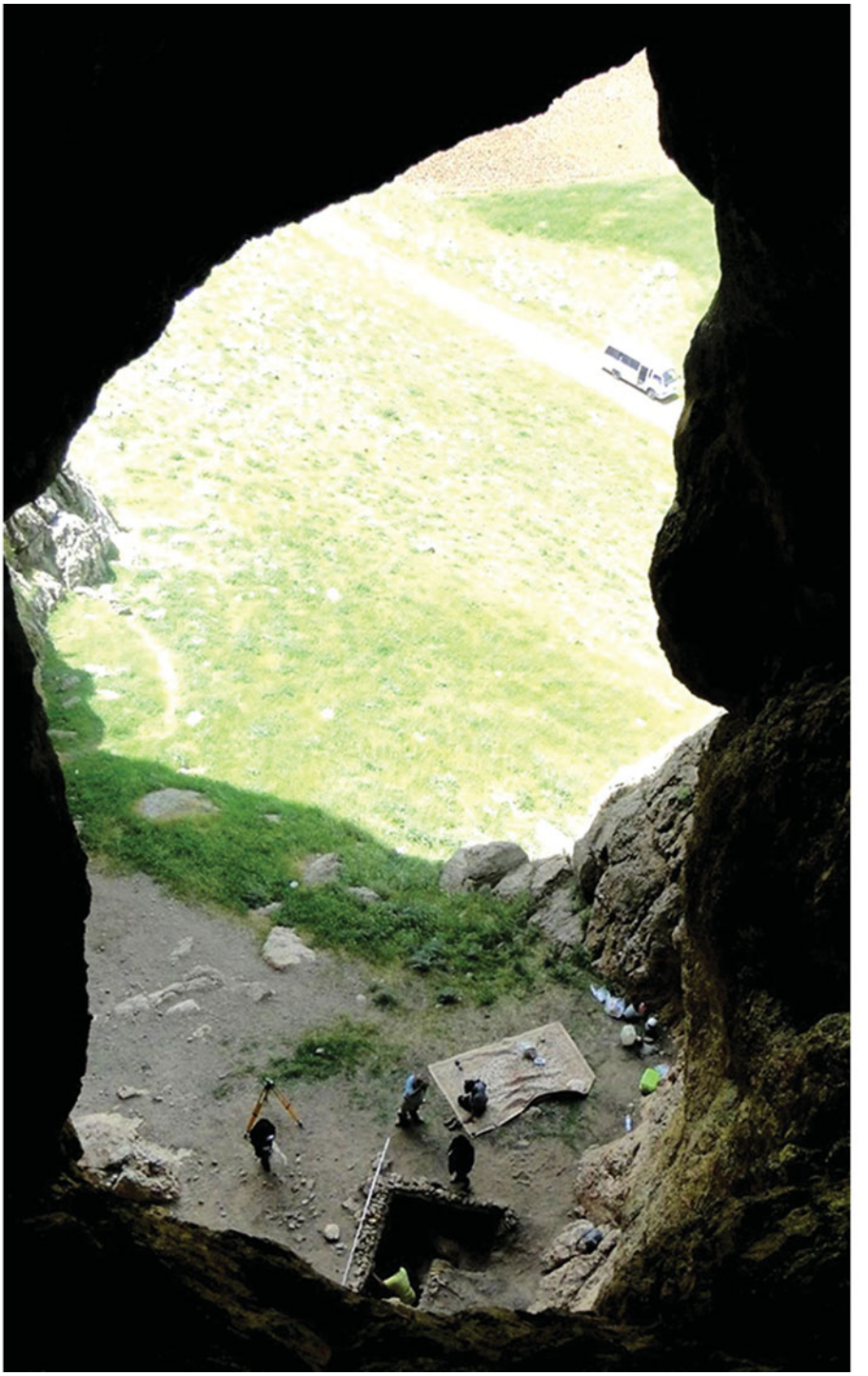
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The massive retaining wall for a central platform at the recently excavated site of Shimao on the Loess Plateau near the northern bend of the Yellow River, China, c. *2200–1800 BC. A major walled site at Shimao was the centre of a widespread set of communities with stone fortified sites, evidence of limited bronze-casting, numerous ritual jades and a mixed subsistence economy, with sheep and goats introduced from the steppe, and some millet agriculture (photograph by Jessica Rawson). For the full article, see this month's Project Gallery.*



Eshkafi-e Razawar: view from inside, and the position of the recent archaeological trench. For the full article, see this month's Project Gallery (Heydari-Guran & Ghasidian).

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EDITORIAL

90 years of *Antiquity*

In 2017, *Antiquity* reaches its ninetieth anniversary. The first issue rolled off the press and hit the bookstands in March 1927, with articles on Lyonesse, Māori hillforts, the Roman frontier and (inevitably) Stonehenge. It was the year when Charles Lindbergh made his solo flight across the Atlantic, Stalin took control of the Soviet Union and work began on the carving of Mount Rushmore. In archaeology, Peking Man was discovered at Zhoukoudian in China, Gordon Childe began fieldwork at Skara Brae and Mussolini ordered the draining of Lake Nemi to recover the Emperor Nero's great pleasure barges. In the heyday of empire, British archaeologists were engaged in several major projects: Sir John Marshall at Mohenjo-daro, Howard Carter in the Valley of the Kings, Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur in Mesopotamia. In the editorial notes to the March 1927 issue, O.G.S. Crawford, founder and first editor of *Antiquity*, listed these and other discoveries, including the British Museum expedition to Lubaantun in Belize and George Reisner's ongoing work at Giza in Egypt, where he had recently uncovered the tomb of Hetepheres, mother of the builder of the Great Pyramid. Several of these were to feature in subsequent issues of *Antiquity*—a short note on Hetepheres in June, another on Ur in September—but it is evident that funding for such fieldwork was no easy matter. The September editorial opened with an appeal on behalf of the British Museum for money to support the excavations at Ur, successfully raising £300.

In celebration of our ninetieth anniversary, we have made the very first issue (March 1927) free to read for the year, so readers can experience for themselves the extraordinary range of archaeology that *Antiquity* has covered from the very outset.

Crawford remained editor of *Antiquity* for a further 30 years, turning the journal from a new arrival to an established feature of the archaeological scene. The contents page of the December 1957 issue, the last under his editorship, read like a roll-call of famous names: Gordon Childe, Leslie A. White, Richard Atkinson, Mortimer Wheeler, Cyrus H. Gordon. From Wheeler's review of the Jarlshof publication we learn (encouragingly) that "*Antiquity* is not always right in its censure; but it is more often right than wrong"[1]. The December issue as a whole, however, was dedicated to evolution, anticipating the centenary in 1958 of Darwin and Wallace's lecture to the Linnaean Society. So it was that Atkinson took worms and weathering as his theme (looking back to Darwin's own book on the subject), while White wrote about cultural evolution and Childe about social evolution. This is not just an interesting anecdote. Following *Antiquity* over the years is fascinating testimony to how the subject of archaeology has changed. *Antiquity* has always focused on new discoveries and new results from the field or the laboratory, but theory has also figured consistently. Indeed,

[1] Wheeler, M. 1957. Civil Service archaeology: a review. *Antiquity* 31: 234–36. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00028490

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1.—THE SUBMERGED BOULDER-HEDGE ON SAMSON FLATS
Ph. Gibson, St, Mary's, Scilly

'Submerged boulder-hedge on Samson Flats', Plate II.1 from the first issue of Antiquity*, March 1927.*

one of the most frequently downloaded articles from the *Antiquity* archive is David Clarke's 'Archaeology: the loss of innocence' from the March 1973 issue, and our recent series on 'Archaeological Futures' (March, June and December 2015) has also attracted wide interest.

Our ninetieth anniversary volume continues the mission set out by Crawford back in 1927: to publish "epoch-making work […] being done throughout the world"[2]. Hence, in this issue you can read about the rock art of the Libyan Desert, the Viking boat burial from Ardnamurchan in Scotland, the Emerald Acropolis at Cahokia, the Niuheliang sanctuary of north-east China and its hinterland, and the conflict-marked landscape of the Ypres Salient, to name but a selection. This issue also reports on the excavation of the rich Hallstatt grave at Bettenbühl, on the Danube floodplain below the famous sixth-century BC fortress of the Heuneburg. Waterlogged timbers survived, and the decision was taken to remove the entire burial chamber as a frozen 80-tonne block for meticulous excavation under laboratory conditions. The removal of the 'Keltenblock' provides our February cover image.

Travels and connections

☙ "We shall keep our readers informed about important discoveries made and books published; and we shall warn them of mare's nests"[2]. Over the years, *Antiquity* has devoted its fair share of attention to informed critique of doubtful claims in archaeology, just as Crawford intended. The concept of 'proof' may no longer be within our reach in this era of 'post-truth' politics, although we hope that despite the contentious political campaigns of 2016, reasoned argument is not entirely dead and that there is still room for specialist expertise. But that does not take us beyond debate. Claims that lie outside the consensus will continue to be made, and where they are backed up by evidence, they deserve consideration.

This applies, among other things, to long-distance contacts. The human colonisation of the world is a consequence of movement, sometimes through harsh environments and

[2] Crawford, O.G.S. Editorial notes. *Antiquity* 1: 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00000016

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occasionally across seas, and we do, of course, have very good evidence for artefacts travelling surprising distances. Such movements are not at issue. What can sometimes be in question is what happened later. The recent discovery of late Roman coins in a medieval context at Okinawa in Japan shows that long-prized objects can remain in circulation for centuries after they were first created. A similar story is revealed by study of the bronze Roman lamp found in a peat deposit at Kavastu in Estonia (Oras *et al.,* pp. 124–38 in this issue). Bronze lamps such as this were rare luxury items in the Roman world, manufactured from the end of the first century BC to the end of the second century AD. Yet the lamp was not deposited at Kavastu until the fifth or sixth century AD, by which time it may have been valued as much for its metal content as for the light it could cast. The necessary fuel, olive oil, would in any case have been unavailable in Baltic Europe.

Thanks to AMS dating and residue analysis, the travels of the Kavastu lamp can be tracked through both time and space. Other long-distance connections can be less easy to evaluate. Among these, pride of place must go to the many claims for transpacific and transatlantic contacts with the Americas before Columbus. There are certainly a number of puzzling pieces to the jigsaw. The presence of sweet potato in Polynesia implies transfer from its native South America, although whether this was through human action or accidental drifting remains difficult to establish. Computer simulations of drift voyaging have shown that boats could have been carried by Pacific Ocean currents to the Marquesas, Tuamotus and Society Islands, but so could seed pods[3]. The bottle gourd probably travelled from Africa to the Americas in just this way, by drifting of its own accord on the Atlantic currents[4].

Writing recently in *Antiquity*, Richard Callaghan[5] modelled mid-Atlantic drift voyages, concluding that average journey times in the range of 70 days (for the Antilles) and 120 days (for the Mesoamerican mainland) were well within the range of survivability for drifting mariners. He ends with a note of caution, urging a healthy scepticism about claims for pre-Columbian transatlantic crossings, but notes, very reasonably, that 8000 years provides a very long time for even rare events to occur. But there is no irrefutable evidence: no indisputably Eurasian or African artefacts have yet turned up in a securely dated context in the Americas. Healthy scepticism does indeed appear to be the order of the day.

In a very readable recent book, *Traveling Prehistoric Seas*[6], US archaeologist Alice Kehoe has returned to the issue and set out the range of evidence, from the specific to the more general parallels that have sometimes been claimed. These include, for example, architectural features shared between Maya pyramids and South East Asian temples. The parallels can be very striking. The archaeologist visiting the steeply stepped tiers of the

[3] Montenegro, Á., C. Avis & A. Weaver. 2008. Modeling the prehistoric arrival of the sweet potato in Polynesia. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35: 355–67. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2007.04.004

[4] Kistler, L., Á. Montenegro, B.D. Smith, J.A. Gifford, R.E. Green, L.A. Newsom & B. Shapiro. 2014. Transoceanic drift and the domestication of African bottle gourds in the Americas. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA* 111: 2937–41. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1073/pnas.1318678111

[5] Callaghan, R.T. 2015. Drift voyages across the mid-Atlantic. *Antiquity* 89: 724–31. https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2015.25

[6] Kehoe, A.B. 2016. *Traveling prehistoric seas: critical thinking on ancient transoceanic voyages*. Walnut Creek (CA): Left Coast.

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Baksei Chamkrong temple at Angkor might easily recall the Castillo at Chichén Itzá, and, furthermore, the two are roughly contemporary. But that in itself hardly makes the case.

Kehoe presents the evidence from pre-Columbian contacts as an exercise in critical thinking, urging students (in particular) to challenge consensus views and come to their own conclusions. Successive chapters take us through the Columbus myth, boats, Polynesians, plants and animals, technologies, and art and architecture. We end up in the Atlantic world, and known and accepted evidence of Norse contact (notably L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland), set against the much more questionable Kensington runestone and the late seventeenth-century Newport Tower (probably a Colonial-era windmill, if AMS dates for the mortar are to be believed)[7]. *Antiquity* has been over this ground before. The Kensington runestone was indeed the subject of an article in our December 1932 issue, where Geoffrey Malcolm Gathorne-Hardy (grandson of the 1st Earl of Cranbrook, and translator of the Icelandic Vinland Sagas for Oxford University Press) was not sure that it could be simply dismissed[8]. For readers not familiar with the object in question, it is a flat stone slab inscribed with a runic inscription dated AD 1362, describing a Norse expedition from Vinland into the North American interior. It was (allegedly) unearthed in Minnesota in 1898, by a landowner who just happened to be a Swedish immigrant himself. Kensington, Minnesota, is a very long way from any hypothetical Vinland settlement, nor is it anywhere close in time to the short-lived, rapidly abandoned settlement of L'Anse aux Meadows. For most people, it is simply implausible.

That said, it is a brave person who would reject anything out of hand; and while we may disbelieve the evidence of early transatlantic contact that has hitherto been presented, that does not mean to say that such contacts were impossible. Furthermore, Kehoe is not arguing that we must accept this or that claim—she herself is indeed careful to highlight the weaknesses as well as the strengths—merely that we should keep an open mind. *Antiquity* has long taken a sceptical stance, however, and continues to do so today.

Project Gallery

☙ Looking back through the early issues of *Antiquity* provides a fascinating insight into how the subject has changed over the past nine decades. *Antiquity* too has changed; and we continue to innovate to this day. Most recently, since October 2016, new Project Gallery articles are available to download as fully formatted PDF files (https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/antiquity/latest-issue). They also now feature DOI (Digital Object Identifier) numbers to help with citations and to make it easier to locate these articles long into the future. We hope readers (and contributors) will continue to find them a useful online supplement to the printed journal.

Chris Scarre
Durham, 1 February 2017

[7] Hale, J., J. Heinemeier, L. Lancaster, A. Lindroos & Å. Ringbom. 2003. Dating ancient mortar. *American Scientist* 91: 130–37.

[8] Gathorne-Hardy, G.M. 1932. Alleged Norse remains in America. *Antiquity* 6: 420–33. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00007353

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