

# The Post Hole

## Issue 7

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### **Hello from the new team!**

#### **Editor**

My name is Erin and I am the new Editor of The Post Hole. I hail from a little village in Buckinghamshire and I am in my third year of a BA in Historical Archaeology. My interests lie in buildings archaeology, particularly conservation and re-use of historic buildings in order to ensure their survival and maintenance. My aims for The Post Hole during the next year are to continue the great work done by Katie, Dave and Gemma by widening both the range of people the journal reaches and the range of people who write for us. We have plans to contact Archaeology Departments at Universities across the country and to make links with the History Department here at York. This is my team...

#### **Submissions Editor**

Hi, my name is Adam and I am the new Submissions Editor for the Posthole. I am in my third year of an Archaeology degree at the University of York. Human evolution is what makes me tick, along with most of prehistory, but I am particularly interested in the Mesolithic period.

#### **Secretary**

My name is Katharine and I am the secretary and one of the submissions editors for the Post Hole. I come from Hull and am currently a third year on the BSc course. My interests include prehistory, osteology, human evolution and environmental archaeology (so quite a bit of variation there!). My aims for the Post Hole during the next year are to try and expand awareness of some of the key issues within my areas of interest and to increase my knowledge and understanding of the discipline of archaeology as a whole through the new ideas and articles I will encounter. I look forward to hearing from many of you in the future!

#### **Assistant Editors**

Hi, I'm Keri, originally from a little village near the Roman town of Colchester in Essex but now I spend almost all of my time in York as I'm in the third and

final year of my BSc Archaeology course. My interest in Archaeology isn't really restricted to any particular time period as I'm interested in anything to do with human remains – so articles relating to osteoarchaeology, physical anthropology, forensics, isotopes, DNA, human evolution, mummification, bog bodies or even parasites will be greatly received by me!

I'm Gail, one of the new Assistant Editors of The Post Hole, and I come from Stafford in the West Midlands. I'm currently in my third year of a BSc in Archaeology, and have become particularly interested in hunter-gatherer studies, especially of the Mesolithic period. I enjoy many issues within this topic, but social dynamics, ideology and ethnographic approaches in particular. Human osteology, and the use of science generally in archaeology, also interests me.

### **Press and Publicity**

My name is Christina and I take care of Press and Publicity on the new Post Hole team. I'm from a faraway Pacific island called Guam and ready to embark on the second year of my BSc Archaeology degree. Human remains, palaeopathology, and DNA studies all tickle my fancy, and while my name may not appear under articles in every issue, I will be working hard on taking the Post Hole "to infinity and beyond"! I look forward to interacting with you, our Post Hole reader, on how the team and I can take this great idea and make it excellent!

Hi, my name is Alex and I'm a second year Archaeology student doing a bachelors of science. My main interests are in the archaeology of London, where I come from, and the Roman period. This year, I hope to help with raising awareness and producing the journal.

### **Web**

I'm Dave and I'm currently in my 2nd year of my undergraduate degree. I'm interested in Geophysics and the Mesolithic and I've taken on the role of 'web guy' as well as helping on the Press and Publicity side of The Post Hole to bring it to a wider audience.

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# 1 Budapest

Esther Cole (<mailto:ejc509@york.ac.uk>)

Budapest: two hundred square miles, twenty-three administrative districts, home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites and widely celebrated as a cultural and architectural myriad. But would it meet my high expectations when I visited it over the summer?

As I discovered in July, an odd changeover takes place in the capital of Hungary during the summer months – such is the intensity of the heat that locals move out of the city, leaving tourists to take up residence in various parts of the three cities. These three cities – Buda, Obuda and Pest – unified in 1873 to form Budapest following the construction of the iconic Chain Bridge over the River Danube. Although the site of Budapest has been occupied since the arrival of the Celts there in the third and fourth centuries BC, this unification in 1873 is the event which can really be said to have propelled Budapest into world capital status. Each city provided individual style, flair and character, with Pest most notably contributing commercial flair and providing the bulk of this capital, taking up one third of the Budapest I encountered in July.



*A stunning panoramic view across the city from Gellert Hill (credit: author).*

Upon emerging from the underground network into the centre, I entered a city which exploded around me in a myriad of styles, colours and time periods. Walking along, I felt as if I was walking through long corridors of history with buildings stretching extravagantly high on either side of me, like columns rising from a temple floor. The Hungarians clearly don't do things by halves – the spaciousness of the city was almost overwhelming and the scale yet intricacy of its design can only be described in superlative terms. The Jewish Synagogue at

the heart of Budapest is an excellent example of this: its geometric designs and stunning attention to detail combined with its sheer scale and splendour didn't fail to astound me. The synagogue is not the only monument of architectural genius to astound the tourist however, with the Houses of Parliament towering by the banks of the river. Their sprawling, vast intricacy took my breath away and even from far away the eye is drawn towards them. Their splendour is fitting for the second largest Houses of Parliament in the world, the largest being our own Houses of Parliament in Westminster.



*The second largest Houses of Parliament in the world! (credit: author).*

From a city which is effectively all about tourists during the summer months, I expected a brilliant array of things to do and see. I wasn't disappointed! Unlike Mediterranean areas where the inhabitants seem fairly relaxed about their tourist industry, confident in the knowledge that visitors will come in droves every summer for guaranteed sun and beautiful beaches (as I discovered recently), Budapest does not indulge in such complacency. I could barely walk down the road without seeing an advertisement for a local attraction, or being invited to partake of the numerous boat and coach tours that operate around the city. In the short time I had there, a couple of us decided to take a coach tour. We stopped off on the way at art galleries in Heroes' Square, bypassing St. Stephen's Basilica, 'Cinderella's Castle' and the Jewish Synagogue before crossing the River Danube via Chain Bridge, ascending to Gellert Hill. Here on this natural fortification of Budapest we were treated to stunning panoramic views over the three cities before descending to view the delightful and intricate Fishermen's Bastion and Budapest Castle. Hopping onto a boat tour during the afternoon showed us yet another side to the Hungarian capital with a tour guide narrating the history of the city: its rise from the banks of the Danube to one of the most famous and visited cities in the world. Given more time in Budapest, I would love to thoroughly explore the three UNESCO World Heritage sites

within the city: the embankments of the River Danube, the Castle District and the Andrassy ut.



*Intricate geometric designs of the Jewish Synagogue (credit: author).*

Despite the scorching and almost unbearable (to someone who lives in the frozen north!) July temperatures in Budapest, my time there was fantastic: fun; cultural; educational; awe inspiring... For an archaeology student, the city is a bottomless pit of wonders, enough to keep you going back time and time again. I know I will be.

## 2 BABA O 2009 – a student perspective

Keri Rowsell (<mailto:kr526@york.ac.uk>)

The 11th Annual meeting of the British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology was held in Bradford between the 18th and the 20th September 2009. This was not only my first time attending BABA O, but my first time attending an archaeological conference.

This year, for the first time, the BABA O conference was preceded by a two day dental anthropology short course, hosted by Alan Ogden and Julia Beaumont of the Biological Anthropology Research Centre, University of Bradford, between the 16th and 17th of September. Unfortunately for me my measly student budget couldn't cover both the conference and the short course so I missed the first two days and was only present from Friday until Sunday.

The keynote lecture to lead us into Friday's session was given by Mike Parker Pearson, who spoke about his ongoing work at Stonehenge (a subject close to any archaeologists heart, after all!), starting with the progress made so far on the 'Beaker People Project' and finishing by providing some insights into his upcoming research, the 'Feeding Stonehenge Project'. Sunday morning and the final keynote lecture was delivered by Keith Manchester, who freely admitted that his granddaughter has prepared his PowerPoint presentation for him, and whose talk was peppered with interesting anecdotes from his career as a GP. This was my personal favourite lecture of the conference, detailing various Palaeopathological conditions such as Leprosy, Venereal Syphilis and Tuberculosis, and discussing the pathological changes seen both in the living and in the bones studied by osteoarchaeologists long after death.

Lectures and talks given at the conference were wide ranging in regards to focus and topic of discussion. For example, Friday's talks included forensics, weapon-related trauma, prehistoric burial mounds and Chris Knüsel's very own Sherlock Holmes-esque investigation into the identity of the 'St. Bees lady'. Saturday saw a shift to studies involving isotopic analysis, biomechanics, bone mineral, and DNA. One notable exception to this was a talk regarding a new computer software programme designed to make the recording and subsequent analysis of human skeletal remains easier and more accurate. Sunday was largely concerned with pathology but touched briefly on warfare and violence, infant mortality, and some unusual dentition from the London based St Bride's crypt assemblage. The final session of the 2009 conference was delivered by Jelena Bekvalac of the Centre for Human Bioarchaeology, Museum of London, who presented a somewhat comical tribute to Bill White (Head Curator of the Centre for Human Bioarchaeology, Museum of London), who retires this month.

One of the 'extra-curricular' events of the BABA O conference is the conference dinner, which this year was an Indian buffet held at the Aagrah restaurant, Thornbury, and which was definitely a lot of fun. After the meal, Alan Ogden hosted his annual BABA O pub quiz, with each table of 10 conference attendees making up a team. Bill White's team won (something of a tradition, I'm lead to believe) and were rewarded with a bottle of champagne.

This year saw Holger Schutkowski step down from his position as chair of BABA O, along with Simon Mays resigning from the position of 'Member from a Professional Organization'. Dr. Jacqueline McKinley of Wessex Archaeology now holds the position of 'Member from a Professional Organization' and,

following an online election held prior to the conference, Chris Knüsel is the new chair of the society.

The 12th Annual meeting of the British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology will be held at the Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies in Cambridge and the provisional dates for this are Friday 17th to Sunday 19th September 2010. Hopefully I'll see some of you there next year...

### **'Top Tips' for attending your first conference**

1. One of the key things I learnt from attending the BBAO conference this year is that conferences are almost as much about meeting people and making contacts as they are about the lectures, talks and poster presentations. From a student's perspective, the people you meet at conferences could turn out to be a great help to you. For example, you may meet someone who could help you with your dissertation, or someone who's taken the Masters degree course you're interested in. Therefore it's a good idea to be as sociable as you can be while you're there and talk to as many people as possible.
2. Stay at a hotel recommended by the conference organisers. This has multiple benefits, especially if – like I did – you choose to go to a conference on your own. Most importantly it ensures that you stay somewhere reputable, so you know that both you and your belongings are safe. However on the social side, it gives you a good chance of meeting other people who are also attending the conference.
3. If you are staying in a hotel with other conference people and they walk to the venue, walk with them. Not only is this a further chance to get to know people, it's also cheaper than a taxi and possibly safer. However, if you do choose to get a taxi, make sure you get the number of a recommended company from the people at hotel reception.
4. Go to the conference meal! It might be included in the conference price or it might be a little bit extra – either way, it's definitely worth it. For one thing this takes the hassle out of trying to find somewhere to eat that night, and for another it's (you guessed it) another chance to meet new people!
5. Last but not least, a society related comment rather than a conference comment. The issue of posting questions on a society mailing list came up at the BBAO Annual General Meeting. The outcome of the discussion can be summarised as this: if you post a question to a society's mailing list, it is considered good etiquette to explain who you are, where and at what level you're studying, and why you want to know the answer to the question you're asking. Furthermore, if you get replies to your question, it's generally appreciated if you send an individual reply to the sender to thank them for their time and effort. Also, when you've received all the replies you think you'll get to your question, it's expected that you will collate the information and post this to the mailing list for all to see if they so wish.



### 3 Viking Summer School at Aarhus

Keith Scholes (<mailto:keith.scholes@btopenworld.com>)

For the past few years the Department of Anthropology, Archaeology and Linguistics at Aarhus University in Denmark has run an English language Summer School on Viking related themes. This year the course was entitled Viking Age Scandinavia: Transformation and Expansion, and ran for 10 days between the 3rd and 12th of August, with a rest day on the Sunday. As a final year student with an interest in Early Medieval Societies I decided to attend the school, and I thought it might be useful for me to give some of my impressions of the course for the benefit of other York students who may be interested in attending the program in future years.

#### The Venue

Aarhus is a city on the East Jutland coast of Denmark, and is, I believe, the second largest city in Denmark after Copenhagen, however by British standards it is still quite small with a population of some 300, 000 people. Much of the university is situated within the city; however the archaeology department is located in a pleasant coastal wooded area some kilometers outside the city itself at Moesgård. This is a historic manor house which in addition to the archaeology department is also the location of a museum, conservation labs and some reconstructed Viking buildings. The museum is well worth a visit, and has displays covering prehistoric through to the Viking period, of particular note is the Graubolle man display, which although not Viking may be familiar to those who have studied bog bodies.



*Moesgård Manor (credit: author).*



The manor house has several residential rooms, normally used to house visiting lecturers, however as the British contingent this year was quite small (myself and three Cambridge students), we were lucky enough to be allocated these rooms. The Scandinavian students were located nearby in slightly more basic, although still reasonably comfortable, hostel style accommodation.

### The Course

The course itself could be divided into two main components: a series of lectures on various topics relevant to the Viking age; and two days of coach excursions to Viking sites on the Jutland peninsula, together with an afternoon devoted to a tour of Moesgård and Aarhus museums, and a guided walk around Viking Aarhus.



*Reconstruction of a Viking Age Farm (credit: author).*

The taught portion of the course consisted of a series of lectures on a variety of topics given by tutors from Aarhus and elsewhere. Some of these were one-off talks given by individuals on their own specialist topics, others were given by a core group of teachers, principally Else Roesdahl, James Graham-Campbell, Anne Pedersen and Unn Pedersen; some of whom will probably be familiar to those of you interested in Viking studies. The subject matter covered was very wide-ranging, with both archeological and more textual evidence discussed; a fairly random sample of individual lecture titles include: Towns, Trade and Exchange; The Great Ship Burials; The Saga Legacy; The Age of Harald Bluetooth; Old Norse religion; and Ships and Seafaring. In addition to standard lectures there also were a number of 'hands on' sessions with various Viking artefacts, weapons, and ship parts. Most of the material discovered was primarily Scandinavian, with fairly limited coverage of other parts of the

Viking world. For example Britain was covered in a single lecture; this however was useful in giving a wider perspective for those of us used to a more British centered approach to the Vikings. The lecture schedule was quite heavy with 4 or 5 one hour plus lectures per day, this can be quite a challenge to those of us used to only a few lectures per week, and it can be quite tiring to maintain the high level of concentration required for several days.

One of the highlights of the Summer School for me were the field trips to major Viking sites in Jutland, these included Fyrkat Viking Fortress; Jelling, Lindholm Høje; and Ribe. As part of the excursions we also visited several reconstructed Viking structures such as farmhouses, and churches; this was particularly interesting as it provided a contrast to the more urban reconstructions of the Jorvik Viking Centre in York. One slight disappointment was that there was no visit to the Viking Ship Museum at Roskilde, unfortunately this is located on the island of Zealand and travel to the museum would take most of the day, however a visit may be considered for future years.

Before starting the course I was contacted by email and provided with a link to a large amount of downloadable pdf documents (papers, offprints, etc), as background reading. I would recommend that anyone attending the course should at least make some inroads into this reading before starting, while this material isn't absolutely necessary to understanding the lectures, it is often very useful.

Unfortunately, at least from my point of view, the course is part of the assessment for many of the Scandinavian students, and consequently finishes with a 4 hour exam, which is taken by all attendees including those who don't count it towards our own degrees. In the end taking the exam was not too great a hardship and one could be quite relaxed, and regard a pass as a useful addition to the CV.



*Rune Stone of Jelling  
(credit: author).*

## Social Events

As well as the teaching, there were a number of formal and informal social events, including an 'icebreaker' wine reception, a barbeque party, and a meal in Aarhus. These were enjoyable events with an opportunity to meet the tutors and Scandinavian students, most of whose English was slightly better than mine!

## Logistics and Costs

The cheapest and quickest way of getting to Aarhus is probably by flying, there is a Ryanair flight from Stanstead for £49. It is worth knowing that Aarhus airport is about 40km from the city, although there is an airport bus to the city for about £10, from there it is necessary to catch a further bus to Moesgård. The accommodation is self catering, although it is usually possible to purchase lunch from a canteen, or cafeteria associated with the museum. It is worth remembering that most prices in Denmark are somewhat greater than in Britain and you should allow a minimum of £15 per day for food and drink. Alcohol

is particularly expensive, for example a half litre of beer in a town centre bar costs about £5

Other (approximate) costs include £170 for course fees, £80 excursions, and £12 per night accommodation. Of course the costs are subject to fluctuations in the exchange rate, and may increase in later years. The course fees need to be paid for in advance via bank transfer, other costs can be paid for in cash to the course administration assistant. It is worth mentioning here that Maria our course administrator, went out of her way to be helpful, meeting us on arrival at Moesgård, and generally providing help and assistance in a slightly unfamiliar environment.

## Conclusion

I have to say that this course, while quite tiring, was thoroughly enjoyable, and I felt that I learned a great deal about the wider Viking world. Consequently I would have no hesitation in recommending the course to anyone interested in extending their knowledge of the Viking period. Please remember, however, that although the actual cost of the course and accommodation is very reasonable, you do need to budget for transport and living costs, which may substantially increase your expenditure.

Finally, if anyone is thinking of attending the course next year please feel free to contact me, I would be happy to expand on the information here, and to give further advice. My email address is [ks535@york.ac.uk](mailto:ks535@york.ac.uk) (<mailto:ks535@york.ac.uk>).

## Resources

- Moesgård Museum (<http://tinyurl.com/yk355x2>)
- Fyrkat Viking Fortress (<http://tinyurl.com/yk8f798>)
- Jelling (<http://tinyurl.com/yjd5h49>)
- Viking Denmark (<http://tinyurl.com/yhmj3rb>)
- Summer School (<http://tinyurl.com/ykmk2bo>)

## 4 To what extent is the divide between public and private life reflected in evidence for public worship in Roman Italy?

Megan Lewis (mailto:mhl771@bham.ac.uk)

As one of my 2nd year modules, I had to plan and go on a ‘Study Tour’ abroad to investigate something of personal interest. As someone with a keen interest in religion and mythology, I chose to explore the divide between public and private in religion in Roman Italy.

Religions in the Roman world were very much split into public and private sections, although there was a certain amount of blurring between the boundaries. Public rites were considered to be those performed at public expense on behalf of the people, whilst private ones were performed by or on behalf of specific families (Festus De Significatione Verborum 245). The placement of specific temples suggests that they may have required more or less privacy, for example the Campus of the Magna Mater in Ostia is on the city boundaries and it may have been that the cult did not wish to be in the public eye.

The division of space within the temple reflects that of private houses. Both have public and private areas, the latter being only accessible by certain people. Private individuals could do things like commission temples or altars for public use in order to display their wealth and piety (Cooley and Cooley 2004: 31). The evidence does also suggest a blur between the public and private divide, the most notable example being the Shrine of the Public Lares; a public shrine to what are usually private, household gods.



*The view up the Via Sacra showing the Temple of Antinous Pius and Faustina and the Temple of Romulus (credit: author).*

### Religion and Politics

If one wishes to see the link between politics and religion in Rome, there is evidence enough in the buildings lining the Via Sacra and in one of the purposes for which the road was used. The Via Sacra is lined with temples and there are even more visible from the road itself, for example the Temple of Vesta and the Temple of Castor and Pollux (Figure 1). There were also several political or administrative buildings. The Basilica Julia, used for civil law courts, government business and banking, is in between the Temple of Castor and Pollux and the Temple of Saturn and the Senate House is adjacent to the Arch of Septimius Severus. Whilst all of the temples may not have been completely visible when the buildings in the forum were intact, there would still have been a sense of being surrounded by a combination of religious and political buildings. There is also evidence for the connection between politics and religion in the dual uses of some of the temples. The Temple of Saturn was

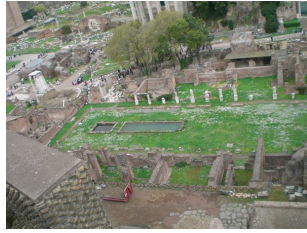
not only used as a temple but also as the storage place for the bronze tablets, on which the laws of the state were inscribed, and as housing for the national treasury (Grant 1970, 81). The social order of the Knights paraded annually in front of the Temple of Castor and Pollux and balloting for official votes was held here from 145BC (Grant 1970, 86). The House of the Vestal Virgins also had a dual purpose as it acted as a safe deposit for public and private documents (Grant 1970, 61).



*View up the Via Sacra showing the Temple of Roma and Venus (credit: author).*

The highest honour a successful general could hope for was a triumph through the city and up the Capitoline Hill to the Temple of Jupiter (Beard 2007, 1). This included following the Via Sacra through the forum (Beard 2007, 81). The Via Sacra leads past the Temple of Venus and Roma, an important temple that, when complete, would have made the entrance to the forum imposing as it was set considerably higher than the road (Figure 2). From the Arch of Titus at the beginning of the forum one would probably have been able to see straight down the road to the Arch of Septimus Severus, with various temples also in the line of sight. It is difficult to tell what the exact view would have been due to the incomplete state of the ruins. With the procession ending at the Capitoline temple, the whole procession at once gave thanks to the gods and honoured the generals for their victory. This connection is also visible through things such as how monuments and objects with a political purpose were decorated. The rostra from the forum at Rome was used for political speeches but was decorated with reliefs of animals being led to sacrifice. It is equally interesting to note the proximity of the forum to the Colosseum. The Colosseum was built by Vespasian using his share of war spoils, in a similar way that temples or arches were raised by victorious generals to commemorate and give thanks for their victory (Claridge et al 1998, 278).





*Aerial view of the Forum showing the proximity of the Temple of Vesta, the House of the Vestals, the Temple of Antinous Pius and Faustina and the Temple of Romulus (credit: author).*

The forum at Rome was not the only one to combine religion with politics. The forums in Ostia and Pompeii were also religious centres. In Pompeii, the Temple of Jupiter overlooks the forum from a raised platform and the central clearing is flanked by the Temple of Apollo on the left and the Temple of Vespasian and the Sanctuary of the Public Lares on the right. If one looks out from the entrance of one temple, it is possible to see at least one other temple, if not more. From the entrance to the Temple of Vespasian one can see the Temple of Jupiter. This is also true of the forums at Rome and Ostia. In Rome, for example, the Temple of Romulus and the Temple of Antinous Pius and Faustina are next to each other and opposite the House of the Vestals and the Temple of Vesta (Figure 3). The forum at Ostia has two main temples, the Temple of Rome and Augustus

and the Capitoline temple. These face each other across the central clearing with a small circular temple dedicated to the Lares Augusti in between them. The forum at Ostia also contained the Basilica and the Curiae, once again showing the mix between religion and politics. Temples were not only found in forums but were scattered across each city. The imperial forums in Rome also contained temples; there were temples located on the Palatine Hill such as the Temple of Apollo, the Capitoline temple was on the Capitol Hill and of course the Pantheon was not in the forum either. Generally speaking, the most important temples were located within the forum. In Pompeii, however, the temples to Asclepius, Isis and Fortuna Augusta were all located some distance from the forum. The temples of Asclepius and Fortuna Augusta in Pompeii are relatively small and therefore unlikely to have been especially important. The Temple of Isis is enclosed in a fairly large area and was probably popular, but its location, towards the periphery of the city, suggests that the cult desired privacy. How much privacy it is difficult to say as, despite the high walls, it was overlooked by the theatre. One would not have been able to see in from the street, yet it may have been possible to see in from the theatre (Figure 4).

In Ostia there were most notably two groups of temples separate from the forum, the Republican temples and the temples on the Campus of the Magna Mater. The Campus of the Magna Mater is right on the city boundaries. The argument for political unpopularity cannot really be made here as it is a large site. If it was politically unpopular then surely it would not have been powerful enough to own such a large amount of land. It is more likely that the cult desired some level of privacy, despite being a 'public' cult. The Temple of the Magna Mater is set away from the rest of the buildings, heightening the sense that this cult was a private, yet public one. Religion also provided means for political advancement. A key example of this is the Temple of Isis in Pompeii.



*The Temple of Isis, Pompeii (credit: author).*



It was rebuilt by the son of a freedman, but as he was still a child at the time it is likely that his father provided the money for the rebuilding to help his son's social and political advancement (Cooley and Cooley 2004, 31) (Figure 5). Freed slaves were not allowed to hold political office and in return for rebuilding the temple the young boy was appointed as a member of the city council (Cooley and Cooley 2004, 31). The Temple of Fortuna Augusta was also paid for by a private individual, a man named Marcus Tullius (Cooley and Cooley 2004, 92). Constructing temples for the imperial cult was a way for the local elite to make an impression and promote their careers (Zanker 1998, 85). Considering the cult officials were all freedmen and slaves these actions are likely to have assisted in their social advancement also. Building public temples in order to advance socially shows that public religion was often exploited by private individuals.



*Dedicatory inscription of the Temple of Isis, Pompeii (credit: author).*

The next issue will have my observations on the public/private divide in relation to temples and ritual, as well as my concluding remarks.

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## 5 Isn't it Time We Stopped Digging?

Phil Smith (<mailto:ps542@york.ac.uk>)

Doing a degree in archaeology really is for people who like digging holes. We learn to dig to our hearts content in a practical sense; by freezing to the bone in a muddy field, full of beautiful trinkets of massive importance to another, more important academic and, of course, we are given no credit. We are but the mere grunts of the archaeological world. However we are also digging another more significant hole, that which is a deep and dangerous pit of a theoretical manner. Just out of curiosity who amongst you saw the word 'theoretical' and lost interest? I realise I was the one who used the word theoretical, but this is what I'm getting at: Why are issues of philosophy and social responsibility shunned in favour of morbid material based obsession? And more importantly; why are we not given an explanation?

When it comes to the political side of archaeology one of the major issues raised again and again is that we, the future of archaeology, the students young and fresh, are a symbol of imperialism. We are British trained and tutored and constantly encouraged to travel to other nations and continents to 'experience' other cultures. My problem is this; our tutors with their western enthusiasm focus on how we can benefit archaeology. Compare this to the people in the countries whose heritage we are expected to dominate viewing us with scepticism and an anticipation verging on dread. Were you aware of this? I wasn't until I read it for myself in numerous papers and books. Surely this is a more pressing issue than the correct technique for wielding a trowel!? I believe that archaeology is a particularly arrogant discipline – through archaeology we can know everything about everyone because we have radiocarbon dating and morphology and isotope analysis and other miracles at our disposal. Arm this with a degree and a massive bibliography and BOOM you have a virtual walking encyclopaedia. This is an unreasonable attitude, to say the least, and yet it is taught to us. I don't mind people being passionate about what they are interested in but the thought of how anybody can care more about academia than they do the emotional concerns of other human beings is disturbing. More importantly why do we, the students, not recognise let alone challenge this!? In one of my more sinister flights of fantasy I think of reasons why we are not told. Are we trained to ignore our social and political responsibility? After all, that would result in a more neutral, scientifically objective approach to our trinket collecting.

If this doesn't seem bad enough then consider this – in my experience as an archaeology student the theory of the discipline is not only mistreated by elements of the senior establishment itself but also by undergraduates. Studying theory is seen as tedious – which it is – but also as inconsequential, which it definitely isn't. I don't want to drag this article down into the dark and mostly inaccessible (courtesy of the archaeological elitists) world of theory but to sum up what I have witnessed – archaeology is a social discipline and it has consequences and implications far beyond the boundaries of a muddy, grunt infested site. I wouldn't have a problem with people disputing this if the reason was unknown, but it is obvious. The discipline of archaeology focuses more on the material than the social and political because it is a western academic institution. It is a product of its culture and time. The most depressingly

ironic fact is this; for a discipline which studies the progression of culture and the changes that occur throughout time, archaeology is so slow in advancing. It reviews how time amongst other factors affects all aspects of humanity and yet refuses to be affected itself. This is because the materialistic mentality of archaeology is absolute thanks to its western roots, trunk and branches. Sadly this ingrains itself every year in the new fruit crop: us.

When I consider all of the above I wonder why I'm allowing it to happen. It's true that if I want a degree at the end of my three year ordeal then I can't be so presumptuous in thinking myself important enough to rock the carefully maintained boat. But the difficulties faced by archaeologists in many countries, especially those with a colonial history, are vast and complex. These are also the countries that, according to the archaeological demigods, we simply must go and see. That's fine; encourage us all you want but don't let us go without knowing the massive issues that affect these countries with regard to archaeology and western academia. Archaeology is seen by many Indigenous groups as a pillar of the centuries of oppression they have suffered and this is a very legitimate claim. Colonialism and archaeology were undeniably sharing the same bed and many argue they still do and so our discipline has a lot to answer for. The archaeologists brought up in these countries face these issues time and again and so are well placed to deal with real social issues. However seeing as Britain is a hub of archaeological conscription and theoretical leadership it is inevitable that we will be exposed to the same issues of heritage management and abuse and its relationship to postcolonial political imbalance and repression.

These arenas of debate and action are ferocious, not to mention hugely complex, with every group matching each other blow for blow on issues such as museum collection, repatriation and Eurocentric agendas. So why are we not prepared!? Is it because our institution is ignorant of these facts due to it being based in Britain? No. Even in Britain archaeologists have to face issues of repatriation due to massive museum collections established when our country was parading around the globe simply because it could. This article isn't about whether you agree with repatriation or not. The issue I am concerned with is that we are not geared up well enough for the wider world and its dynamic socio-political climate. Archaeology is a social discipline and thus it has implications beyond its own borders and it simply is not possible to claim academic or scientific neutrality. When I consider the reasons why we are not prepared I come back to the same conclusions; archaeology is so entrenched in its western dogma it simply doesn't care about the people it studies and worryingly this deliberate ignorance is not only forced on us but has detrimental implications towards our ability to be competent and responsible archaeologists.

Like many things in archaeology this creates a paradox with the only explanation being the same as those regarding all other archaeological short-comings in this area. We are the future of archaeology. Unfortunately we are the future of western imperialist archaeology; tutored and trained to spread the absolute word of scientific protocol. This pleases the establishment as it maintains the discipline's status as the pinnacle of knowledge regarding humanity. This explains why we aren't taught how to approach the challenges that face us and rather are distracted by being taught to identify different types of pottery. This is desirable because simply, we are not meant to succeed in the theoretical world. We are the grunts and shall remain so. Having a new generation of thinkers could undo the discipline and its values. With the challenges that face

archaeology outside its walls and bastions the last thing needed are challenges within. Equip us with a trowel and a basic knowledge of science and we are the perfect people to maintain the status quo because we are in no condition to engage in socio-political debate. I can't help but think that the best tool an archaeologist has to provide for their discipline is a room full of eager, bright eyed and ultimately clueless grunts destined for obscurity.

## 6 Outreach: an International Perspective

Harry Robson (<mailto:hkrobson@brad.ac.uk>)

As is often the case in the 21st Century, there appears to be an increasing need for a connection to be established between the community associated with a site and the archaeological team digging it, particularly when an excavation commences. I noticed this whilst undertaking research at the University of York in relation to excavations at Hungate, the single biggest excavation in York in the last 25 years, which are ongoing.

This article presents the link between archaeology and the local community within an international perspective, specifically with relation to the ongoing excavations and expeditions to Nokalakevi, Georgia (ex USSR).

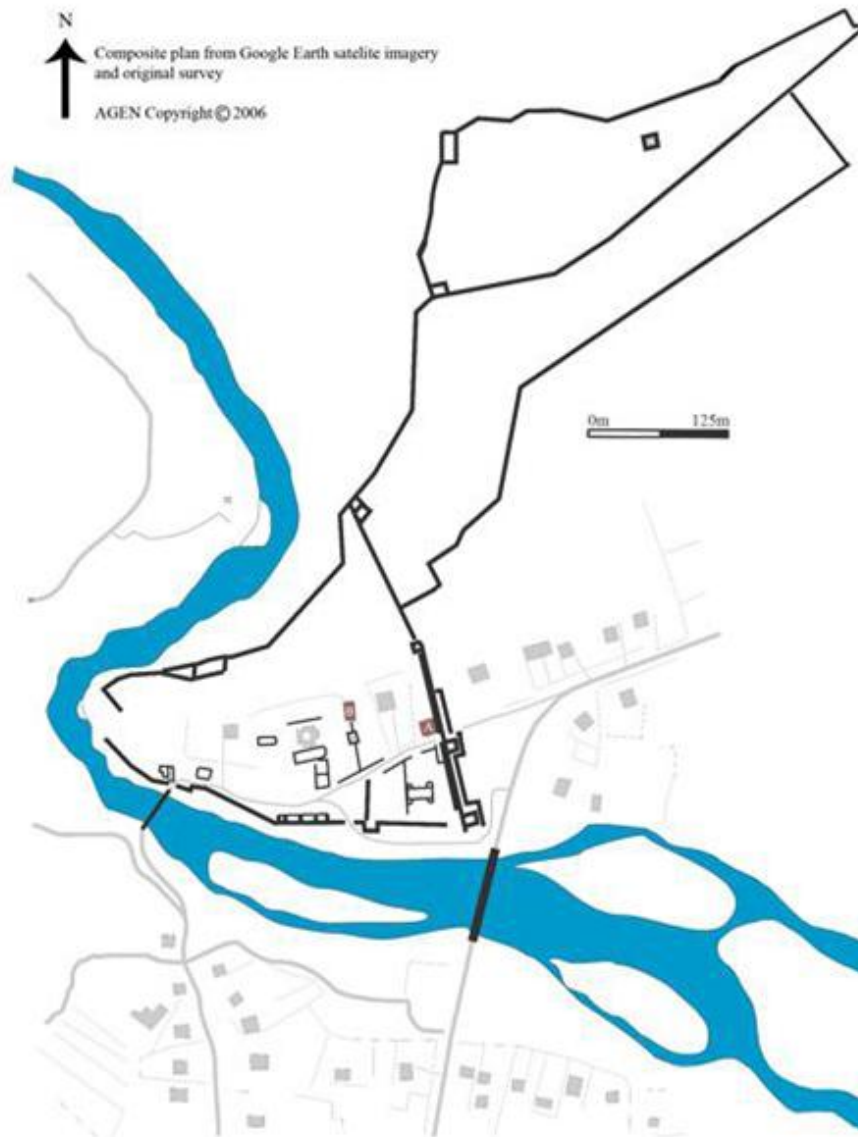
### Background of the Anglo-Georgian Expedition to Nokalakevi

The current excavations at the site of Nokalakevi began in 2001 with the establishment of the joint Anglo-Georgian expedition to Nokalakevi (AGEN) in 2000 (Grant and Everill 2009). AGEN is collaboration between English and Georgian specialists including archaeologists, historians, finds conservators, a palaeobotanist and a ceramic specialist.

Nokalakevi (which roughly translates as the ‘ruins where once a town was’) is located in the Samegrelo province, in the west of Georgia around 15.5km north of Senaki. The site consists of a citadel on top of a high hill and a town on the river terrace below, linked by strongly fortified walls (Grant and Everill 2009). Nokalakevi is a deeply stratified settlement and fortress site with distinct cultural contextual layers, in the 8th/7th centuries BC, the 4th-2nd centuries BC and the 4th-7th centuries AD, and imposing standing remains. The archaeology of the site reflects its location on the edge of the Graeco-Roman world, with influences from Iran and Mesopotamia, the northern steppes and the indigenous cultures of the South Caucasus.

The Late Roman fortress of Archaeopolis-Tsikhegoji is of particular interest for various reasons. It is a large regional centre within the landscape (the fortress alone covers c.20ha. within the walls). It is well documented in Greek literary sources (Procopius of Caesarea, Agathias of Myrina and Justinian’s Novels) because it was a key strategic point in the Byzantine-Sassanian wars of the 6th century AD. Furthermore it is believed to have been the capital of the successive kingdoms of Colchis and Lazika. With regard to the earlier contextual horizons, there is a distinct lack of evidence for the history of the area from literary sources and the anthropogenic material available is therefore all the more invaluable in writing the history of Nokalakevi, Colchis and the wider region (including the Pontic coast of Anatolia) (Colvin pers comm. 2009). In 1833 Frédéric Dubois Du Montpéreux suggested the site to be Aia, the capital of Homeric Colchis in the Argonautic myths and Archaeopolis, the capital of late antique Lazika.





*Digitised plan of the site, Nokalakevi (by Dr Paul Everill).*

The initial expedition to Nokalakevi was a joint German-Georgian expedition led by Dr Alfons M. Schneider of the German Archaeological Institute in Istanbul. His team carried out the first archaeological excavations at the site in the winter of 1930-31. Schneider's results were published in the German periodical *Forschungen und Fortschritte* in September 1931 and confirmed the identification of the site as Archaeopolis.

In 1973 the S. Janashia Museum of History sent a large and well-equipped expedition to excavate and conserve the historical monument at Nokalakevi. This continued until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 when political upheavals led to considerable disruption and the end of large scale works at Nokalakevi. The fortification walls and the other features at the site which were conserved

and reconstructed are a result of the work undertaken in the early 1970's. Three volumes of results were published, edited by P. Zakaraia (1981, 1989, & 1993).

The very rich archaeological heritage in Georgia is poorly known and not well documented outside of the country. This scholarly isolation, initiated in the 1930's and continuing until the 1990's, was due to the former Soviet Union and the instability it caused. Partly as a result of this instability and political and ideological pressures, Soviet-era archaeological methods seem outdated by western standards. However AGEN's enthusiasm and encouragement, the implementation of western archaeological methods, combined with western engagement with Georgian archaeology and scholarship, have resulted in nine successful expeditions to Nokalakevi to date. This is despite the present political rumblings and aggressive occupation in 2008 by the Kremlin in which Russian troops entered Nokalakevi on 20th August 2008.



*View of Nokalakevi. Forty Martyrs Church surrounded by imposing fortification walls (credit: author).*

### **My involvement with the project**

I initially travelled to Nokalakevi in August 2007 as part of my undergraduate first year field school requirements. After spending 4 weeks there as a volunteer it was apparent that I had found a place of real interest and stayed for an extra 10 days after the excavation in Tbilisi. The fieldwork I undertook included a whole plethora of western excavation methodologies all under guidance from specialists in their particular fields. The work conducted was on Trench 'A' which has been open since 2001 (it was extended in 2006) and contains the Hellenistic necropolis. These deposits, made up of 4th-6th century BC Hellenistic building foundations and richly adorned Hellenistic burials, occupied the majority of the excavation team.

In July 2008, at the beginning of my placement year, I returned to Nokalakevi to for another season of fieldwork as a volunteer. I was fortunate enough to be

continuing with similar work to the previous season and so my experience was invaluable. I particularly enjoyed working on the well-preserved burials of the Hellenistic period in both seasons. I also participated in the field conservation laboratory and worked on the restoration and conservation of pottery and small finds, where I have been able to make a significant contribution to the post excavation work. Consequently I was invited to return as a site assistant during June/July of 2009. This excavation season saw the opening of Trench 'B' which had not been excavated since 2005 and the continued excavation of Trench 'A' which is located east (of Trench 'B') and just inside the imposing standing remains.

Trench 'B' consists of a near uniform square wall which is believed to be a continuation of an earlier or contemporary gate house which encloses a Byzantine-medieval cemetery (from c6th/7th centuries to c16th/17th centuries) which has been dated primarily from the ceramics and homogenous remains. The 2009 season saw the clearance of the section edges and the removal of plastic and vegetation and the further reduction of contextual deposits which yielded a further five inhumations, all of which were orientated east-west (with their heads pointing east); undoubtedly Christian burials.

Trench 'A' on the other hand was excavated further though work ceased due to bad weather around the third week of the four week season. However excavation yielded three further inhumations within the Hellenistic cultural deposits and further evidence of wall foundations and cobbled surfaces within destruction horizons. Further work undertaken was a complete GPS survey of the citadel and locale carried out by Dr Paul Everill.



*The author excavating a Byzantium inhumation in the cemetery of Trench B, July 2009 (photograph by Ano Tvaradze).*

Whilst working with British archaeologists and their Georgian counterparts and training with Georgian students in on-site excavation and off-site post excavation, I have developed a love for the country, the region, the people their

and which has encouraged me to learn the language with a view to reading further into the archaeology and history of the region.

### **Outreach: an international perspective**

Nokalakevi is a small village which when, compared with western standards, would seem to be in a third world state. However the foundation of AGEN and the numerous subsequent collaborative expeditions to Nokalakevi have resulted in improvement to the local economy as well as bringing an awareness of intercultural differences to the local population. In addition to AGEN undertaking archaeological research, it also provides ongoing collaborative training in excavation techniques to archaeological students of many nationalities. In the past American, Australian, Polish, Dutch and Arabian along with Georgian and British students have taken part in the excavations and have learnt a great deal about the implementation of western archaeological methods.

The involvement of the National television channel has also played an important role in the last 2 years, in advertising the site's historical and archaeological importance. Interviews have taken place with members of the expedition team from both Georgia and the United Kingdom. Successive broadcasts have highlighted the cultural and historical importance of the site to the Georgian population. The raised profile of the monument outside Georgia has been helped by the improved infrastructure and the collaboration with the international front which the Georgians are particularly enthusiastic about. The invasion by the Russians and the continued occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia from 7th August 2008 has given worldwide publicity to the region's problems.

AGEN benefits not only from the Samegrelo regional government in the Samegrelo region but also from Nokalakevi itself. The funding, raised by AGEN and in particular David Connolly, has often been matched with an increased amount from Professor Lomatishvili who has successfully negotiated funding from the Georgian government and the National Museum in Tbilisi. Our presence at the monument raises the prestige of Nokalakevi which in turn has led to further maintenance and conservation work at the monument which has been directed and carried out by Professor Lomatishvili and his team.

This further work has included the redevelopment of the museum, including a new roof, which has made the building water-tight. In addition the building has been rewired and provided with electricity through the purchase of a new generator. The exhibits were improved by purchasing new display cases to replace those which had previously been broken when their contents were stolen. These valuable artefacts were stolen by rebels supporting the ousted president Gamsakhurdia in the 1990's (Colvin 2008). The installation of signs in Georgian, Russian and English was implemented in 2007. The money raised has also been used to employ local men and women to run the museum as well as to archive the artefacts and give guided tours of the fortified walls, the bath houses, palaces, the foundations of two churches as well as the excavation trenches and other standing remains.

The redevelopment of the 'dig house' (previously marred by bullet-holes from the civil war) took place in line with the improvements to the museum. Stories from colleagues suggested that, due to the instability of the country in the 1990's the site was not a particularly pleasant place to be. This was made worse by the occupation of the village by rebels during the uprising which resulted in the



looting of the expedition's equipment. On a more positive note the continued support and funding from both the AGEN and the numerous volunteers who have populated in the site in recent years has led to a vast improvement in the 'dig house' which has been modernised. The 'dig house' is now a suitable residence for the archaeologists as well as acting as a location for post-excavation work and a field laboratory for several archaeological sites in western Georgia. The well equipped kitchen enables all members of the excavation team to be fed with this service being provided by local women employed by AGEN (Colvin 2008).



*Forty Martyrs Church (6th century AD), winter 2008 (photograph by Varnika Kenia)*

The employment of workmen both locally and within the Senaki district during the excavation season and throughout the remainder of the year has provided worthwhile jobs as well as a basic income for. This in turn has created a well-maintained and safe environment, set in beautiful and very peaceful surroundings, for the archaeologists to work in. During the non-excavation period it is the duty of the workmen to maintain and control the spoil heaps, clear vegetation and refuse, remove graffiti, back-fill trenches and cover them with plastic sheeting for protection. Many of the imposing wall foundations, including the unstable wall surrounding the Byzantium-medieval cemetery in Trench 'B' have also been secured and restored. The workmen have also re-roofed the 6th century AD Forty Martyrs Church. This is located within the citadel and is of significant historical importance as well as being the centre for the Christian beliefs which are a focal point within the community.

Collaboration between the project and the community has also included the local police force and the regular Georgian army, both based in Senaki. This year a rugby game between the expedition members and the army took place which, ultimately, led to a defeat for the expedition! Interested local people are also encouraged and welcomed to become involved in the excavations. This

gives them an opportunity to learn about archaeology and history as well as improve their English and meet various like minded people.

In the last 2 years of my involvement with the project I have taught English to local children in Nokalakevi as well as school children from Senaki. The lessons took place throughout three weeks of the four-week excavation season with a maximum of 4 lessons a week. These lessons were taught at the archaeological museum of Nokalakevi with the use of aids. The major teaching component consisted of the students themselves actually speaking and holding discussions in English. The lessons gave those students a time to reflect upon different cultures and discuss better ways of learning English at their schools. Those who were more advanced in their knowledge of the language arranged to meet with me for additional coaching. Not only has this given me a sense of confidence in terms of teaching but has given me a chance to personally help the people of Nokalakevi.

In 2009 an excursion for the excavation team and the local children I had been teaching was organised by the Senaki government. We went to the Black Sea and the port of Batumi, took a guided tour around Batumi museum and attended concert by Katie Melua. This was a very successful day which served to further cement the relationship between all parties.

## Conclusion

I believe that all of the above has contributed to promoting Nokalakevi as an archaeologically significant site and at the same time advertising its historical, cultural and spiritual richness. This has demonstrated that similar archeologically important centres which may be located in other remote regions can be excavated easily and successfully. I can testify to this because of my time in Nokalakevi and my ongoing association with the project. The overwhelming friendship and hospitality received from our Georgian colleagues and the residents of Nokalakevi as well as the local government in Senaki has been an integral part of our collaboration and has contributed to the success of the project.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly I should like to thank the head of the expedition Professor Dato Lomatishvili for his encouragement, input and hard work at Nokalakevi for the last 28 years. I should also like to thank Ian Colvin, Dr Paul Everill, Ben Neil and Dr Nino Kebuladze for their consistent hard work and giving me the opportunity to return for subsequent visits. Furthermore I should also like to thank a number of great friends on the expedition team including Henry Bennet, Marika Mchedlishvili, Rezi Kenia, Gio Amashukeli Chris Russel and Kathy Grant, Ano Tvaradze, Niko Murgulia and Natia Dzigua who made me feel most welcome on my initial visit and have become great friends over the years. Further thanks go to Elene and Varnika Kenia and Dave Crowther and specific thanks go to Sally Jamburia for believing in me and for being a continued great friend.



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## 7 The Modern Afterlife of the Bog People

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A brief introduction into just some of the ways bog bodies have inspired modern works of film and literature, from the poetry of Seamus Heaney to a horror film released earlier this year.

Who will say ‘corpse’ to his vivid cast? Who will say ‘body’ to his opaque repose? (Heaney 1990, 70)

This extract from Seamus Heaney’s ‘The Grauballe Man’ goes some way to explaining literary representations of bog bodies. Their preservation means they appear to be life-like, but their stillness and distant expression denies any chance that they are alive. The bog bodies are therefore defined somewhere between “body” and “corpse”, just as the bog is defined as somewhere between land and water. The initial sense of wonder they inspire gradually becomes mingled with fear, as their injuries and sufferings gradually become apparent. This is the “beauty and atrocity” (Heaney 1990, 70) of the bog body that has captured the imagination of poets and novelists alike.

The discovery of The Tollund Man and The Grauballe Man inspired Heaney’s collection of poetry on bog bodies. In ‘Punishment’ he uses the voice of the Windeby Girl as he imagines the moments leading up to the girl’s death. The body found in North Germany was discovered pinned down into the peat with sticks and her eyes blindfolded with a woven band (Asingh 2007). In its perfectly preserved state the body is a gift from the past, but also a reminder of the violence of that time:

you were flaxen-haired,  
undernourished, and your  
tar-black face was beautiful. (Heaney 1990, 72)

If Heaney was interested in the way the bog people provide a window into the past, Geoffrey Grigson is more concerned with how they are treated in the present. In ‘The Tollund Man’, he attacks the unceremonious way the body was placed on display after its discovery:

No consolation after millennia, my friend,  
Sacrificed for a future, to stir in this way  
by your shiny, silky-black shape (Grigson 1982, 56)

In a sense, the body’s excavation prolongs its suffering and only compounds the original atrocity. The bog body is still not at rest after its initial torment.

These themes of wonder before fear and the ethics of bog body research are also explored by the author Margaret Atwood in a more personal way. The Bog Man tells of the summer affair between a final year undergraduate and her archaeology professor, who combine a romantic getaway with a newly discovered bog body in Orkney. When seeing the body the girl suddenly questions the morality of the excavation: ‘Surely there should be boundaries set upon the wish to know, on knowledge merely for its own sake’ (Atwood 1992, 96). As the trip progresses, she begins to lose the original awe of the professor, and slowly ‘He

becomes flatter and more leathery, more life goes out of him, he becomes more dead' (Atwood 1992, 106). Her memory of the bog man becomes intertwined with her memory of the professor. Her initial regard for her professor is slowly replaced by the discovery of his faults, just as the amazing preservation of bog bodies becomes slowly overshadowed by the evidence of violent death.

The OED (Oxford English Dictionary) shows that the word 'bog' itself is linked to the Middle English word 'bogge', meaning to dread and fear something. In this way "bog man" has been linked to "bogeyman", a figure of dread with various incarnations around the world:

As you warn your naughty children to beware of the bogeyman... think of the more terrible fate of Lindow Man. (Turner 1986, 176)

Michael Cadnum uses this darker side of bog bodies in *Sleepwalker* (1991). The story, set in York, describes the excavation of a bog man, which turns against the archaeologists in vengeful fury and tries to pull their hearts out (perhaps archaeologists in York should take note!). This may be another comment on ethics of excavation, but also demonstrates an emerging focus on fear of preserved bodies.

In the 2009 film *Legend of the Bog*, starring Vinnie Jones, bog bodies become a kind of pre-historical zombie. Property developers, archaeology professors and unwitting visitors to the swamp are terrorised by an angry bog body looking for revenge. In the words of the film: "he's had 2000 years to get grumpy". Only the specialist bog body 'hunter' (conveniently named Mr. Hunter) can bring him down.

While *Legend of the Bog* is not the most contemplative account of bog bodies, it does unwittingly touch on their role in art and literature with its tagline: "Bodies buried for eternity... until now". In other words, bog bodies emerge from the certainty of death to live another life. This modern collection of film and literature has interpreted bog bodies as either a gift from the past or a threat to the future and given them a modern afterlife.

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## About The Post Hole

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