

# THE OXFORD CENTRE FOR ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY ART & CULTURE

Annual Report  
2016/17



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Institute of Archaeology, 34–36 Beaumont St, Oxford, OX12PG



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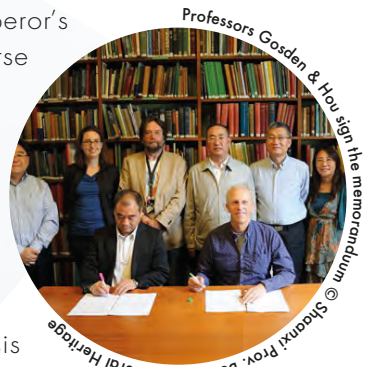


Over the last few years, the scope of research, teaching and academic exchange within the Oxford Centre for Asian Archaeology, Art, and Culture has grown significantly and the committee decided that the Centre should begin to build a stronger online identity and actively publicise its activities and events. This, our first annual report, is an important part of that plan and offers a brief account of the OCAAAC year.

For further information and details of forthcoming lectures and events, visit: [asia.arch.ox.ac.uk](http://asia.arch.ox.ac.uk) or follow us on twitter [@archaeoasia](https://twitter.com/archaeoasia)

## HIGHLIGHTS

At the beginning of the academic year, the directors of the Centre (Professors Chris Gosden and Mark Pollard) signed a prestigious Memorandum of Understanding on collaborative research with the Museum of the Qin First Emperor's Mausoleum in Xi'an, China. Over the course of the year, additional meetings between Dr Anke Hein and key staff members from the museum (Professor Hou Ningbin and Dr Li Xiuzhen) have established a clear focus for our collaboration: *The Environmental Impact of the Terracotta Army*, as studied through tree-ring reconstruction and the analysis of pollen profiles from the Qinling Mountains.



This project will begin in earnest over the course of 2018/19 and incorporates both current OCAAAC staff and Drs Janice Li and Zhuang Yijie (University College London)—a former post-doctoral researcher at Merton College and affiliate of the Centre.



In June 2017, Professor Dame Jessica Rawson (a founder member of OCAAAC and one of the Centre's most active supporters) was awarded the Charles Lang Freer Medal by the Smithsonian Institute (Washington, DC) in recognition of her enduring contributions to the field of Chinese art and archaeology. Dame Jessica is only the 14th recipient of the medal since it was established in 1956, joining eminent names, such as Max Loehr, Tanaka Ichimatsu, Stella Kramrisch, and Roman Ghirshman.

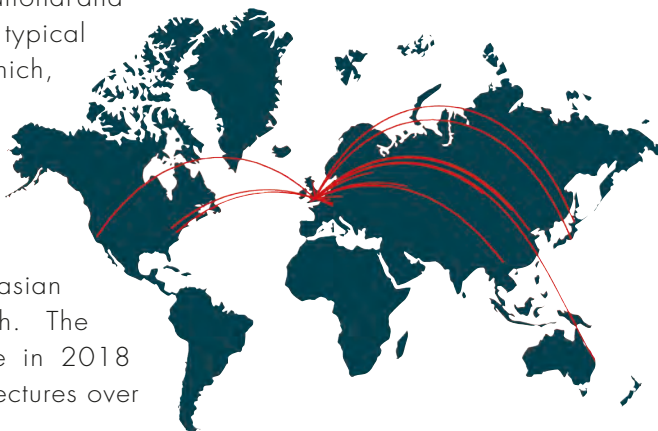
# OCAAAC LECTURES

2016/17 was another good year for our popular seminar series on Eurasian Archaeology. Thanks largely to the generosity of Professor Jessica Rawson, we were able to invite a wide range of speakers to come to Oxford and deliver lectures on their current research.



This year, we were delighted to host Professor Nikolai Makarov (Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow), whose lecture on the archaeology of identity in northern Rus' was attended by more than 45 staff and students, as well as Drs Joshua Wright (University of Aberdeen) and Bryan Miller (Rothermere American Institute, Oxford) who spoke on the emergence of empires in the steppe, Dr Margarete Prüch (University of Heidelberg) who discussed recently discovered Han Dynasty lacquer boxes in Crimea, Professor Gina Barnes (SOAS, London) who introduced Tectonic Archaeology in Japan, Dr Paul Wordsworth (Oriental Institute, Oxford) who spoke on urban archaeology in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and Dr Michela Spataro (British Museum) who considered technological innovation and conservatism in the ceramics of the Balkan Neolithic.

This broad mix of local, national and international scholars is typical of this popular series which, over the last seven years, has brought together academics from three continents to discuss the latest developments in Eurasian Archaeological research. The series is set to continue in 2018 with at least nine more lectures over the course of the year.



# CONFERENCES

As usual, the OCAAAC was active at an international scale in 2016/17, presenting research, convening conference sessions, and organizing focussed international research meetings, both as a part of existing projects and as independent events:

**WAC-8** Just before the start of the academic year, our core staff members and several affiliated students participated in the 8th World Archaeology Congress in Kyoto. Over the course of a week of events, they arranged and participated in wide variety of sessions including 'Interpreting prehistoric art: context, meaning, function', 'New perspectives in the archaeology of violence', 'Social archaeometallurgy: the role of metal within and between societies' and 'Landscapes of art and the art of landscapes'.

**CORE-TO-CORE** In January, Professor Hirofumi Kato (Centre for Ainu and Indigenous Studies, Hokkaido University), with whom we have built a strong collaborative relationship over the last decade, returned to Oxford to hold the 5th Annual Core-to-Core Workshop on Biological Anthropology, organized jointly with Dr Rick Schulting.



This event, which has become a regular feature in the Centre's calendar, brought together twelve papers on a wide range of topics from phylogenetic relationships between early ape ancestors, to investigations of violent death in medieval Ipswich. One of our affiliated students, Alyssa White, also participated in the workshop, presenting her study of human stable isotopes from Neolithic and Bronze Age burials around Lake Baikal.

**HUNTER-GATHERERS** Later in the year, the lives of these complex hunter-gatherer societies were brought into sharper focus at a dedicated symposium, organized by Dr Schulting and the Baikal-Hokkaido Archaeology Project ([bhap.artsrn.ualberta.ca](http://bhap.artsrn.ualberta.ca)). It was an excellent event, integrating individual life-histories and high-resolution chronological research.

## CCAW'17

In March, Dr Hein put together an exciting international conference on *Culture Contacts in Ancient Worlds*, generously funded by a mosaic grant from the University of Munich, the University of Oxford China Centre, and St Hugh's College. Professor Harald Hauptmann (Heidelberg) opened the conference with stimulating keynote on Central Asian petroglyphs, and over the course of the next two days there were five full panels on: *Theories and Models, People, Plants, and Animals; Technology and Resources; Trade and Exchange; and Culture Contact and Identity*



## CERAMICS

A smaller one-day workshop on ceramic analysis, also organized by Dr Hein, was held in June to coincide a visit by Dr Ma Hongjiao, who delivered a keynote lecture on the use of strontium Isotopes to distinguish wood ash and limestone glazes, challenging long-held assumptions about the recipes for Chinese high-fired ceramics. Other contributions from Professors Mike Tite and Nigel Wood, Drs Michela Spataro, Thibaut Devière, and Peter H were equally well received. The speakers were joined in lively debate by Professors Rawson, Pollard and Julian Henderson (Nottingham University) as well as a number of current DPhil and Masters students.



## METALS & ART

During September, two international conferences, both organized by Dr Hommel, were held in Ulaanbataar and Oxford under the auspices of FLAME and ECAIC projects, respectively. The first, hosted by the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, was dedicated to current research in Eurasian archaeometallurgy and attracted a large audience of local specialists. The second, which gathered leading specialists on Eurasian Iron Age Art was held two weeks later. Included in the programme, thanks to a collaboration with the NEARCH project, was a young Russian Researcher, Anastasia Loboda from NCR Kurchatov Institute (Moscow). Anastasia is working alongside the FLAME team to integrate technical and analytical approaches to archaeological metalwork.

Further information about these conferences can be found on the relevant project websites.

## RESEARCH VISITS

In addition to these traditional conferences, workshops, and meetings, Professors Rawson, Pollard and Gosden continued an existing programme of travelling conferences organized jointly with Peking University. In previous years, together with other OCAAAC staff and students, they have visited Kazakhstan, Siberia and the Gansu Corridor. In 2017, they headed to Yunnan and on into Mongolia, exploring a range of sites, museums and institutions. These visits have not only inspired new sets of questions about the archaeology of these areas, but also helped to establish stable networks through which future OCAAAC staff and students can successfully build their research.



The Professors, deep in discussion, at Sagan Zabu, Bolkai Region, in 2015

## ESTABLISHED EXCHANGES

A successful programme of academic exchange with the School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University (supported by Ian Taylor and the Au-Reyes Fund) continued into its 4th year in 2017. In late January, we were joined by Professor Zhang Chi, who gave a series of lectures on the Chinese Neolithic, from Longshan to Erlitou.

An important thread running throughout these lectures was Professor Zhang's interest in the mechanisms and causes of culture change as reflected in the material record. In this context, he considered the collapse of China's highly developed Neolithic polities and discussed Professor Rawson's revitalization of Tong Enzheng's model of exchange and interaction around the northern and north-western borders of the Central Plains.



Professor Zhang examines a Neolithic ceramic assemblage in Gansu Province

Like his predecessors on this exchange (Professors Xu Tianjin, Wu Xiaohong, and Li Shuicheng) Professor Zhang' included a large amount of new material, in presentations, much of which has only recently been excavated. They were of immeasurable value to the students and staff who were able to attend.

As part of the same programme, Professor Rawson was invited to Peking University in May to deliver a major lecture series on her research in China and the Eurasian steppe to students and staff of the School of Archaeology and Museology. Dame Jessica is the third scholar to be invited from Oxford, after Professors John Baines and Mark Pollard.

## NEW CONNECTIONS

Immediately after Professor Zhang's visit, the Centre welcomed a small delegation of senior staff from the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. Professors Nikolai Makarov (Director) and Ekaterina Devlet' (Scientific Secretary) together with Dr Maria Dobrovolskaya (Senior Research Fellow) spent a week in Oxford giving and attending lectures and other meetings with staff across the School of Archaeology

to define areas of mutual interest and establish programmes of collaborative research. In addition, Professor Makarov proposed a regular programme of institutional exchange focussed around a joint annual conference. The first of these meetings is expected to take place in Suzdal' in late Spring 2018.

Their visit, enabled by Professor Rawson and Dr Peter Hommel, has already borne fruit, with a preliminary study of dental isotopes (with Dr Andrea Czermak) and the first scientific dating of the enigmatic Bronze Age burials at Karakol' in the south-western Altai. The results of these studies, funded by FLAME and the School of Archaeology, will be published in the new year. At the end of May, Dr Hommel furthered this relationship, joining Professor Devlet' on a networking visit to the Far Eastern Federal University and the





Khabarovsk Provincial History Museum. This visit, partially financed by the Ian Taylor Fund, has resulted in a bilateral grant application to promote international exchange and facilitate new research into questions of change in hunter-gatherer lifestyles and diet during the Holocene.

In early September, Dr Hein and Dr Thibaut Devière went out to initiate talks with researchers from Jilin University and the CNRS about a possible parallel programme in neighbouring regions of north-eastern China.

## RESEARCH

In 2016/17, after five active and successful years, Professor Rawson's Leverhulme Trust-funded project, *China and Inner Asia: Interactions that changed China (1000 to 200 BC)*, entered its final phase. This project officially finished in September, leaving the ERC-funded Flow of Ancient Metals across Eurasia (FLAME) and Leverhulme Trust-funded European Celtic Art in Context (ECAIC) projects, led by Professors Pollard and Gosden, respectively, as the Centre's flagship research programmes for next academic year.

In collaboration with colleagues from China, Russia and Mongolia, OCAAAC staff are conducting a range of primary research projects Eurasia as part of these projects. Full details of these activities can be found on the relevant project websites:

[flame.arch.ox.ac.uk](http://flame.arch.ox.ac.uk) and [ecaic.arch.ox.ac.uk](http://ecaic.arch.ox.ac.uk)

Increasingly, from Japan to the Caucasus, the Centre is also involved in an array of smaller projects and excavations. Though less impressive in their scale than our flagship programmes, these projects are equally exciting. Many represent important pilot studies by our younger researchers working at the cutting edge of Eurasian archaeology. It is these projects that we will highlight here:



Dr Hommel gets acquainted with the silver spearheads from the Borodino Hoard in Moscow



**JAPAN** Dr Schulting, Izumi Braddick and Alyssa White pushed on with their work on human osteology and skeletal evidence of trauma, with extended research seasons at key research institutions across the archipelago. Their aim was to investigate the prevalence and character of serious injury, violence, and disease in Jomon, Yayoi and Okhotsk Period populations, tackling questions about the 'peacefulness' of hunter-gathers and the character of contact and change in human relationships as rice agriculture was introduced to the islands.



**NORTH-WESTERN CHINA** This summer, Dr Anke Hein went into the field to lead the field survey for the Tao River Valley Project, directed by Prof. Rowan Flad (Harvard University) in cooperation with the Gansu Provincial Institute of Archaeology and Peking University. The project investigates the transformation of material culture and human lives along the 'proto-Silk Road' at around 2000 BC.



Enabled by a grant from the John Fell Fund (in partnership with the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm), Dr Hein also began a related project on Neolithic and Bronze Age painted ceramic traditions in this region, using materials from a rich but as yet under studied collection excavated in the 1920s.

**MINUSINSK BASIN** Earlier this year, Dr Hommel and Professor Chris Gosden were awarded a small research grant from the British Academy to continue a long term collaboration with Dr Yury Esin of the Khakassian Research Institute for Language Literature and History in Abakan initially established during Professor Dame Jessica Rawson's Leverhulme Trust-funded project China and Inner Asia in 2012. The new project, which goes into the field in May 2018, will undertake a pilot study of recently identified nomadic settlements in southern Siberia.



# TEACHING

As a new addition to the existing programmes of student teaching by OCAAAC staff in Chinese Archaeology, Drs Hommel and Hein convened a new Masters module on the Archaeology of Eurasia in 2016/17. It provided a general introduction to the archaeology of the steppe and forest zones of northern Eurasia, for students with primary research interests in other areas. This course is an important addition to the scope of departmental teaching, and plans for another module on the history (and prehistory) of Chinese Ceramics are already in place for 2017/18.

The OCAAAC team also led teaching on a collaborative study abroad programme for undergraduate and masters students from Hokkaido University. This successful programme, organized by Professor Kato and facilitated by OCAAAC's Mitsuko Ito, is now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year and we look forward to welcoming a new group of students in the Spring.

Members of the Centre have also been invited back to Sapporo to contribute to the successful RJE<sup>3</sup> programme, which aims to inspire young scholars and future policy makers from leading universities in Eastern Russia and Japan to champion sustainability, heritage and diversity across the Arctic world.



# CURRENT STUDENTS

Many of our affiliated DPhil students, both continuing and incoming, have also been active in the field and laboratory over the summer, whether as part of research programmes organized by OCAAAC staff or following their own independent programmes of research and professional development:

## CAUCASUS

Working with Dr Hommel and Dr Natalia Shishlina (State Historical Museum, Moscow) Nyree Manoukian was able to add important material from the excavations at Tsarskaya (Maikop culture) to her study of Kura-Araxes ceramic traditions in the Southern Caucasus. Nyree also undertook her first season of DPhil research in Armenia, exploring collections and sampling potential sources of ceramic raw materials.



**INDIA** Ken Ishikawa continued with his studies, flying out to India for a season of survey at Western Ksatrapa Period Buddhist cave sites in Gujurat.

**MONGOLIA** Rebecca O'Sullivan, one of our finishing DPhil students, took full advantage of an unexpected opportunity to join a Mongolian-American team in July to survey some remarkable rock-art landscapes in the Mongolia Altai.

**CHINA** Wen Wen, Kirstin Clouser and Limin Huan, participated in major excavations to extend their knowledge and experience of archaeological field research in China. Wen completed a season at the famous Changsha kilns in Hunan province, Kirstin headed to Sichuan, while Limin worked at Neolithic Majiayao in Gansu province.



Researchers examine an extraordinary trench at the Changsha Kilns excavation site

**JAPAN** Ongoing excavations on Rebun Island by Professor Kato continued to provide opportunities for Oxford students interested in Japanese archaeology. Izumi Braddick and Gabe Hughes joined the excavations to explore the successive phases of occupation from Early Jomon settlers to the historical Ainu.

**CONGRATULATIONS!** The Centre was particularly proud to see Patrick Roberts, Cao Qin, Liu Ruiliang, Chen Beichen, and Rebecca O'Sullivan successfully complete their DPhil studies in 2016/17.

Dr Roberts went on to join former OCAAAC members Nicole Boivin and Mike Petraglia at the Max Planck Institute in Jena as a research group leader in isotopic research. Dr Cao left Oxford to begin a permanent curatorial role at the National Museum of Scotland, while Dr Liu stayed on to contribute his expertise to the FLAME project. After his graduation, Dr Chen will take up an offer from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, and we are sure that Rebecca, who submitted her thesis at the very end of the academic year, will go on to find similar success after her viva.

## SUPPORT THE CENTRE

The Centre is currently maintained through a number of small internal grants and contributions made possible through the research activities of its members. However, we are actively seeking more substantial external funding and donor support to enable us to offer project studentships and research fellowships under the OCAAAC banner.

If you are interested in supporting the further development of the Centre, please contact us at:

[asia@arch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:asia@arch.ox.ac.uk)

We would be happy to discuss the Centre's current activities and future plans in more detail.

# SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (2016/17)

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## Directors

Professor Mark Pollard  
Professor Chris Gosden

## Senior Research Fellows

Professor Dame Jessica Rawson  
Dr Rick Schulting

## Research Fellows

Dr Anke Hein  
Dr Peter Hommel

