

## Some highlights of the 2002/2003 academic year

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*The Director of the Institute comments on developments since the fifth issue of Archaeology International was published.*

**A**s in previous years, I start by referring to some of the initiatives noted on the back cover of last year's issue of *AI*.

- The first point relates to the Institute's activities in South Asian archaeology. Dr Julia Shaw was appointed to the new full-time lectureship, to take up her post in time for the 2003/2004 academic year (no undergraduates having chosen to take the special options in South Asian archaeology this year) and to contribute to a jointly taught second-year undergraduate course on the archaeology of East, Southeast and South Asia. However, since this was agreed, she has been awarded a three-year British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship from 2002/2003. UCL has agreed that we may advertise for a two-year replacement lecturer (for 2003/2005) while Julia's teaching is restricted under the terms of the fellowship to five hours per week. It is expected that the additional appointee will assist in bringing to publication the proceedings of the two-day conference on South Asian landscape archaeology mentioned on last year's back cover, and also take the lead with the organization of a major international conference on themes in South Asian archaeology that it is hoped will be hosted in London in July 2005.
- Roxana Ferllini has been appointed to the new part-time lectureship in forensic archaeology, and she, Pat Wiltshire and others are heavily involved in the continuation of the Institute's Forensic Archaeological Science MSc degree. Roxana comes from Costa Rica, having studied at the University of Oregon where she gained an Anthropology BSc and a Biological Anthropology MSc. Meanwhile, Pat continues to be amazed at the success of so many of her past students on this course, almost all of whom have found employment in forensic science.
- In September 2002 I at long last managed to visit ancient Merv in Turkmenistan. By then the Institute's involvement in the project had undergone considerable change in personnel and support. Gaetano Palumbo had become Director of Archaeological Conservation Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia for the World Monuments Fund (WMF) based in Paris, where his wife and (now two) young children reside. Tim Williams had been appointed to a full-time senior lectureship and had become Co-director of the

Merv project, with Kakamurad Kurban-sakhatov in Ashkabat. Tim also runs the Managing Archaeological Sites MA degree and is developing Institute policy for new short courses here and overseas in many aspects of archaeology. The project has been boosted by financial and technical support from both the International Centre for Earth Construction (CRATerre) in Grenoble and UNESCO. In addition, the Institute has created, with International Student House in London, a joint scholarship that it is hoped will match a Chevening Scholarship and allow a Turkmen citizen to take the Managing Archaeological Sites MA in 2003/2004 prior to being employed, through our Turkmen patrons and supported by the Institute for a further three years, to direct and manage a 15-strong team of workers to undertake archaeological documentation, as well as preventive and remedial conservation, which we hope will be funded for an initial five years from outside sources.

There is good news regarding the Institute's involvement with ancient Egypt. UCL's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for financial support towards the construction of the proposed Panopticon building (see p. 59 in *AI* 2001/2002), which would rehouse the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, has been successful to the tune of £5.19 million. At first sight, it might seem bad news that the Institute and the University of Pennsylvania Press have agreed to part company over the production of the eight volumes arising from the Encounters with Ancient Egypt conference held at the Institute in December 2000. In the event, Penn Press worked only on the first volume and would not guarantee to produce the whole series before 2004/2005. However, this has in many ways turned out to be a blessing, because – as is noted on the back cover of this issue of *AI* – Cavendish Publishing Ltd has acquired the licence to use the UCL Press imprint, and their first major publication under the new imprint will be our Encounters series.

In last year's *AI*, I mentioned a five-year plan for training and research in Chinese archaeology, to be associated with the establishment of a lectureship. Since then, the Institute has signed an agreement with Peking University to set up an international centre for Chinese heritage and archaeology in London and Beijing, with permanent posts, a major training initiative and dedicated space. The estimated cost of the entire initiative is more than £6

million, whereas the £1.25 million over five years that I referred to last year is primarily for training. There are positive signs that we shall succeed in funding at least part of the training programme, but the prospects for raising the larger sum required to establish the centre, with permanent posts, look far less promising. However, as is reported on the back cover of this issue, UCL has agreed to create a lectureship in Chinese heritage and archaeology, to start next academic year, and it is hoped that current discussions with the neighbouring School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, University of London) will result in an increase to two in the number of specialists in Chinese archaeology in UCL and SOAS.

Turning to Africa, I am pleased to report that the Institute's seminar on African archaeology, which has been held intermittently over the past nine years, now meets regularly in alternate weeks. Entitled "African peoples and pasts", it draws an audience from the community of Africanists in London and has attracted a wide range of speakers from Africa, the UK, the USA and elsewhere, as well as from the Institute's own group of Africanists which now includes ten PhD students. Nor are we forgetting Europe. Indeed, in a reaffirmation of our continuing commitment to medieval archaeology at the Institute, UCL has created a lectureship in the subject to start at the beginning of the 2003/2004 academic year.