

The Institute's primary Research Groups

In the 1997/98 issue of AI, the Director explained how the Institute's research groups were set up. Here the respective coordinators report on the activities of the four primary Groups.

The Environment and Culture Research Group

Coordinator: Stephen Shennan

The Environment and Culture Research Group is the Institute's primary group for those staff and postgraduate students whose interests lie in the interactions between people and their environments. This subject area is one for which the Institute has been well known for many years and the core of the Group consists of members of the Institute's former Department of Human Environment. Initial discussions among its members led to agreement to focus on two broad themes: resource use, sustainability and environmental change; and health, diet and disease. These formed the subject of the Group's seminar series in the current academic year (see below).

Research projects

Members of the Group are currently engaged in a great variety of research projects that involve field, laboratory, computer-based and theoretical work, and are at various stages of completion.

During the past decade, excavations directed by Mark Roberts at Boxgrove in Sussex have produced abundant evidence of how hominids lived there on the coast 500,000 years ago (see *AI 1997/98*, pp. 8–13). Now the first monograph to report the results of the project in detail is in press with English Heritage, which has funded the research, and work on the second and final monograph, also funded by English Heritage, is well under way. One of the key aspects of this project is detailed reconstruction of the butchery of large game animals at the site and a consideration of the significance of these and other activities, such as the manufacture of flint handaxes, for our understanding of the cognitive abilities and social behaviour of these early hominids. Among other analytical work, this involves a major exercise in the refitting of fragments of flint tools, which is currently being undertaken by Dimitri de Loecker, who has come from the University of Leiden to join the project.

The current fieldwork projects in which members of the Group are participating are too numerous to be listed in full, but mention may be made of some of them. Louise Martin, and other members of staff and postgraduate students, continue to have a major role in various aspects of the continuing excavations at the Turkish early neolithic site of Çatal Höyük. Jon Hather is a member of the Institute's team working with Russian colleagues at Novgorod, where

he is studying both the wooden artefacts and the exploitation of woodland by the medieval population (as he reports on pp. 37–38). Ken Thomas continues to participate in the Bannu Archaeological Project in Pakistan, jointly with Dr Bob Knox (British Museum) and Pakistani archaeologists; and he is also studying, with a research student, mesolithic coastal ecology in southern Britain (see pp. 17–19).

A focus of increasing interest is the impact of Holocene climatic change on human societies and economies. David Jeffreys and Fekri Hassan are working on this subject in the context of the origins and development of Egyptian civilization; and James McGlade is collaborating with French and Spanish colleagues in research on climatic impacts on the later prehistory and history of the western Mediterranean (see pp. 42–45). Also, Stephen Shennan has initiated a project on the relationship between climatic change and demographic patterns in the later prehistory of temperate Europe.

Another theme of increasing research interest is the use of computer modelling to explore the implications of hypotheses about how people have exploited resources and landscapes. Research on this theme is being carried out particularly by Mark Lake and James McGlade.

Simon Hillson continues his research on various projects related to human remains, one of which arose unexpectedly in the summer of 1998 when he was invited to examine remains found during building work at a house in London that has since proved to be the site of one of the earliest anatomy schools (see pp. 14–16).

Seminars and workshops

The Group continues the tradition of "Human Environment" seminars by inviting speakers from both within and outside the Institute. The theme of health and disease was chosen for the autumn term, during which seminars were given on palaeolithic people's teeth, the diagnosis of metabolic disease in archaeological bone, diet in Roman Egypt, catastrophic landscape change and the development of north Pacific society, and the reconstruction of past human diets from stable isotopes of bone. The theme chosen for the spring term was resource exploitation and the topics included climatic change and urban drift at Memphis in the Nile Valley, the "Neanderthal" versus "modern human" debate in the context of western Asia, the micromor-

phology of manure, landscape dynamics and political ecology in northeast Spain, and the use of GIS to reconstruct past vegetation.

A major area of debate in British archaeology in recent years has been the relationship between post-processual archaeology and archaeological science. This was the subject of a one-day workshop held in February 1999, which was organized by Louise Martin and which included speakers from the Institute and from other UK and overseas universities. Entitled "Environmental archaeology and social theory: crossing the divide?", it was a well attended and stimulating event that focused on the issue of whether environmental archaeology could or should address the kinds of questions about social and symbolic aspects of the past that post-processual archaeologists are trying to grapple with. No definite conclusions were reached, but many of the points raised are now being pursued more informally within the Group.

A second one-day workshop was held in late March jointly with the biological anthropologists from the UCL Department of Anthropology. Its theme was "Anthropology, archaeology and behavioural ecology" and its aim was to explore shared research interests as a basis for developing closer collaboration.

Finally, it is appropriate to mention a workshop that, although not strictly part of the Group's activities, was organized by one of its primary members, Fekri Hassan. A brief report by him follows.

Ecological change and food security in Africa's later prehistory

Fekri Hassan

In September 1998 a workshop on the above topic was held at the Institute, supported by the European Science Foundation, and attended by twenty-two participants from seven European and five African countries. Its main aim was to elucidate the long-term background to the droughts and climatic fluctuations that have beset Africa over the past four decades. It thus signalled the increasing relevance of archaeological perspectives on issues, such as climate change, of interest to the global community. The topic was examined transregionally and had the following goals:

- to develop a common strategy for documenting and interpreting local responses to global ecological events and their influence on intercultural contacts
- to forge available data into a coherent ecological-cultural framework
- to explore means by which data can be processed in a dynamic model that can be used for interpreting the long-term consequences of ecological events
- to establish a databank of ecological and archaeological data to assist researchers and policy makers in the assessment of long-term ecological processes.

Following a survey of ecological changes in Africa in response to climatic variability

during the past 10,000 years (the Holocene period), regional responses to such changes were discussed. Emphasis was placed on abrupt climatic events as triggers of cultural responses. By the end of the workshop, a series of preliminary conclusions were reached about climatic changes and human responses to them during the Holocene. The main points are summarized below:

- The record of climatic variability reveals a long-term scale of change of approximately 1,700 years or more, and episodic oscillations at a scale of 100–400 years. There is also evidence of such abrupt and severe events spanning decades to a century, which have caused momentous cultural transformations, especially when several such events have occurred in rapid succession.
- Major changes in human subsistence during the Holocene, in response to changes in the availability of water and food resources, included the domestication of wild cattle in northeastern Africa between 9,000 and 7,600 cal BC (see note on radiocarbon dates on p. 2); the introduction of domestic goats and sheep from Southwest Asia by 5,800 cal BC; the cultivation in the Nile Delta by 5,000 cal BC of wheat, barley and pulse crops from Southwest Asia, and the spread of agriculture and pastoralism as far south as Nubia by 4,000 cal BC; the emergence in the Sahara of a fishing–hunting–foraging economy under the wetter conditions that prevailed there from about 9,000 cal BC until desiccation set in; the spread of livestock to the central Sahara by 4,000 cal BC; the adoption of sheep and goats by some groups in East Africa by 2,500 cal BC; and the cultivation of sorghum and other indigenous crops in West Africa by 2,100 cal BC stimulated by the onset in the Sahara of severe aridity and associated with the southern spread of pastoralism.
- Sociopolitical responses to climatic changes included the enhancement of social networks; the development of social hierarchies; the establishment in the lower Nile Valley of a unified nation state; and the development of asymmetrical political relationships between pastoralists, farmers and foragers as pastoralism and shifting cultivation spread to most of Africa, stimulated by successive droughts.

At the end of the workshop it was decided to establish a network to develop an integrated database and a collaborative research programme on abrupt climatic events. It is hoped to convene a second workshop in the near future, to build on the success of the first.

The Social and Cultural Dynamics Research Group Coordinator: Jeremy Tanner

The Social and Cultural Dynamics Research Group brings together staff and postgraduate students whose primary interest is in anthropological and sociological approaches to the study of material culture, cutting across the regional and chronological boundaries that have traditionally divided archaeology. The Group's members share the common aim of studying the dynamics of material-culture systems in a comparative perspective.

Research projects

Members of the Group have active research projects and collaborations in western Europe, Scandinavia, the Mediterranean and Levant, Africa, Southeast Asia, China, the Caribbean and Mesoamerica. The 1997/98 issue of *AI* included three reports on continuing projects led by members of the group: Kevin MacDonald wrote on "More forgotten tells of Mali", Peter Drewett and José Oliver on "Prehistoric settlements in the Caribbean", and Ruth Whitehouse on "Sa Cova d'es Carritx: a new prehistoric cave cult on Menorca". This issue includes two further accounts of projects in which primary members of the group are centrally involved: Elisabeth Bacus describes her field project in the island of Negros on the later prehistory of the Philippines (pp. 54–56), and Jeremy Tanner describes the project on Viking art in Norway and England organized jointly with the coordinator of the Complex Societies Research Group and the Director of the Institute (pp. 27–30). The latter project, entitled "Faces across the North Sea", has been awarded grants by the Research Council of Norway, the British Council and the Leverhulme Trust.

Other projects in Britain and abroad run by primary members of the Group include: Cyprian Broodbank's on the Aegean island of Kythera, for which funding has been received from the British School at Athens, the Society of Antiquaries and the Institute of Aegean Prehistory; Peter Drewett's in Sussex and on Barbados and the British Virgin Islands; Susan Hamilton's in Sussex, Cornwall and Burgundy; Kevin MacDonald's in Mali; José Oliver's in Puerto Rico; and Ruth Whitehouse's in northern Italy. Members of the Group are also actively involved in the development of two new international projects, one on "The archaeology of pilgrimage in South Asia", in which Vivek Nanda is playing a major role, and the other on "Comparative and scientific approaches to pigment technology and colour symbolism", in collaboration with members of the Complex Societies and Heritage Studies Research Groups.

Conferences, workshops and seminars

The Group's activities were inaugurated with a one-day workshop that was designed to define the focus and scope of our research interests. Its topics ranged from the nature and origins of social complexity to the role of material culture in the construction and transformation of social identities. Areas of interest identified during this workshop are now being followed up in a programme of seminars and one-day conferences.

In February 1999 Katherine Wright and Kevin MacDonald organized a one-day workshop on archaeological approaches to urbanism. Entitled "Urbanization and the social life of cities", it brought together members of three of the Institute's research groups: Social and Cultural Dynamics, Complex Societies, and Environment and Culture, as well as colleagues with related interests from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.

The Group also sponsored two seminars given by Dr Xing Wen, Lecturer in Art History and Archaeology at the Department of Archaeology, Peking University. His visit was part of a developing programme of exchange and collaboration between our Institute and the Peking Department. The two seminars – "Coffin or world: the significance of second-century BC funerary art from Mawangdui, South China" and "Position and seasonality in early Chinese colour symbolism" – contributed both to our developing research programmes in comparative art and to the formulation of the new international and interdisciplinary project on pigments and colour referred to above. Planning is already under way for further workshops and one-day conferences in the coming year, on themes such as cultural landscapes, craft specialization, ritual and change, and hierarchy.

The Complex Societies Research Group

Coordinator: James Graham-Campbell

The Complex Societies Research Group is the Institute's primary Group for many of the academic staff, honorary research staff and postgraduate students who are actively involved in the archaeology of literate societies. Thus it brings together those working on many varied aspects of the ancient Near East, Egypt, the Greek and Roman worlds, and medieval Europe. In so doing, it maintains the Institute's long-standing interdisciplinary links with UCL's Department of History, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), and both the University of London's Institute for Classical Studies and the London Centre for the Near East, as well as with colleagues at the British Museum. Its secondary members include many other members of staff who contribute an extensive range of multi-disciplinary skills and worldwide interests to the Group's activities.

In its first year, the Group participated in the sponsorship of a day conference, visiting lecturers and several seminar series. These activities carry on during the current session, while planning is taking place for future conferences and workshops intended to lay the basis for original research publications. Research grant proposals have been – and continue to be – formulated in association with the Institute's Research Committee.

Research projects

Several field projects already in progress and directed by primary members of the Group were described in the first issue of *AI*: John Wilkes wrote on "Excavating the Spartans", Georgina Herrmann on "A Central Asian city on the Silk Road: ancient and medieval Merv" and Harriet Crawford on "Dilmun revisited: excavations at Saar, Bahrain". Other projects by members of the Group are described in this issue: Gustav Milne writes on the Institute's involvement in London's archaeology (pp. 11–13), Mark Hassall on Greek and Roman military catapults (pp. 23–26), Andrew Reynolds on excavations at medieval Novgorod (pp. 34–37), and James Graham-Campbell and Kris Lockyear on Celtic inscribed stones (pp. 39–41).

Looking to the future, members of the Group have been responsible for preparing a major grant application for research on London's medieval churches, in conjunction with Dr Derek Keene (Director of the Centre for Metropolitan History at the University of London's Institute of Historical Research), and in collaboration with Dr Eric Robinson of UCL's Department of Geological Sciences. The project has been designed as an interdisciplinary research programme with the object of transforming current knowledge of medieval religious building activity, with particular regard to

how urban prosperity was related to church building in London and how the various medieval quarrying industries responded to the demands set by major building campaigns.

The two coordinators of the Complex Societies and Social and Cultural Dynamics Research Groups have worked jointly, together with Peter Ucko and in association with our colleagues at Trondheim in Norway, to formulate the "Faces across the North Sea" project (described in this issue by Jeremy Tanner on pp. 27–30). Other projects, both collaborative with other groups and independent in nature, are at various stages of planning.

Conferences and workshops

During the 1997/98 academic year the Group sponsored a one-day conference, organized and chaired by John Wilkes, in association with the Split Archaeological Museum (Croatia) entitled "Recent archaeological research in Dalmatia". The speakers included Emilio Marin and Jagoda Mardesic, both from Split.

A workshop that was originally to have taken place this academic year, in collaboration with Eliezer Oren (Ben Gurion University of the Negev), utilizing the Institute's Petrie Palestinian Collection, has been postponed until 2001, to await completion of the re-housing and re-cataloguing the Collection. Planning is well advanced for three conferences in 1999–2000: "Encounters with ancient Egypt" (organized by John Tait), "Continuity in the aftermath of conquest" (organized by Harriet Crawford) and "Viking treasure: silver economy in the Viking Age" (organized by James Graham-Campbell in conjunction with the British Museum).

Lectures and seminars

Primary members of the Group are actively involved in the Classical Archaeology and Mycenaean seminar series of the Institute of Classical Studies, and in seminars organized by the London Centre for the Near East. The Group is able to sponsor occasional visiting speakers, both to the latter and to the longstanding UCL Postgraduate Seminar in Medieval Archaeology. It also co-sponsored, with the Secondary Research Group on Material Culture and Technology, two meetings on the theme of ancient Egyptian technology. The Group provides a forum for members of the Institute's honorary research staff to give papers on their own work and for the presentation of results by research students whose work is nearing completion.

Recent visiting lecturers, sponsored or co-sponsored by the Group, have included Laszlo Török (Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest) on "Sacred landscape, histori-

cal identity and memory: aspects of urban archaeology in ancient Nubia"; Albert Ammerman (Colgate University, Hamilton, New York) on "Landscape transformations in early Rome: recent research"; and Eugenie Nosov (Director of the Institute of the History of Material Culture, St Petersburg) on "Ryurik Gorodische and the origins of Novgorod".

Future plans

The Group intends to carry on fulfilling its Institute mission to promote the understanding of literate societies by sponsoring innovative research designs, grant proposals, conferences, workshops, lectures and seminars, along the lines described above. In addition, it will continue to facilitate opportunities for its honorary research staff to participate in the academic life of the Institute. It is also our professed intention, together with the three other primary Research Groups, to ensure that the Institute's research students are given the opportunity to become more directly involved in the development of all our future activities.

The Heritage Studies Research Group

Coordinator: Clifford Price

The Heritage Studies Research Group brings together those members of the Institute who have an interest in the interpretation, presentation and conservation of the cultural heritage, and it aims to promote and facilitate multidisciplinary research. The disciplines represented within the Group demonstrate that it is well equipped to meet this objective: its expertise includes museology, materials science, statistics, Egyptology, computing, law, museum curatorship, chemistry, education, biology, instrumental analysis, conservation, geology and, not surprisingly, archaeology. The Group pursues its objectives by means of a series of seminars and workshops, by developing research projects, and by helping to formulate the Institute's policy on strategic issues regarding the cultural heritage.

Seminars and workshops

At the start of the academic year, the Group received a presentation on the newly formed UCL Centre for Museums, Collections, Heritage and Conservation Studies. The Director of the new Centre is the Institute's Director, Peter Ucko, and its Deputy Director and Acting College Curator is Nick Merriman, a member of the Group. This is an exciting initiative that, for the first time, facilitates cross-faculty collaboration in the curation and conservation of all the College's collections, with the aim of ensuring that they receive the care and attention that they undoubtedly deserve.

Later in the year Professor David Pearce and Dr David Madison from the UCL Department of Economics gave a seminar, "Putting an economic value on heritage". Members of the Group were sceptical about the results of some of the research presented, and vigorous discussion ensued. The link between the Department and the Institute has subsequently been strengthened by Professor Pearce's agreeing to become a secondary supervisor for one of the research students in the Group.

Another seminar was given by Nick Merriman and Hedley Swain (Museum of London) on the subject of archaeological archives, in which they explored the extent to which such archives serve the public interest. They presented the background to the crisis affecting the long-term curation of archaeological archives, which, among other things, led to closure of the Museum of London's archive in 1996. They presented the results of a national survey of archaeological archives, and made the case for imaginative programmes to make them of greater interest and relevance to a wider range of users.

On two occasions, the Group received short presentations from some of its own research students. Each of the research

groups tries to integrate its research students as fully as possible, and student seminars are one way of achieving this. In addition to informing a group about research in progress, the seminars offer the students valuable practice and feedback as they prepare for the regrading examination that allows them to proceed from MPhil to PhD registration.

Research projects

Collaboration between the Heritage Studies and the Social and Cultural Dynamics Research Groups has led to seminar discussions about techniques applicable to pigment analysis. At one seminar Professor Robin Clark of the UCL Department of Chemistry spoke about the applications of laser Raman spectroscopy, and Dr Andrea Casini from the Istituto di Ricerca sulle Onde Elettromagnetiche Nello Carrara in Florence described his work on imaging-reflectance spectroscopy of paintings. Both seminars made valuable contributions to the formulation of a proposed interdisciplinary, multinational project on pigment technology and colour symbolism (see back cover of this issue).

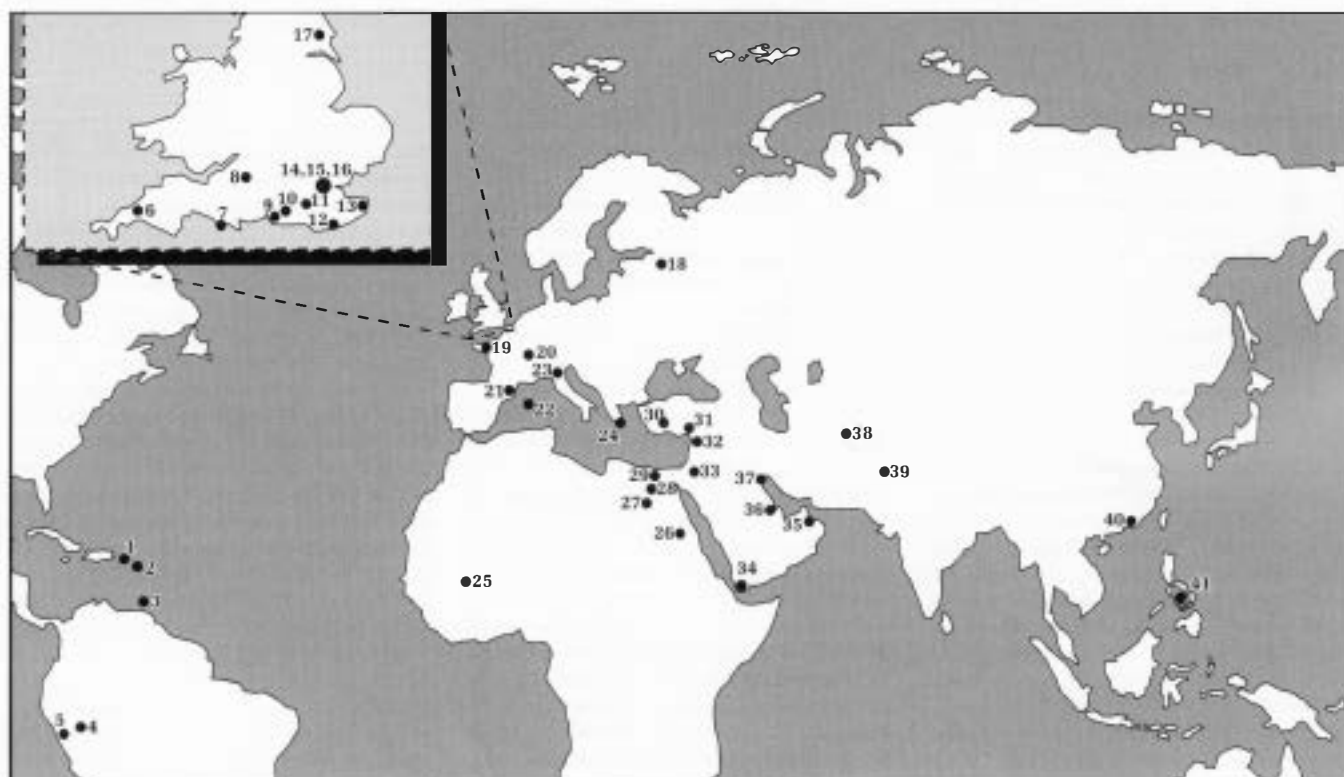
In April a one-day workshop on moisture movement and the behaviour of salts in porous materials such as stone, ceramics and wall paintings was organized by the Group and held at the Institute. Colleagues from the UCL Departments of Chemical Engineering, Geological Sciences, and Physics & Astronomy participated, as well as others from the Courtauld Institute in London, the University of East Anglia, and research institutions in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. The central aim of the workshop was to formulate a collaborative research project on the conservation of porous materials for submission to the European Commission.

A seminar is to be held in the summer of 1999 on the conservation, interpretation and presentation of rock art in the UK. Jointly with Bournemouth University, the Institute has won a contract from English Heritage to undertake a pilot study, as a prelude to a proposed international project on rock art. The pilot study will utilize in-house expertise in conjunction with many external individuals and institutions, including Historic Scotland and the University of Trondheim, with which the Institute has a formal academic link.

Policy development

The Group has also played a major role in formulating the Institute's policy on dealing in antiquities. Its members were unanimous that the Institute should urge the UK government to sign and ratify the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of

Cultural Property and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen and Illegally Exported Cultural Objects. The Group was also concerned that issues relating to the antiquities trade should be fully considered in all Institute programmes, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The Group's advice was accepted at a subsequent Institute staff meeting, at which the view was taken that it was now necessary to spell out the implications of these conventions for the day-to-day actions of the Institute and its individual staff members. A document to serve this purpose has now been drafted and will be discussed further by the Group. Questions of acquisition and disposal are also being considered, as are the difficult issues raised by the conservation and analysis of artefacts, the source of which is not securely known (unprovenanced material).



World distribution of current field projects

Caribbean and South America	England	Continental Europe	Africa	Asia
1. Caguana, Puerto Rico Oliver: pre-Hispanic	6. Bodmin Moor, Cornwall Hamilton, Tilley: Bronze Age	18. Novgorod, Russia Hather, Orton: medieval	25. Inland Niger Delta, Mali MacDonald: pre-Islamic	30. Çatal Höyük, Turkey L. Martin: neolithic
2. Tortola, Virgin Islands Drewett: pre-Hispanic	7. Portland, Dorset Thomas: mesolithic	19. Brittany, France Graham-Campbell, Lockyear: medieval	26. Hierakonpolis, Egypt Adams: predynastic	31. Sakkagözü, Turkey Garrard: palaeolithic-neolithic
3. Barbados Drewett: pre-Hispanic	8. Compton Bassett, Wiltshire Reynolds: multiperiod	20. Burgundy, France Hamilton: multiperiod	27. Fayum Oasis, Egypt Hassan: predynastic	32. Sidon, Lebanon Griffiths: multiperiod
4. Raqchi, Peru Sillar: multiperiod	9. Boxgrove, Sussex Roberts: palaeolithic	21. Empordà, Spain McGlade: multiperiod	28. Memphis, Egypt Jeffreys: multiperiod	33. Wadi Faynan, Jordan Wright: Bronze Age
5. Batan Grande, Peru Merkel: pre-Hispanic	10. Bignor, Sussex Rudling: Roman	22. Menorca, Spain Whitehouse: Bronze-Iron Age	29. Kafr Hassan Dawood, Egypt Hassan: multiperiod	34. Wadi Siham, Yemen Phillips: pre-Islamic
	11. Mount Caburn, Sussex Drewett, Hamilton: multiperiod	23. Eastern Po Plain, Italy Whitehouse: Bronze Age, Roman		35. Kalba, Sharjah, UAE Phillips: pre-Islamic
	12. Hastings, Winchelsea, Sussex D. Martin: medieval	24. Kythera, Greece Broodbank: multiperiod		36. Saar, Bahrain Crawford, Killick: Bronze Age
	13. Sandwich, Kent Milne: medieval			37. as-Sabiyah, Kuwait Carter, Crawford: neolithic
	14. 36 Craven Street, London Hillson, Martin, Waldron: 18th century AD			38. Merv, Turkmenistan Herrmann: multiperiod
	15. Thames intertidal zone, London Milne: multiperiod			39. Bannu, Pakistan Thomas: multiperiod
	16. Southwark Cathedral, London Milne: medieval-present			40. Hong Kong, China Drewett: neolithic
	17. Pickering, Yorkshire Schadla-Hall: mesolithic			41. Negros, Philippines Bacus: multiperiod

• Only the main projects currently run by members of the Institute, or to which they make an important contribution, are included (individual research student's field projects are excluded) and only the main members of the Institute involved in each project are listed: staff from other UCL departments, UK and overseas universities and other organizations also participate in, and in some cases co-direct, particular projects.

• All the overseas projects depend on collaboration with local archaeologists and with the relevant antiquities services, museums or universities, and several of them also involve collaboration with other UK universities, colleges, museums and other organizations, e.g. 13 (Dover Museum), 9 (English Heritage, Natural History Museum), 15 (Museum of London), 17 (Cambridge, Durham), 18 (Bournemouth), 22 (Reading), 28 (Egypt Exploration Society), 30 (Cambridge), 32 (British Museum), 33 (Leicester), 38 (British Museum) and 39 (British Museum).