

approach he is going to get the ones he wants) are based on far too many assumptions to have a solid basis.

To an 'outsider', some articles will smack of the 'well so what?' syndrome. Nuzhnyu's study of Ukrainian Upper Palaeolithic microliths, re: representation of different projectile forms, merely confirms what had been securely established by typology and the recovery of entirely preserved samples! Similarly Sylvie Beyries' stunning paper on four Ethiopian Acheulian implements expounds the knowledge that at various sites, in various regions, to varying degrees wood was being worked during the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic.

Annoyingly her reference to site formation processes potentially altering or destroying microwear traces, though valid, is far too vague, especially given that she quotes the extensive work undertaken by the late Irene Levi-Sala in her bibliography but does not reference it in the text.

The closest to a review is provided by Odell. One could be forgiven for not understanding all the implications and innuendos as it is presented through the fable of Brer Rabbit! (Pity the Swedes present that day - the story is totally unknown in Scandinavia). With a welcome dose of humour Odell argues the pros and cons of present methodologies in microscopic analysis (which Grace, [above] clarifies best of all). Underlying this however Odell defends his low power approach - scorned by many, not just Brer Fox - by stating its major benefit - " 'Why, we kin look at great gobs of tools, '" says Brer Rabbit (130).

This book provides a thought-provoking insight to a relatively new, rapidly developing, open and honest field imposing upon itself the need for a theoretical approach. It avoids bandwagonism, covers a wide range of projects and it is these aspects, I feel, that will attract non-participants to read the book. It is a positive, though not flawless step; my sole concern is that one is left to assume that any original post-paper discussions/criticisms have been incorporated by the authors rather than presented to the reader.

Tristan Carter

SEMINARS

ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA POSTGRADUATE STUDENT SEMINARS

On 27 October 1990 approximately thirty people attended a day-long series of postgraduate seminars devoted to Ancient Mesopotamia at the Institute of Archaeology (University College London). Abstracts of the five seminar topics are given below. The event, accompanied by coffee and lunch, was organised by Renuka Maden and Clemens Reichel, both Institute students. A follow-up session of similar seminars is intended to be held in Oxford in March 1991 as part of what is hoped to be a continuing series of *Ancient Mesopotamia Postgraduate Student Seminars*. These are intended to be an informal forum for the presentation and discussion of current postgraduate student research on the archaeology, languages and history of ancient Mesopotamia, up to and including the Islamic period. It is hoped that the venue of these events can rotate according to those University departments where there is sufficient interest in this subject and postgraduates who are

willing to undertake the necessary reciprocal organisation. Anybody interested in obtaining further details should contact Renuka Maden, either at the Institute of Archaeology (UCL) or SOAS.

Tina Breckwolddt (King's College Cambridge) spoke about her PhD. research on Dates at Larsa, specifically their production, distribution and consumption at this south Mesopotamian city in the Isin-Larsa period (early second millennium BC), based on evidence in harvest contracts, orchard sales and rentals, the so-called *sutu* texts, and other receipts, consumption lists and letters.

Jane Moon talked about her PhD. (Birmingham University) work based on a corpus of Early Dynastic pottery (dating to the early third millennium) excavated since 1976 in a wide variety of contexts at the urban settlement of Abu Salabikh in southern Iraq. The primary objective is to produce a refined ceramic chronology and then to investigate possible contextual variations - more stimulating questions about pottery production and its social dimensions can only be addressed following this 'basic grammar'.

Andrew Petersen (SOAS) reviewed and illustrated little-known architectural evidence for early Islamic (particularly Umayyad) forts, settlements and routes in the Iraqi Western Desert in an attempt to place both well-known sites, such as Ukhaidhir, and others including Khan 'Atshan, within an improved chronological and spatial context. An archaeological imbalance caused by more intensive fieldwork in modern Jordan and Syria was thus redressed and the potential for future fieldwork demonstrated for this important but unfortunately currently inaccessible area of Iraq.

Clemens Reichel summarised his MA dissertation (Institute of Archaeology, UCL: submitted 10 October 1990) on The Town Wall Houses in Nimrud (Iraq) reconsidered. The site of the Town Wall houses (TW) is the only domestic area hitherto uncovered among palaces and temples on the Acropolis at Nimrud, a sufficient reason to study its archaeology and history - especially in view of more recent excavations in northern Iraq and subsequent text publications (CTN I - III). The available material provides an interesting insight into the life in seventh century (Late Assyrian) Nimrud down to the very end of the Assyrian empire.

Finally, reflecting part of his D.Phil research, St. John Simpson (Wolfson College Oxford) outlined the archaeological evidence for the development of Sasanian glass manufacture and use in Mesopotamia. Despite the prominence of Sasanian glassware on the antiquities market and in the Far East, there has been little discussion of its role within the Sasanian world: interpretational problems of surface survey evidence for glass workshops were outlined along with evidence for chronological, regional and contextual variation within Mesopotamia, the different technological features of Sasanian glassware and the possible evidence for its trade.

St. John Simpson