

INTRODUCTION

Since its foundation as an independent Institute within the University of London fifty-three years ago, the Institute of Archaeology has contributed to research in many aspects of the developing discipline in many different parts of the world. For the first thirty years of its existence it was exclusively a postgraduate research institution, and it has continued to give high priority to postgraduate studies since the introduction of undergraduate teaching in 1968. Today, one third of the 300 students enrolled at the Institute are postgraduates, over 50 of whom are research students registered for M Phil/PhD degrees. Most of the MA and MSc students also undertake their own individual research projects as part of the Master's degree. Institute postgraduates are thus involved in a multitude of diverse investigations, in Britain, continental Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Americas, and each year they make, collectively, a very substantial contribution to archaeological knowledge.

The results of all this research activity have until now reached the archaeological community by diverse and sometimes obscure routes, or not at all. Much new information has remained contained in doctoral dissertations and masters-degree reports, available in the libraries of the University but not formally published. Sometimes whole theses appear, duly edited, as *British Archaeological Reports*, Institute *Occasional Papers*, or other monographs; more frequently the 'best bits' find their way into scholarly journals, including, sometimes, the Institute's own *Bulletin*. But, despite the many outlets that exist for archaeological publication, the results of much of the research undertaken by Institute postgraduate students are not at present made known to interested archaeological colleagues around the world. I am therefore delighted that several of our current research students have taken the initiative - and put in the necessary sustained effort - to launch *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology (PIA)*.

The appearance of this first issue of *PIA* is the result of much hard work by a dedicated group of postgraduates who not only assumed responsibility for the practicalities of production but also for extracting the contributions from their colleagues and editing them to a high standard! The result is a substantive contribution to archaeological scholarship which, in the seven papers selected for this first issue, display a breadth of research themes and methods - ethnographic, stylistic, experimental, theoretical and analytical - which nicely reflects the diversity of postgraduate research that is characteristic of the Institute. The list, and abstracts, of the 18 PhDs awarded between January 1989 and February 1990 is also a fine testament to the vigour and range of current research. The launch of *PIA* by the postgraduates themselves is a most promising development as the Institute moves into the 1990s, now as an integral part of University College London and committed more than ever to the study of archaeology as a humanistic and scientific discipline worldwide in its scope.

David Harris
Director
Institute of Archaeology

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