

Newsletter Spring 2014

May to August 2014

From the GIA director Prof. Peter Attema



This summer newsletter comes to you from Crustumerium, near Rome, where GIA staff and students have been involved in the excavation of an extensive Iron Age to Archaic burial ground and related settlement since 2006. Right now we are investigating part of its imposing defensive works. It is only one of the many fieldwork projects in the Mediterranean, Near East, Arctic and the Netherlands in which the GIA is involved. An overview of fieldwork projects and other GIA activities can be found in the just released Annual Report over 2013, edited by Annette Hansen. Looking back on the first three months of my appointment as GIA Director, the fact that three of our PhD students received their doctorate (Congratulations Rik Feiken, Sarah Willemsen and Mans Schepers!) and two obtained a PhD position in the NWO sustainable humanities scheme (Congratulations Annette Hansen and Yffinus van Popta!) certainly stands out. With one more PhD position allocated to the GIA this year, the GIA keeps a neat balance between promotions and new positions!

PhDs

PhD Defenses

Mans Schepers receives Cum Laude on his dissertation. On 15 May, Dr. Mans Schepers received cum laude on his dissertation: 'Reconstructing vegetation diversity in coastal landscapes'. Congratulations Mans!

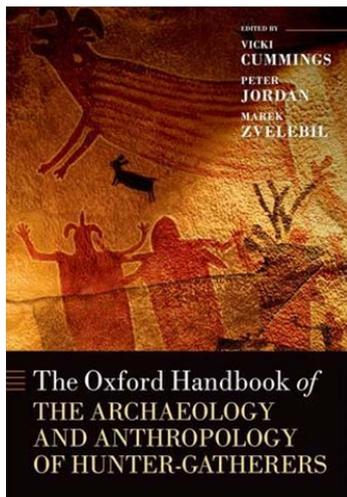
Welcome to our new PhDs!



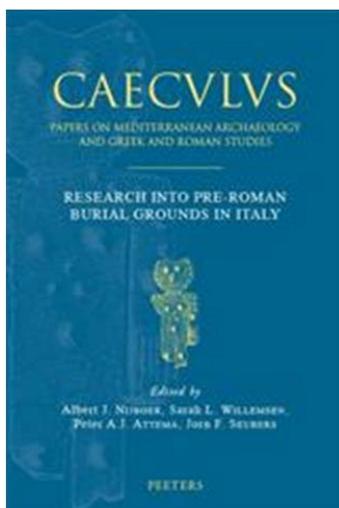
Sarah Dresscher from the Arctic and Antarctic Studies research group recently started her PhD. Her PhD project deals with the Russian Pomor hunting activities on Spitsbergen during the 18th and 19th century. The focus lies on the way they lived and worked under Arctic circumstances. In order to understand this it is necessary to look into the subsistence strategy as well as their commercial activities. The Pomor hunting systems in Spitsbergen transcends this divide between subsistence and commercial hunting. This creates many new and interesting research questions. On the one hand, it is clear that Pomor groups were sent to Spitsbergen to make a profit by obtaining valuable resources. They needed to organise their

activities throughout the annual cycle to make this possible. But on the other hand, these groups also needed to *survive* the extreme conditions of the High Arctic, and to ‘live off the land and sea’ as well as to make a profit. This would have generated many tensions between the motivations to survive but also to be commercially successful. Understanding exactly how and why Pomor groups solved these basic problems is the main goal of the PhD project.

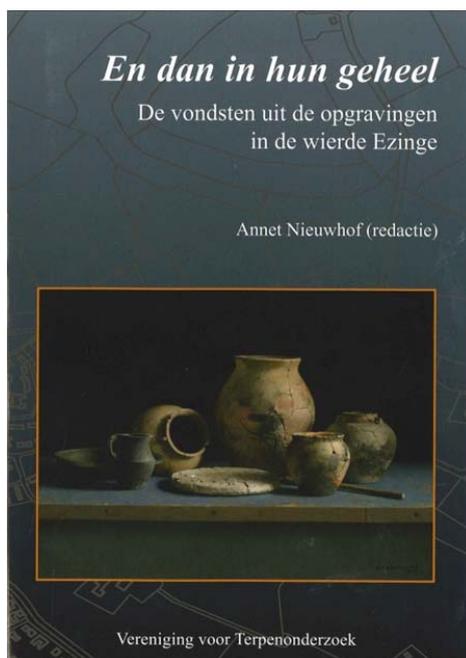
Publications



Peter Jordan editor of new Oxford Handbook Prof. dr. Peter Jordan is an editor of the impressive, new Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology and Anthropology of Hunter-Gatherers (<http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199551224.do>). The handbook is one of the fourteen *Oxford Handbooks* that brings together the world's leading scholars to write review essays that evaluate the current thinking on a field or topic, and make an original argument about the future direction of the debate. The Oxford Handbooks are one of the most successful and cited series within scholarly publishing, containing in-depth, high-level articles by scholars at the top of their field and for the first time. One of the chapters is written by Prof. dr. Daan Raemakers.



New release: Caecvlvs 8 - Research Into Pre-Roman Burial Grounds in Italy, edited by A.J. Nijboer, S.L. Willemsen, P.A.J. Attema, and J.F. Seubers. Caecvlvs 8 with the title Research into Pre-Roman Burial Grounds in Italy results from a specialist workshop held at the University of Groningen in 2011 highlighting new results in the field of funerary archaeology. It contains papers on burial grounds in Italy ranging from Verucchio in Emilia Romagna to Francavilla Marittima in Calabria between the 9th and 4th centuries BC. Four papers deal with the hundreds of tombs excavated at Crustumerium (Rome) where the GIA has been excavating over the past 9 years (www.Crustumerium.nl).



En dan in hun geheel: De vondsten uit de opgravingen in de wierde Ezinge (Annet Nieuwhof Ed.)

Between 1923 and 1934, a large area of the *terp* of Ezinge in the Reitdiep area of the province of Groningen was excavated by the Biological-Archaeological Institute (now GIA), led by Albert Egges van Giffen. The excavation generated a great deal of interest within the Netherlands and abroad. In Ezinge it became clear for the first time that people did not live in primitive huts during the Iron Age and Roman period. Many large farms were found, some with what were clearly animal stalls. The buildings could house large numbers of livestock.

The finds and new information from the excavations were so extensive that they have never been analysed and published in full. Ezinge is one of many sites in the Netherlands that were excavated in the twentieth century but never fully published. The Netherlands Organisation

for Scientific Research (NWO) set up the Odyssey programme in order to unlock the knowledge concealed in these old excavation data and make it available for modern-day research. Within Odyssey, the Groningen Institute of Archaeology was awarded a one-year grant for the purpose of analysing and publishing the Ezinge finds. This research, carried out in 2011, was led by Annet Nieuwhof of the Terpen Centrum of the Groningen Institute of Archaeology.

In June, the final publication of the research project, *En dan in hun geheel. De vondsten uit de opgravingen in de wierde Ezinge*, came out. The title, *En dan in hun geheel* ('And Now in Their Entirety'), alludes to article by Van Giffen in which he pledges to publish the results at a later date 'in their entirety'. Unfortunately, he never did so. In the book, the hand-shaped pottery and the Roman and early-mediaeval wheel-thrown pottery, the metal and stone objects, the beads, and the human and animal remains are described and interpreted in the context of settlement history.

The book is published by the Vereniging voor Terpenonderzoek (Association for Terp Research). This association was raised in 1916 to support Van Giffen's research in the terp region; it partly financed the excavations in Ezinge.

The book is available from the Association, www.terpenonderzoek.nl. Full book details: A.Nieuwhof (Ed.), 2014: *En dan in hun geheel. De vondsten uit de opgravingen in de wierde Ezinge* (= Annual Reports of the Association for Terp Research, 96), Association for Terp Research, Groningen. 256 pages, richly illustrated. ISBN 978-90-811714-6-5.

With contributions by: Wil van Bommel-van der Sluijs, Harry Huisman, Lykke Johansen, Egge Knol, Susanne Manuel, Annet Nieuwhof, Mirjam Post, Wietske Prummel, Dick Stapert, Sophie Thasing, Tineke B. Volkers and Inger Woltinge

Research

S25: unlocking site variability in the Neolithic Swifterbant river system In the years 2008-2010 fieldwork near one of the river dunes in the Swifterbant river system (the Netherlands) provided new insights in the regional occupation history during the Neolithic (c. 4500-3700 ca. BC). Excavations in the 1960's and 1970's at river dune sites S21-S24 focused on the finds and features in the dune sand. It proved impossible to subdivide the finds to various occupation phases in Mesolithic and Neolithic. In contrast, the levee sites along the river system are dated to the period 4300-4000 cal. BC.

The new excavations at S25 are located at the border zone of the dune, built-up with clay deposits in which all finds were registered within small spit cells (50x50x5 cm). This allowed a detailed analysis of the spatial distribution of the finds. In combination with several ¹⁴C dates this indicates a slow built-up of the deposits in the period 4500-3700 cal. BC.

A comparison of artefact characteristics underlines that S25 is to be interpreted as a site of the Swifterbant culture. Nevertheless S25 proved to be rather different from all other known sites in the area. Its ceramics are a subset of the ceramics available at the other sites. There are no features (no hearths, no graves, no postholes). There is no evidence for cereal cultivation.

It is concluded that S25 is a dump zone related to activities on the river dune. These activities are more restricted in scope than those attested for the levee sites, suggesting that the river dune had a specific function in the regional occupation system. It is supposed that S25 is the remnant of a series of small-scale and intermittent visits to the dune. As such, S25 extends our interpretation of human behavioural variability in the Swifterbant region.

The research will be published in coming issue of *Palaeohistoria* 55/56 (2014). For further information about the project, contact Professor Daan Raemaekers (d.c.m.raemaekers@rug.nl).

Final Field Campaign of the Rural Life Project From 15 June to 19 July Martijn van Leusen, with PhD student Wieke de Neef, will be on fieldwork campaign in northern Calabria (the 'toe' of the Italian boot) to tie up some loose ends within the NWO project 'Rural Life in Protohistoric Italy' 2010-2015. This complex campaign has several goals requiring different teams working alongside each other. For the Rural Life Project (RLP) Wieke de Neef will work on the completion of the documentation of the protohistoric finds collected in our autumn 2013 campaign; she will also conduct and collaborate with various Italian specialists on studies of the Archaic, Hellenistic/Roman and 'spick ware' pottery groups that have been collected as part of the long-term Raganello Archaeological Project (RAP) survey project in the basin of the Raganello River.

Martijn van Leusen will be completing an experimental lithics survey started in 2012, with a team of Italian collaborators, and will also direct a series of pottery survey experiments to help establish confidence limits on the earlier Raganello Archaeological Project survey (2000-2009) results. The 2012 lithics experiment has already yielded some very promising results so it is hoped that a high-profile publication will result when the experiments are concluded this summer. Evelien Witmer, as Faculty Research Assistant, will help set up, run and analyze the pottery survey experiments, and help prepare them for publication as well. Visiting specialists from the USA and the UK will help

conduct some pilot X-ray fluorescence (pXRF) studies on the Project's protohistoric pottery in preparation for future funding applications.

Finally, in order to avoid spending too much time indoors or confined to experimental fields, we will be taking our students to conduct some additional field walking surveys to fill gaps in our current regional coverage of the Raganello Basin.

Preliminary reports on all RLP campaigns, including the 2012 lithics experiment, can be found on the Academia page of Martijn van Leusen (<https://rug.academia.edu/MartijnvanLeusen>).

Digitisation project of historical topographic maps Starting this May, volunteer Jan Gerard will be a regular visitor to the GIA second-floor GIS-lab. He will help digitise early 20th century topographic map sheets of the Pontine plain in central Italy, and georeference scanned 18th century topographical manuscript maps of the Northern Netherlands, under the supervision of Martijn van Leusen. Jan has worked earlier as a volunteer on similar projects for the municipality of Groningen.

The detailed topographic maps made for the reclamation of the Pontine plain in the 1920s are an important source for the landscape reconstruction of this area, which has been studied by Peter Attema since the late 1980s. As in the Western part of the Netherlands, they record details of the surface topography that are now lost by continued subsidence and man-made changes. Elevations in particular are recorded to the nearest dm and sometimes to the cm, so the first product of the work will be a high resolution Digital Elevation Model (DEM).

The manuscript maps of the Northern Netherlands were made by Johannes Beckering in the 1780s and are rich in detail (a simplified small-scale version hangs in our canteen), but need significant geographical correction and interpretation before they can be 'stitched together' into a useful digital topographic map. Recently, Reinder Reinders with the help of UB staff has conducted archival research to trace and scan the dispersed manuscript maps and various intermediate maps made by Beckering. These scans will now be georeferenced using points recognized on the Military Map of the Netherlands and, if copyright issues are resolved, the topographic information can be digitized for research and educational purposes.

For further information about this project, contact Dr. Martijn van Leusen, p.m.van.leusen@rug.nl.

The 2014 campaign at Crustumerium, directed by Peter Attema, Barbara Belelli Marchesini



Deep trench through a defensive work of the late Archaic work with remains of possible Iron Age earthwork in the foreground in section

and Bert Nijboer, still underway, is already yielding interesting results. Imposing Archaic chamber tombs have been located on the edge of an Iron Age to Archaic road trench that was excavated in the campaign of 2013 and which also yields clear signs of ancient quarrying. Deep shaft tombs of the Iron Age are being excavated as well, some with monumental closing systems and rich burial gifts. Part of the GIA team is involved in research of an artificial hill that occupies a strategic position in

between the burial ground and the



Student Francis Koolstra at work in a shallow tomb

settlement. Geophysical research had already indicated the immense size of a buried stone structure that is now being brought to light. It dates to the final settlement phase. On the south side, at a much lower level, it covers a possible Iron Age defensive work.



Few weeks old child, buried in a vase (enchytrismos)

At the foot of the hill, a late 6th. BC child burial - enchytrismos - was recovered in a coarse ware olla that is now being investigated by the physical anthropologist of the team. We hope to inform you on the outcome of all the 2014 excavation in the next newsletter!

Honours, Awards, and Prizes



Ancient remains ploughed to the surface at the site of Forum Appii

Minor Centers team obtains grant from Gratama Stichting Gijs Tol & Tymon de Haas have obtained a grant of €15.980 from the Gratama Stichting. With this grant, they will investigate the state of preservation of archaeological remains at the site of *Forum Appii* (Pontine Region, Central Italy) through field survey and geophysical prospections. The investigations are intended to form a basis for sustainable and targeted management of the site's remains, which are subject to continuous degradation caused by intensive agriculture and construction works.

For more information, contact g.w.tol@rug.nl or t.c.a.de.haas@rug.nl.

Activities

There will be a session entitled “Culture and Arctic Climate Change: Integrating Long-Term Perspectives from Archaeology and the Environmental Sciences” at the Fall meeting of the American Geophysical Union (AGU). This is being organised by members of the International Polar Archaeology Network (PAN) including the GIA's Professor dr. Peter Jordan, and is supported by funding from the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) . The meeting will take place from 15-19 December in San Francisco. If you are interested in submitting an abstract, please reference the invitation for further instructions (<http://www.rug.nl/research/groningen-institute-of-archaeology/news/agu-2014-session.pdf>).

Interesting Links



Check out the UniFocus video on the GIA Archaeobotany Department and our Plant Collection!

(http://www.unifocus.nl/site/pagina.php?id_item=424&tab=journaals&pag=1)