



April, 28th 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Our 4th newsletter comes in a slightly reduced form with most of this year's conferences cancelled or postponed due to the ongoing global pandemic, including our own UISPP congress (page 2). The XIX UISPP congress, including our two pyroarchaeology sessions, has been postponed to September 2021, but will still take place in Meknes. However, there still have been plenty of new pyroarchaeology papers published in the recent months (pages 2 to 5).

We conclude our newsletter with an obituary for Ofer Bar-Yosef, written by one his former PhD students, Carolina Mallol (pages 6-7), and hope to bring you better tidings with our next newsletter.

With our best wishes

Carolina, Chris and Mareike*

Contact us via Email pyroarchaeology@gmail.com

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* responsible for this newsletter

Conference News

Due to the global pandemic most of this year's conferences have been cancelled, including the Trial by Fire Conference at Liverpool University, and some have plans of going virtual instead (e.g. EAA and ESHE). The **XIX UISPP congress** in Meknes has been postponed to 2nd to 7th September, 2021, and the abstract submission deadline has also been postponed, to 31st March, 2021. This also means that there will be no meeting of our scientific commission this year.

Publication News

Allué, E., Mas, B., 2020. The meaning of *Pinus sylvestris*-type charcoal taphonomic markers in Palaeolithic sites in NE Iberia. *J. Archaeol. Sci. Rep.* 30, 102231.

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Courty, M.-A., Allue, E., Henry, A., 2020. Forming mechanisms of vitrified charcoals in archaeological firing-assemblages. *J. Archaeol. Sci. Rep.* 30, 102215.

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Florin, S.A., Fairbairn, A.S., Nango, M., Djandjomerr, D., Marwick, B., Fullagar, R., Smith, M., Wallis, L.A., Clarkson, C., 2020. The first Australian plant foods at Madjedbebe, 65,000–53,000 years ago. *Nat. Commun.* 11, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-14723-0>

Henry, A., Coli, V.L., Valdeyron, N., Théry-Parisot, I., 2020. Old taphonomy issues, new charcoal data for Mesolithic contexts: Impact of fragment size and sampling context on the assemblages of Escabasses cave (SW France). *J. Archaeol. Sci. Rep.* 30, 102232.

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- Lambrecht, G, Mallol, C. (2020). Autofluorescence of experimentally heated bone: Potential archaeological applications and relevance for estimating degree of burning. *J. Archaeol. Sci. Rep.* Volume 31, June 2020, 102333 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2020.102333>
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Ofer Bar-Yosef (1937-2020)

and the worldwide web of contemporary prehistorians

We would like to share a few words to express our admiration for Professor Ofer Bar-Yosef, the George and Janet MacCurdy Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology and Emeritus Professor in the Harvard University Department of Anthropology, who passed away this past March 14th. Ofer was a prominent figure in contemporary Archaeology, mentor to a good number of renowned archaeologists from different countries and best known for his contributions in key topics of human evolution: the earliest Out-of-Africa migrations, the Middle-to-Upper Palaeolithic Transition and the Neolithic Revolution.



Ofer working on an experimental hearth at Hayonim Cave. Photo courtesy Mary Stiner

Ofer knew he wanted to be an archaeologist since he was a young boy and had a high-impact academic career from the start. In the 1960s, during his undergraduate and graduate training with Moshe Stekelis at the Hebrew University, he laid down the groundwork for all subsequent fieldwork and analytical research on the prehistoric lithic technology of Israel. As he continued to “push the brush” and bring to light the major prehistoric sites in his country, including ‘Ubeidiya, the Mount Carmel cave sites, and key Epipaleolithic sites in Mount Carmel and the Jordan Valley, he also spent time in Bordeaux, France, where he connected with François Bordes and started to build what became a strong and friendly network of French and Israeli prehistorians. Ofer received the title of Honoris Causa from the University of Bordeaux on March 12th, 2018. After twenty-one years of teaching prehistoric archaeology in the Hebrew University he moved to the United States as a professor at Harvard University in the Department of Anthropology. From then onward The Stone Age Lab became a friendly, international research hub and production center for many seminal papers and site monographs. With Ofer behind the wheel, the first one in and the last one out, the lab was always thriving with field projects, important guests and discussions about “winners and losers” in human evolution. His more than 400 published contributions were the product of a love for work that was as catchy as his whistling when he was around.

One of the topics to which Ofer contributed significantly was fire in prehistory. His excavations in Kebara Cave in the 1980s furnished exceptional evidence of Neanderthal use of fire. In 1996

and 1997 he teamed up with professors Paul Goldberg and Steve Weiner, his “magicians”, and together with Chinese colleagues they carried out investigations in Locality 1 at Zhoukoudian, China, debunking a previous hypothesis about the use of fire by humans at Layer 10 from this locality, which dates to around 500,000 years ago. As other pioneering interdisciplinary studies orchestrated by Ofer, this work set an example and paved the way for the high-resolution geoarchaeological approach that is now the state-of-the-art. As part of this approach, Ofer always insisted on the importance of experimentation and ethnoarchaeology and in 2006 he encouraged us to investigate fire use among the Hadza hunter-gatherers.

Ofer’s life and career, through his powerful ability to make associations and synthesize social complexity in combination with a passion for fieldwork and his sociable, kind nature set the stage for a good part of what interdisciplinary international research in prehistory is today. You will always be remembered, and we will try to dig faster.

Carolina Mallo