

Forging Identities Training Course. Autumn 2010
‘Ways of Seeing’: Interpreting Data Patterns

Location: University of Southampton, UK

Time: 3 days (4th – 26th Nov)

Key Staff: Dr Jo Sofaer; Dr David Williams

Supporting Instructors: Sarah Coxon; Dominic Barker

Lab technician: Jill Phillips

Aims:

- By means of the theme ‘Ways of Seeing’, to encourage students to consider a diverse range of ways in which it is possible to understand and interpret archaeological data. (Different ‘ways of seeing’ have the potential to lead to different kinds of interpretations).
- To develop practical analytical skills
- To expose students to a range of different kinds of archaeological data
- To develop understandings of data recording
- To understand the process of interpretation

Objectives:

Students will have:

- Developed some critical skills in interpreting patterns of data.
- Developed some practical skills in interpreting patterns of data.
- Been exposed to a range of different kinds of data
- Gained an appreciation of different kinds of data
- Gained an appreciation of different recording strategies
- Be able to consider the implications of how data is recorded for interpretation

Day 1 (Dr Jo Sofaer, Dominic Barker)

Field trip to Stonehenge and Devizes museum (to see Wessex Bronze Age material).

The particular thematic focus of the field trip will be “Ways of seeing”. This will include discussion of different ways of understanding the prehistoric landscape around Stonehenge and objects from the Wessex barrows in terms of the variety of ways that this single data source have been interpreted and understood. Students will therefore be encouraged not only to consider a range of archaeological interpretations (and their historical / theoretical contexts), but also the relationship between archaeology and the public, and the constitution of ‘archaeological sites’.

Day 2 (Dr David Williams, Jill Phillips)

Practical training: This will include a practical where students learn to make thin sections as a transferable technique (used for pots, bone and stone) and an introductory course in ceramic petrology. The students will be given a short basic course on petrology and the identification of common non-plastic minerals likely to be found as temper in pottery. Students will take turns in

the thin-sectioning practical throughout the day (only 2 or 3 students can work at thin-sectioning at one time). Archaeological applications of the technique will be discussed, in particular its role in describing exchange networks and cultural interaction. Students will also have a session on photomicroscopy. The 'ways of seeing' here are therefore about different scales of data available from objects (including what can be seen at the microscopic level) but are also designed to give students transferable practical skills that can be embedded within the Forging Identities research framework through their application to studies of exchange.

Students will be divided into 4 small groups for practical work.

- 8.30 – 9.30 Short talk to all students on reasons for thin sectioning and the use of the polarizing microscope [dfw]
- 9.30 – 10.45 Group 1 – 2 people, practical on thin sectioning [jp]
- 11.00 – 12.30 Group 2 – 3 people, practical on thin sectioning [jp]
- 12.30 – 1.15 **LUNCH**
- 1.15 - 2.30 Group 3 – 3 people, practical on thin sectioning [jp]
- 2.45 – 4.15 Group 4 – 2 people, practical on thin sectioning [jp]
- c. 4.15 – 5.00 Photomicroscopy [jp + dfw]

Day 3 (Dr Jo Sofaer, Dr Alison Gascoigne/ Sandy Budden, Sarah Coxon)

This morning will provide analytical training by asking students to critically engage with a series of articles on technology. The bibliography will be pre-circulated. Technology has been chosen as it is an issue relevant to the research of several of the students and is an area with contrasting theoretical perspectives in archaeology.

AM

Student participation seminar on Technology and Archaeology. A reading list will be provided and students should come to the seminar ready to discuss the readings.

LUNCH

Reading for seminar (= must read)**

Dobres, MA. 2010. Archaeologies of Technology. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34(1): 103-114. See also other articles in this special issue of *Cambridge Journal of Economics on Technology*. Especially sections on The Nature of Technology and Technology in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Optional:

Pfaffenberger, B. 1992. Social Anthropology of Technology, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21:491-516.

Ingold, T. 1993. Technology, language, intelligence: a reconsideration of basic concepts. In K. R. Gibson & T. Ingold (eds.) *Tools, Language and Cognition in Human Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 449-472.

Lemonnier, P. (ed) *Technological Choices: transformation in Material culture from the Neolithic to modern high tech*. London: Routledge pp. 1-35.

van der Leeuw, S.E. and Torrence, R. (eds) *What's New? A Closer Look at The Process of Innovation*. One World Archaeology 14. London: Unwin Hyman.

+ one of the following

Bijker, W.E. 1992. *Shaping technology/building society*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Bijker, W.E., Hughes, T P. and Pinch, T.J. (eds) 1987. *The social construction of technological systems*. New directions in the sociology and history of technology. Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest.

Knappett, C. 2002: Photographs, Skeuomorphs and Marionettes. Some Thoughts on Mind, Agency and Object. *Journal of Material Culture* 7(1): 97-117.

Latour, B. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. New York : Harvester Wheatsheaf

Schlanger, N. (ed) 2006. *Marcel Mauss. Techniques, Technology and Civilisation*. Oxford: Durkheim Press / Berghahn Books.

+ one case study

Sillar, B. 2000. Dung by Preference: The choice of fuel as an example of how Andean pottery production is embedded within wider technical, social, and economic practices. *Archaeometry* 42 (1): 43-60.

Gosselain, O.P. 1999. In Pots we Trust. The Processing of Clay and Symbols in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Material Culture* 4(2): 205-230.

Sillar, B and Tite, M.S. 2000. The challenge of 'technological choice' for materials science approaches in archaeology. *Archaeometry* 42(1):2-20.

Sofaer Derevenski, J, 2000. Rings of life: the role of early metalwork in mediating the gendered life course, *World Archaeology* 31(3):389-406

Sofaer, J. 2006. Pots, Houses and Metal. Technological Relations at the Bronze Age tell at Százhalombatta, Hungary. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 25(2):127-147.

Sofaer, J. and Sørensen, M.L.S. 2002. Becoming cultural: society and the incorporation of bronze. In: B. Ottaway and E.C. Wager (eds.) *Metals and society: papers from a session held at the European Association of Archaeologists sixth annual meeting in Lisbon 2000*, BAR International Series: 1061, Oxford: Archaeopress. pp.117-121.

Wade, J.A. 1989. The context of adoption of brass technology in northeastern Nigeria and its effects on the elaboration of culture. In van der Leeuw, S.E. and Torrence, R. (eds) *What's New? A Closer Look at the Process of Innovation*. *One World Archaeology* 14. London: Unwin Hyman pp. 225-244.