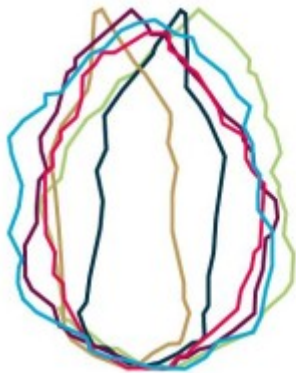


MONREPOS – THE EARLY BIRDS

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2014, Finds Anthropology, Archaeology, Excavation, illustrations, Library, museum, researcher



Monrepos

Archaeological Research Centre and Museum
for Human Behavioural Evolution

Who thinks that an archaeological research centre and museum can only be run by archaeologists these days must be ignorant. Technical staff is required at many places and usually they are our early birds. They are cleaning, fixing, and organising the house and its bits and pieces before most researchers actually arrive. Nevertheless, they are a part of our daily working life and an important part of the staff: Imagine an uninformed cleaning lady in an institute mainly focused on stone age archaeology with several pebbles or bones or sediment bags on the floor... Thus, these staff members not only make a whole day of archaeological research possible but also contribute to it with their experience.

However, in the last months, new skills were required from some of them. For example, Walter Mehlem, our house technician, has quite some extra work to do at the moment taking care that really all the work that was supposed to be done in the museum by subcontractors, craftsmen, gardeners etc. was in fact correctly done. So, really he is looking forward to the days after the opening when “business as usual” or the usual craziness returns.

Well, writing about early birds by midday just shows that I’m none of them. However, we couldn’t keep our schedules at the institute if everyone was a nightowl like me. For example, mail arrives early and parcels full of paper necessary for an institute like ours arrive almost on a daily basis. A lot of paper is needed for prints of our scientific output such as our own articles, official letters, and bureaucratic formalities such as compensation of travel cost. Moreover, many pages of articles have to be printed out to become a hardcopy part of our ever growing library. Besides these articles, our library owns several thousand monographs and journals all focused on hunter-gatherer anthropology, Palaeolithic and Mesolithic archaeology, zooarchaeology, experimental archaeology and everything of interest for archaeologists working on the development of human behaviour before the Neolithic revolution(s). Presumably, we house one of the largest libraries on this topic worldwide.



Apparently, such a large body of information needs some organisation and someone who prints out the articles, picks them up from the printer, registers them and puts them in the right place – so if a researcher is looking for a specific article it can be found. At Monrepos, Sascha Sieber is currently taking care of this bit of enabling archaeologists to actually work all day. Frank Schmid is sharing his office and working on another important project: Digitalising photo documentation. Monrepos has been participating and organising excavations in Eurasia for over thirty years so we have an enormous number of slides from excavations and excursions which need to be digitalised and organised in a way that someone looking for a specific profile is also able to find it. Of course, no archaeologists could do this job besides the usual work so we are really thankful that Frank is doing the job for us.

It's not as if archaeologists were a bunch of poorly organised people but help is always appreciated. And although a lot of our drawings and graphs are made by ourselves as a part of our research, help is not just welcome in this important part of our profession but occasionally needed. Graphs and figures help to visualise our findings or simply the artefacts we found. Therefore, Regina Hecht and Gabi Rutkowski are part of the Monrepos team. Regina helps us make better graphs, optimise our print outs and, occasionally, she also gives short introductions to graphic programs for young students like I used to be. Her work is so helpful because someone who is only considering the readability of a graph helps to translate our results for everyone and, thus, helps us to make science understandable and useful.

Gabi Rutkowski usually helps us with neat and clean ink drawings of artefacts. Although she hasn't studied archaeology, she has probably seen more archaeological stones and bones than many senior archaeologists and occasionally can point out overseen details. However, at the moment she is also needed for last preparations for the opening of the museum.

