Proceedings of the 17th conference of the International Work Group for Palaeoethnobotany, Paris 2016

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The present volume of *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* comprises a collection of papers presented at the 17th conference of the International Work Group for Palaeoethnobotany (IWGP) held at the National Museum of Natural History (*Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle*, MNHN) in Paris (France), between July 4 and 9, 2016. This was the second time the IWGP meeting took place in France, 18 years after the event was organised in Toulouse in summer 1998.

Scholars, students and administrative personnel from the hosting team—*Archaeozoology, Archaeobotany: Societies, Practices and Environments* (UMR 7209, MNHN-CNRS) were in charge of the organisation of the conference, which received financial support from several French institutions and organisations: the MNHN, the Institute of Ecology and Environment (INEE) of the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), the National Institute for Rescue Archaeology (INRAP), the Archaeology Department of the Ministry of Culture and Communication and the Association des Amis du Muséum.

251 participants from 33 different countries representing all continents (except Antarctica) gathered in central Paris for a week of intensive and enriching scientific exchange. While senior scholars were present to share their experience, many young researchers—doctoral students and post-docs—also participated in the conference and presented their results obtained from a multitude of new studies.

110 oral and 88 poster presentations were scheduled during 5 days and in order to guarantee a reasonable timetable,

parallel sessions had to be organised during part of the meeting (one and a half days). This was a première in the history of the IWGP and even though some participants may regret the passing of an epoch when it was possible to fit in all presentations into one week, the success of the IWGP meetings and the expanding community of palaeoethnobotanists will probably also make the planning of at least some parallel sessions necessary during future conferences.

As already noticed during the 16th IWGP conference, held in Thessaloniki (Greece) in 2013, the themes treated during the meetings are becoming more global than previously and this tendency was reinforced in Paris. Thus, from concerning primarily archaeobotanical work carried out in Europe and in south-west Asia, the last conferences have included an increasing number of studies relating to other parts of the world, in particular India, East Asia and South America. Australia, Africa and Oceania were also represented at the Paris conference by several communications.

Lectures and posters were presented within more than a dozen of thematic sessions. Besides sessions dedicated to specific geographic and chronological domains, papers were organised according to methods used (isotope geochemistry, geometric morphometrics, aDNA) or themes such as ethnobotany, ritual, food, islands or trees. Traditionally the IWGP meetings bear mainly on the results from seed and fruit analysis and the organising team did indeed decline a certain number of proposals dealing exclusively with wood, charcoal and pollen studies or proposed to present a poster rather than a lecture. Still, and positively, many presentations adopted a multidisciplinary approach combining data from different disciplines of environmental archaeology, historical sources, ethnobiology, chemistry, etc.

The domestication of food plants was, similarly to previous conferences, a theme that was treated by several participants presenting data on the domestication of maize, millets, rice, soy and adzuki beans as well as fruit trees.

Communicated by F. Bittmann.

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The present volume contains 18 original articles and one review representing a sample of the nearly 200 communications given in Paris in summer 2016. The first paper concerns the plant use by Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers in the Iberian Peninsula (Martínez-Varea et al.) and is followed by several articles dealing with human-plant interactions during the Neolithic, in Anatolia (Rössner et al.) and in Europe (Filipović et al.; Steiner et al.). Plant economies of the Bronze and Iron Ages in northern Europe (Effenberger; Rösch) and southern France (Rovira and Alonso) are then the subject of two papers followed by four contributions on different aspects of plant use in medieval Europe. The latter deal respectively with the agricultural economy of a Polish island (Badura et al.), medieval wood use (Cywa), the palaeoecological interpretation of a buried meadow (Akeret et al.) and the plants involved in embalming procedures during the late Middle Ages (Corbineau et al.). Trees are then the subject of three papers. Two of them deal with the domestication of fruit trees, the first from a general and global perspective (Fuller) while the second focuses on the olive tree in Greece (Valamoti et al.). The third is dedicated to fire-making tools from the Yanghai cemetery in China (Jiang). The final four contributions reflect a domain hardly present in previous IWGP meetings but that has developed recently: the archaeobotany of South America with one paper on squash domestication (Martínez et al.), two papers on Argentinean plant use (López; Petrucci et al.) and the last on macrobotanical remains linked to feasting in the Maya civilization of Mesoamerica (Cagnato). The volume is completed by a review of Neolithic and Bronze Age agriculture on the Balearic Islands (Pérez-Jordà et al.).

The editors would finally like to express their gratitude to all the participants in the conference who made the IWGP meeting an inspiring and scientifically stimulating event. We also would like to thank the authors that have submitted their contributions for this special issue as well as the editing team at *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany*. And we conclude by wishing you all *bonne lecture*!

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*Multiple reviews