

Proceedings of the 16th conference of the International Work Group for Palaeoethnobotany, Thessaloniki 2013

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This volume of *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* comprises a collection of papers presented at the 16th conference of the International Work Group for Palaeoethnobotany, held at the Research Dissemination Centre (KEDEA) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece) between June 16th and 22nd 2013. The conference was organised under the auspices of the *School of History and Archaeology* of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the *Municipality of Thessaloniki*, the *Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports* and the *Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development and Food*. The *Museum of Byzantine Culture* hosted the official dinner of the conference. The following institutions financially supported the conference: the *Research Committee* of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the *Institute of Aegean Prehistory*, *Foglip-ERC*, the *Ministry of Rural Development and Food*, and *Piraeus Bank*.

Various other sponsors supported the conference with donations in kind (gifts and food/drink): Agrino, Apivita, Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Babatzim wines, Claudia Papagianni wines, Creta Carob, Gerovassileiou wines, Haitoglou, Holomon herbs, Ianos, I Kathimerini, Korres, Kyr Yianni wines, Ligas wines, Masticha Shop, MIET (National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation), Mylelia, Pantopoleion tis Thessalonikis, Psichalos publications, Rayan

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This is the first time an IWGP conference has been organised in Greece, where archaeobotany was initiated by German, Dutch and British colleagues, like Maria Hopf, Helmut Kroll, Willem van Zeist, Sytze Bottema, Glynis Jones, Jane Renfrew and James Greig, most of whom were among the pioneers of archaeobotany worldwide. These people sowed the seeds of archaeobotany in Greece as members of national archaeological school missions in various parts of the country, in those early days when archaeology was 'losing its innocence' as David Clarke epitomised the arrival of *New Archaeology* (Clarke 1973). Among the pioneers, colleagues such as Glynis Jones and Helmut Kroll not only 'saved seeds' (Jones et al. 1982) and broadened the horizons of Greek archaeobotany but, perhaps most significantly trained indigenous archaeologists into becoming the first native archaeobotanists. Thus, the 16th IWGP held in Thessaloniki (the second Mediterranean city to host an IWGP after Girona in Spain 2004) would simply not have happened without the work of these teachers and practitioners of archaeobotany.

The conference went officially global this time, providing a podium to papers from regions not traditionally represented in the preceding IWGP meetings. Presentations on Inuit archaeobotany, South African hunter-gatherer survival strategies, Chinese burial offerings, Japanese prehistoric rice growing and consumption, and Argentinian early cultivation and food processing demonstrate the wide geographical range represented by the current IWGP. Various challenges had to be dealt with during the organisation of the conference including a large number of submitted oral presentations and posters, and a host country in deep financial

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crisis. During the five days of talks and posters, a tightly packed programme presented an organisational challenge and probably a strain to what one can absorb during a conference. Yet, it was decided neither to have parallel sessions nor to cut out any of the sessions proposed by many organisers on special thematic fields such as ‘Stable isotopes in plant remains’, ‘Food globalization in prehistory across Eurasia’, ‘Dispersal of cultivated plants: the origin and early spread of naked wheats’, ‘The role of wild foods amongst early farmers and late foragers’ and ‘Plant archaeogenetics and archaeogenomics’.

In addition to the laboratory session a special identification workshop on naked cereals took place, organised by Stefi Jacomet. Another workshop took place where *Spätzle* were prepared in the traditional way (organised by Barbara Zach, Hans-Peter Stika and Moritz Hallama), putting archaeobotany into action. The dish prepared was a Swabian speciality consisting of spelt wheat noodles (*Spätzle*) and lentils, ingredients frequently occurring in European Bronze Age archaeobotanical data sets.

In total, nearly 270 participants attended the conference (Fig. 1). The oral presentations totalled 98 while 164 posters were presented. For the special issue 50 papers have been

announced, 27 papers were finally submitted of which 20 were accepted for publication after peer-reviewing.

The *Original Articles* (15) can be divided into contributions on plant use, economy and methodological aspects spanning the Neolithic through to the Iron Age (Hartmann–Shenkman et al.; Antolin et al.; Valamoti; Kubiak-Martens et al.; Martin; Pagnoux et al.), on more methodological and integrated aspects including taphonomical problems, geoarchaeology and phytoliths as well as pollen (Pelling et al.; Petó et al.; García-Granero et al.; Vandorpe and Wick). These are followed by contributions focussed on plant foods (cultivation, transformation, offerings) in South America and China partly taking into account ethnobotanical aspects (Lema; Capparelli et al.; Jiang et al.) and two papers on medieval sites and economy from Ireland and Siberia (McClatchie et al.; Korona).

Four *Reviews* give overviews and the state of the art of *new glume wheat* in France (Toulemonde et al.), advances in aDNA of plant remains (Brown et al.), stable isotopes (Fiorentino et al.) and the history of *Taxus* in southwest Europe (Uzquiano et al.—communicated by C. Bakels). The volume is completed by a contribution on medieval finds of *Smyrnum olusatrum* in the Netherlands (Brinkemper).



Fig. 1 16th IWGP participants at the KEDEA premises. Photo courtesy of Giannis Tsoufidis©

Thus, topics of this volume include early farming, ancient food and the role of wild plant resources, regional syntheses or analyses focusing on single species, case studies, integration of archaeobotanical data and methodological issues including frontline research methods such as DNA and isotopic analyses.

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* Multiple reviews

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