

The 19th European Meeting of the Paleopathology Association, 27 - 29 August 2012, Lille, France

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The biennial European Meeting of the Paleopathology Association was held in the beautiful city of Lille, France from August 27 to August 29. The Meeting has again successfully gathered specialists-scientists coming from different backgrounds- history, archaeology, anthropology, Egyptology, odontology, medicine etc- but linked with the same common interest- the scientific analysis of ancient diseases in different temporal, cultural and sociological contexts. The great number of participants and the interest shown by the auditory throughout the whole congress confirmed the long-term interest of different scientists and practitioners and, very importantly students and young generation of researchers to participate in it.

Before the beginning of the very formal part of the Meeting, it was dutiful and very touching for all who were present to open the meeting by remembering one of the most important names in the paleopathology field that unexpectedly passed away this year, that of dr. Donald Ortner (1939-2012) and the great scientific and human legacy that he left to all of us, but top of all to his closest partners, friends and colleagues that had the privilege to meet and work with him. In the formal opening part of the Meeting, the official journal of the Association the International Journal of Paleopathology, one of the few of its kind, was presented by its Editor in chief, Dr. Jane Buikstra. In this occasion it was evidenced once more the importance of communicating results, experience and enhancing collaboration between palaeopathologist in the world.

The main topics covered by the Meeting included different interdisciplinary fields, among which Paleoparasitology, isotopic analysis, and medical and archeological approach to paleopathological questions. In its final form, the Meeting had a total of 10 sessions that covered the most important and

recent research fields in paleopathology: Methodology session (including computer tomography and virtual anthropology), infectology and parasitology sessions (from tuberculosis to intestinal parasites), DNA session, trauma session (from case reports to forensic approaches to determine ancient trauma mechanisms), isotopic session (from bronze age to medieval times), population and epidemiology session (from epidemics to general health status of ancient populations), odontology session, mummy studies session (from Egyptian, Sicilian, Belgian to Korean mummies), and paleo-rheumatology session (from the vertebrae to the skull). Other interesting papers have been presented outside the final 10 sessions. A total of 68 oral presentations were held during the three days, with no overlap between different sessions, allowing the participants to be able to attend them all (a.n. that is a very positive thing for a congress and people participating in it and interested in different, sometimes unrelated topics). However, only four presentations (6%) were dedicated to paleodontology: "How serious is the impact of the method of timing estimation of linear enamel hypoplasias on the results of the study? (M. Krenz)", "Treponema denticola a causative agent of periodontitis detected in tissue biopsies of the Iceman (F. Maixner)", "Dental chipping in the Middle Iron Age Population from Lithuania: sexual and social differences (Z. Miliauskiene)" and "Periodontitis of the Neolithic Iceman (3300 B.C.): clinical aspects and aetiological considerations (R. Seiler)". In addition, three plenary lectures by Olivier Dutour, Frank Rulhi, and Anne Grauer were held between two oral sessions.

Along with the oral sessions, poster sessions (with a total number of 129 posters, 9 of them dedicated to paleodontology (7%)) related to the oral ones, were organized during the coffee breaks, leaving time (sometimes not enough due to the great interest for the topics presented) for discussion. However the opportunity to continue the initial conversations, was given during a wonderful informal dinner the day before the closing ceremony, that was accompanied also by the talent of a magician at the end of the evening.

The last day of the Meeting was dedicated, besides two oral and poster sessions, to the workshops and the official closing ceremony, where the most interesting and valuable student presentations (oral and poster) were awarded with the Cockburn prize. The awarded students were Ms Schats with the oral presentation "A forensic Approach to Medieval Gunshot Trauma" and Ms Binois with the poster presentation "A dog's life. Multiple trauma and potential abuse in a medieval dog from Giumps (Charente, France). Besides being both very interesting, well conceived and presented, they evidence the great interest that is being given to trauma analysis also in the paleopathology field.

The last, but not least part of the Meeting included the workshops organized by the most renowned experts in the field. They have also attracted great interest among the participants and included: workshop on War casualties, Bone porosities: growth or pathology, Leprosy and Mummy studies of Antinoe. Unfortunately, in this part of the Meeting the participants were able to attend only in one of the listed workshops held at the same time, although all the topics are of great interest to people involved in paleopathology research and profession.

The main compliments for the successfulness of this Meeting must go to the Organizing Committee (Dr T. Colard, B. Bertrand, W. Devriendt, S. Kacki, A. Amelie and the scientific manager dr. J.

Blondiaux) as well to the Paleopathology Association that cherishes the tradition of gathering, socializing and scientific enlightenment in a discipline that is essential both to past and future generation interested in the position and evolution of the man through time.



Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille (Lille Palace of Fine Arts) - the meeting point and the place where the 19th PPA Conference was held



Working atmosphere at the workshop War Casualties