

you and Erich [Schmidt]. I am planning to get together in the field this summer, as many active workers as possible, in order to thrash out a number of matters in regard to plans for work, nomenclature, cooperation, etc. etc. Do you think this might be done as a meeting of the Southwest Society? In that case perhaps Mrs. Parsons would be willing to issue a call. I would be very glad to do it myself and have the meeting at my camp at Pecos, but do not wish to appear to be trying to run things. Judd would also be glad to have such a meeting at his camp at Pueblo Bonito if that seemed a better place. Have you any knowledge of Mrs. Parsons whereabouts? Several letters I have written have remained unanswered and I imagine she must be abroad. If so, do you now when she expects to be back?

Very sincerely yours,

[signed] A.V.K.

We are grateful to James Snead for letting us know of this letter and assisting in its publication. It adds hitherto unknown details to the origin of the Pecos Conference, which Kidder convened at his Pecos field camp in August 1927, a year later than his original plan. Judd decided that Chaco Canyon was too far from the railroad over roads too often impassable, so Kidder invited archeologists to Pecos. The Southwest Society was founded in 1918 by Elsie Clews Parsons as a private philanthropy, giving support to many anthropological activities, mainly in the Southwest. Whether it was involved in supporting the Pecos Conference is not known—her gifts were usually not announced by her or the recipients.

This letter and its historical importance are a reminder of the value of archives. Letters that seemed of only brief significance when written can contribute usefully to the history of our discipline, in this case the beginning of the Pecos Conference, a landmark in American archaeology.

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## **An Appreciation of Claude Warren and Susan Rose's "William Pengelly's Techniques of Archaeological Excavation"**

by

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The short (40 pages) pamphlet by Warren and Rose (1994) provides the answer to a complex question regarding credit for an important archaeological methodology, stratigraphic excavation. Let me set the stage for this appreciation.

Continuing research on the beginnings of stratigraphic excavations in North America (Browman and Givens 1996), I sought the origins of the idea of actually excavating by strata, rather than post-facto interpretation, seen in North America as early as 1895 in the work of Henry Chapman Mercer, but not really introduced into the repertoire of American techniques until the work of Gamio, Kidder and Nelson between 1911 and 1914. The roots of the latter three seemed to lie with individuals such as Reisner, Boas, Uhle, who in turn seemed to rely on Hugo Obermaier, Gabriel de Mortillet, Marcellin Boule, and perhaps Pitt-Rivers, while Mercer's work could be traced to Boule and Albert Gaudry. Doggedly following back the roots, I found that Chapman (1989) could make a reasonable case that Pitt-Rivers had actually learned of the idea of stratigraphic excavation from Evans, Prestwich, and Lubbock, from the British scientists working with the Upper and Middle Paleolithic excavations during 1858-1868.

On the continental side of the question, archival work traced the origin of this idea back to Albert Gaudry and Gabriel de Mortillet in the middle 1870s. Following a lead from Nathalie Richard (personal communication 1996), it appeared that the French scientists first commented on the method only after learning of the work at Brixham Cave (and latter Kent Cavern) conducted by William Pengelly and reported by Evans, Falconer, Prestwich and others. Albert Gaudry was involved in the classic validation of Boucber de Perthes' Abbevillian and Acheulian assemblages, in 1859 along with Charles Lyell, John Evans, and Joseph Prestwich. Gabriel de Mortillet later reviewed all these materials in a series of intensive studies in 1880 through 1883 .

My attention thus turned to the excavations of Brixham Cave and Kent Cavern, to ascertain if it were Falconer, Prestwich, Evans, Pengelly, or some other we might credit for apparently setting the ball rolling. Credit was not clear. William Pengelly, in an 1883 paper detailing the work at Brixham in 1858, stated that

"Hence I resolved to have nothing whatever to do with the 'trial pits' here and there, or with shafts to be sunk in selected places; but, first to examine and remove the stalagmitic floor; then, the entire bed immediately below (if not of inconvenient depth) horizontally, throughout the entire length of the cavern, or so far as practicable; this accomplished, to proceed in like manner with the next lower bed; and so on until all the deposits had been removed."(Pengelly 1897:75).

This report, however, was 25 years after the fact, and seemed in conflict with others.

In a September 9, 1858 report on the progress of excavations to the Royal Society, jointly authored by Hugh Falconer, A. C. Ramsay, and William Pengelly, it is stated that "The committee, fully impressed with the probability of remains of different periods being met with at different levels in the cavern floor, determined from the outset on working the upper deposits horizontally inwards, as far as might be practicable on the same horizon, and then of working the lower deposits successively in the same manner. "(Murchison 1868, 1:493). This implied perhaps joint authorship of Falconer, Ramsay, and Pengelly. Further in this same volume is a copy of a letter from Falconer, dated May 10, 1858, in which Falconer states "I was intrusted with laying down the plan and giving the instructions upon which the exploration was to be conducted" and "that its exploration for a specific object was taken up at my suggestion, and carried out on the plan laid down by me"(Murchison 1868, 1:592). In a letter in 1863, Falconer (1863:460) further claimed that "I had sole charge of laying down the plan, and giving instructions upon which the exploration was to be conducted by Mr. Pengelly. " Based on these claims, it would appear that perhaps Falconer should be credited with the implementation of stratigraphic excavations.

The September 8, 1858 letter also noted that "the conduct of the excavations was consigned by the London Committee to Mr. Prestwich and Mr. Pengelly. " (Murchison 1868, 1:476). This raised yet another possible claimant: Prestwich. Reading Prestwich's reports, however, I found that Prestwich (1874:475) gave the entire credit to Pengelly, noting that "It is, however, to Mr. Pengelly, that the committee are indebted for the active and constant superintendence of the work." However, one might argue that Pengelly was merely carrying out Falconer's orders, as Falconer implies. Some suggestion it was in fact only Pengelly came from Evans ( 1972:466), who stated that the exploration of the cave was "in the manner suggested by Mr. Pengelly."

Thus prior to receiving Warren's and Rose's pamphlet for review late in 1996, I could make a cogent case for both Pengelly and Falconer. This pamphlet, however, seems to set the case clear. Warren and Rose bluntly state that much of Falconer's claim for credit "is untrue", that the methodology was developed by Pengelly, not Falconer. While Book 3 of Pengelly's field notes (which contains all the correspondence regarding decision concerning the excavation methods) is missing, they feel they can pull together enough other correspondence to support their conclusion. Warren and Rose cite an August 1, 1858, letter from

Falconer to Pengelly, wherein Falconer writes "I have not been writing to you about the Brixham Cave because the conduct of the arrangements lay between you and Mr. Prestwich." (1994: 12). They note thus that the actual excavations had commenced two weeks earlier, at a period when Falconer had not yet been in touch with Pengelly, and Prestwich had been in Switzerland for a month; an August 12, 1858 letter from Falconer to Pengelly which reports that the London Committee "entirely approve of the plan of operations which you have laid down (1994:12), and a September 24, 1858 report from A. C. Ramsay in which Ramsay refers to a 1858 report read by Pengelly to the London Committee "describing his method" (1994:13). Additional they cite private correspondence between Charles Lyell and William Pengelly of April 13, 1863, wherein Lyell says he wants Pengelly to know that he is aware that Falconer is egotistically and selfishly claiming credit for the excavation technique which Lyell knows is Pengelly's idea (1994:15). Warren and Rose conclude that "Clearly Pengelly was the person primarily responsible for the development of these excavation methods and techniques" (1994:29). More recently, Leonard Wilson (1996) has come to the same conclusion as Warren and Rose, basing his findings upon the study of Lyell's and Falconer's unpublished correspondence. Warren and Rose seem to have finally laid to rest the question of appropriate credit for this important archaeological technique.

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