

Editorial

CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE

I recorded, in the March number last year, the death of BEN CULLEN, as a young researcher who perished before he — or any of us — could really know just what he could and would do. I asked the natural question, ‘Why do good people die young?’, to which I know of no comforting reply; instead one grasps at, ‘They live in memory.’ IAN GOLLOP has made a tangible memory of Ben by creating a Ben Cullen Prize, to be awarded for the best contribution to a volume of *ANTIQUITY* by a researcher ‘of the new generation’, an inexact phrase which expresses how he and we think of Ben. The prize is of £500 freely given (and tax-free) for the winner to do with as they wish, Ian rightly thinking that there should be simple generosity in a world with too many grudging conditions.

The first winner of the BEN CULLEN PRIZE, in respect of the 1996 volume, is JOHN M. STEINBERG for his ‘Ploughzone sampling in Denmark: isolating and interpreting site signatures from disturbed contexts’ (June issue; 70: 368–92). Mr STEINBERG, a graduate student at the University of California Los Angeles, was occupied with finishing his Ph.D dissertation when his *ANTIQUITY* paper was published.

The Ben Cullen Prize makes a companion award to our own existing *ANTIQUITY* PRIZE of £1000 for a contribution ‘of special merit’, which is awarded for the third time. That winner, in respect of the 1996 volume, is KURT LAMBECK (Australian National University) for his splendid ‘Sea-level change and shore-line evolution in Aegean Greece since Upper Palaeolithic time’ (September issue; 70: 588–611).¹

A pair of articles in this number contribute to our knowledge of the many hundred open-

air rock-engravings now recorded from the Côa Valley, north Portugal, last year threatened with flooding by a new dam. (The hydro-electric company, sensing which way the wind may yet blow, keeps its half-built works in good order, ready for a green light after all.) Are the figures, with their ibex and their great oxen in twisted perspective, a glimpse of that great mass of Palaeolithic art once on the surface of Europe, of which before we have only known those few which survive in the caves? Or are they instead from post-glacial to perfectly recent in date, their supposed stylistic affinities either a later lingering-on of Palaeolithic habits of depiction, or a simple error following from what we today choose to see in them? Both cases were argued in *ANTIQUITY* in late 1995 (69: 877–901).

The figures can only be as old as the rock-surfaces into which they are cut.

FRED M. PHILLIPS and colleagues (below), using the Chlorine-36 method which indicates how long rock surfaces have been exposed, conclude that panels were available for engraving during the Palaeolithic; they have been exposed for 16,000–136,000 years. Rates of surface modification and erosion are indeed slow enough to preserve Palaeolithic petroglyphs there.

RONALD I. DORN’s radiocarbon studies (below) have proved less conclusive. The numbers in his determinations are much like ALAN WATCHMAN’s — lower than one might expect of Palaeolithic surfaces. He also finds sign that radiocarbon is not safely and stably trapped within rock patinas and varnishes where neither older nor younger carbon can reach it; accordingly radiocarbon determinations on these deposits do not provide true measures of date. This is disconcerting, as we have begun to look to direct radiocarbon measurement as a method of absolute dating for rock-art.

This work contradicts the element in ROBERT BEDNARIK’s conclusion (*ANTIQUITY* 69: 877–83) — that the Côa figures are not of Palaeolithic age — which depends on the notion that the figures must be young because the surfaces are not sufficiently old. Offering *maximum* ages,

¹ The funds for the *ANTIQUITY* Prize come from our own resources, themselves accumulated from subscriptions.

The judges for both prizes were Christopher Chippindale and Anthony Sinclair, the two editors of *ANTIQUITY*, as they are involved with the journal’s everyday running, and Warwick Bray and Anthony Harding, as *ANTIQUITY* trustees not involved with its everyday affairs. The choice was made from all contributions to volume 70 for 1996.

it may leave open the notion they are young figures cut into old rocks.

With these concerns in their minds, an expert group was commissioned by the Portuguese Minister of Culture in mid January 1997 to look at the Côa figures. It came to the decisive view they are ‘one of the largest concentrations of Palaeolithic rock-engravings known’; in the images, the ‘themes addressed and their associations, their techniques and their compositions attest to the Palaeolithic age of the majority of the figures, which find their equivalents in numerous sites with parietal and mobiliary art that are perfectly dated’.²

☪ Many of us — I am one of them — enjoy an argument: what is the definition of the intellectual world, other than the place where ideas are debated? (*Question*: ‘Why are academic debates so vicious?’ *Answer*: ‘Because the stakes are so small.’) As usual, some contributions to this issue reply to or countermand what has been published in the journal before; their authors think them necessary to recover the record from its error. As usual, they are mostly placed at the end rather than the start of the papers and notes, itself a small statement of attitude. The last ANTIQUITY editorial advanced the notion that research by definition is new work which cannot be known as ‘Right’ or ‘Wrong’; if its status is known, it is not research; if its status is unknown, it will need to be debated. Certainly Côa has been argued over, and ANTIQUITY has been a forum for those arguments: *pro*, they are not Palaeolithic, so style is dead as a guide to age; *contra*, these stylistically Palaeolithic petroglyphs are of Palaeolithic age, and a recent direct dating is refuted. We have

2 The members are Dominique Sacchi, Sergio Ripoll and Rodrigo de Balbín (who have studied open-air Palaeolithic rock-art sites in Europe), Paul Bahn and Michel Lorblanchet (authors of recent syntheses of Palaeolithic art as a whole), and Valentin Villaverde (who has studied the mobiliary art from Parpalló, which appears stylistically close).

The translated quotations read at full length in the original French:

‘Le site de Foz Côa est d’une importance exceptionnelle; il constitue à ce jour une des plus grandes concentrations de gravures rupestres paléolithiques connues.’

‘Les thèmes traités et leurs associations, leurs factures, leurs compositions attestent l’âge paléolithique de la plupart des figures; ils trouvent leurs équivalents dans de nombreux sites de l’art pariétal et mobilière parfaitement datés; ce diagnostic ne manquera pas d’être confirmé au cours des recherches à venir.’

tried to keep the language here better-humoured than the stronger statements about the Côa affair I have seen on the Internet and in other publications; unjustified strong language can become libel or slander, and may enter unpleasant legal domains. More importantly, it diverts the focus from issues and evidence to emotion.

The house-rule of this office is to permit (and encourage) contributors to express themselves as strongly as they consider fitting in respect of the facts, the notions and the frames of thinking — but they should not abuse others in the person. Since notions and frames of thinking do not stand alone, but reside only within the minds of persons, this rule is not much help: a person who holds wrong notions is thereby a wrong person. Further, it can rightly be said that some of the skills and tactics proper to debate do address the person, as well as the notion. Discussion between myself and one contributor to the present issue did not progress until we found a common word to express the difference between us, in our debate about how to address a debated issue; the word was ‘mockery’. The contributor thinks an element of that is valuable to their article and certainly appropriate; I do not in this instance. (Since the contributor has primary responsibility for what is published under their name, the contributor’s view has prevailed. It is not an article that is a reply as such to previous contribution.)

Is ANTIQUITY, is the wide world too sensitive nowadays, too timorously correct, to speak plainly and negatively, when negative words are in order? Some things, some people *are* better than others; all assessments, implicit or open (like the current British RAE, below), in saying some things are better, also say that others are worse. Successful students with supportive and positive-thinking teachers spend years in schools being told just how very good they and their work are, as they diligently learn from second-hand sources; this is not a sufficient preparation for the time that comes when their work is not good, by the other standards which should apply to research publications. I have been re-reading a remembered controversy of a generation ago: Sir Mortimer Wheeler’s book-review of Sir Ian Richmond’s Hod Hill report (ANTIQUITY 52 (1968): 149–50). From its immediate subject, qualities of the book reviewed, ‘the last book of one’s oldest friend’, it moves instantly to the person and finds the life ‘was

in terms of scholarship, something of a tragedy'. There are strong passing comments on other persons in Wheeler's return to published responses (52 (1968): 292–6). We are more prissy today, I believe. And the quality of the writing, in the several contributions to that old exchange, strikes me as better and brisker than one would see now.

Among the good recent books ANTIQUITY did not address in a detailed review was JEAN WILSON's 1995 study, *The archaeology of Shakespeare: the material legacy of Shakespeare's theatre*,³ prize-winner as the British Archaeology Book of the Year. I turned to it, and especially to its excellent and disconcerting last chapter on 'The Rose and Globe excavations', when there was more news in January 1997 about the future of these two sites on the South Bank of the Thames in London, the archaeologically surviving theatres of Shakespeare's era. To recap from Wilson, and from ANTIQUITY's earlier coverage,⁴ the written and drawn sources are slight from which we may figure the true playing space of Shakespearean theatres; accordingly, these two sites are precious for telling us the size and shape of the stage itself, of the yard for the standing audience, and of the galleried building, open to the sky, which held it. The design of Sam Wanamaker's replica of Shakespeare's Globe, completed late last year, was modified in the light of the Rose and Globe excavations, but still largely derives from the non-material sources.

For any class of archaeological site, the two correct impulses are to learn by exploring (usually with destructive methods) and to conserve for better future knowledge; a sensible policy respects both impulses and provides for both. Elizabethan theatres are rare — it is only the Globe and the Rose which are known to survive in London — so a policy is unbalanced

3 Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing; 0-7509-0926-9 hard-back £19.99.

4 On the Globe: S. Blatherwick & A. Gurr with J. Orrell, Shakespeare's factory: archaeological evaluations on the site of the Globe Theatre at 1/15 Anchor Terrace, Southwark Bridge Road, Southwark, *Antiquity* 66 (1992): 315–33.

On the Rose: J. Orrell & A. Gurr, What the Rose can tell us, *Antiquity* 63 (1989): 421–9.

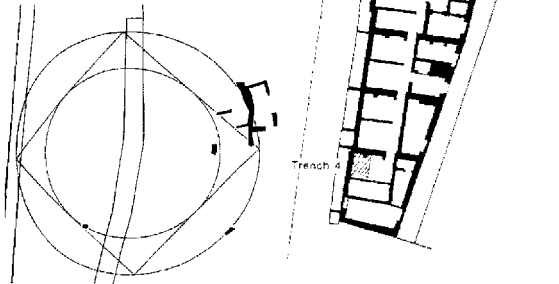
On the policy adopted for the Rose in 1989: C. Wainwright, Saving the Rose, *Antiquity* 63 (1989): 430–35.

On why nothing had been happening up to late 1993: A. Gurr, Static scenes at the Globe and the Rose Elizabethan theatres, *Antiquity* 68 (1994): 146–7.

Right: the four trial pits dug in 1991 under Anchor Terrace, itself listed for its historical value, which stands over the western portion of the Globe.

Below: the Globe, with diameter guessed, from the now-known fragments.

Details from Blatherwick & Gurr's figures 5 & 4, ANTIQUITY 66 (1992): 315–33.



which would largely excavate both: much learning, too little conservation.

In 1989, the Rose was exposed and £1 million bought a month's postponement of the developer's scheme to build an office block through and over it. Instead of a considered exploration, archaeological excavation ceased; the site is now shielded by a concrete-capped mantle of sand under the new building whose piled foundations in one zone are very close to the supposed edge of the Rose. Nothing has come of the 1989 proposal for an archaeological exploration and display of the remains; one hopes that the waterlogged deposits are indeed stable and intact after their disturbance then. Significant change in moisture content and bacterial activity were found in 1993.⁵

At the Globe, four test-pits were opened in the basement of Anchor Terrace, the 19th-century building which covers a large part: under its solid foundation raft are signs of the stage area. Exploration in the vacant car-park behind it to the east found more, and a sketchy knowledge of the lay-out can now be hazarded (see plans above); the other fragments would be to the west, under the main highway of Southwark Bridge Road.

5 A. Gurr, Not digging up the Globe, at <http://www.rdg.ac.uk/globe/Bulletin/AnchorScandal.html>

On 7 January 1997, Southwark Council's planners resolved the future of the Globe. Anchor Terrace is to be converted into flats, as English Heritage — whose statutory duty is to safeguard the nation's archaeology and historic buildings — ruled that 'further archaeological investigation with[in] the basement of Anchor Terrace is not justified at present'. This will safely return the Globe's remains to 'the burial regime which has protected them in the past'. With permission to build new flats granted for the car-park site, that will also disappear from archaeological access under new buildings.

Andrew Gurr, English professor at Reading and past contributor to *ANTIQUITY* on these matters, reminds us, 'Abandoning the study of these remains means that we lose permanently the opportunity to learn anything new about our greatest playwright's own theatre.' Anchor Terrace, sturdily built, can safely withstand more excavation in its basement, and that would leave most of the whole Globe site unsampled for the future. 'A policy on archaeological sites,' says Gurr, 'which insists on leaving them undiscovered is a paradox, brilliantly economical in cost, but appallingly smug about the ignorance those savings leave us in over the sites for which English Heritage has statutory responsibility. It acclaims the heritage concept and historical knowledge in principle, but denies it in practice.'

I would go further. If the Rose is indeed to stay buried, unexcavated and (one hopes) safely stable under its office block, in my view, the Globe then becomes sufficiently important that its considered exploration and recovery justifies large interference with, even demolition of Anchor Terrace;⁶ this is a building of a historical value but of so much less historical value than the Globe underneath, whose conservation *and* exploration should come first.

6 *The buildings of England** says of Anchor Terrace, 'a large, symmetrical composition of 1834. Projecting ends and centre with stone balustrades, iron balconies in between'; name of the architect not reported. A respectable example (also said to date to 1839) of one mid-19th-century building type of which a great many survive, it is in no way special within a numerous class.

More deserving of preservation than Anchor Terrace is the building put up a century later across on the other side of Southwark Bridge Road. This Universal House of 1933 is by Joseph Emberton — a structure of actual historical importance: 'one of the first buildings in England to follow the continental precedent and show rounded corners without any visible supports. The walls divided into horizontal strips of window glass and opaque pale green glass as a wall covering.'

Instead of much learning, too little conservation, we have the opposite unbalanced policy: much (hoped-for) conservation, too little learning.

☞ The state funding bodies for the British universities duly announced, in December 1996, the outcome of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE),⁷ the judging by subject and department of the quality of the nation's university research, intended to show which departments are worthy of which level of research-funding support until the next RAE in 2001.

The results for archaeology are good, as the table (opposite) shows in comparing the outcomes for 1992 and 1996. Strong winners appear to be Bradford and Leicester which have gone up two grades (plus Manchester, also up two grades after a merger with art history). Both departments I know to have been striving to improve themselves, under the leadership of strong and young professors, from a time of difficult circumstances. Nine departments go up by one grade, and three to the higher 5* rating within the top grade of 5. Not one department drops a grade, and the average rise is nearly a whole grade.

It all looks splendid: a great rise in quality, and a large rise also in the number of staff assessed — so quality is well up and quantity is well up. Since the point of the exercise is to identify and to reward successful research units, archaeology can expect a very large and deserved reward in most British universities! Quality up a quarter multiplied by quantity up a quarter equals a rise of a half!

Not so fast!

For a start, the large causes for concern expressed in varied contributions to *ANTIQUITY* in the March and June 1996 issues stand. One

But Universal House was demolished 1981–2.

A historical buildings policy that lost Universal House and now guards Anchor Terrace as if its historical value matches the Globe shows no good consistency of judgement.

* B. Cherry & N. Pevsner, *The buildings of England: London 2: South* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 590.

7 The RAE is a joint operation by the separate funding councils for England, Scotland and Wales, and by the Department for Education in Northern Ireland. The results are conveniently available on the English funding council's well-designed World Wide Web page at <http://www.niss.ac.uk/education/hefc.html>. The report on their work from the assessment panel for archaeology was not available as this number of *ANTIQUITY* went to press in late January.

institution	1992 score ^a	1996 score ^a	staff number ^b	'capability index'	Notes	
Cambridge	5	5*	25.5	153	5* Research quality that equates to attainable levels of international excellence in a majority of sub-areas of activity and attainable levels of national excellence in all others.	
Oxford	5	5*	27	121		
Sheffield	5	5*	20.8	125		
Belfast	4	5	10	37	5 Research quality that equates to attainable levels of international excellence in some sub-areas of activity and to attainable levels of national excellence in virtually all others.	
Bradford	3	5	18	90		
Durham	4	5	21.6	108		
Leicester	3	5	16	80		
Reading	5	5	11	55		
Southampton	5	5	21.2	106		
UCI. (London)	5	5	48.4	242		
Birmingham	3	4	19.5	78	3a Research quality that equates to attainable levels of national excellence in a substantial majority of the sub-areas of activity, or to international level in some and to national level in others together comprising a majority.	
Bristol	[5] ^c	4	7	28		
Cardiff	3	4	12.2	49		
Edinburgh	4	4	10.3	41		
Glasgow	3	4	13.3	53		
Liverpool	3	4	15	60		
Manchester	2	[4] ^d	8 ^d	—		
York	3	4	8.9	36		
Exeter	3	3a ^e	5.3	16		3b Research quality that equates to attainable levels of national excellence in the majority of sub-areas of activity.
Lampeter	3	3a	12	36		
Nottingham	2	3a	9	27		
Bournemouth	2	3b	16	48	1 Research quality that equates to attainable levels of national excellence in none, or virtually none, of the sub-areas of activity.	
Carmarthen	—	3b	2	1		
Newcastle	3	3b	11.2	25		
Newport	—	3b	4	12		
Stafford	2	2	2	4	The 1992 scale was the same, but without the 5/5* and 3a/3b splits within numbered grades.	
Winchester	—	2	3.8	6		
Queen Mary/ Westfield	2	— ^f				

Outcome of the British 1996 Research Assessment Exercise for archaeology by the 26 departments assessed (compared with the outcome for 25 in 1992). The first three columns of this summary are from the tables on the HEFCE web page.

The average score in 1992 was 3.3.

The scales being sub-divided for 1996, a matching average is hard to compute. If 5* is scored as 5.5, 3a as 3.5 and 3b as 3, then the 1996 average score is 4.1.

The average score rose between the two assessments by 0.8, or some 24%.

The total staff numbers assessed in 1996 on these lists comes to 388. The increase over 1992 is some 25%.

The research 'capability index' is the measure devised by Tim Darvill (Bournemouth) that combines rating, proportion of staff assessed and number of staff assessed: see note g (right) on its calculation, and text overleaf on its intention.

- c. In 1992 Bristol archaeology was assessed when combined with Classics.
- d. The Manchester Department of Archaeology of 1992 merged into a combined Department of History of Art and Archaeology for which the 1996 rating is 4; its archaeology component has 8 staff.
- e. Exeter's research group for archaeology of wetlands was 'flagged' for its higher quality.
- f. Queen Mary/Westfield closed Archaeology after 1992.
- g. The Bournemouth research 'capability index' is: capability = rating x proportion of staff assessed x number of staff assessed where rating is the assessed grade (3a/b both scored as 3, and 5* scored as 6) proportion is by the assessment classes for this, turned into a numerical multiplier (from A= 1 to D = 0.25)

was by Barry Cunliffe, who has led the 1996 archaeology assessors; we entitled his report 'The benefits of assessment, and some risks'. Quite right, that university research should not be funded without proper audit, in terms of knowledge as well as cash, of where the money goes. But it has simply not been demonstrated that the RAE *does* measure quality in any kind of fair way, or that the correlation between past achievement and future potential actually is so strong. The assessors in archaeology have been reading and judging the 372 individuals by the up to 4 publications offered from each = 1488 publications; many of these will have been full-length books, and many will have concerned specialist studies of which most assessors have no expert knowledge. All this is done in the time they can squeeze out of their already busy professional lives.

And there is no need here to moan on much more about the obscurities that surround the impossibility of judging that diverse research work in a simple grading scale. What *do* the criteria mean by 'research quality that equates to attainable levels' of national and of international excellence, in the recurrent phrase that defines the gradings? Since 'attainable' means 'that which can be reached', if it is not attainable, it is not material to the issue!⁸


Is the rise in quality a real one, or have the assessment thresholds been allowed to drift down? (The same question as one asks when student grades move sharply up: is the work better, or is it instead the marking which has become softer?) Or, have the thresholds stayed stable, while the universities — learning the plots and plays of these games — have contrived to present a better image of themselves. ('The students answer the exam questions better, but they don't actually know more.') Other games are being played at other levels, as the subjects are also in competition with each other. Does a subject which awards its departments

high grades thereby show itself good or, again, does it just admit to low standards of what constitutes excellence? ('Canny students choose the subjects where it is easy to get high grades; canny students may choose the subjects where it is hard to get high grades, because high grades there tell more.') Archaeology's average grade is up, but so are grades across the subject board.

The grades decide the allocation of an unchanged level of research funding. HEFCE (the English funding council) is not to fund the low-scoring 1 and 2 departments; then a factor kicks in, at 1 for grade 3b, increasing by 50% for each step to 5, so 1.5 for grade 3a, 2.25 for grade 4, 3.375 for grade 5; then a 20% premium for 5*, with a factor of 4.05. Unexpected sufferers, in a time of rising scores, may be those which scored well before, and have scored the same: a repeated top grade 5 means less funding; climbing within it up to 5* in 1996, means more.

The research weight of a department follows from size as well as quality. Darvill's 'capability index' intends to measure both; it makes an extra column in our league table. His numbers push UCL far in front, as the 5-graded department nearly twice the size of any other; and Darvill's own Bournemouth department is propelled from grade 3b up amongst the 4s.

No sooner one RAE than preparations for the next. Archaeology is at present classified as one of the Humanities and a classroom-based subject, in the lowest subject-funding band, rather than one recognizing also a field science with laboratory needs. The place of archaeology in the league-table of subjects by their costs is the larger deciding issue for the next caper.

 This is all the playing of games with arithmetic, games that will decide British futures; in other jurisdictions other games are played.

The variety of funding sources available to US universities seems such a treat, contrasted with the central control and centralized assessments of Britain. Until you remember the desire of the State of California to build so many prisons for those it puts into custody by its 'three-strikes and you're out' rule — a diverting of funds that affects the State's educational work; and where the financial health of the University of California visibly follows the passing state of that State's business cycle. Or remember the programmes whose 'research quality equates to attainable levels of international excellence', in the British RAE's

⁸ The less diligent method sketched in a previous ANTIQUITY editorial, and fairly described as 'rapid classing by common reputation on to the back of an old envelope', had some match with the official table: since no one knows what real truth about quality exists that is being measured, no one can say which measuring method is the better.

The old envelope in question, which I sealed away in the drawer with 'other dead editorial stuff', has fortunately not been retrieved, so the match is not here reported in the particular.

jargon, which have to fund themselves from private sponsorship, scrounged dollar by patient dollar; Peter Kuniholm has to do that for his dendrochronology project at Cornell which is fundamental to the archaeological chronologies of the later prehistoric western Mediterranean — a programme which sets the level of international excellence that is attainable.

The RAE is British-specific, but many ANTIQUITY readers elsewhere will themselves have encountered the same issues wherever (everywhere) there is more good research worth doing than resources to do it.

This said, what is now distinctive in the British system is the multiplying and overlapping of assessments — assessments for teaching, assessments for research, assessments in rival variants of 'quality control'. Each steals time, attention and effort from teaching and from research. Marilyn Strathern, leader of the anthropology department here at Cambridge, which has recently looked well in assessments of both roles, sees these as symptoms of a breakdown of trust. It is no longer believed that responsible professionals *will* carry out their responsibilities professionally; instead a proof is needed by *some* kind of a measure, however uncertainly the measure measures whatever it hopes to measure.

Enough said. This coverage in ANTIQUITY in its turn steals time, attention and space in our pages from research itself.

Noticeboard

Conferences

York, England: 4–7 September 1997

'Interpreting historic places in Britain and the United States: images, myth and identity': ideas and practice, British and US, of the cultural significance of historic places, especially those chosen to promote national history and culture.

Events Office, IoAAS, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP, England.

Bournemouth, England: 16–18 December 1997

TAG '97: annual conference of the Theoretical Archaeology group. Planned themes: 'People, burials and human remains', 'Archaeology and the public', 'Archaeology in art & literature', 'Social action: people, place & space', 'Theory & world archaeology', 'Buildings as artefacts' and 'Archaeology & indigenous people'. Session proposals by 1 May, individual papers later.

TAG Organizing Committee, School of Conservation Sciences, Bournemouth University, Poole BH12 5BB, England; (44)-1202-595478 FAX; tag@bournemouth.ac.uk e-mail.

Amsterdam, Netherlands: 12–17 July 1998

Classical Archaeology towards the Third Millennium, with three sections to address that theme: 'Society, economy, politics, & religion'; 'Archaeology in the field & in the museum'; 'Architecture and categories of material'. Abstracts by 1 January 1998.

Conference Office, Spui 21, 1012 WX Amsterdam, Netherlands; (31)-20-525-4791 FAX.

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