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and Quantative Methods in Archaeology CAA92 – Aarhus
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On behalf of the organisers - Jens Andresen and myself - I would like to welcome you all to CAA 92, the first CAA outside the United Kingdom.

Three years ago, when I was first approached with a question of whether I would be willing to take CAA 92, I must have said yes, although I still believe I said no.

In Southampton two years ago, when a motion was brought forward, I argued against bringing CAA outside the United Kingdom, but at the same time I promised that if the decision was to take it to Denmark, I would do my utmost to make it a success.

The three days to come will show if it is to become a success or not, but one look at the list of papers to be presented, and one look at the list of participants, leaves no room for evasion. I have to eat every word I said in Southampton - it is indeed possible to establish a viable CAA outside the United Kingdom.

The fact is that we have some 85 papers, and as of two days ago 204 persons had registered for the conference. Both figures are, I believe, unprecedented in CAA history.

CAA is growing, and so is its international importance. But not only CAA is growing, the whole field of applied information science is currently growing. Thus, the *communication in Archaeology* symposia at the second *World Archaeological Congress* in Venezuela September 90, was obviously a great success, to be substantiated later to day in a book presentation. The session on information science in Archaeology at the UISPP congress in Bratislava in September 91 was undoubtedly the most well organised and most successful of the many different sessions - or so at least it was commonly claimed in the corridors at the congress. Finally, a large and well visited European conference on information technology in archaeology was held in Paris in November 91.

The application of information science in archaeology is also beginning to come of age. Increasingly, we find contributions that are critical to the whole structure and organisation of traditional archaeological research, and claims are made for radical changes aiming to take archaeological information, and archaeological work procedures - methods if you wish - into a shared, electronic information universe, where equal and immediate access to data and methods are available to all. This is what Reilly and Rahtz in their introduction to the book to be presented here at half past twelve to day has called "the democratisation of archaeological knowledge".

However, this is a development that surely is going to spell trouble. To the vast majority of archaeologists - at least in Denmark - the computer is merely an advanced typewriter and/or a calculator. It is not in any way considered to be anything of consequence to archaeology as such. To suggest that the archaeological research tradition should be completely renewed based upon information scientific approach is indeed to step out of line, and commit a capital offence.

And why, then, is it a capital offence? A lot of reasons can and will be given, most of them along the well known line that it is unacceptable to have the humanistic, archaeological research reduced to something mechanical to take place inside a machine. But deep down, fear is the key. It is the fear of the unknown, of the consequences of something you do not understand properly. It is the fear of the established to have their hard-earned positions undermined by a democratisation of knowledge and methods to handle that knowledge. It is a fear of personal insufficiency; a fear of seeing the "button pressers" pass by while you yourself is left behind.

It may well be that I am far too pessimistic concerning the reactions of the archaeological establishment to a full-scale introduction of information science into archaeology. It may all happen a lot more smoothly than I imagine. The real reason for me to bring my doubts forward, however, is that no matter what strength the repercussion will have - and it will be there, I am sure, we should consciously go ahead, and try to

bring about an electronically based archaeological research universe, and we should not go silently about it either.

To me the worst thing that can happen is if the computer, as the versatile tool it really is, should be adopted exclusively with an aim to reinforce the traditional research design, where knowledge acquisition and preparation takes place in closed circuits, and information is made available in carefully controlled discharges only. It does not make any difference then if the publications that appear are printed traditionally, or if they are distributed electronically.

"Is it simply naive to hope for what might be termed the democratisation of archaeological knowledge on a global basis?" Reilly and Rahtz ask in their introduction. Yes it is probably too naive, but then naivety may occasionally be strength. We must work towards a total integration of archaeological information and the methods to handle this information with, we must work against the tendencies for disintegration so apparent to day, and we must do this with all the naive beliefs of success we can bring together, for if we loose our naivety we may be tempted to quit the job.

Many of the papers on this years CAA concern themselves with the structure, organisation and dissemination of archaeological information. This was also true with last year's conference, and no doubt the number will increase with the conferences to come. This is a trend to nourish, and I would like to urge people to go into closer cooperation on an international level. This cooperation should primarily aim towards consent on a logical design of the information to be handled and on the design of a communication structure for the dissemination of the information.

Now CAA is not an organisation for setting down committees to decide on standards. CAA is a meeting place, where archaeologists, computer scientist and statisticians can meet and render inspiration to each other. But where people meet sweet tunes often arise. My request to you is thus to use this conference - and perhaps especially the late night sessions - to discuss among other things how we go about creating a shared electronic information universe in archaeology.

Finally, I would once more like to welcome you all. I hope you will have three advantageous days, and that you will remember Århus for the good, and forget whatever organisational blunders we may make.

With these words I will leave the stand to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Aarhus - Henning Lehman - for the official opening of the conference.