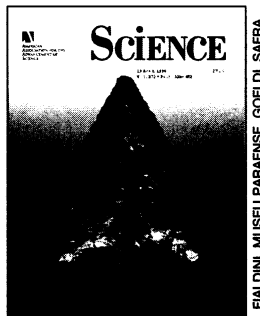


LETTERS

Cultural relations

Describing a field trip to China, a writer says that it "was scientifically productive and enjoyable." In another letter, Chinese scientists are praised for "adhering to their . . . independence from interference" in disclosing a case of plagiarism. And the excavation of a Paleoindian site in the Brazilian Amazon is discussed in light of radiocarbon dating, statistical procedure, and the larger archaeological record of Early Americans. (Right, quartz spear point, 6.4 centimeters long, discovered at that site.)



Plagiarism in China

I am glad that the Chinese scientific community *finally* succeeded in disclosing a case of plagiarism (News & Comment, 18 Oct., p. 337). The case was an open secret, of which I became aware when I was conducting research in Beijing in early 1996. I talked with the two authors who disclosed the case in the *Journal of Dialectics of Nature*. From what I learned then, it appears that there was pressure not to publicly discuss the case. The article was first submitted to another journal for publication. I was told later by one of the authors that three journals declined to publish it.

I applaud the Chinese scientists for adhering to their upright attitude toward scientific research and, most important, to their independence from interference.

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month in China doing fieldwork at the same time (and, in fact, on a very similar subject) as Lucas, Geissman, and Molina-Garza, and I was fully and generously hosted by my Chinese colleagues. I did not spend one yuan. Both the individual scientists and the institutions I worked with were extremely gracious, and the trip was scientifically productive and enjoyable.

It would be wrong to impugn the Chinese scientific community on the basis of this unfortunate incident. Let us hope that an amicable and mutually satisfying resolution to this dispute can be found and that ongoing and future U.S.-Chinese collaborations will not be imperiled by escalation into inappropriate venues.

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Paleoindians in the Brazilian Amazon

Anna C. Roosevelt *et al.* (Article, 19 Apr., p. 373) present results of excavation of Caverna da Pedra Pintada at Monte Alegre, an important early site in the Brazilian Amazon. A valuable critical review of other putatively pre-Clovis age [earlier than about 11,200 carbon-14 years before the present (B.P.)] South American sites is buried in the footnotes of their article. Ironically, after questioning the validity of these dates, Roosevelt *et al.* advance the culture disclosed at Monte Alegre as a Clovis contemporary, with the stated implication that North American Clovis was not "the sole source" of human migration into South America: "Clovis is evidently just one of several regional traditions."

U.S.-Chinese Collaborations

Jeffrey Mervis, in his article "Both sides point finger in tiff over China dig" (News & Comment, 1 Nov., p. 715) about a conflict between Chinese and American geoscientists working in western China, reports an unfortunate occurrence, from which readers might conclude that systemic impropriety on the part of Chinese scientists and institutions was to blame.

I do not presume to know the details of the incident, but I emphatically urge caution against generalizing that such incidents are characteristic of fieldwork in China or that they in any way typify relations between U.S. and Chinese scientists. I spent a

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