

SYMPOSIUM IN MEMORIAM. ARTHUR C. AUFDERHEIDE  
THE SCIENTIST, THE FRIEND (1922-2013)

## PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

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**Abstract.** Remembering Arthur Carl Aufderheide, Art as he liked to be called by his many friends, is to speak of so many things that a session of a Mummy Congress looks much shorter than needed. On the other hand, it is impossible to bring Art to our memory without thinking of Mary, his lovely wife. In this short presentation we (because I am speaking

on behalf of all the people in this island that had the privilege to know them) make the story of the first meetings with the Aufderheides and their consequences. They represent everything a person can expect of a friend, a colleague, an intellectual, and, over all, someone who is always trying to make the things easier.

**Keywords.** Aufderheide. Arthur. Mary. Tenerife.

## A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF ARTHUR C. AUFDERHEIDE

Art was born in New Ulm (Minnesota) on September 9, 1922, inside a family of German origin (he told me that he spoke German before learning to speak English). His basic education took place in the Lutheran Parochial School of New Ulm and then in St. Olaf College.

The medical education of Art in the School of Medicine of the University of Minnesota, in Minneapolis, was curious because he had to complete it in only three

years, finishing in 1946, due to the need for physicians of the Medical Corps of the US Army during World War II.

After his military duty, Art became a pathology specialist after completing his specialized training in the University of Minnesota and Rochester Medical Hospital.

### **The Army**

The US Army called him to keep his military duty around the time he was beginning his medical studies. This happens in a curious manner: the visit of several US Army Officers to the School of Medicine who told him and his classmates that they had two options: to finish their medical studies in three years to serve as medical officers as soon as possible or to go directly and immediately to the front. For sure, Art and his friends chose the first option and fortunately for him the war ended a few months before he finished his studies.

Due to his commitment to the Army, Art was stationed in Europe (Germany) between 1947-1949 as a medical captain. Married during this postwar period to Mary Buryk (our Mary), this was – in his own words – one of the happiest periods in their lives taking advantage for travelling, one of the things that they liked more, and knowing in depth the old, and then almost destroyed, Europe.

### **Medical and academic career**

After completing his military duties in Europe, Art returned to the United States to be specialized in pathology at the University of Minnesota and Rochester Medical Hospital. Around 1950 he began his professional career reaching important medical positions like head of the Department of Pathology in the Minneapolis Veterans and St. Luke hospitals, founder and professor of Pathology at the School of Medicine of the University of Minnesota-Duluth Campus and head of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at that university, as well as the founder and first Director of his famous Paleobiology Laboratory (included in the Department of Pathology).

## **EXPERIENCES**

Apart of his passion, that without a single doubt was medicine, Art was a lively person who had a true and deep adventurer spirit and these characteristics of his personality pushed him to do things that few persons are able to carry out. It is

clear that Art had the fortune to have his twin soul, Mary, who supported, animated, helped... and resisted his ideas and projects.

Therefore, it is not strange that after a meeting at Duluth, in 1965, with a friend who was organizing a Polar expedition for the next year, Art was finally recruited as physician of that expedition and went to the top of the world in the very famous "Plaisted Pollar Expedition" in 1966, and although they didn't succeed in reaching the North Pole this fascinating experience marked him to perform many projects around the world and was very useful for his future paleopathological trips and expeditions around the world.

Other fantastic experience in his life was to spend three different periods during three continuous years with the Inuits.

## OUR FIRST MEETING

When the founder of Tenerife's Archaeological Museum, Luis Diego Cuscoy, retired in 1986, he was substituted by Rafael González-Antón (Rafa) who wanted to increase the bioanthropological research there and for doing that he called me to organize that branch in 1987. So, the first thing that I did was to review the library to check the bioanthropological bibliography we had and the curious thing - or perhaps or more probably the destiny - was that the first book that I saw there was that of Aidan and Eve Cockburn *Mummies, Disease and Ancient Cultures* and when I opened the volume a hidden letter fell to the ground. That letter was signed by Eve asking for pictures of Guanche (Tenerife's prehispanic inhabitants) mummies for the new edition of the book. Rafa and I sent the needed pictures and in her answer she asked us to write a short paper on the history of paleopathological research in the Canaries to be published in the *Paleopathology*



Fig. 1. Arthur Aufderheide

*Newsletter*. Art read this paper in 1988 and he wrote to Rafa asking for articles on Guanche mummies that were sent immediately and as an answer we got a box full of scientific papers on his own... and a surprise.

That surprise was the announcement that he was interested on Guanche mummies and he and his, up to then unknown for us, wife Mary were preparing their visit to Tenerife... the first of their many visits. So, in October 1988 Mary and Art arrived to the island and after observing the Guanche mummified and skeletal collections presented a short report on the possibilities of a research project to be done by us and his team.

Everybody know well the consequences of that first visit and his report: the organization of the so-called "CRONOS PROJECT. Bioanthropology of Guanche mummies" consisting in the opening of an international exhibition entitled "*Mummies, secrets of the past*" and the holding of the first (at that moment modestly called "international" and not "world") Congress on Mummy Studies that was key for the organization of nine more congresses around the world up to our days.



**Fig. 2.** Conrado Rodríguez-Maffiotte, Arthur and Mary Aufderheide during one of the sessions of the I World Congress of Mummy Studies (Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, 1992).

## AFTER CRONOS

Art continued his collaboration with Tenerife's Archaeological Museum and the then recently created Instituto Canario de Bioantropología in projects and courses during many years after CRONOS. At the end of 1993 he proposed me to write together a book on paleopathology that included skeletal and soft tissue paleopathology, the skeletal part should be written by me and the chapters on soft tissue by Art. After contacting several publishers, Cambridge University Press decided to publish the book with the title *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Paleopathology* (1998). This constituted a true surprise for me and it demonstrates the confidence and the faith of Art for the young people, apart of his sincere love.

The last two visits of Art Aufderheide to Tenerife were in 1996 and 1999 to take part in paleopathology and bioanthropology courses organized by the Instituto Canario de Bioantropología (belonging, as the Archaeological Museum, to the Organismo Autónomo de Museos y Centros of the Cabildo de Tenerife).

But, for sure, this was not the last time we met. Our meetings in other places of the world were frequent and we attended together congresses and more congresses on paleopathology and mummy studies like those of Nuuk (Greenland), Torino (Italy), Santorini (Greece), Tegui (Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain), etc.

The mummy meeting of 2009 organized by Albert Zink in the Institute for Mummy Studies in the Eurac, Bolzano (Italy) was the last time that I had the privilege to meet Mary and Art and I had the feeling or, better, the premonition that, regrettably, that should be in fact the last time. After that we kept in frequent contact by mail, interchanging ideas and commenting sport news, especially the victories of Rafa Nadal, the Spanish tennis player, of whom Art was a true fan... until a day that he didn't answer my mails anymore when he was confined in Solvay Hospice House.

## THE END

I knew about the death of Art on 10 August 2013, while I was for holidays in the small island of La Gomera (close to Tenerife) through a phone call from Mercedes Martín, biologist in the Canarian Institute of Bioanthropology and friend of Art too, at 9.30 a.m. saying "Arthur died yesterday in Solvay Hospice House".

The impact, or better the shock, that Art's death caused in the scientific community was tremendous and for all of us was absolutely sad because he was a

case of those absolutely uncommon persons that seem to be eternal, that one thinks that cannot die or, from a selfish point of view, that “they do not have the right to die” because with their death they are taking away not only their presence but their wisdom and knowledge.

Art was one of these uncommon persons for all the people who had the privilege to know him that when they are gone leave a true feeling of orphans.

Almost four years later, on June 2017 Mary Buryk Aufderheide died in Minnesota. During four entire years Felipe Cárdenas, Jane Buikstra, Bernardo Arriaza, along with other friends, tried to know where Mary was... without success.

Mercedes Martín knew the sad new of Mary's death almost a year later through internet and only few weeks before the opening of the Extraordinary World Congress on Mummy Studies held here in the International Auditorium of Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

## THE HUMAN BEINGS

Mary and Art, Art and Mary. It is impossible to imagine one of them without the other conforming a compendium of education, friendship, generosity, kindness, elegance, modesty and honesty that are very uncommon to find.

MARY AND ART AUFDERHEIDE REST IN PEACE.