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Volume 11 Vegetation History and,4rchaeobotany starts with a special double issue, the outcome of the 12th symposium of the international Workgroup for Palaeoethnobotany (IWGP) at Sheffield, 17th-24th of June 2001. This is the third time that the proceedings of the triannual meeting have been published in a special double issue of Vegetation History and Archaeobotany, the official organ of the IWGP. For this issue M Charles and G Jones act as additional guest editors. The IWGP meeting was attended by 123 participants from 25 countries and in all there were more than 70 presentations. The papers covered a wide geographical and chronological range and were presented under four themes although, inevitably, some papers cover more than one theme. All these themes are included in this volume: consumption: food, fodder and cuisine (Bakels, Dalnoki and Jacomet, Valamoti), collecting and cultivation (Kubiak-Martens, Bieniek, Fairbaim et al., Willcox, Wollstonecroft), historical archaeobotany (Motta, Jacomet et al., Robinson M, Zach, Benes et al., Vermeeren and van Haaster) and analytical archaeobotany (Butler, Charles et al., Rösch et al., Bogaard, Karg and Mdrkle, Kreuz and Schdfer). The symposium provided a forum for lively debate and the papers presented demonstrate how alive this area of research is at the beginning of the 21st century. The editors of this 'special' volume are grateful to the referees for their prompt work and diligence.

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