

---

# Bocquet-Appel's contributions to paleodemography

Lyle Konigsberg\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign [Urbana] – États-Unis

## Résumé

For many of us outside France, our first introduction to Bocquet-Appel's work in paleodemography came via his seminal publication with Masset in 1982: "Farewell to paleodemography." This work came only five years after the completion of Bocquet-Appel's doctoral thesis. The article has been and continues to be widely cited. In fact, as of the last count in Scopus, the article has been cited almost 300 times, giving it the highest count of any of Bocquet-Appel's articles. Indeed, it outstrips Bocquet-Appel's second most cited article ("When the world's population took off") by about 150 citations. Given the importance of this work, my presentation begins with a summary of the impact of the "Farewell to paleodemography" article and its direct aftermath.

While Bocquet-Appel bid farewell to paleodemography in 1982, we are very fortunate that he nevertheless continued to work and publish on paleodemographic methods and analyses. Initially, the farewell to paleodemography article was met with a number of what can only be characterized as relatively unthinking responses. Among these I would count Buikstra and Konigsberg's 1985 article "Paleodemography: critiques and controversies." But with the passage of time, it became clear that Bocquet-Appel and Masset's article was not so much an actual "farewell" as a call for a paradigm shift in paleodemographic methods. Bocquet-Appel was at the vanguard of this paradigm shift. Much of the history of Bocquet-Appel's contributions to paleodemographic methods have already been described in book chapters by Daniel Courgeau, so I only recount some of the major points. A relatively little known fact is that Bocquet-Appel served as one of the discussants for a 2009 poster symposium titled "The coming of age of age estimation" at the American Association of Physical Anthropologists meetings in Chicago. This symposium, co-organized by Konigsberg and Frankenberg, included a poster on tooth cementum annulation on which Bocquet-Appel was an author and which was presented by a young Stephan Naji. Sadly, this was the only time that I met Bocquet-Appel face-to-face and was able to speak with him about developments in the field of paleodemography.

Although the title of this presentation is specific to paleodemography, it is also important to realize that Bocquet-Appel's work contributed to a more general contrast between calibration methods that use an informative prior versus those that use a diffuse prior. This has implications for a host of applications including topics as diverse as estimating stature for *Homo floresiensis* and determining whether an asylum seeker is under an age threshold.

---

\*Intervenant