
EDITORIAL

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In his final Editorial, my predecessor John Chapman (Vol 4(3):300–301, Fig. 2), drew attention to an imbalance in the content of the Journal towards the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Copper/Bronze Age, with about 37% of articles published in the *Journal of European Archaeology* (vols 1–5) and latterly the *European Journal of Archaeology* concerned with these periods; a further 30% were not focused on a specific period. My own survey, based entirely on *EJA* vols 1–4, suggests that 64% of articles have been prehistoric in focus, with 20% not period-specific. Only 20% of the prehistoric articles, 13% of the total, dealt with the Iron Age. This imbalance, it must be stressed, is largely a reflection of submissions, and so is supply led, but clearly it does not entirely reflect the interests of our readership. Another weakness of our coverage, though less so in the earlier issues of the Journal, has been in heritage management (and although EAA members and other readers working in these fields are clearly interested in discussions of specific periods or research problems, there is obviously a place for mature reflection and discussion of the important issues they meet in their everyday activity).

This issue contains three articles, the earliest of which – in terms of its chronological coverage – regards the early Iron Age. Specialists in earlier periods cannot be too disappointed however, as five of the nine articles published in issues 5(1) and (2) have regarded the Neolithic and Copper/Bronze Age. Moreover we include an important ‘heritage management’ article which discusses a problem that impacts on all archaeologists in their professional activity; the preservation of digital data.

The first article, by Christopher Knüssel, discusses the early Iron Age Vix burial, integrating the information provided by the tomb furniture with a discussion of the skeletal evidence. Knüssel proposes that the ‘princess’ might best be seen as a ritual specialist, discussing the rôles played by both shamans and priests in both the ancient world and ethnographic accounts. Shamans have become relatively popular as a category for the analysis of ancient behaviour, but this article is not just a naïve attempt to find an analogue. The article concludes that the burial is that

of a diminutive (160 cm high) female, of about 35–40 years, whose skeleton exhibited certain androgynous traits. Apparently she would have presented with a waddling gait and held her head tilted to the right side. Knüssel suggests that she became pre-eminent through the exercise of ritual power, perhaps in relation to the consumption of wine. Indeed Knüssel notes that the *Vix krater*, filled to the brim, would contain the equivalent of about 1500 bottles of wine!

Zsolt Vágner's article is a review of our evidence for tenth to sixteenth-century pottery kilns in the territory of medieval Hungary, bringing together evidence from a number of modern states: Hungary, Slovakia, Yugoslavia–Serbia and Romania. Discussion of the archaeological evidence (for which the bibliography gives a useful entrée for those less familiar with work in the Carpathian Basin) is flanked by twentieth-century ethnographic evidence; archival evidence is less useful. Vágner identifies two main types, up-draught and horizontal-draught kilns, each of which is further divided into single- and two-chambered subtypes.

The third article, by Julian Richards, the director of the UK's Archaeology Data Service, identifies a crisis in the publication and archiving of archaeological field data in Europe. This crisis is not of course just an issue for the heritage management community, but affects all archaeologists, even those not involved in archaeological excavation as such. We all need access to data, and data-sets need to be preserved so that interpretations and conclusions based on their manipulation can be verified, an essential precondition of scientific research. However, the growing pace of archaeological excavation and investigation means that increasingly fieldwork is not published – or only partially published – and even the production of the so-called grey literature (including archive reports deposited with heritage management agencies) is only partial. Richards concentrates on digital data, which is produced in increasing amounts by all archaeological investigations (spreadsheets, databases, CAD files, GIS, etc.); he reviews strategies for its preservation, and discusses the solutions adopted by the Archaeological Data Service that he directs. As a university-based archaeologist, I cannot stress enough the importance of this issue, whose impact is not limited to our heritage management colleagues; I can, moreover, testify to the usefulness of the resource that the Archaeology Data Service provides, both for teaching and in the research carried out by students and colleagues.

The *European Journal of Archaeology* caters for a wide-ranging readership, both in terms of geographical distribution and period interest, and it is probably therefore impossible to keep all our readers happy all of the time. Our aim, however, is to stimulate constant reflection and debate, to promote a solid European dimension to our discipline. At the close of my first year as General Editor, I trust that this target has been met.