
EDITORIAL

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Few of those who were present at the Inaugural Meeting of the EAA in Ljubljana in September 1994 will forget the feeling of anticipation that electrified the hall as the meeting opened. The *Journal of European Archaeology* – predecessor of the *EJA* – had existed for some time, and that project, ‘a new journal for a new idea of Europe’ (Editorial Board 1993:1), was now to be extended, uniting all archaeologists across the continent in a single association.

The mood must have been rather similar to the enthusiasm of the pioneers of prehistoric archaeology who met in the nineteenth-century international congresses in Neuchâtel, Paris, Norwich, Copenhagen or Bologna, and those meetings of pioneers not only created the international scholarly community that brought about prehistory’s emergence as a discipline, but they also galvanized the archaeological research of the countries in which they were held (Desittere 1991; Pearce 1994:25–26). In this respect the Bologna meeting is especially instructive, coinciding as it did with the final (re)unification of peninsular Italy as Rome fell to the Piedmontese. Like the Ljubljana meeting in Slovenia, the Bologna meeting of 1871 was held in the context of national renewal, as the map of Europe was being redrawn.

The Austrian chancellor Metternich famously dismissed the nascent state of Italy as merely a ‘geographical expression’, but it is this very quality that is the strength of the EAA, transcending political and economic boundaries: Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.

The *EJA* ‘seeks to promote open debate amongst archaeologists committed to a new idea of Europe in which there is more communication across national frontiers and more interest in interpretation’ (‘Aims and scope’, inside front cover), and it is this word ‘interpretation’ which gives the key to the special role of our Journal. There are many archaeological journals (some would say too many) and many fora for the presentation of empirical data. The *EJA* has made a name for itself as *the* forum for interpretative articles whose interest goes beyond the local or the national. However our aim is not to enforce a single theoretical viewpoint, to homogenize European archaeology; each tradition has its own agenda, its own questions that are of relevance: European archaeology is thankfully a ‘pluriverse’ (Tosi and Pearce 1998:V) and this diversity is its strength. We have much to learn from one another: as Ian Hodder (1986:106) warns ‘. . . intellectual colonialism [may be defined as to] impose on the

[other society] our own . . . concepts, explain *their* culture in *our* terms, without trying to understand them, to let *them* teach *us*' (original emphasis).

John Chapman achieved much in his editorship, and I am in the enviable position of reaping what he has sown, so that I fear that he will not get sufficient credit for the growing impact of the *EJA*. This impact can be measured both in the number of submissions sent to the Journal – I have inherited more than a year's material – but also strangely in the number of submissions by authors based in UK universities. The status of British archaeology departments, and crucially their funding, depends on a periodic assessment of the 'quality' of their research, the Research Assessment Exercise (see for example Chippindale 1997:4–7). One of the measures used is the status of the journals in which research is published, and the *EJA*'s growing reputation is thus demonstrated by the number of British-based submissions. In other words it shows that British academics, at least, consider the Journal a prestigious place to publish. We should all be very grateful to John for his hard work on behalf of the Association and the Journal.

As John wrote in his last editorial, I am acutely aware that the geographical distribution of the articles published does not accurately reflect the membership of our Association. Likewise I hope to overcome the gender imbalance he illustrated. I also would like to see more heritage management themes in the Journal. However the articles published reflect submissions, and the only way to achieve these aims is to encourage submissions. The *EJA* is the Journal of the Association, and participation by members is the natural expression of that ownership.

This issue of *EJA* has a distinctly Neolithic tone, and Clive Bonsall, Mark Macklin, David Anderson and Robert Payton make an important contribution to the ongoing debate about the importance of hunting-and-gathering in the early Neolithic economy and offer a climatic explanation for the delay in the adoption of agriculture in north-west Europe. I shall be setting this as reading for my students taking the 'early Neolithic Britain' course.

In that they are bounded units, islands are often seen as ideal laboratories for the study of archaeological phenomena, and there have been various articles dealing with islands in the Journal (e.g. Robb 2001). Two articles in this issue deal with island archaeology. Chris Scarre's article suggests that 'islands appear to have held a special significance which made them especially appropriate for the placement of the dead' (p. 34) and discusses the siting of burial monuments on Ouessant and the Molène archipelago with reference to the effects of tidal ebb and flow. The ritual landscape he reconstructs shows a clear logic, and his insights into coastal beliefs will be applicable to other situations. Anders Götherström, Niklas Stenbäck and Jan Storå reinterpret the middle Neolithic site of Jettböle on the Åland Islands between Sweden and Finland, with the aim of identifying and interpreting the social practices and depositional processes at the site. They rightly draw attention to the immense problems archaeologists face when trying to separate the sacred from the profane. Their article is an excellent example of how DNA evidence can be integrated into more conventional archaeological discourse. They observe that 'most studies based on ancient human DNA so far have been of more genetic interest than archaeological interest' (p. 60), and this point is of wider application: if archaeometry is to make a serious contribution to our discipline, the formidable battery of techniques that are now available to us must be brought to bear on answering *archaeological* questions. In a rather more technical article in the archaeological science section of the Journal, Janet Redman, Malcolm Stewart and Angela Gernaey discuss mycolic acids as biomarkers for the diagnosis of ancient tuberculosis and suggest how the information obtained might contribute to our understanding of the past.

Staša Babić's review of research on central Balkan 'princely graves' offers an interesting intellectual history of work on these monuments and the evolution of the concept of the 'Glasinac culture'. She offers her own hypothesis for the mechanisms by which Greek prestige goods reached the central Balkans, informed by the contemporary debate on the context of the classical world within which those processes operated. Her comment that the 'grand project of European archaeology . . . can be successful only if all the particularities of European experience are taken into account, modern as well as past' (p. 71) goes to the heart of my point about homogenization.

Tom Saunders moves us back to Atlantic Europe, with an explicitly Marxist discussion of how the organization of space within the Archbishop's Palace in Trondheim reflects the socio-political context of late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century AD Norway.

Finally – and trespassing into the Reviews section which is edited by Peter Biehl and Alexander Gramsch and introduced in their 'Book marks' – a brief word about Miriam Noël Haidle's review of the XIVth UISPP congress, a very different affair to the Annual Meeting of the EAA. As I have tried to outline above, it is when archaeologists come together and contribute from the perspective of their own scientific context (and when we listen to one another) that our own archaeologies are enriched.

As Editor I welcome your suggestions – please feel free to contact members of the Editorial Board or me directly (mark.pearce@nottingham.ac.uk).

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