European Journal of Archaeology 21 (4) 2018, 503–505

Editorial

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Welcome to the final issue of the *European Journal of Archaeology* (*EJA*) for 2018. In this issue, we present six articles spanning topics as different as Neanderthal studies in northern Europe, mobility in Iron Age Greece and whaling in the early medieval and Viking periods. It is also noteworthy that, of these six articles, fully half are open access, which is the highest proportion we have ever had in an issue of the *EJA*. Publishing is a rapidly changing world at the moment, and there are numerous ongoing debates about how and whether to publish academic research open access (n.b. one of us (CF) has weighed in on this in the context of the *EJA* previously in *The European Archaeologist*: https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/EAA/Navigation_Publications/TEA_content/debate.aspx~openaccess), but suffice to say we feel strongly that the growing support of funding bodies, universities and other employers for open access publications can only be a positive step forward. These six articles are followed by ten book reviews. Below, we summarize and comment on these contributions.

Trine Kellberg Nielsen and Felix Riede's article focusses on the historiography of Pleistocene archaeology in Scandinavia and applies network analysis models to address how and why Scandinavian literature has remained peripheral to the wider European Palaeolithic literature. Among their most interesting results is the observation that Pleistocene research in this region has been considerably hampered by the existence of two parallel spheres of research: one made up of professional archaeologists and the other of amateurs and collectors. Most worrying was their observation that, in one Finnish example, controversial and questionable archaeological data have been incorporated relatively uncritically into children's literature. It would be interesting to see more attention paid to research networks in specific subfields of archaeology, though a greater focus on the social dynamics of those networks would be welcome.

Moving into the Neolithic, Václav Vondrovský turns our attention to the orientation of that most fascinating form of architecture, the Linearbandkeramic longhouse. In his article, Vondrovský argues that the orientation of these longhouses might be connected to the position of the sun, rather than universally pointing towards an ancestral homeland as other archaeologists have argued. These previous studies, he argues, have come to their conclusions based on a geographically unrepresentative sample of longhouses, as there is clear variation in longhouse orientation in eastern and western LBK zones. In order to look at the significance of solar position (and, thus, sunlight and shadow) to the orientation of longhouses, Vondrovský conducts shadow impact and solar radiation analyses on 3D models of two longhouses—one from Bylany and one from Cuiry-lès-Chaudards. He concludes that the more east-west orientation of western longhouses, as compared to the more north-south orientation of their eastern predecessors and

© European Association of Archaeologists 2018 doi:10.1017/eaa.2018.33

https://doi.org/10.1017/eaa.2018.33 Published online by Cambridge University Press

contemporaries, still results in similar light and shadow patterns, suggesting that it reflects a shift in practice (and perhaps also cosmology), but probably not a major change.

Maikel Kuipers takes us into the Bronze Age via a detailed technological study of Early Bronze Age axes. He frames his material analyses with a deep dive into the long-held belief that the rise of bronze tools coincided with a rise in craft specialists. In this extended discussion of specialization and specialists, Kuipers makes the valuable point that archaeologists too often conflate economic specialisation and technical specialisation, and he argues that more care needs to be taken in assessing both the skills of prehistoric craftspeople and the Bronze Age economy. He illustrates how this approach might look by illustrating the *chaîne opératoire* of a number of bronze axes and detailing the level of technical still evidenced at each production stage, which he uses to highlight the variety of skill-levels—from amateur to virtuoso—which ancient bronze smiths seem to have attained and which archaeologists might productively explore. However, we remain unconvinced by his assertion that skilful production automatically equates to higher valued artefacts and higher social status for artisans—perhaps research into these questions that moves away from the well-trodden path of bronze axes and swords would offer greater illumination on this point.

Shifting into southeastern Europe, Laura Dietrich and colleagues take us to the Late Bronze Age site of Rotbav in order to discuss whether its so-called 'ashmound'—a light grey deposit full of bone and other materials—might represent the remains of collective feasting. They compared the ashmound assemblage to established criteria for identifying feasting sites, and found considerable overlap. In particular, they point to the high proportion of round stones and clay balls used for cooking, fine ceramic drinking cups and a faunal assemblage dominated by meat-rich joints of large animals, in contrast to the faunal assemblage of the nearby settlement where smaller animals predominate. While this intriguing site offers credible evidence for collective activities, including feasting, future work on the topic would benefit from a wider scope to set this sort of Late Bronze Age feasting within its broader social, economic and regional contexts.

Eleni Panagiotopoulou and colleagues offer us further insights into southeastern European prehistory with their discussion of mobility patterns drawn from strontium isotope analyses in Early Iron Age northeast Greece. Isotopic mobility studies have become a regular feature of archaeological research because they are able to shed light on the pattern of movement of specific individuals in prehistory, often disrupting long-held assumptions about people, place and extent of mobility. In this case, the authors used isotopic analyses to examine whether changes in burial location and funerary practice at four cemetery sites in Thessaly could be linked to incoming populations. Their results were variable: at three of the sites, most individuals appeared to be local, while at the fourth non-local individuals were present. Interestingly, these non-locals were buried in a traditional manner and do not look like outsiders archaeologically, reinforcing the point that the scientific category 'non-local' and the anthropological category 'non-local' are not identical and should not be conflated. This is a valuable and well-presented reminder that, while scientific tools can give us extraordinary insight into elements of the archaeological record, that record is itself intensely human and cultural, so interpretation must be careful and nuanced.

The final article in this issue is Andreas Hennius and colleagues' fascinating discussion of whaling and whalebone gaming pieces in early medieval Scandinavia. This work

https://doi.org/10.1017/eaa.2018.33 Published online by Cambridge University Press

explores bone and antler gaming pieces dated to the first millennium AD in order to investigate the nature of whalebone acquisition at this time. Based on typological and faunal analyses of gaming pieces—a previously understudied material category—the authors suggest that whalebone (especially from North Atlantic right whales) was increasingly exploited from the sixth century AD. This date correlates with increases in whalebone and blubber exploitation identified at archaeological sites in coastal Scandinavia, particularly northern Norway. Hennius and colleagues conclude that the increasing numbers of whalebone gaming pieces during the Vendel and into the Viking periods indicate both that exploitation of maritime resources was of increasing importance during this time and that trade networks known from later periods—through which circulated exotic and elite materials—were already well established by the late first millennium AD.

In our reviews section, we begin with praise for a new book on current theoretical perspectives in archaeology—one that favours approaches such as symmetric, non-anthropocentric and post-human archaeologies. Next, general readers and students are recommended to read Paul Bahn's latest overview of world archaeology. A festschrift dedicated to the late zooarchaeologist, Tony Legge, is also praised, while a book hypothesizing a link between Palaeolithic rock art and elites is challenged. We then present a set of four reviews of five new books extending culturally, chronologically and geographically from hunter-gatherers (both globally and in Sweden) to the Parthian Empire and its relations with Rome, to human connectivities and conflicts up to the twentieth century. We then end with reviews of two new edited volumes on the history of archaeology, which contribute respectively to our understanding of antiquarianism and of nationalism.

If you are interested in submitting an article on any aspect of European archaeology, or have recently published a book that you would like us to review, do please get in touch with a member of our editorial team or visit us on https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-archaeology

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