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Editorial

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Welcome to this year's second issue of the *European Journal of Archaeology*. In this issue we feature five articles with a clear focus on prehistory—a bit of a change from our recent spate of excellent Roman and medieval topics. Despite the prehistoric focus, the approaches are quite variable, ranging from fine-grained contextual studies of specific sites to broad statistical investigations of big data and experimental work as well as a focus on early excavation methods. This issue also includes reviews of seven books, including monographs on the philosophy of archaeology and archaeological pedagogies, respectively, as well as a series of edited volumes on diverse periods and materials.

This issue starts with a beautifully detailed examination of early Neolithic pottery from the Cabeço da Amoreira shellmiddens by Ruth Taylor and colleagues. They apply macroscopic and microscopic methods of analysis to a corpus of about 1000 sherds of recently excavated ceramic sherds in order to understand the diversity of the assemblage and of the human practices which produced it, as well as to develop a better understanding of its provenance and, concomitantly, of the mobility of people, things, and new technologies in the earliest Neolithic in Portugal. Based on the results of this analysis, they suggest that the earliest pottery users at this shellmiddens site were also pottery makers, though with ties to other potting communities. As they note, this detailed study of a single site's assemblage has potentially far-ranging implications for our understanding of the emergence of Neolithic ways of life in western Iberia, the overlap or relation between Neolithic and Mesolithic communities, and supra-regional models of the maritime spread of pottery into Iberia.

Monica Mărgărit and colleagues develop a functional study of freshwater mussel shells from the fifth millennium BC site of Cheia in Romania through an experimental program of research. Their research started with the observation of modification of some of the valves of *Unio sp.* shells recovered from this Chalcolithic settlement which may have resulted from human action. In order to distinguish human from taphonomic modification, the authors collected a number of fresh shells (living and dead) that were used in a series of activities (processing vegetal matter and wood, scraping leather and skin, working bone and clay, and processing fish). Based on microscopic analysis of the experimental and archaeological shells, they argue that, while mussel valves are useful for a variety of tasks, at this site they were likely expedient tools used for working clay (wet and dry). In addition to illuminating the use of shells at this particular site, this article serves as an elegant case study for the ongoing value of experimental methods to understand the archaeological record.

In contrast to these two detailed studies of single-site assemblages, Peter Shauer and colleagues develop a complex statistical model of big(gish) data, to investigate the possible relationship between the variable production rates of special lithic objects and the

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emergence of metal tools over the course of the later Neolithic and Chalcolithic in central-western Europe. They generate summed probability distributions of thousands of radiocarbon dates for stone and metal extraction sites, and focus particularly on the temporal and spatial distribution of jade axes, flint daggers, and early copper artefacts. They interpret their results as suggesting a timeline for the slow replacement of stone sources by metal sources and axeheads by daggers in prehistoric value systems. As a flint dagger specialist, I find myself somewhat sceptical about the power of this 'view from space' to explain or model more localized cultural practices, including technological changes; but there is no question that this sort of big-picture-perspective is valuable for testing our models and thinking beyond the site and region.

At a logarithmically smaller scale, Dariusz Manasterski and colleagues examine a special deposit with Bell Beaker elements at Supraśl site 6 in north-eastern Poland, associated with the Late Neolithic Neman cultural circle and people following a hunter-gatherer way of life. During excavation at site 6, a small shelter was identified with a broken pot at its threshold and an array of small natural objects and artefacts they interpret as a pouch buried at the centre of a stone hearth. The objects—including sherds of Bell Beaker pottery, non-local flint tools, an amber pendant, and a fragment of metal—are obviously special, and the authors argue they formed a ritual deposit, perhaps linked to funerary activities. They conclude by suggesting that this ritual deposit gives insight into the transformation of social processes in this region between the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age.

Finally, João Luís Cardoso and Nuno Bicho offer a fascinating insight into the development of scientific excavation through an archival excavation of the work of nineteenth century Portuguese archaeologist Nery Delgado. Through Delgado's own records and letters, they identify him as a pioneer of systematic excavation, including the use of excavation grids, excavation in artificial spits, and the careful recording of 3D information during the excavation of the Casa da Moura cave in the 1860s and 1870s. Delgado's system was so precise that the original spatial and vertical location of specific objects can still be reconstructed from their nineteenth century labels. That some of these records were almost disposed of as waste in the 1970s is a reminder of the still unrecognized wealth of knowledge retained in museums that we really ought to spend more time investigating.

Our reviews section this issue is diverse, as is typical, with many very positive recommendations from our reviewers. The reviews section opens with a qualified recommendation to read a new monograph applying Heiddeger's concept of *dwelling* to develop our understanding of the humanness of early hominins. Vavouranakis argues that this book offers a valuable interdisciplinary approach to philosophy and archaeology, though one somewhat hampered by the narrow scope of its single case study. Two edited volumes—one on the circulation of green stones in Europe and the Americas and the other on Viking craft and exchange—come in for strongly positive reviews for the breadth and quality of their various contributions. Relaki is somewhat skeptical of a new monograph designed to be an introductory text about ancient Greece, while Metzner-Nebelsick offers strong praise for the first comprehensive, English-language book on the Heuneberg as does Rajala for a new monograph concerning mobility in ancient Italy. Finally, Hanscam strongly recommends a theory-driven monograph on archaeological pedagogy, albeit one that is rather narrowly British in outlook. Perhaps, however, it will spur a new fashion for writing about how teaching and learning operate in and shape our field.

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