European Journal of Archaeology 25 (1) 2022, 1–3

Editorial

Catherine J. Frieman

General Editor

Australian National University

Welcome, readers and subscribers, to the first issue of our 25th volume. Although this isn't exactly our quarter century anniversary (we had a few early years where we went by *Journal of European Archaeology*), 25 still feels like a big number and one worth celebrating. One of the ways we're celebrating is through a special series of reviews commissioned by our amazing reviews editors Marta and Maria. They've asked a number of eminent archaeologists to review classic archaeology monographs. Titles were chosen in part based on suggestions made by EAA members on social media, and include books written in several languages and published between the early twentieth century and the early twenty-first. The first four of this special reviews series ends our reviews section this issue. The issue also features six original research articles spanning Mesolithic Scandinavia, al-Andalus, various interesting approaches to medieval materials and assemblages, and a reflection on public archaeology and engagement in Poland.

This issue starts with Charlotte Brysting Damm's thought-provoking discussion of the evidence for pyrotechnology in Mesolithic Norway and how this illuminates other aspects of daily life. Damm builds outwards from the patchy archaeological evidence for Mesolithic hearths or fires by exploring the range of possible fuel options—from plants to blubber—and the types of fires they would be used to make. This allows her to consider Mesolithic dietary practices and perceptions of the landscape and vegetation. Damm makes abundantly clear that the value of environmental archaeology lies not just in the granular reconstruction of past environments, but also in the ability to illuminate complex and long-term relations between people and the places they occupied.

Shifting our attention further south, Salinas and colleagues offer us exciting new insights into technology and innovation in early Islamic al-Andalus. Compositional analyses on glazed ceramics, glassware and glass-making debris from this early stage suggest that the two technologies were closely related and, the authors argue, not linked to glass-making in other parts of the Islamic world. Instead they argue that lead glazing of ceramics was a local invention and one that directly influenced the local production of lead-rich glassware. This is an excellent reminder that our material categories are not and should not be considered stable or universal, nor our evolutionary trajectories.

Returning to northern Europe, Ulla Moilanen and colleagues perform a careful re-evaluation and re-analysis of a well-known early medieval grave. The material associated with this grave defy easy gender categorization, and previous interpretations were myriad. In this article, the authors study the stratigraphy and return to the materials with new analytical tools, including ancient DNA. This approach allows them to speak more expansively about the sex and gender presentation of the individual buried in this

Copyright © The Author(s), 2022. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the European Association of Archaeologists
doi:10.1017/eaa.2021.53
https://doi.org/10.1017/eaa.2021.53 Published online by Cambridge University Press

grave and their perception by their community. Although the authors admit their results are tentative, I am inspired by the way they have built genetic analysis into a complex, contingent and ultimately ambiguous discussion of sex, gender, and identity.

Moving forwards in time, Sawicki and Levá offer a careful study of late medieval Central European dress ornaments from village sites and rural cemeteries in present-day Slovakia and Czechia. They compare a previously rarely synthesized corpus of rural finds with material from towns and urban centres, seeing little distinction between the dress ornaments accessible to rural and urban populations. This hints at the integration of rural and urban economies in the later medieval period and the complex ways people were engaging with and displaying material culture.

Starksi's contribution resonates with the previous article, as he studies a broad suite of the material culture and architecture of small, late medieval urban centres in the Baltic region to better understand their integration into Baltic urban culture and the Hanse. Although these towns were not economically central, nevertheless their inhabitants were clearly influenced by and engaged with the wider regional material trends and patterns of trade. Different towns showed different levels of integration in this network, but all clearly played an important role. Both this paper and the previous make clear that the hierarchies we assume to exist in the past are at least in part created by our own archaeological attention, and more focus elsewhere complicates the picture enormously.

The final research contribution in this issue is also from the Baltic region, and concerns the development of public archaeological practices in Poland. Pawleta outlines the history of public archaeology in Poland—largely this is linked to education, outreach, and entertainment, but with some recent co-created and community archaeological projects. He argues that, in future, Polish archaeologists should push to further democratize the discipline and engage on a more equal footing with interested members of the communities with whom they work. I find myself somewhat sceptical that academic archaeologists are best placed to lead this movement, but the more people engaged with the study and presentation of the past, the more complex and interesting those pasts will be.

Our reviews section this issue covers a range of periods, approaches, and archaeological practices from new approaches to Mediterranean connectivity and a beautiful new synthesis of Iberian prehistory to a new book exploring the ancient world as presented in video games. Since one of the books reviewed in this issue is my own recent monograph, I thought a bit of transparency about our review process would be welcome. The *EJA* reviews editors Marta and Maria handle all aspects of the review process, from working with publishers to contacting reviewers and helping them prepare their reviews. Typically, they send me the nearly completed reviews for any editorial comment (usually that means I catch typos – Marta and Maria are outstanding editors). In this case (and any like it), the author of the book under review is entirely cut out of the process, and the work redistributed around the editorial team. So, *EJA* Deputy Editor Zena worked with Marta and Maria to finalize the review, and I never saw it before its submission to the publisher. I flag this because the editorial board of *EJA* feels strongly that transparent, ethical processes are a necessary part of producing good scholarship. We are proud of the *EJA* code of ethics published in 2019 (https://www.e-a-a.org/EAACodes#EJAethics), and always welcome comments and suggestions from EAA members regarding best practice.

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

https://doi.org/10.1017/eaa.2021.53 Published online by Cambridge University Press

touch with a member of our editorial team or visit us on https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-archaeology

The Reviews team is also actively to increase the pool of potential book reviewers. If you would like to be considered to review for *EJA*, please e-mail Marta and Maria at ejareviews@e-a-a.org and ejaassistreviews@e-a-a.org with a brief list of your topics of interest and a short CV attached. Advanced postgraduate students as well as those who have completed their PhD are able to review for *EJA*. Proposals to review specific books are considered, provided that they are relevant to the *EJA*'s mission.

https://doi.org/10.1017/eaa.2021.53 Published online by Cambridge University Press