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Editorial

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This is the final issue of the *European Journal of Archaeology* for 2021, and quite a meaty one too. In this issue, we feature three articles on archaeological topics ranging from Roman material culture to medieval funerary archaeology as well as a curated Forum piece on the topic of populism and European archaeology. For what I think is the first time in years (though, I admit, I have not gone and checked), there is not a single prehistoric topic in this issue (outside the reviews), a sign of the increasing diversity of EAA's membership and the growing breadth of our author pool. The articles cover a variety of materials, sites, and approaches that demonstrate the best of European archaeology, a field that mixes precise fieldwork with cutting-edge science. The Forum piece started its life as an *EJA*-sponsored session at the 2019 EAA annual meeting in Bern. Editorial board member Daniela Hofmann and I organized this session, and subsequently invited the presenters and several others to prepare short reflections for this publication, which is about twice the length of a standard article. This issue also includes seven reviews, including three that address a recent and deeply troubling new monograph arguing against repatriation.

This issue starts with a finely detailed examination of three seal-rings and other evidence of Roman occupation dating to the last centuries of the first millennium BC at recently excavated sites in the Pyrenees by Joan Oller Guzmán and colleagues. Although this region had previously been believed to be relatively peripheral during the Roman era, Oller Guzmán and colleagues demonstrate the intensity of the Roman presence in this region and its military character, as evidenced by the three seal-rings. They argue these remains indicate a network of garrisons linked to a strategic routeway crossing the Pyrenees that would have facilitated both control of the local populations and access to exploitable local resources.

Staying within the Roman world, Sadi Maréchal explores the rural landscape of the northwest Roman Empire during the first centuries AD through the lens of villa bathhouses. He explores the introduction and morphology of bathhouses to Gallia Belgica and Germania Inferior in order to examine the ways Roman-style bathing was used by local elites in competition with each other. Contrary to previous research that suggested Roman bathing was rare in rural parts of the empire, Maréchal demonstrates that the construction of bathhouses was relatively common among the villa-owning rural elites in his study area. This provides a clear example of how established binaries placed onto the past—Romans/non-Romans, rural/urban—may serve to obfuscate our understanding of the world people lived in and the ways they navigated it.

Shifting forward in time to the late medieval and early modern period, Craig Cessford and colleagues present an impressive piece of research exploring normative funerary rites

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and victims of the Black Death in Cambridgeshire, UK, from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries AD. They conducted a mass screening of ancient DNA from nearly 200 burials of this period and identified ten individuals who were definitely infected with *Yersina pestis* at death and three further tentative infections. Of these, most were buried with standard rites and obvious respect in church grounds rather than with haste in mass graves, previously the only type of plague burial recognized archaeologically. Aside from the importance of the scientific results and their unfortunate resonance in our pandemic present, I want to highlight the quality of the collaboration demonstrated by this paper, which was written by both professional and academic archaeologists as well as palaeogeneticists. As Cessford and colleagues' work makes clear, this is the future of good archaeology.

The final research contribution in this issue is a multi-authored Forum on populism. As I noted above, this Forum started life as a session at the Bern EAA—our last in-person meeting before the pandemic. The presenters and audience were thoughtful and lively, and the degree of audience engagement convinced us to move forward with this more dialogic publication with its multiplicity of perspectives rather than a more traditional special issue of only five or six longer papers. The Forum contributors highlight many aspects of populist pressure within the archaeology and heritage spheres, from broad discussions of archaeology's ongoing imbrication with nationalism to specific case studies of different national traditions of governmental and popular engagement with archaeological sites, materials, and narratives. This is not intended to be the final statement on the subject, but hopefully will promote debate and discussion about the way politics and archaeology continue to entwine and what we can do as archaeologists to keep our work from doing harm.

Our reviews section this issue covers a range of periods, approaches, and archaeological practices. It opens with Bicho's strongly positive review of a new edited volume on social inequality in hunter-gatherer communities—this time from an evolutionary archaeological perspective. Betts offers a similarly positive review of Woolf's new monograph concerning the rise and fall of ancient cities, with the asterisk that only Mediterranean urbanism is discussed in this volume. Matić argues that a Foucauldian archaeology of gendered material culture in historic Iran impresses in its own right while also opening avenues for future traditional archaeological analyses; and Stefanou suggests that a new edited volume on public archaeology in museums is well worth reading, if narrowly focused. Our reviews section ends with three reviews of a highly publicized and extremely problematic book that denigrates the push to repatriate human remains, even in colonial contexts. All three reviews are critical, but each takes a different approach and perspective, widening the larger discourse about repatriation, colonialism, and respectful, ethical archaeological 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 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 increasing 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.

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