
EDITORIAL

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This is an issue marked by departures and new arrivals in the life of the EAA. I am certain that all readers would wish to join the Editorial Board in thanking Kristian Kristiansen for his years of inspired leadership of the Association and his energetic and far-sighted guidance in the recent transformations of the Journal. We look forward to working harmoniously with the new President, Willem Willems, to improve the Journal on all fronts. Likewise, Mike Shanks is stepping down from the Editorial Board and moving on to a new university in the New World. Mike brought his special flair and insight to the Reviews section to create a distinctive style of review, well exemplified in this issue. The Board would like to thank him for all his efforts as Reviews Editor over the last four years and wishes him great good fortune at Stanford. The Board is happy to welcome both the new Reviews Editor, Peter Biehl, and the newly-appointed Assistant Reviews Editor, Alexander Gramsch. Peter and Alexander have great plans for expanding this section, beginning in issue 2(3), and we encourage readers to contact them if you know of a book which should be reviewed in the Journal.

In a year in which ethnic cleansing is attested in Kosovo, it is impossible to forget the Bosnian war and the massacres at Srebrenica. One of the nearby mass graves was the site of a 1997 archaeological excavation which recovered over 400 bodies and associated artifacts. The excavation was documented by press photographer Gilles Peress, whose photographs were presented in the exhibition 'Bosnia après/avant guerre', held in Paris in 1998. In a penetrating review essay, Laurent Olivier writes a commentary on not only the practice of the 'excavation of our present time' but also the relationship between archaeology as revealing the past and photography as witness of what survives into the present. Olivier defines one of the paradoxes of time as the uniqueness of each moment of time contrasted to the multiplicity of temporalities in every object or context. While each temporality presences its own memories, the physical remains show the survival of being from the past, even though the action of the past is over and gone. In this way, the past is not past but survives in itself but it always requires someone to make sense of it.

The archaeological techniques used in the Srebrenica excavation were used to elucidate the personal identity of the victims. In informed theoretical debate, identity continues to be one of the most important current issues, as reflected by several contributions in this issue. Emma Blake uses an approach termed 'dynamic nominalism' to examine the process of self-categorization, whereby the people who fit the emergent categories and the categories describing those people are mutually constitutive. In its dual role as both a structuring device and a practice of knowledge acquisition, self-categorization is one way of transcending the structure-agency dichotomy and thus could become an important contribution to

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the 'agency' debate in archaeology. In her case-study of Sardinian nuraghi, Blake identifies a common problem in the study of transitions: the assumption that a series of parallel changes occurs simultaneously to create the illusion of a major structural change. In the period preceding a well-defined nuraghic cultural identity, a great variety of social practices is discerned and the changes were by no means coeval. In this cultural flux, the elements constituting the basis of a future mature nuraghic identity are selected from a far wider range of available materials, some of which are tried and rejected.

One suspects the same issue of separate innovations interpreted as a coalescing entity but, in reality, providing contrasting material for different persons and groups to draw on occurs in the Early Medieval period in South West Germany, which Almut Schülke examines at the transition to Christianity. In a historiographical study of the processes of 'Christianization', Schülke deconstructs the under-theorized and reflectionist treatment of the mortuary data common in many earlier studies. Instead, she defines a broadly interpretative research agenda for future research, to include the investigation of the relationship between the mourners (and their identities) to the deceased (and theirs). With this successful challenge to a one-to-one association of 'Christians' or 'pagans' with specific burial rites or grave deposits, the possibility arises of a more dynamic, agency-based approach to material culture in German Early Medieval studies.

The third contribution concerned with identity is a review by Alexander Gramsch of three books concerned with nationalism, politics and the role of archaeology in cultural and nation-state identities – a debate at the core of the very existence of the EAA. All of the other book reviews focus on Iberia, prompting the question whether there is something quite distinctive about Iberian archaeology. The three publications under review are more likely than most to provide an answer to this question, since they cover a vast range of Iberian pre- and proto-history as well as historical archaeology: the multi-authored 'Archaeology of Iberia' edited by Díaz-Andreu and Keay, the conference proceedings of 'the Atlantic Neolithic and the origins of megaliths' and the epic 7-volume publication of the whole of the First Congress of Peninsula Archaeology.

The other papers are important for the diversity of their subject matter – prestige axes and ancient fields. Serge Cassen and Pierre Pétrequin use their contextual study of the fine polished stone axes of Western France and Northern Iberia to define a new chronology for these prestige objects which first entered exchange networks linking late foragers and the first farmers and proceeded to be used and deposited in a far wider range of contexts. The qualities of these axes which conferred value and prestige in exchange and use are often neglected in prehistory: visual, tactile qualities of colour, reflectivity, sheen and smoothness, as well as ideal form and unusual dimensions. This paper touches on important new approaches to objects in the past.

Finally, it is rare to find in the EJA a paper discussing the excavation techniques used to elucidate a completely different category of archaeological object. But so few ancient fields have been excavated *in toto* that the new techniques developed by Maria Petersson and her team from Linköping make fascinating reading. The excavation at Särstad, in East Central Sweden, pioneered the first stripping of areas of cultivated morainic soil, with its high quantities of stones and boulders. The extensive series of 14-C dates indicates that charcoal collected from buried ploughsoils can provide reliable and uncontaminated results for dating ancient cultivation. At Särstad, a cycle of arable and abandonment occurred five times, beginning in the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age and lasting up to very recent times. Petersson has utilized similar techniques in the more recent, and even more extensive, motorway rescue excavations at Abbetorp, where natural rock outcrops and portable stones are used in a multitude of cultural ways related to structured deposition. We look forward to further reports of these exciting new discoveries.