

---

# E DITORIAL

**John Chapman**  
*University of Durham*

In this second issue of the *European Journal of Archaeology*, three themes of perennial significance to archaeologists are discussed in diverse ways and with varied data – nationalism and group identity, places and material culture. The case studies range from the Volga Basin to Spain, from France to middle Sweden, including the Roman Empire; the period coverage misses out the Palaeolithic and Neolithic but all other major periods are represented. There are more male contributors than female, as was consistently the case in the JEA. A typical EAA mix!

Most European nation-states have recently been grappling with their engagement with fascism and its policies during the Second World War. Here, Laurent Olivier deconstructs the close links between post-war French archaeology and the Vichy regime, legislative and administrative links which remained strong into the late 1980s. In France, the state has had strong links with national origins since the 18th century, buttressed by the glorious Celtic and Gallo-Roman past to the detriment of prehistory. What was different about the Vichy regime was the emphasis on moral saviours such as Vercingetorix and Jeanne d'Arc who maintained the nation's honour in time of defeat, as well as the continued emphasis on famous Gallic sites such as Gergovie, Lyon, Autun and Alesia, all excavated under the Vichy regime's new administrative and funding structure. By contrast, archaeology in the occupied parts of Eastern France relied upon an Aryan model to document the spread of Germanic cultures into Alsace-Lorraine and further (Kimmig's study of the Urnfields, Werner on Late Antiquity and Zeiss on the High Medieval period). Olivier probes the significance for post-war archaeological practice of maintaining Vichy policies and structures for so long after the Liberation, concluding that archaeology's main role in France is the affirmation of the unity of the state and the continuity of national identity.

Continuing with the focus on the links between archaeology and 18th century nationalism, Margarita Díaz-Andreu makes an attack on monolithic ethnic identities rooted in 18th century nationalist equations of the political unit with the ethnic group. Díaz-Andreu takes the work of Barthes and Cohen in support of a multi-dimensional and negotiable view of ethnicity one stage further in proposing that multiple ethnic identities co-exist in the same person and are variously manifested depending upon contextual dimensions such as age, gender, religion and status. Díaz-Andreu challenges archaeologists to abandon the search for material correlates of ethnicity, preferring the formulation that ethnicity is

*European Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 1(2): 147–148  
Copyright © 1998 Sage Publications (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi) and  
the European Association of Archaeologists [1461–9571(199808)1:2;149–176;005030]

more about perceptions than about material culture. However residual the role of material culture in providing information about ethnicity, it has to be utilized *faute de mieux*, as in Díaz-Andreu's case study about Lliria pottery from Iron Age Iberia.

Turning to the active flouting of artistic mimetic conventions to define group identities, Miranda Green discusses the use of triplism in horns, genitalia and figures by Celts to create visual tension and potency on small-scale sculptures in stone and bronze. The uniqueness of each object which incorporates triplism stands in marked contrast to the standardization of mass-produced Gallo-Roman bronze statuary and suggests deliberate individuation, perhaps created by, or in conjunction with, entranced shamans. Green interprets the use of a third horn on a horned animal as defining a liminal relationship, with all the implied power of transitions, while inferring from the transfer of the same emblem onto an animal naturally without horns a distancing from reality and a fluidity of categorization, both of which create danger, risk and potency. Green's paper is a good example of the complex relationship between art, power and identity.

The second paper dealing with material culture illustrates the current gulf in interpretational possibilities between proto-history and deep prehistory. Zhilin presents a detailed and rigorous reconstruction of a set of complete *chaines operatoires* for the production of bone arrowheads in the Mesolithic of the Volga Basin. These peat-based sites are Russia's equivalent to the British Star Carr and a whole range of organic objects is well preserved on each of the 11 sites excavated between 1984 and 1996 (summary details of which are published here). Use wear analysis is used to identify the tools used to make the bone arrowheads from, mostly, elk long bones. The waste products of each stage in the chain have been found on site and technological analysis shows the two main techniques – the Eurasian groove-and-splinter technique and a knapping technique for the production of long blanks. The technological peak in production comes in the Boreal period, while cruder forms occur in the Atlantic. Comparison of inter-site and inter-regional stylistic variations may well offer approaches to the definition of community identities in the Volga Mesolithic. But the real question is how can the material culture of the Mesolithic be more closely related to the social concerns of later prehistory, whether in interpretations of ethnicity or power relations?

The final theme concerns the archaeology of place. Anders Kaliff presents a detailed interpretation of a single mortuary place in Östergötland. Kaliff is intrigued by rocks, both in their natural setting and as cultured material. Although less concerned with general issues of what makes landscapes 'work', as with Ingold's 'tasksapes', Kaliff utilizes the contextual potential for big themes inherent in small accretions of field evidence. The Ringeby cemetery comprises the largest concentration of Late Bronze Age graves in Östergötland – 62 created in over 600 years. The site contains many forms of stone construction, including clearance and burial cairns, cup-marked rocks and heaps of fire-cracked rocks. The most interesting hypothesis is that the power of stone lies in its compressed, petrified fire; when the rock is burnt, the fire (perhaps the soul of the rock) escapes. Two parallels are proposed: first, the cremation of human bodies, where the transformation by fire releases the soul from the body along with the smoke and, secondly, the smelting of ore, where the metal (the soul) is released from the rock (the body). Intriguingly, fragments of slag and cremated human bones are both found in the fire-cracked rockpiles. This detailed examination of an ancestral place indicates the way that a dwelling perspective can be integrated into mortuary archaeology.

John Chapman  
General Editor