
EDITORIAL

John Chapman
University of Durham

The infusion of the social into the two major dimensions of study – space and time – has proceeded in a variable but patterned way in archaeology; social space came first, with social temporalities lagging long behind, while the integrated Hägerstrandian notion of time–space is still rarely used to understand past social practices. In this issue, different studies privilege time over space and vice versa. The emphasis on space is at the forefront of Johnston's discussion of landscape archaeology and a 'dwelling perspective', in Attema and his colleagues' presentation of the results of long-term regional survey and excavation projects in Italy. By contrast, Urbańczyk makes the point in his discussion of the origins of the Goths that early Mediaeval migrating groups must emphasize the ideology of origin myths (the temporal dimension) because they possess no recognizable geographical space. This point is reinforced by Hedeager in her wider study of Mediaeval ethnicity and style, both with strong spatial components covering much of Europe. These cross-cutting approaches to time and space colour the issue, giving it a distinctive character as much as the wide geographical coverage – from Scandinavia to Italy, Britain to Poland – despite a narrower chronological range than usual – the Late Bronze Age through to the Early Mediaeval period.

Archaeologies of origins and place figure prominently in Willems' magisterial paper on 'The future of European archaeology', where the temporal aspect of the archaeological heritage comes over strongly in its definition as 'the source of European collective memory' and the spatial contradictions continue between a Europe ideologically unified in regional diversity (and an unmentioned Other). The main challenge Willems issues is for heritage managers and archaeologists in all European countries to recognize that archaeological finds, sites and monuments have moved on from being objects of study to cultural resources of use and benefit in the present and the future. Moving deftly through the minefield of EU regulations and policy directives, Willems picks out the main routes which archaeologists could use to find ways of registering their views with their own governments (e.g. on the 1998 ESDP, or European Spatial Development Perspective – who among us had previously heard of such an initiative?!). He favours a pluralistic approach, with archaeological positions heard clearly at national government level, through international groupings of heritage management bodies, as well as through non-governmental organizations such as the EAA. An issue that springs to my mind concerns the effects of the likely Russian economic meltdown on the CIS's already frail monument protection policy.

European Journal of Archaeology Vol. 1(3): 291–292
Copyright © 1998 Sage Publications (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi) and
the European Association of Archaeologists [1461–9571(199812)1:3;291–292;006623]

The two papers most concerned with space, place and landscape differ sharply in content. Johnston's paper is a theoretical critique of recent totalizing uses of the landscape content, which is made to stand for the environment, the frame of reference of prehistoric persons, while at the same time being derived from a modern world-view. Johnston summarizes this critique in the notion of the 'paradox of landscape', meaning that if landscape is taken to mean the totality of lived experience, it loses any explanatory potential or interpretative value. Instead, he posits that material culture, places and associations of objects and people lie outside landscape and relate back to it, providing the cultural context for human dwelling as part of the natural world.

Attema and his Dutch colleagues, Kleibrink, Burgers and Yntema, combine a series of regional survey and excavation projects in central and southern Italy in a major re-appraisal of urbanization and the preceding tendencies towards settlement centralization in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Ages. The choice of three regions is but a small sample of the complexity and variability in regional strategies used in these wider landscape transformations. The key concept here is that urbanization is conceived of as a set of regional social and spatial processes developing towards the town-country split characteristic of mature urban forms. The Hellenistic urbanization process included rural infilling, which is described as the urbanization of the countryside. Before this period, settlements were occupied and the rest of the landscape was not; now, both town and country are occupied, leaving only lagoons, marshes and mountains unsettled. This radical redefinition of the countryside lies at the heart of urbanization – does this gel with other regions of Mediterranean Europe? The other main theme of Attema et al. is the issue of core and periphery. Here, the traditional balance is neatly reversed, so Greek colonial settlements are regarded as peripheral to the native world. This is part of an ongoing re-assessment of the archaeology of the 1st millennium BC in Italy, in which the processes defined as 'Romanization', as formerly applied to Europe as it fell under Roman imperial rule, are now discussed for Italy itself. The active use of colonial material culture by indigenous elites is particularly important, as is the interaction between colonial and local religions. The result is a much more complex series of changes and a much more dynamic role for indigenous peoples over a longer time-period.

Both Hedeager and Urbańczyk examine the same period and sometimes the same Early Mediaeval ethnic groups – generally with a similar suite of theoretical and methodological tenets. Both view these entities as poly-ethnic opportunistic agglomerations unified by ideologies legitimizing the domination of political elites that created myths of a common past. Hedeager covers a wider field in less depth than Urbańczyk and, intriguingly, both advance a case for the origins of the Goths in their native region – Hedeager in South Scandinavia, Urbańczyk in Poland! Urbańczyk successfully integrates historical, anthropological and archaeological evidence despite the different 'histories' of the Goths – dynastic written histories and the histories of the people told by archaeological data. Hedeager asserts the importance of art styles in the creation of a social cosmology and defines the Salins I style as the materialization of an ideology reproduced in myth. But, despite some caveats to the contrary, both authors are prone to use the artifactual record as a proxy measure of ethnicity, despite the warnings of Díaz-Andreu (*EJA* 1(2):199–218). There is clearly an ongoing debate of great importance to the Early Mediaeval period, in which material referents to origin myths take over from place-value in the creation of group identity. But even in a war-torn period such as this, one may expect contributions to cultural identity were made by the values inhering in long-settled places. This brings us back to the false time/space dichotomy, clearly of importance in future debates.