

Editorial

ROBIN SKEATES

The General Editor

Durham University, UK

In this second issue of the *European Journal of Archaeology* for 2013, you will find five general articles and ten book reviews. Below, I summarize and comment on their significance to European archaeology.

Marie Balasse, Adrian Bălăşescu, Anneke Janzen, Joël Ughetto-Monfrin, Pavel Mirea, and Radian Andreescu present the results of their stable carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen isotope analysis of thirty-nine domestic and wild animal bones from the early Neolithic site of *Măgura-Boldul lui Mos, Ivănuş*, in southern Romania, as well as comparative data from the nearby late Eneolithic site of *Vităneşti Măgurice*. They argue that – in contrast to the models of small-scale herding integrated with intensive garden agriculture proposed by Paul Halstead and Amy Bogaard for early Neolithic northern Greece and central Europe – domestic animals were herded extensively in the relatively open environment of the eastern Balkans. They also suggest that sheep may have been deliberately fed in the winter on crop plants grown in the summer (winter also being the season in which sheep birth was centred), and that at least one cow may have been overwintered and fed leaf fodder by the settlement. These interpretations of animal husbandry strategies are tentative, in part due to the relatively small sample size. Nevertheless, the study is important as it ranks among the first high-quality faunal isotope work undertaken on the Neolithic of the temperate Balkans.

Sophie Bergerbrant, Lise Bender Jørgensen, and Sølvi Helene Fossøy reinvestigate the previously overlooked Nybøl burial, comparing and contrasting the woollen textiles found in it with the form, shape, and size of garments from four other, better-preserved, Danish Bronze Age oak-log coffins. They also discuss the appearance and social significance of male bodies and costumes in Bronze Age Scandinavia, arguing that not only inorganic artefacts but also organic clothing expressed the wealth of an individual. Overall, this sound study makes a valuable contribution to the dataset and current thinking on the archaeology of textiles in later prehistoric Europe.

Eóin O'Donoghue reconsiders the fragmentary terracotta statues originally positioned on the roof of a monumental architectural complex, dating to the sixth century BC, in the Etruscan settlement of Poggio Civitate (modern Murlo) in central Italy. Rejecting previous interpretations of the statues as representations of deities on a religious sanctuary and/or secular meeting place, O'Donoghue argues that the human statues, including a bearded male type wearing a distinctive 'cowboy' hat, were ancestor figures that actively protected, legitimated, and advertised – both near and far – the prestige and authority of the aristocratic family that resided in the building. This argument breathes fresh life into the long-standing controversy surrounding Poggio Civitate's significance, and is also a good example of the new, interpretative, archaeological studies of Etruscan society currently being produced by British scholars.

Jesús García-Sánchez and Miguel Cisneros discuss the method and theory underpinning their archaeological field survey of the *Ager Segisamonensis* – the landscape surrounding an Iron Age settlement and successive Roman city of Segisamo (modern Sasamón) in northern Spain. In contrast to traditional site-based archaeological research in this region, detailed recording of ‘off-site’ artefact scatters is central to their approach, using hand-held global positioning system devices and a geographic information system-based grid of artificial ‘aggregation units’ designed to overcome the constraints of modern field boundaries. This has enabled them to provide new insights into the Romanization of the countryside in this region, which saw the development of more intensive agriculture and associated settlement. Whether or not one agrees with their reassertion that manuring best explains the formation of off-site artefact scatters, this article will be of interest to archaeologists working in Mediterranean survey, and particularly to those who wish to work at a higher resolution.

David Petts presents a new model of late Roman society in northern England during the fourth and fifth centuries AD. He shifts archaeological attention away from frontier forts to the growing evidence for the spread of villas into the area between the rivers Tees and Tyne, interpreting the villas as the buildings and estates of serving and retired high-ranking army officers who consolidated and transformed their social position and identity as both officers and gentlemen, particularly in the context of the decline of Roman state power and the subsequent advent of Anglo-Saxon groups. This is an interesting model which makes good use of new archaeological data from commercial excavations to make a critical contribution to the sophisticated on-going debate about the Roman–Saxon transition in Britain.

In the Reviews section, there are discussions of ten new books of significance to European archaeology. We start with a highly-praised conference volume on the archaeology and anthropology of salt, extending from prehistory to the present. Next is Bob Chapman’s thought-provoking discussion of why a book on the development of inequality in human societies – which makes no mention of the archaeology of Europe – should be of interest to European archaeologists. This is followed by acclaim for a new collection of papers on feasting and food-related practices in archaeology. After this, the reviewed books are ordered chronologically, from two regional syntheses of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic, to more focused volumes on Neolithic pit deposition and on third millennium BC stone bracers in the British Isles, to a collection of essays that weighs up the pros and cons of neo-evolutionary models of state formation in Italy and Greece, to an outstanding book on headhunting and the body (and plenty more besides) in Iron Age Europe, and, finally, an edited volume that places the archaeology of medieval Novgorod (in Russia) in its environmental context.

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, please get in touch with a member of our editorial team or visit us on <http://www.maney.co.uk/index.php/journals/eja/>.