

European Journal of Archaeology 18 (1) 2015

Editorial

Robin Skeates

The General Editor

Durham University, UK

Welcome to the first edition of the *European Journal of Archaeology* for 2015. This is a special issue dedicated to Turkish archaeology. It follows on from the hugely attractive 20th Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists held in Istanbul in September 2014. In this special issue, with the considerable help of Necmi Karul (Associate Professor in the Department of Prehistory at Istanbul University, and a member of the *EJA*'s Editorial Board), we have sought to celebrate some of the current research being undertaken in and around archaeology by Turkish scholars. Following issues of the *EJA* will also include articles by some of the international teams of archaeologists working in Turkey. By contrast, here, we present a series of data-rich Turkish perspectives. Although archaeological theorists may wish to challenge some of the interpretations presented, especially those derived from a culture-historical framework, the strength of these articles is the way that they make accessible, in the English language, patterns in old and new data that might otherwise have remained in the domain of specialists.

Yılmaz Erdal analyses the mortuary treatment of ten buried individuals from the PPNA settlement of Körtik Tepe in south-eastern Anatolia, using a bioarchaeological approach. He diagnoses cut-marks on the bones in terms of defleshing. He then goes on to argue that this, combined with the application of plaster and paint to the skeletons, can best be understood as post-burial (rather than secondary burial) ritual practices, intended to purify the corpse. In so doing, Erdal makes an interesting contribution to current taphonomic studies of the myriad ways in which corpses have been manipulated after death.

Eylem Özdoğan presents her perspective on the emergence of Neolithic agricultural villages in western Anatolia in the early seventh millennium BC, and then charts some of the diverse trajectories of the ‘Neolithisation’ process on into the early sixth millennium BC. The account is dominated by changing ceramic styles, and to a lesser extent architectural and burial types. Key drivers of change are identified as human mobility and interaction. In this way, Özdoğan provides us with a helpful overview of what is a rapidly growing regional dataset. However, for an alternative perspective on the westward spread of Neolithic technologies across Anatolia, readers might also consider Bami & Heyd’s (2011) work.

Continuing with western Anatolia, Erkan Fidan, Deniz Sarı, and Murat Türkteki provide a comparable regional synthesis of the Early Bronze Age, with particular reference to changing styles of architecture, pottery, and metalwork over time and space. Developing political formations and intensifying trade relations are regarded as prime movers in cultural change. This article also exhibits an underlying

culture-historical tension regarding ‘pottery groups’ and the extent to which these can be equated with ‘cultural regions’.

As part of their work for the Hittite Historical Atlas Project, Metin Alparslan and Meltem Doğan-Alparslan provide a general introduction to the Hittites, before turning to a review of the complex problem of geographical names occurring in cuneiform tablets. The Hattuša tablets, for example, mention more than 3000 place-names (including regions/lands, cities, rivers, and mountains), only a few of which have been precisely located. Nevertheless, the authors draw our attention to excavations at other Hittite settlements that are providing new data and interpretative possibilities. For another perspective, readers might wish to consult Matthews & Glatz’s (2009) publication on the historical geography of Hittite north-central Anatolia.

Kemalettin Köroğlu explores the origins of Urartian-Assyrian relations in the highlands of eastern Anatolia in the thirteenth century BC, and the consequent emergence of the Urartian kingdom in the mid-ninth century BC. Drawing on a combination of documentary and archaeological data, he argues that the establishment of Assyrian provincial centres in the upper Tigris region played a key role in the transformation of indigenous, semi-nomadic groups of Hurri-Urartu origin, who were made to work for Assyria during the building process and later became part of the Assyrian system. In the process, Köroğlu provides a valuable overview of recent archaeological excavations undertaken in the upper Tigris region.

Leaping forward in time to the medieval period, Aygül Ağır uses documentary evidence to shed light on the now archaeologically invisible residences of the Venetian '*bailo*' — a formally appointed representative of the Venetian merchant colony in Constantinople. In particular, Ağır discusses the possible locations and architectural features of these important buildings between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Such research may seem narrow in scope, but is actually necessary for our wider understanding of the medieval archaeology of Constantinople.

Turning to our reviews section, Estella Weiss-Krejci and Marta Díaz-Guardamino have compiled another interesting set of opinions on recently published books relevant to European archaeology. We begin with a review of a large edited handbook on African archaeology, which, in addition to reminding us of the archaeology of European/African encounters, makes the case for Africanist research to be given greater consideration by European archaeologists. There follow some mixed opinions on an edited volume that reconsiders the contribution of gender archaeology to funerary archaeology in and around Spain. The following reviews are then ordered chronologically, from the Late Glacial through to the medieval period. More through chance than design, we consider a particularly abundant crop of new books on the Neolithic, whose core themes include: the extensive circulation of large polished jade axes sourced to north-west Italy, the redefinition of Levantine rock art, the north Italian radiocarbon chronology revised with the help of Bayesian modelling, the uniformity and diversity of LBK lifeways, and the rich settlement evidence of Ireland.

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, or have a suggestion for a special issue of the *EJA*, do please get in touch with a member of our editorial team or visit us on <http://www.maney.co.uk/index.php/journals/eja/>.

References

Brami, M. & Heyd, V. 2011. The Origins of Europe's First Farmers: The Role of Hacilar and Western Anatolia, Fifty Years On. *Praehistorische Zeitschrift*, 86:165–206.

Matthews, R. & Glatz, C. 2009. The Historical Geography of North-Central Anatolia in the Hittite Period: Texts and Archaeology in Concert. *Anatolian Studies*, 59:51–72.