
EDITIONAL INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL OF EUROPEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

A NEW JOURNAL FOR A NEW IDEA OF EUROPE

There has been a long tradition of archaeological study at the European scale. Perhaps the greatest prehistorian this century, Gordon Childe, wrote primarily on the early growth of European civilisation and his books on this theme have been fundamental for the development of the discipline. Within a strong tradition of writing about pre-historic Europe there has recently been an increase in the number of synthetic texts, sometimes concentrating on particular aspects or periods. This European archaeology derives both from the European scale of many of the cultural processes and influences of the past, and from a nineteenth- and twentieth-century preoccupation with the origins of European civilisation.

It is remarkable then that a journal devoted to European archaeology does not already exist. The main reason for this is that, alongside the European scale of enquiry, there have been national and regional interests that have dominated the publication of journals through the national societies. Such journals have aimed on the whole to publish archaeology relevant to their regions. A further reason for the lack of such a journal is that theoretical debate which might have extended beyond national frontiers has long been stifled by authoritarian university structures, dogmatic Marxist doctrines in Eastern Europe, and revulsion at the political misuse of archaeology in the Third Reich.

However, the events in Europe since 1989 are creating a new climate which looks beyond national frontiers and which involves new generations of archaeologists. Across Europe there is an awakening and freshening of archaeological debate about archaeological methods, interpretations, issues, and theories.

The aim of the new journal is to promote this burgeoning of archaeological debate and a commitment to a new idea of Europe where there is more communication across national frontiers, more open debate, and more interest in explanatory ideas. The journal will encourage younger academics to submit articles. It will provide a medium of communication between new centres of activity as they sprout across Europe in a discipline which has been particularly closed to debate. It will encourage dialogue with non-European perceptions of European archaeology. It will not only publish new

empirical data and new interpretations of the past but will also encourage debate about the role archaeology plays in society, how it should be organised in a changing Europe, and the ethics of archaeological practices.

The Association of European Archaeologists, as a democratic body representing European-wide interests, will institute its own procedures for the appointment of future editorial officers of the journal.