

---

# **E**EDITORIAL

**Alan Saville**

*National Museums Scotland, UK*

This special volume of the *European Journal of Archaeology* represents a first in several respects. It is the first time all three issues have been put together as a single volume and the first time that the *EJA* has published the complete proceedings of a conference (a conference which itself had no direct connection with the EAA). Neither of these firsts necessarily sets a precedent for the *EJA* in future; they result from a happy coincidence which chimed with a strategy formulated by the EAA Editorial and Executive Boards and our publishers to achieve our goal of catching up with the journal's actual cover-date of publication. Just at the moment that this strategy was being considered, serendipity intervened in the approach from Margarita Díaz-Andreu to publish the outcome of the highly successful 2007 conference she organized at Durham University in celebration of the legacy of Gordon Childe, 50 years after his death.

Having been interested in Childe and his work since my student days – when *The Dawn* and *New Light on the Most Ancient East* were still in regular use as course textbooks – I attended the conference in Durham expecting to be comfortingly reminded of events and ideas about which I already knew or had once known but forgotten. Not a bit of it! Instead I was very pleasantly surprised to find that there is still so much in the way of new information to discover and original perspectives to consider about Childe and his writings.

It is not the only occasion on which the *EJA* has featured biographical study of Gordon Childe (see Leighton and Sørensen 2004), but we have not undertaken such an extended focus on a single individual in this way before. That Childe should be the person to whom this first single volume of the *EJA* is devoted should of course occasion no great surprise or require any extended justification. This towering (and still one feels in some ways rather misunderstood) figure – arguably the most outstanding practitioner of European prehistory in the twentieth century – embodied in so many ways the practices and aspirations of the EAA that he is a natural choice for our attention. It is because of the clarity, breadth, and depth of

his thinking about prehistory and the archaeological process that Childe's legacy will endure and his work will continue to be discussed and argued over. As was famously said of Stonehenge (Hawkes 1967), one feels that every age will have the Gordon Childe it deserves – or desires.

This volume also breaks new ground in publishing the definitive listing of Childe's literary output. The bibliography – a labour of love over many years by Peter Gathercole and Terry Irving – was obviously not part of the conference itself, but its existence in draft helped to underpin the research of some of the authors here. It provides a splendid accompaniment to the conference proceedings and will I believe serve to put studies of Childe on a whole new footing, making this volume doubly indispensable for any future work in this field.

I am especially grateful to Margarita Díaz-Andreu for assembling all the contributions from her conference and for organizing their peer review and initial editing. This is a landmark volume for the *EJA*, and the choice of Gordon Childe as its subject matter could not be more appropriate.

\*\*\*\*

A degree of normality for this volume is provided by the reviews section, which has the usual wide-ranging mix of subjects and reviewers. If by chance there are any readers of the *EJA* who are not interested in Gordon Childe, they will have to find solace in the reviews, and in the news that the journal will return to its standard format of three issues and disparate articles with volume 13(1) in April 2010.

## REFERENCES

- HAWKES, J., 1967. God in the machine. *Antiquity* 41(163):174–180.
- LEIGHTON, M. and M.L.S. SØRENSEN, 2004. Breathing life into the archives: reflections upon decontextualization and the curatorial history of V.G. Childe and the material from Tószeg. *European Journal of Archaeology* 7(1):41–60.