



Frontispiece 1. Aerial view of House XI at Gamla Skogsby, Sweden, under excavation in September 2022. The site is located on the Baltic island of Öland, known for its rich and well-preserved Iron Age remains. Sandby borg, located approximately 10km from Gamla Skogsby, has produced evidence of a fifth-century AD massacre, attesting to the use of violence as a political tool during this turbulent period (see Antiquity 92: 421–36). To contextualise the work at Sandby borg, Linnaeus University has conducted excavations since 2019 at the contemporaneous village site of Gamla Skogsby. The findings include well-preserved house foundations and a wealth of animal bone, pottery and other artefacts, which paint a fuller picture of mid-Iron Age society in Migration-period Scandinavia (photograph © Sandra Lundholm/Kalmar County Museum).



THE OATH OF CYRIAC

SAVING OUR **PAST**
IS ALSO
SAVING OUR **FUTURE**

LA CAIXA DE LA LLUM PRESENTS
A FILM BY OLIVIER BOURGEOIS
AN OLIVIER BOURGEOIS FRANCK MEYER & HOUMAM SAAD PRODUCTION
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS LAURENT WOLF & LUIS KINDER
WITH DR. MAAMOUN ABDULKARIM MOHAMAD BASHIR SHABANI -
DESBINA BASLAN - NAWROUZ TOBAL HAMO - RAHAF HAMWI - NAZIR AWAD
DR. AHMAD DEEB - AHMAD OTHMAN - KHALED AL MASRI - TAREK ABU ALI
MUSIC BY LAURENT WOLF - EDITED BY FRANCK MEYER
WRITTEN BY YASMINE MAHMOUD & OLIVIER BOURGEOIS
WWW.THEOATHOFCYRIAC.COM



Frontispiece 2. The Oath of Syriac, directed by Olivier Bourgeois, is a feature docudrama based on events in 2015, when a group of archaeologists, museum curators and attendants sought to protect the collections of the Aleppo National Museum during the Syrian conflict. As the city of Aleppo came under siege, the museum staff worked to hide or evacuate some 50 000 artefacts, from small finds to monumental sculptures. The Arabic-language film features members of the museum staff as themselves, recounting their experiences of the conflict and their efforts to preserve the museum's collections. Released at the end of 2021, the film has gathered numerous prizes in 2022, including the Arkhaios Film Festival award for the Best Cultural Heritage Film and Special Mention at the Aquileia Film Festival (image © theoathofcyriac).



EDITORIAL

Palaeogenomics and the Nobel Prize

🔍 The sequencing of the Neanderthal genome is little more than a decade old, yet the story behind that work has already been narrated several times¹ and its place in the study of the human past is well established. Now, the wider significance of that research has been recognised by the award of the 2022 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine to Svante Pääbo of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (Figure 1). The prize is awarded by the Nobel committee “for [Pääbo’s] discoveries concerning the genomes of extinct hominins and human evolution”.² In recognising the field of palaeogenomics, the award is a timely reminder that, today, important breakthroughs are as likely to occur in the lab as in the field. It is also a fast-moving research area. Indeed, such is the breathtaking speed of these developments that the sequencing of the Neanderthal genome came within only a couple of years of the discovery by Pääbo and his team of a previously entirely unknown hominin: the Denisovan. As such, in just a few short years, the human family tree has been greatly enlarged. Moreover, so fundamental are the insights of palaeogenomics that the basic conceptual metaphor of a tree, with its branches of genetic divergence leading to speciation, has been uprooted. We now know, for example, that the genetic mixing of Neanderthals and modern humans—once purely a matter for speculation and fiction writing—not only actually happened, but also happened repeatedly in multiple locations and at widely separated moments in time. Further, we also now know that this mixing of genes offered selective advantage to humans in colonising new environments—the Denisovan gene EPAS1, for instance, confers tolerance of low oxygen at high altitudes, such as in Tibet. Billions of people today still carry a genetic legacy from these extinct hominins; as much as four per cent of the genome of modern-day humans of European or Asian descent derives from Neanderthals. At a time when national and international politics is increasingly defined by the dichotomy of ‘them’ and ‘us’, palaeogenomics is revealing far more complex and interesting human histories, which, with care and nuance, can underpin a more progressive view of humanity.

At the same time, it is clear that our individual genetic inheritances, both from hominins and more recent ancestors, can affect each of us in very different ways. Take health, for example. Pääbo’s team demonstrated that separate haplotypes inherited from Neanderthals by modern humans can differentially affect health outcomes in relation to COVID-19. More generally, a recent review of the genetic influence of our complex evolutionary histories on other immune responses, as well as adaptations to environmental factors such as elevation, temperature and diet, indicates wide-ranging effects, the full significance of which we are only

¹ PÄÄBO, S. 2014. *Neanderthal Man: in search of lost genomes*. New York: Basic Books.

² For this, and the citations for other Nobel laureates below, see <https://www.nobelprize.org/>



Figure 1. The winner of the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine 2022: Svante Pääbo (© Nobel Prize Outreach; illustration by N. Elmehed).

just beginning to grasp.³ In just the last few weeks, a new study has documented how individuals with a variant of the ERAP2 gene were better able to survive the fourteenth-century Black Death; that variant, however, is today associated with common autoimmune problems, such as Crohn's disease.⁴ Hence, as the growing evidence for the complexity of human evolution draws us ever more convincingly into a single extended family, it simultaneously promises to provide us, as individuals, with insight into our personal histories and health.

Archaeology has long grappled with how to bring together evidence that spans multiple spatial and temporal scales; palaeogenetic research prompts us to renew our efforts. How can we reconcile and narrate processes and events that shift in scale from the tens of thousands of years needed for the dispersal of hominins around the globe, to the intimate lives of individual families?⁵ Like radiocarbon dating before it, the implications of palaeogenetic research

³ BENTON, M.L. *et al.* 2021. The influence of evolutionary history on human health and disease. *Nature Reviews Genetics* 22: 269–83. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41576-020-00305-9>

ZEBERG, H. & S. PÄÄBO. 2021. A genomic region associated with protection against severe COVID-19 is inherited from Neandertals. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA* 118: p.e2026309118. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2026309118>

⁴ KLUNK, J. *et al.* 2022. Evolution of immune genes is associated with the Black Death. *Nature*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-05349-x>

⁵ E.g. DNA analysis of 13 related Neanderthals: SKOV, L. *et al.* 2022. Genetic insights into the social organization of Neanderthals. *Nature* 610: 519–25. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-05283-y>

reach far beyond providing us with new data to refine our existing understanding of the past; in just a few short years, the field has provided us with answers to questions we had not even known to ask, fundamentally changing our perspective of what it means to be human.

The award of the Nobel Prize to Pääbo builds directly on the decades of genetic research that were pioneered by the Nobel laureates for Physiology or Medicine in 1962—Francis Crick, James Watson and Maurice Wilkins—“for their discoveries concerning the molecular structure of nucleic acids and its significance for information transfer in living material”. We might also look back to the work of another Nobel laureate for an understanding of how we have previously sought to conceptualise our co-existence with other hominins. The winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983 was William Golding, author of the novel *The Inheritors* (1955), which imagined an encounter between Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens*. In their very different fields, Golding and Pääbo capture the transformation of our changing understanding of the human past, developing from the literary imagining of the interbreeding of hominins through to the empirical documentation of its legacy in our own genes.

Nobel laureates with a direct or even indirect claim to have shaped the discipline of archaeology are few and far between. Prior to this year’s prize, the best-known recipient is undoubtedly Willard Libby, who received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry 1960 “for his method to use carbon-14 for age determination in archaeology, geology, geophysics, and other branches of science”. Before Libby, we probably need to look back to 1902 and the Nobel Prize for Literature awarded to the ancient historian and classical archaeologist Theodor Mommsen, recognised by the committee as “the greatest living master of the art of historical writing, with special reference to his monumental work, *A history of Rome*”. The award of the 2022 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine is therefore a moment to be celebrated. Our hearty congratulations to Svante Pääbo and his team, and to the wider field of palaeogenetics, on their success.

Attentive readers will have noted the growing numbers of aDNA studies published in *Antiquity* in recent years and, indeed, that the winners of the 2022 *Antiquity* Prize (a modest affair compared with the Nobel!) was awarded to a collaboration between an archaeologist and a palaeogeneticist. Ian Armit and David Reich’s article, ‘The return of the Beaker folk? Rethinking migration and population change in British prehistory’, examines the implications of the massive genetic turnover in third-millennium BC Britain identified by aDNA analysis.⁶ Specifically, they explore the limits of the current genetic and archaeological data, demonstrating how two very different interpretations can be legitimately drawn from the same evidence. By directing our attention to the gaps in the data and outlining the evidence we need to collect in order to move forward, the authors provide a model for the successful collaboration between archaeology and palaeogenomics.

Cultural heritage and climate change

 Speaking of the Nobel Prize, it is 15 years since the 2007 Nobel Prize for Peace was awarded jointly to Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

⁶ ARMIT, I. & D. REICH. 2021. The return of the Beaker folk? Rethinking migration and population change in British prehistory. *Antiquity* 95: 1464–77. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2021.129>

“for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change”. Over the subsequent decade and a half, climate scientists have accumulated more data, developed more sophisticated models, become more confident in their predictions and authored reports that are increasingly urgent in tone. The old consensus, for example, that it was impossible to attribute specific weather events to anthropogenic climate change has been swept aside by simple probability;⁷ if ‘one in 1000-year’ events now seem to be happening with much greater regularity, it is because they are. Many of these extreme weather events, including this summer’s unprecedented monsoon rains in Pakistan and storms such as Hurricane Ian that blew through the Caribbean and the eastern US seaboard in September, reflect simple physics: warmer air and higher sea temperatures provide more energy and moisture, leading to slower-moving storms capable of releasing greater amounts of rain.

The extreme weather events of 2022 were covered in the October Editorial, with reference to a number of international initiatives looking both to raise awareness of the threat of climate change to cultural heritage, and to promote collaborative research between archaeologists and climate scientists. In this issue, building on a 2018 *Antiquity* article on the effects of climate change on archaeology in the Arctic region,⁸ we feature a special section dedicated to climate change and cultural heritage. Jørgen Hollesen opens the section with an overview of this rapidly growing field. He stresses the challenges of addressing a phenomenon that is multi-dimensional, with both immediate and longer-term implications, direct and indirect effects, and which are often hard to see or even measure. This complexity exacerbates and multiplies existing threats and introduces new risks. Old certainties about the management of sites and landscapes have been replaced by the urgent need to develop new methods and mindsets to adapt to this dynamic new climate context. As an example, Hollesen raises the presumption, enshrined in the Valletta Convention, for the *in situ* preservation of archaeological remains. With changes as diverse as rising sea levels, falling water tables, melting ice and forest fires, we need urgently to rethink established notions of guardianship that are based on the assumption of a stable climate and unchanging environment. We will need to reorientate towards adaptation, managing change and prioritising what can and cannot be recorded and protected. A key consideration concerns funding. In many countries, the bulk of archaeological work today is funded by developers. The ‘polluter pays’ principle, however, conspicuously does not seem to apply in the context of climate change, and new models and sources of funding will be needed to support future cultural heritage and climate change adaptation work.

In their article, Gregory and colleagues focus on the specific challenges of climate change for coastal and underwater cultural heritage. The threats range from the erosion or submergence of coastal sites due to rising sea levels, higher storm surges and stronger storms, through to the deterioration of shipwrecks and other underwater sites caused by higher oxygen levels, acidification and the spread of invasive species. Clearly, coastal environments are, and always

⁷ MANN, M.E., T.C. PETERSON & S.J. HASSOL. 2017. What we know about the climate change-hurricane connection. *Scientific American* 8. Available at: <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/what-we-know-about-the-climate-change-hurricane-connection/> (accessed 27 October 2022).

⁸ HOLLESEN, J. *et al.* 2018. Climate change and the deteriorating archaeological and environmental archives of the Arctic. *Antiquity* 92: 573–86. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2018.8>

have been, dynamic. The Project Gallery article by Friesem and colleagues in the current issue, for example, reports the use of coring to demonstrate the presence of intact archaeological deposits at a Pre-Pottery Neolithic site in the Eastern Mediterranean submerged by rising sea levels in the early Holocene. As such, coastal management plans increasingly focus on ways of adapting to, rather than resisting, change. But strategies such as ‘managed retreat’, which aim to replace linear sea defences with buffer zones that can accommodate higher tides and storm surges are not easily reconciled with the aim of preserving archaeology *in situ*. Greater integration of cultural heritage and environmental management is therefore required in order to ensure a holistic and informed approach to adaptation.

Still, hard decisions will need to be made—and paid for. Hurricane Ian provides a timely example. At St Augustine, on the east coast of northern Florida, the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument is the oldest masonry fort in the continental United States. Just days before the events to mark the 350th anniversary of the fort’s foundation, Hurricane Ian whipped up a storm surge that flooded the fort and historic city centre. Yet, the Castillo de San Marcos finds itself relatively well protected; at the centre of a major tourist industry, the National Parks Service has invested in a sea wall and archaeologists have digitally documented the fort to help mitigate against accelerated weathering and erosion caused by climate change.⁹ Other sites are less well protected. Hurricanes and storm surges affect thousands of other sites along Florida’s coast, many of which, such as shell middens, are even more vulnerable to erosion, yet far less visible and less likely to attract the resources needed to document and protect them. The good news, as Gregory and colleagues note, is that the tools with which to address some of these issues have improved dramatically over the past 20 years, including the boom in remote-sensing, the availability of legacy and newly acquired aerial imagery, drone technology and photogrammetric digital recording.

In the third article of this special section, Matthiesen and colleagues turn their attention to the specific challenges of climate change and wetland archaeology. Wetlands preserve some of the most valuable and impressive archaeological remains of any global environmental niche. The truly astonishing rate of destruction of the world’s wetlands over the past century has surely robbed us of inestimable information about the human past; now, climate change threatens the surviving wetlands with, for example, lower or unstable water tables and peat fires. Simultaneously, the importance of wetlands as part of climate change mitigation and, especially, carbon sequestration, is being increasingly recognised. But, again, environmental management strategies are not always well coordinated with the preservation of archaeological sites and landscapes. Policies such as ‘no net loss’, which seek to ensure that the overall extent of wetlands is maintained by compelling developers to mitigate any losses through the creation of new wetlands, clearly do not accommodate cultural heritage considerations. Similarly, the rewetting of agricultural land in order to expand wetlands as part of carbon sequestration projects presents a potential threat to other archaeological landscapes. As ever, closer collaboration with climate change scientists and environment managers will be

⁹The Castillo de San Marcos National Monument Digital Documentation and Interpretation Program. Available at: <https://dhhc.lib.usf.edu/project/the-castillo-de-san-marcos-national-monument-digital-documentation-and-interpretation-program/> (accessed 27 October 2022).

essential.¹⁰ A particularly important message which arises from the authors' review of the physical and chemical processes impacted by climate change concerns the centrality of local solutions. Whilst global action is necessary to decarbonise the world's economy as a whole, the effects of climate change on wetlands and wetland archaeology are so complex and specific as to require highly localised solutions. Indeed, the importance of local solutions to global problems is picked up in the final article of the special section.

Climate change and Sustainable Development Goals

Turning to policy-making, Cathy Daly and colleagues examine adaptation planning for cultural heritage, focusing specifically on low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). Through a review of national adaptation plans, and an expert questionnaire survey, the authors demonstrate that only a handful of the LMIC surveyed (Brazil, Colombia, Nepal, Palestine and Sri Lanka) specifically include archaeology in their adaptation plans, though a larger number encompass archaeological resources within the wider remit of cultural heritage. The authors present a series of case studies to illustrate work already underway at World Heritage Sites such as Ayutthaya (Thailand) and Pasargadae (Iran), and, in particular, to highlight the importance of local engagement in the development of adaptation and management plans. At Pasargadae, for example, during flooding in 2019, local farmers directed surface water away from agricultural land onto the World Heritage Site, due to a lack of awareness about the site's value and vulnerability. A clearer sense of local ownership and engagement in the site's management is therefore crucial to its protection.

An almost identical scenario has played out in the last few months at the World Heritage Site of Mohenjo Daro (Pakistan), where this summer's unprecedented monsoon dumped 1400mm of rain on the site in a single week, causing damage to the mud walls designed to protect the site.¹¹ The UNESCO World Heritage Fund quickly provided \$350 000 of emergency funding for Pakistan to cope with the immediate effects of the wider flooding across the country, including \$150 000 to support recovery and prevention measures at the Mohenjo Daro and Thatta World Heritage sites.¹² In response to the torrential rain, the Technical Consultative Committee on Mohenjo Daro outlined a range of measures, including the importance of working with the local community to ensure that flood waters are not directed from elsewhere towards the site.¹³ As the examples of Pasargadae and Mohenjo Daro clearly show, there is much value in sharing such examples to develop a sense of common issues and the most effective ways to address them.

¹⁰ E.g. England Peat Action Plan. 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-peat-action-plan> (accessed 27 October 2022).

¹¹ HUSSEIN, A. 2022. Record rains in Pakistan damage Mohenjo Daro archaeological site. *Al Jazeera*, 8 September 2022. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/8/record-rains-in-pakistan-damage-mohenjo-daro-archeological-site> (accessed 27 October 2022).

¹² Floods in Pakistan: 350,000 USD from UNESCO for heritage recovery. Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/floods-pakistan-350000-usd-unesco-heritage-recovery> (accessed 27 October 2022).

¹³ Antiquities wing of Culture Tourism & Antiquities Department, Govt of Sindh. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/AntiquitiesSindh/photos/pcb.5595669603786532/5595669493786543> (accessed 27 October 2022).

Sustainable development is key to the success of building local ownership and engagement with adaptation policies in LMIC. The national plans for Timor-Leste, Nepal and South Sudan, for example, emphasise the value of heritage tourism as an alternative to traditional livelihoods that may be lost due to future climate change. The mobilisation of cultural heritage in support of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, including generating employment and economic growth and tackling climate change, is the focus of growing critical attention. A new book, *Rethinking heritage for sustainable development*, by Sophia Labadi explores some of the complexities and contradictions of leveraging the value of heritage to promote economic growth in Africa. Labadi, the winner of the European Archaeologists' Association Heritage Prize 2022,¹⁴ turns a critical eye on a range of projects that use tangible and intangible heritage as the basis for sustainable development in the Global South. In assessing the success of these schemes, Labadi notes that many fail, or are only partially successful, because local communities are "disconnected from their heritage and environment, and are over-burdened with other priorities".¹⁵ This, it is argued, stems from the importation of Western mindsets and values that do not fit with or recognise local expertise and needs. In particular, Labadi observes that working within European frameworks that prioritise tangible heritage and its protection, and which enshrine Cartesian dualities such as culture *vs* nature, is often found to be inadequate on contact with local realities. All too often, well-intentioned projects, whether growing traditional crops to supply Western demand for 'superfoods' or setting aside land for wildlife conservation, fail to deliver for local communities. There are no instant or straightforward solutions but, Labadi argues, central to advancing a truly sustainable development agenda is the need to expand education and skills—and these need to be locally developed rather than imported from the North.¹⁶ Hence, as stressed by the authors of all four articles in this climate change special section, it is only by engaging and empowering local communities that we can develop the equitable and sustainable approaches to cultural heritage management needed as we look collectively to adapt to climate change and to achieve UN's wider sustainable development goals.

Climate change and Bruno Latour

 In highlighting some of the limitations of Western models as the basis for successfully addressing global inequalities and climate change, Labadi channels a wider critique of European ontology most clearly articulated in Bruno Latour's influential anthropology of science, *We have never been Modern*.¹⁷ Latour, who passed away in October 2022,¹⁸ was not an archaeologist; indeed, he barely made reference to the discipline in his many and varied works.

¹⁴ European Archaeological Heritage Prize 2022. Available at: https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/Navigation_Prizes_and_Awards/Heritage_Prize_2022.aspx (accessed 27 October 2022).

¹⁵ LABADI, S. 2022. *Rethinking heritage for sustainable development*. London: UCL Press, p. 213. <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781800081925>

¹⁶ See also CHIRIKURE, S. 2021. Making archaeology relevant to global challenges: a Global South perspective. *Antiquity* 95: 1073–77. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2021.72>

¹⁷ LATOUR, B. 1993. *We have never been modern*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

¹⁸ Bruno Latour obituary. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/10/bruno-latour-obituary> (accessed 27 October 2022).

Undoubtedly, however, he has had a significant impact on archaeological thinking. From Actor-Network-Theory, through emergence, to symmetrical archaeology, Latour's evolving ideas have stimulated and informed innovative archaeological research for at least three decades. Looking back through the pages of *Antiquity*, Latour has been a discernible influence from at least the mid 1990s, with a notable uptick in the use and citation of his ideas over the past five years. His thinking has informed *Antiquity* articles on the agency of materials, from Roman objects-capes to contemporary marine plastic waste, ideas for how archaeologists might push back against populism, and multiple studies of networks, relationality, entanglement and assemblage.

Latour's final works focused on climate change and COVID-19. In *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, for example, Latour argues that the dominant mode of science and philosophy that emerged in the seventeenth century is fundamentally unsuited to tackling the proliferating problems of the Anthropocene, or what he labels the 'New Climatic Regime': "the physical framework that the Moderns had taken for granted, the ground on which their history had always been played out, [and which] has become unstable".¹⁹ For Latour, environmental collapse, extreme inequality, political instability and COVID-19 are a series of deeply interrelated crises that will only be solved through new ways of conceptualising Nature that allow for the agency of non-humans, including the planet itself. In arguing thus, he amplifies the concept of Gaia, as advanced by the late James Lovelock (the name Gaia, coincidentally, being suggested to Lovelock by the Nobel laureate, William Golding, see above). The intertwining of all these ideas—climate change, colonial histories, Eurocentrism, cultural heritage and Indigenous ontologies—is most eloquently drawn together by Amitav Ghosh. His most recent book, *The Nutmeg's Curse*, ostensibly offers a history of the Banda Islands of Indonesia and their colonial exploitation to supply the European demand for nutmeg and other spices. As the book's subtitle—*Parables for a Planet in Crisis*—suggests, however, the Banda Islands are a lens through which Ghosh seeks to address a much broader set of contemporary issues. Crucially, he sees all of these themes as not only inter-related, but deeply rooted in history, and their resolution tractable only through an historical lens. Moreover, like Latour and Lovelock, he demands a role for non-humans, for example, seeing agency in the volcanoes of the Banda Islands and questioning whether extreme weather events in "the most intensively terraformed parts of the Earth" are because "those landscapes have now decided to shrug off the forms imposed on them by European settlers".²⁰ Whether or not we accept the vitality that Latour and Ghosh attribute to the non-human natural world as a means to push back, philosophically and politically, against capitalist logic, both writers emphasise the importance of historical perspective, which by definition must include archaeology, for addressing contemporary challenges.

Elsewhere in this issue

Among the other research on offer in the current issue, readers will discover studies of the earliest megalithic burial monuments in East Africa (Sawchuk *et al.*), rare evidence for early

¹⁹ LATOUR, B. 2017. *Facing Gaia: eight lectures on the New Climatic Regime*. Cambridge: Polity, p.2.

²⁰ GHOSH, A. 2021. *The Nutmeg's Curse: parables for a planet in crisis*. London: John Murray, p. 83. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226815466.001.0001>

domestic structures in Southeast Asia (Grono *et al.*), early Christian basilicas at the port-city of Adulis on the Red Sea coast (Gabriele Castiglia), and arboglyphs on baob trees in north-west Australia (O'Connor *et al.*). Shanti Pappu and Kumar Akhilesh take us back to the early twentieth century with a historiographical study of Palaeolithic terminology, revealing some of the lively debate among the global community of prehistorians around the naming of regional lithic cultures, such as the 'Madrasién' of southern India. We also travel to China, with a study of jade burning that indicates that this funerary practice may have commenced in the late third millennium BC, 1000 years earlier than previously thought. Meanwhile, an isotopic study of archaeobotanical assemblages from China's Loess Plateau reveals how the adoption of new crops, such as wheat and barley, was accompanied by variable knowledge about their effective cultivation. We also feature a pair of articles that take us back to the site of Waun Mawn in south-west Wales. Timothy Darvill presents a critique of the recent *Antiquity* article by Mike Parker Pearson and colleagues on the dismantled stone circle at the Welsh site.²¹ Darvill outlines an alternative interpretation of the evidence, questioning the existence of a stone circle there and, consequently, the authors' suggestion that the Bluestone pillars at Stonehenge were transported from Waun Mawn. Parker Pearson and colleagues provide a response to Darvill's article, elaborating on elements of their original argument using some newly acquired data, and reworking other aspects in the light of recently published results.

During 2022, many in-person conferences have resumed. This year, we have had the opportunity to meet with our authors, reviewers and readers at SAA in Chicago, WAC in Prague and EAA in Budapest. As we approach the end of the year, we look forward to attending the first in-person Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) conference since London in 2019. Members of the *Antiquity* team will be in Edinburgh, 15–17 December; do come along to the conference stand to discuss any ideas for articles or features in the journal. We also hope to see you at the plenary session, sponsored by the Antiquity Trust, and that you will test your knowledge of all things archaeological at the *Antiquity* pub quiz! Finally, we wish all our contributors and readers a peaceful and prosperous 2023.

ROBERT WITCHER
Durham, 1 December 2022

²¹ PARKER PEARSON, M. *et al.* 2021. The original Stonehenge? A dismantled stone circle in the Preseli Hills of west Wales. *Antiquity* 95: 85–103. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2020.239>