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# **E**DITORIAL

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This issue was not originally planned as a thematic one, but it has turned out to comprise four complimentary papers, each with a distinctly 'fishy' flavour and many more linkages besides. Two papers are concerned with the Mesolithic or Mesolithic/Neolithic periods, and two with early historic/medieval times. Two are concerned with stable isotopes, radiocarbon dating and specific locations, and are strongly evidence based; two are geographically wide-ranging reviews which draw on biological, ethnographic and historical insights to make their interpretative cases. But there are many other linkages and I believe that any readers with an interest in any one of these papers – whatever their main personal specialism – will benefit from reading them all and thereby discovering new perspectives useful in their own work.

Stable isotope palaeodiet studies, in conjunction with AMS dating, have of course been one of the 'growth industries' of archaeology in recent years, making one of those periodic step changes which expand and transform our discipline. Since the later 1990s no archaeologist can have been wholly unaware of these developments, and it is perhaps surprising that relatively few papers on the topic have appeared so far in this journal. The first two articles in this issue do, however, provide a very timely introduction to what is perhaps a more mature phase two of the stable isotope 'revolution', in which the approach is rather more cautious and evaluative, with a properly self-critical stance towards the data and the inferences to be drawn – fascinating stuff, the implications of which go way beyond these particular case studies focused on the Danube Gorges and the Orkney Isles.

The medieval 'fish event horizon'<sup>1</sup> discussed by Barrett and Richards has a resonance for the Mesolithic period, which witnessed an explosion in the human exploitation of riverine, lacustrine and marine resources. But did this include deep-sea fishing? Pickard and Bonsall, equally concerned as are the stable isotope authors with source criticism, reject the contention that Mesolithic fishers engaged in any regular fashion with such a dangerous pursuit. Whether narwhals were caught in deep or shallow water Pluskowski does not say, but their magnificent,

*European Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 7(3): 219–220

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the European Association of Archaeologists (www.e-a-a.org) ISSN 1461–9571 DOI:10.1177/1461957104059825

and potentially very dangerous, 'unicorn horns' enter the archaeological record in circumstances which the author maintains warrant study in terms of material culture rather than as zoological specimens.

The other theme of this issue, explored in the Book Marks review section guest-edited by Willem Willems, is that of archaeological heritage management. This is another 'growth industry' in archaeology but one which has not perhaps had as much of an impact in the literature as it should. Willems has of course himself written previously on this topic in the journal – see *EJA* 1(3) and *EJA* 2(2) – and hopefully he welcomed the recent paper by Van Dockum and Lauwerier in issue 7(2) – but perhaps most heritage managers are too busy doing their work to write (or read) about it? Or is it, perhaps more to the point, that unlike university academics, heritage managers' careers are not so directly tied to their publication records, so the imperative to get into print is less pressing?

I hope that readers of this issue will not feel there is a disjunction, or at least not an inappropriate disjunction, between the papers and the reviews section. The issues raised by Willems and his reviewers are just as important for archaeologists of whatever persuasion as are those research questions explored in the preceding articles. Indeed, intellectually, socially, politically, and – think about it – financially, the academic and heritage professional aspects of archaeology are inextricably linked. This is something the EAA has always sought to foster, particularly through its annual meetings as both Willems and Cleere point out, and I trust the contents of the *EJA* will also continue whenever possible to reflect this interrelation.

## NOTE

1. See Daniel Pauly, 'Much rowing for fish' (*Nature* 432, 813–814, 16 December 2004 issue), for comments resulting from studies by Barrett and others on the medieval fish diet shift from freshwater to marine species.