



Frontispiece 1. Aerial view of archaeological investigations in August 2024 at a Roman military camp some 2200m above sea level at Colm la Runga in the Oberhalbstein Alps, Switzerland. The camp, enclosed by three ditches and a rampart, was first discovered in 2023 using lidar data and is now under investigation by the University of Basel. Finds include hobnails, arrowheads and slingshots with the stamp of the Third Legion. The camp lies 900m above the site of a battle in 15 BC at which three Roman legions engaged with the Suanetes, a local Rhaetian group. The strategic location of the camp offered a panorama of the surrounding landscape and secured an important route through the central Alps. Photograph ©Andrea Badrutt, Chur.



Frontispiece 2. Archaeological investigation underway at Ngomene in southern Mozambique in August 2024. The hilltop site features drystone-walled enclosures typical of the 'Zimbabwe culture' best known from the site of Great Zimbabwe (AD 1000–1600). Located 30km from the coast and the contemporaneous trading port of Chibuenne and the Bazaruto archipelago, Ngomene promises insights into the role of Indian Ocean maritime trade in the political economy of pre-colonial southern Africa. The Entangled project comprises researchers from the University of Cambridge and the University of Eduardo Mondlane, working with the consent and participation of the local communities and heritage authorities to undertake survey and test excavations at the site. <https://entangledproject.com/> Photograph © Abigail Moffett.



EDITORIAL

On the Silk Road

Among the new World Heritage Sites announced earlier this year are two properties that take the form of lines: the Via Appia¹ and the Beijing Central Axis.² Built in the fourth century BC, the Via Appia, or Appian Way, cuts straight through the marshes south of Rome, before winding across southern Italy to the Roman port of Brundisium on the heel of the Italian boot. In similar fashion, the Beijing Central Axis is a perfect north–south line, running through the heart of China’s historic capital, along which the city’s most important imperial palaces and ceremonial buildings are aligned. The axis dates to the refoundation of the city under the Yuan dynasty (AD 1271–1368) and many of the extant structures date to the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1636–1912) periods, but the line itself attests to a much older Chinese tradition of urban planning specified in the *Kaogongji* (the Book of Diverse Crafts). Based on Confucian principles, the axis and the urban form it guides use symmetry and balance to achieve societal and spiritual harmony (Figure 1).

These two new World Heritage properties share several characteristics. They were conceived by powerful ancient states; they are lined with monumental structures; they are physically inscribed on the landscape but also evoke genealogical lines of civilisation; they are tangible and intangible. Geographically, however, the two lines are a world apart, located at either end of the Eurasian landmass, separated by well over 5000km and seven time zones. Yet, if you whisper the magical words ‘Silk Road’, this enormous distance contracts. Suddenly, the vast expanses of Steppe and desert become not a barrier but a highway linking one end of the continent with the other.

The term ‘Silk Road’ was coined in the nineteenth century to describe the links between Han China and the Roman Empire. In recent years, however, its scope and popularity have expanded dramatically and, perhaps more than coincidentally, there are currently two temporary exhibitions in London that take the Silk Road as their theme. At the British Library, ‘A Silk Road Oasis: Life in Ancient Dunhuang’ presents some of the manuscripts and other finds from the Buddhist cave complex of Mogao at Dunhuang in Gansu province, China. Located on the edge of the Gobi Desert, the oasis city of Dunhuang was a key node connecting East and West. The exhibition presents the city as “a cultural melting pot where ideas, technologies and art flowed freely” characterised by “multiple languages, faiths and cultures including Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and Christianity”.³ Meanwhile, at the British Museum, the ‘Silk Roads’ exhibition narrates the “significant leaps in connectivity

¹ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1708>

² <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1714>

³ <https://silkroad.seetickets.com/timeslots/filter/a-silk-road-oasis-life-in-ancient-dunhuang>



Figure 1. Staircase leading to the Hall of Supreme Harmony, aligned on the Central Axis, Palace Museum, Beijing. Photograph R. Witcher.

and the rise of universal religions that linked communities across continents” during the second half of the first millennium AD.⁴ Broadly organised around the concept of a journey from East to West, the objects on display include a glaze-splashed Tang-dynasty ceramic camel, a Buddha statue discovered in Sweden, a string of cloves and a monumental wall painting from Samarkand (Figure 2).⁵

Both exhibitions lean into the idea of the Silk Road as a form of transcontinental connectivity or globalisation *avant la lettre*. They emphasise multicultural themes of tolerance and diversity and explore the long-distance movement of not only objects but also people, using individual lives to illustrate journeys including “Willibald, an ingenious balsam smuggler from England, and a legendary Chinese princess who shared the secrets of silk farming with her new kingdom” and “the personal stories of those who lived, travelled through, worked, and worshipped” at Dunhuang. Both also appeal to a certain Orientalist romanticism around caravans of exotic

goods crossing deserts from one oasis to the next. This transcontinental globalised world order where people, things and ideas moved freely from one region to the next is a seductive narrative. But for every trader and pilgrim there was likely also an enslaved person and a soldier; as well as economic exchange and religious tolerance, there was also conflict and suspicion. The Cloud Platform at the Juyongguan Pass north of Beijing captures this tension. Built in the mid-fourteenth century AD, at the end of the Yuan dynasty, the 9.5m-high white marble structure was originally designed as a platform to support religious buildings above the road into China (Figure 3). The surfaces of the passageway beneath the platform are richly decorated with Buddhist imagery and feature religious texts in six scripts including Tibetan and Old Uyghur. It is a monument that embodies the essence of the the Silk Road and the free flow of merchants and religious ideas between East and West. Yet, the platform lies within one of several forts that guarded the Juyongguan Pass, a critically important route that led from the frontier to the new Ming capital at Beijing. Enclosed within a fortified circuit itself protected behind the Great Wall, the Cloud Platform reminds us that the

⁴ <https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/silk-roads>

⁵ Brunning, S., L. Yu-ping, E.R. O’Connell & T. Williams. 2024. *Silk Roads*. London: The British Museum.



Figure 2. Detail of a wall painting from the south wall of the 'Hall of the Ambassadors' at Samarkand showing a ritual procession with the mid seventh-century AD ruler Varkhuman accompanied by consorts, guards and priests mounted on horses, camels and an elephant, as featured in the British Museum 'Silk Roads' exhibition © ACDF of Uzbekistan, Samarkand State Museum Reserve.

transnational flow of people, goods and ideas along the Silk Road also involved insecurity, borders and state control.

Hence, the concept of the Silk Road extends far beyond camels and cosmopolitanism. The term may have originated in reference to the Han/Roman period, but research on the archaeology of the Silk Road now sprawls widely across time and space. Unlike the precisely surveyed lines of the Beijing Central Axis and the Via Appia, the Silk Road braids and meanders across the Eurasian landmass. Indeed, the concept is increasingly pluralised: the Silk Roads. It has been broadened geographically to encompass transoceanic connectivity: the Maritime Silk Road, drawing in the Indian Ocean world, from Southeast Asia to the east coast of Africa.⁶ The term has also been evoked in relation to ever-earlier periods, recognising 'prehistoric' Silk Roads along which new crops and technologies moved between East and West.⁷ At the same time, the concept has expanded far beyond the study of the past; the sociologist Tim Winter observes that the "Silk Road has now migrated out from Archaeology,

⁶ See, for example, the Review Article on historical archaeology in the Indian Ocean world by H. Rødland, in this issue. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2024.171>

⁷ For example, Liu, X. & M.K. Jones. 2014. Food globalisation in prehistory: top down or bottom up? *Antiquity* 88: 956–63. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00050912>; Sun, Y. *et al.* 2024. Variation of millet grain size and cooking techniques across Asia between the late fourth and first millennia BC. *Antiquity* 98: 401–16. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2024.31>; Hunt, H.V. *et al.* 2024. Did crops expand in tandem with culinary practices from their region of origin? Evidence from ancient DNA and material culture. *Antiquity* 98: 12–29. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2023.197>

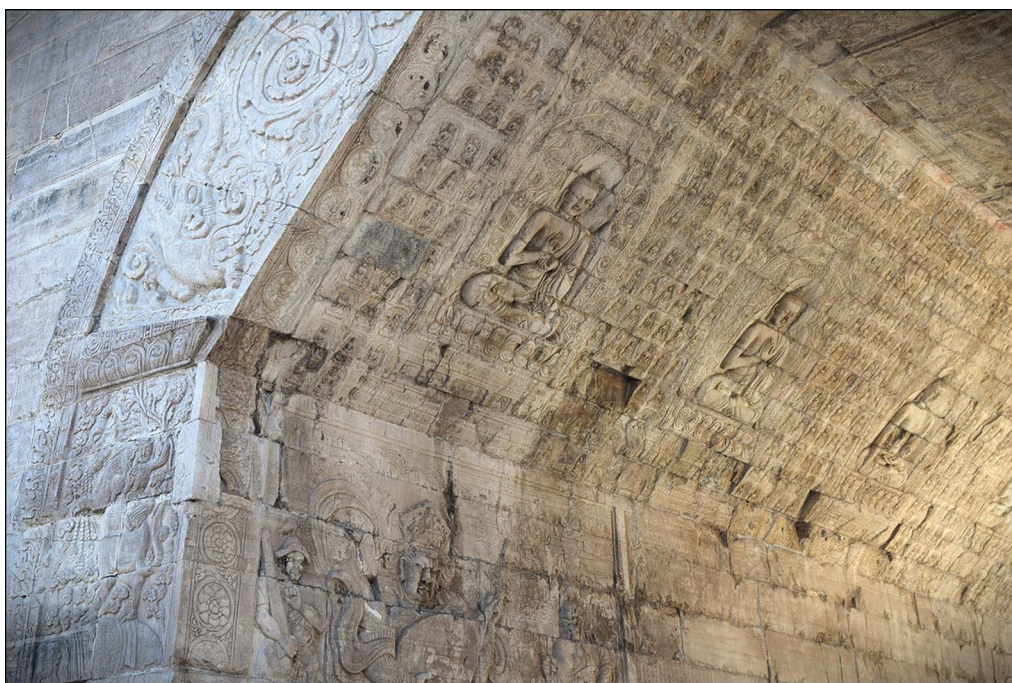


Figure 3. Detail of the decoration of the Cloud Platform at Juyongguan, Beijing. Photograph by R. Witcher.

Asian Studies and History into International Relations, Political Geography, Religious Studies, Public Health, and Urban Studies to name a few”.⁸

The concept has taken on particular resonance in relation to China’s ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ (BRI). Launched in 2013, the BRI is a vast infrastructure development strategy intended to expand land and maritime connections between China and the rest of Asia, Europe and Africa. Over the past decade it has financed and built countless roads, bridges, ports and railways in dozens of countries (Figure 4). Beyond infrastructure and economic development, the initiative also encompasses collaboration and funding for research and education. With these twin aims of enhancing connectivity and cooperation, it is no surprise that in naming the initiative China should have reached for the Silk Road(s) concept—officially, the ‘Silk Road Economic Belt and Twenty-First-Century Maritime Silk Road Development Strategy’. Hence, ancient history and contemporary geopolitics are woven together anew; Winter notes: “Activating these Silk Road discourses within such a vast political economy of trade and capital investment holds real possibilities for rewriting world and regional histories, [and] recalibrating discourses about East and West.”⁹ Hence, although the Silk Road may have originated in nineteenth-century Europe as an Orientalist discourse of primarily

⁸Winter, T. 2022. *The Silk Road: connecting histories and futures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 5–6.

⁹Winter 2022: 177.



Figure 4. A viaduct passing through the Nairobi National Park, part of the 600km-long railway built with Chinese finance and completed in 2017 to connect Mombasa with Nairobi and Suswa, Kenya. Photograph by R. Witcher.

antiquarian interest, it is a malleable concept that can be redefined in relation to contemporary ambitions.

Following the launch of the BRI, Michael Storozum and Yuqi Li have documented a significant uptick in the numbers of overseas archaeology projects funded and jointly led by Chinese scholars.¹⁰ These archaeological missions, like the infrastructure projects financed by the BRI, focus on countries in Central, South and Southeast Asia and in East Africa, encompassing both the terrestrial and maritime Silk Roads. Much of this research is published in Chinese journals though some has appeared in the international literature, including *Antiquity*; for example, on the Indian Ocean voyages of Zheng He in the early fifteenth century AD.¹¹ Storozum and Li interpret this increase in overseas Chinese research in relation to two strategic aims of the Chinese government: National Rejuvenation, broadly developing a deeper sense of a collective past and contemporary national identity, and the advancement of China's international reputation and status as a cradle of civilisation. National Rejuvenation is directed primarily at a Chinese audience, while the emphasis on the origins of civilisation looks out to the international community.

¹⁰ Storozum, M.J. & Y. Li. 2020. Chinese archaeology goes abroad. *Archaeologies* 16: 282–309, figs. 1 & 2. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11759-020-09400-z>

¹¹ Lin, M. & R. Zhang. 2015. Zheng He's voyages to Hormuz: the archaeological evidence. *Antiquity* 89: 417–32. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2014.28>

In the service of these two aims, archaeology, museums and cultural heritage are being used to articulate “a more Sino-centric narrative of world history”.¹² It is, of course, a model that has been previously deployed by European nations, but there are some differences. For example, Storozum and Li note that unlike many European and North American overseas archaeological projects, Chinese missions tend to emphasise shared heritage, nurturing a form of “South–South co-operation”.¹³

Given the significant interest in the connections between archaeology, nationalism and politics,¹⁴ the linkages between the BRI and Chinese archaeology, especially recent overseas missions, has received surprisingly little attention. Indeed, while *Antiquity* has, in recent years, seen a discernible rise in the numbers of articles penned by Chinese authors and those focusing on the archaeology of Central Asia, I can find only a single passing mention of the BRI, dating to 2017, that speculates on the impact of the initiative on the focus of archaeological research.¹⁵ There is certainly plenty of material to explore. China’s strategic emphasis on cultural heritage is reflected in that country’s increasingly significant role on the international stage, including via UNESCO, and domestically through substantial investment in archaeology departments, training and museums. For example, just last year, Beijing’s new Chinese Archaeological Museum opened its doors to the public. Housed in a huge bespoke building, the museum features 6000 exhibits across 7000m² organised around themes such as the ‘Origin of Civilisation’, the ‘Unified Great Nation’ and ‘National Awakening’. The Maritime Silk Road has attracted significant investment with major museums dedicated to ports and seafaring in Ningbo, Shanghai and Yangjiang and, in the last few months, a major hi-tech laboratory dedicated to the excavation and preservation of a late Qing dynasty shipwreck raised from the Yangzi River.¹⁶

And China is not alone in leveraging the power of cultural heritage, and of Silk Road(s) archaeology specifically. India and Vietnam, for example, are collaborating on the construction of a National Maritime Heritage Complex in Gujarat. The new museum will be located close to the archaeological remains of the Indus Valley port-city of Lothal and promises exhibits on the Harappans as pioneering seafarers and on India’s contacts with the Greco-Roman world.¹⁷ Meanwhile, the President of Mongolia, Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh, has announced plans to ‘rebuild’ the Silk Road city of Karakorum, the historic capital of the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century and today part of the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site.¹⁸ If the value of archaeology to nation states in the West is arguably not what it once was (at least based on the funding allocated to it by cash-strapped governments), in some other parts of the

¹² Storozum & Li 2020: 285.

¹³ Storozum & Li 2020: 294; Winter 2022: 171.

¹⁴ E.g. Hanscam, E. & B. Buchanan. 2023. Walled in: borderlands, frontiers and the future of archaeology. *Antiquity* 97: 1004–16. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2023.14>

¹⁵ I was even more surprised to discover that the reference appears in a New Book Chronicle written by the then Reviews Editor: R.E. Witcher. 2017. New Book Chronicle. *Antiquity* 91: 1401–11. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2017.175>

¹⁶ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202409/1320572.shtml>

¹⁷ <https://nmhc.in/>

¹⁸ <https://www.mongoliaweekly.org/post/revitalizing-mongolia-s-heritage-president-announces-plans-to-rebuild-kharkhorum> See also, Bemann, J. *et al.* 2022. Mapping Karakorum, the capital of the Mongol Empire. *Antiquity* 96: 159–78. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2021.153>

world, especially those arrayed along the Silk Road(s) of the Middle East and Central, South, Southeast and East Asia, cultural heritage is attracting significant political attention and investment.

Archaeological theory and conspiracy theory

Forty years ago in an influential *Antiquity* article, ‘Archaeology in 1984’, Ian Hodder diagnosed an archaeological dilemma. At that time, archaeologists eschewed speculation and asserted the objectivity of science, yet they increasingly acknowledged the fundamental importance of dealing with cognitive aspects of the past: “How can a scientific archaeology devoted to the testing of theories against data cope with verifying statements about ideas in prehistoric people’s heads?”¹⁹ By rejecting the scientific separation of theory and data and, instead, reconceiving archaeology as a cultural and social discipline, Hodder cut the Gordian Knot. The past is not pieced back together by objective scientific testing but rather constructed in the present in relation to contemporary social and political concerns. This position opened the way for a more democratic narration of multiple pasts by a greater diversity of social and cultural groups: “The result of this relativism is not anarchy, if by that is meant that an endless series of arbitrary pasts will be produced [...]”; rather “The past is everybody’s past and by releasing it, the dangers of [George] Orwell’s totalitarianism are lessened”.

Over the subsequent four decades, such multivocality has been embraced both theoretically and politically. But what about those narratives of the past that patently distort, pervert or even invent archaeological evidence in support of unpalatable ideas or political causes? If archaeologists surrender their authority as producers and arbiters of past truths, do we invite in the barbarian horde of pseudoarchaeologists? What, for example, of the Netflix series *Ancient Apocalypse*, the latest season of which was released in October this year? Is this ‘docu-series’ to be welcomed as one more narrative that enriches the mix or to be firmly dismissed as a swivel-eyed conspiracy theory? And who gets to decide: professional archaeologists? Or perhaps an algorithm? Intriguingly, while Graham Hancock’s ideas about an Ice Age civilisation circulate freely online, a post from *Antiquity*’s Threads account promoting an article on the archaeology of a Second World War synthetic-fuel plant (Kierszys & Dzikowski, in this issue) was deemed—presumably by an algorithm—to be in breach of the platform’s guidelines and duly removed with no reasonable prospect of appeal.

Previously in these pages, I mused on what *Antiquity*’s second editor and chief inquisitor of pseudoarchaeology Glyn Daniel would have made of the first series of *Ancient Apocalypse* and Hancock’s idea of an Ice Age civilisation concealed from the public by a cabal of professional archaeologists. It was Daniel, as editor, who published Hodder’s 1984 article, welcoming it as “stimulating and provocative”,²⁰ while also being vocal on the “foolish fantasies [that] pour from the press every month and sell like hot cakes”—or, what he more concisely dismissed as “bullshit”.²¹ One suspects he would have been appalled at *Ancient Apocalypse*

¹⁹ Hodder, I. 1984. Archaeology in 1984. *Antiquity* 58: 25–32, p. 25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00055940>

²⁰ See editor’s abstract, Hodder 1984.

²¹ Daniel, G. 1979. Editorial. *Antiquity* 53: 169–74, p. 172. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00042484>; Daniel, G. 1979. The forgotten milestones and blind alleys of the past. *RAIN* 33: 3–6, p. 5. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3032546>

while secretly relishing the opportunity to pour scorn on it. Organisations such as the Society for American Archaeology have issued more measured statements seeking to debunk the claims and expose the racist foundations on which they are built—though naturally such objections are interpreted as evidence for the very conspiracy the series seeks to expose.²² Of course, we might wonder whether the viewers of *Ancient Apocalypse* actually believe its narrative or, instead, simply tune in for some fantastical entertainment which they recognise to be no more related to the reality of the prehistoric past than is *Gladiator 2* to ancient Rome. And on the theme of Hollywood blockbusters, does the appearance of Keanu Reeves in the latest series of *Ancient Apocalypse* suggest some celebrity endorsement was deemed necessary to pep up the viewing figures?²³ Either way, this one is more likely to win a Golden Raspberry than an Oscar. Zero stars.

Some of the questions raised 40 years ago in Hodder's article, and indirectly by *Ancient Apocalypse*, come to mind in relation to the debate section in this issue. Opening proceedings, Catherine Frieman reconfirms many of Hodder's tenets: the fragmentary and unruly nature of archaeological evidence, the possibility of multiple narratives for dealing with these uncertainties and the construction of different pasts in support of present-day concerns and alternative futures. Frieman observes that "As soon as we map out our unknowns, a thousand new stories emerge, each ready for critical analysis and each with a different resonance in our present". To address these unknowns, Frieman calls for an archaeology of 'unproof', the term inspired by an Ursula Le Guin novel (both Frieman and Hodder take examples of fiction as their touchstones). It is an approach that "encompasses the holes in our data, the ambiguity of our results, those things that are unknown [...] This in turn gives us scope for possibility, for creativity and for action. We must become mediators between the multiplicity of fluid pasts and the potentiality of better futures." Hence, the archaeology of unproof expands the scope for multivocality while insisting on the critical analysis that allows for the dismissal of the outright invented pasts of the sort advanced in *Ancient Apocalypse*. For example, Hancock has made much of the idea that neatly laid stone blocks at the prehistoric site of Gunung Padang in Indonesia were the result of human activity dating back 27 000 years. This extraordinary claim may have made it into the academic literature, but the article was quickly retracted on contact with scholarly reality.²⁴ Still lingering from Hodder's account, however, is the question of authority. Who gets to validate those narrative pasts that arise outwith the academy? What is the role of the expert when confronted by versions of the past that distort the evidence or are deployed in support of political interpretations with which we disagree? In the context of the rise of 'reactionary populism', for example, Alfredo González-Ruibal, Pablo Alonso González and Felipe Criado-Boado have argued the need for archaeologists to defend the value of their expert knowledge in the public arena.²⁵ Here, we have invited Rachel

²² <https://documents.saa.org/container/docs/default-source/doc-governmentaffairs/saa-letter-ancient-apocalypse.pdf>

²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/sep/29/ancient-apocalypse-netflix-graham-hancock-keanu-reeves-theories>

²⁴ Lewis, D. 2023. A 27,000-year-old pyramid? Controversy hits an extraordinary archaeological claim. *Nature* 624: 15–16. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-023-03546-w>

²⁵ González-Ruibal, A., P.A. González & F. Criado-Boado. 2018. Against reactionary populism: towards a new public archaeology. *Antiquity* 92: 507–15. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2017.227>

Crellin, James Gibb, Beatriz Marín-Aguilera and Tim Flohr Sørensen to respond to Friedman's manifesto for an archaeology of unproof.

Meanwhile, the 'Archaeology in 1984' article also forms the starting point for this year's *Antiquity* lecture by Ian Hodder at the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) meeting in Bournemouth in December. The original article was written in response to Orwell's dystopian novel warning of the dangers of totalitarianism. Four decades later, its author uses his TAG keynote to examine the role of archaeological theory in a future where materiality has been redefined and where humans are threatened by artificial intelligence (more algorithms!).

On the subject of TAG, here we also record the untimely passing of Tim Darvill, a long-standing TAG Trustee and a regular contributor to these pages. In a recent *Antiquity* article, Tim called for greater recognition of the value of negative evidence in archaeology, not simply the incompleteness or fragmentary nature of the archaeological record but also the genuine absences.²⁶ Growing out of his work on developer-led archaeology, it is a call that complements the idea of unproof and the need to engage with the immaterial as much as the material aspects of the past. Tim's work on the therapeutic value of archaeology and cultural heritage for people's physical and mental wellbeing also provides one answer to the question posed in Hodder's 1984 article about the possible significance of the distant past in modern society. The TAG family and the wider discipline are the poorer for Tim's passing.

The journey's end

Having, above, considered the malleability of the Silk Road(s) concept, the reader might indulge me if I take the idea of a long journey as a personal metaphor. For, with this issue, I reach the end of my tenure. Starting out 12 years ago as Reviews and Deputy Editor, and as Editor for the past seven years, I have travelled a long way with *Antiquity*, literally and figuratively. The opportunity to edit *Antiquity* is a privilege afforded to few individuals and I'm deeply grateful to the *Antiquity* Trustees and to the Directors of *Antiquity* Publications Ltd for entrusting me with the journal and for their unwavering support. During my term, there have been some significant shifts in the discipline and in the wider world, which, I trust, have been appropriately reflected in these pages. As outlined in the previous two editorials, over the past decade we have also engaged with major developments in publication practice and publishing ethics and greatly expanded our range of activities, including initiatives around social media and mentoring early career researchers.

Of course, *Antiquity* is more than one person and I am grateful to the many individuals who have helped along the way. First and foremost, my thanks to the editorial office, both the present team (Helen Devonshire, Lindsey Elstob, Max Storey and Abigail Teasdale) and previous staff (Adam Benton, Emily Hanscam, Tom Horne, Ross Kendall, Felicity McDowell, Liz Ryan, Kate Sharpe, Thomas Swindells and James Walker). I'm grateful to successive Deputy Editors Becky Gowland and Robin Skeates and Reviews Editors Dan Lawrence and Marion Uckelmann. Special thanks go to Claire Nesbitt in her capacity as long-serving Deputy

²⁶Thomas, R. & T. Darvill. 2022. What haven't we found? Recognising the value of negative evidence in archaeology. *Antiquity* 96: 955–67. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2022.69>

Editor and Reviews Editor. I owe a debt of gratitude to my predecessor as Editor, Chris Scarre, who provided invaluable mentoring for the role, and to Jamie McIntyre at Cambridge University Press for steering the journal through the ever-more complex world of archaeological publishing. Finally, my thanks to members of the editorial advisory board who have provided crucial guidance and to the many authors, peer reviewers and to you, the reader, for helping *Antiquity* move from strength to strength.

In signing off, it is a pleasure to introduce *Antiquity*'s new Editor, Robin Skeates. A specialist in Central Mediterranean prehistory, with interests in museums and heritage, he also brings a wealth of editorial experience as the former editor of the *European Journal of Archaeology* and, of course, as the current Deputy Editor of *Antiquity*. The Editorial Office will remain at Durham University and all contact details remain unchanged (<https://antiquity.ac.uk/index.php/contact>). As *Antiquity*'s centenary approaches, I wish Robin and journal the very best of luck.

Looking back on his decade as Editor, Martin Carver concluded that editing *Antiquity* is the best job in archaeology.²⁷ It's an evaluation that only a privileged few get to make—and one with which I wholeheartedly concur!

ROBERT WITCHER
Durham, 1 December 2024

Postscript

Professor Lord Colin Renfrew, 1937–2024

After this editorial had gone into production, we learned of the passing of Professor Colin Renfrew, Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn. Colin was one of the most influential archaeologists of his generation. He served as the Disney Professor of Archaeology at the University of Cambridge (1981–2004) and was the founding Director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research. Colin's research ranged widely from his first and enduring interest, the prehistoric Aegean world, through archaeological theory, the implications of the 'radio-carbon revolution', archaeogenetics and language, to visual culture and illicit antiquities. Generations of archaeologists began, and continue to begin, their careers reading his book *Archaeology: theories, methods and practice* (co-authored with Paul Bahn).

For many years, Colin was a trustee of the *Antiquity* Trust, maintaining a long connection with the journal: his first contribution, a series of book reviews, appeared in 1968 and his final article, on the emergence of social complexity at Liangzhu (co-authored with Bin Liu), was published in 2018. In recognition of his prolific and wide-ranging research over the intervening five decades, in 2023 he was awarded the inaugural TAG prize for Outstanding Contribution to Archaeological Theory. Colin's passing, just a few weeks before this year's TAG conference, will make the gathering a poignant one but also offer the opportunity to reflect on his life and legacy and to celebrate an extraordinary career in archaeology.

²⁷ Carver, M. 2012. Editorial. *Antiquity* 86: 965–72. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00048183>