Editorial

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Paleolithic archaeology is a field with over a 150 year history. Together with the discovery of human fossils and Darwin's evolutionary theory, Paleolithic archaeology was integral to overturning the Biblical account of the origins of humanity and of the world as we see it today, a change that fundamentally altered the way we see ourselves. This one set of discoveries alone, we would argue, is in league with the greatest scientific contributions to humankind ever made. Even today, Paleolithic archaeology continues to provide new data to understand better our own species, both biologically and culturally, and the impact that we have had on the Earth's environment, climate and biodiversity during the last few million years. Moreover, of all branches of archaeology, Paleolithic archaeology is probably the one that has the least concern for national boundaries, and it may be the only one that includes active research projects in all continents and regions of the world. Yet, despite all this, we found ourselves in 2017 without an international venue dedicated to publishing Paleolithic research.

How could this come to pass? For a long time, basically since the origins of the field itself, Paleolithic archaeologists have relied on national journals of prehistory, venues such as the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, *Antiquity*, or the *Bulletin de la Société Préhistorique Française*, to name just a few. These journals have served the field well and continue to do so, but arguably none has achieved the kind of international exposure that scientists seek today or that the field needs in order to achieve a better global understanding of the past. In part this has become a question of language, and as a result most of the national journals now offer the option of publishing in English. The national journals, most of them without large corporate backers, have also

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been slower to react to changes in publishing. Technological advances have made printed volumes much less important to scientists today (though many of us still enjoy the pleasure of feeling the paper on our hands), and going on-line only is offering new possibilities for data and code sharing that we are still working to integrate into the way we do science.

As a result of these issues, we have watched Paleolithic archaeologists try to take their work to the existing international journals. In some cases they succeed, as well they should, because Paleolithic archaeology does subsume a diverse array of research and contributes to a wide range of specialties. In other cases, however, it does not succeed and Paleolithic archaeologists are left with difficult decisions about where to place their work to better reach their audience.

This is an unsatisfactory position for a field with such a long, illustrious, and important research tradition. We need our own journal. We need a journal we can call home, where Paleolithic research properly done can be assured a venue, and where the diversity of our research can congregate, interface and grow. We felt we needed a journal exclusively dedicated to Paleolithic archaeology, with a diverse editorial board that has expertise in the Paleolithic and Stone Age but also comes from many scientific disciplines. In sum, we needed a *Journal of Paleolithic Archaeology*.

What's in the name? Archaeologists struggle with terms, and we are no exception. Without going into the details of the arguments for and against each possibility, to our knowledge there is no one term to cover our topic better than Paleolithic. We want to emphasize that although we use a term with European origins, Paleolithic, we fully intend for *JPA* to cover Stone Age archaeology of Africa as well as any other Plio-Pleistocene events and evolution outside of Europe. We understand the research traditions and political circumstances that led African Stone Age archaeology to define itself as distinct from Paleolithic archaeology as then practiced in Europe. Nonetheless, we would like to offer that while it is perhaps still useful to distinguish, for instance, the Middle Stone Age from the Middle Paleolithic, we can consider that the various phases of both the Paleolithic and the Stone Age can be grouped together as Paleolithic archaeology. We sincerely hope that our African colleagues can agree, and we welcome their contributions.

We would also like to emphasize our view that the initial peopling of the Americas and of Australia are part of the Paleolithic story. We recognize that, for example, archaeologists working on the first Americans do not consider themselves Paleolithic archaeologists, but like Stone Age archaeology, we think this is a matter of research traditions and not of content. We hope that our colleagues working in these areas will concur that the similarities of purpose, materials, methods and theory are greater than the differences and that they will consider publishing in *JPA*. To emphasize this point, we have chosen associated editors to handle papers specifically focusing on the Americas and on Oceania – of course, they also have other expertise that are fundamental for the *JPA*.

JPA is not just for archaeologists. Up to now, we have only discussed archaeologists, but advances in our understanding of Paleolithic archaeology are driven these days by a growing group of researchers that may not consider themselves archaeologists. In fact, we venture to say that most of what passes as Paleolithic archaeology is done by non-archaeologists. Of course what unites us is our drive to understand the deep past, and that is what the *Journal of Paleolithic Archaeology* is for. We want to understand the

Plio-Pleistocene foundation of our Holocene condition - *JPA* is truly aimed at all archaeologists and other scientists researching Paleolithic archaeology. It covers all aspects of Paleoanthropology, including biological and cultural human evolution, paleoecology, geochronology, site formation processes, diet, paleoclimate, taphonomy and many more fields applied to the Paleolithic period sites. Again, our Editorial Board, though small, was formed with this diversity in mind, including experts covering not only all world regions but also the main areas of research expertise for Paleolithic archaeology.

So, what does *JPA* publish? The Journal publishes four types of studies: original Research articles, Invited articles, Reports, and Short communications. Articles are generally more synthetic and touch on larger issues in Paleolithic archaeology. Reports are generally more focused on particular data sets. Short communications can include comments on papers published in *JPA* or elsewhere, summaries of meetings, and so forth. We also welcome special issues on various topics in Paleolithic archaeology. We intend that all studies should provide new data and discussion on discoveries of sites or hominin fossils; theoretical and methodological advancements as long as they are directly related to Paleolithic archaeology; site stratigraphies or other data-descriptive reports including analyses of new or old artefactual collections; and main research studies on Paleolithic archaeology addressing broad topics of interest in Paleoanthropology.

What about open access and open science? Open access publishing, where authors rather than readers take on the costs of publication, makes the science we do available to as many people, researchers and the public that funds our research, as possible. Open access publishing is part of a larger open science initiative that seeks to make the entire publication process, including data analysis, figure and table preparation, and peer review, open, verifiable and therefore more replicable. Changes are happening quickly on all of these fronts, motivated in part by the scientists themselves but also importantly by the funding agencies that make our work possible. So, for example, EU regulations now specify that all funded research has to be published in open access, meaning that all results for programs such as COST, Hera-net, ERC, and all of H2020 (the largest funding programs in Europe, for science in general, and archaeology in particular), have to be published in open access.

We fully support open science initiatives including open access publishing, and we will continue to push to take the *Journal of Paleolithic Archaeology* in this direction. However, scientific publishing is in a period of transition, and in preparing for this new journal we became convinced that the financing of open access publishing is still such that going all open-access would run a serious risk to the success of the journal. So, for now, we have decided to stay with the more standard approach of allowing both open access and paywall papers. As for open science, we have set the requirement for data publishing high, and we want to see original data sets in the supplementary information or linked to other journals dedicated to the publication of data.

JPA is an exclusively online journal that provides an international environment for archaeologists and other scientists with a wide spectrum of expertise. It is our aim that *JPA* will have a fast publication record. While each *JPA* submission will pass through a rigorous quality control and peer-review evaluation process before receiving a decision, our goal is that this process, from submission to publication, will take only a few months. This will be possible only with the great effort of the Editorial Board as well as

the reviewers, whom we wish to thank right now, and that we hope to acknowledge publicly at the end of each year.

We know that there are already many international journals, many of which we use. However, none of these are fully dedicated to Paleolithic archaeology with an editorial board specifically knowledgeable on Paleolithic archaeology. During the preparation of our proposal to Springer, we talked to many colleagues, from senior, well reputed scientists, to young graduate students, and the response was unequivocal: YES, launch the *Journal of Paleolithic Archaeology*. So here it is, enjoy it, work with us, and make it a great journal for Paleolithic archaeology. Its success depends on all of us.

Leipzig and Faro, August 2017.

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