

From the Foundation to a Vision of the Future: A Note from the Founding Editors

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In April 2015, over a rushed lunch in a noisy and packed conference-hotel restaurant, we began to conceptualize a new journal dedicated to the field of bioarchaeology. We excitedly shared our enthusiasm and brimming ideas, and quickly realized we had a common vision: to create a unified place for rigorous peer-reviewed bioarchaeological research that was global in scope, focused on well-contextualized studies, highlighted early career scholarship, and promoted topics of public interest. Prior to the publication of *Bioarchaeology International* there was no dedicated journal available to the discipline as a whole, despite the ever-increasing percentage of bioarchaeological research being published in the flagship journals of biological anthropology and archaeology. More importantly, no journal offered researchers an integrated source where osteological, archaeological, funerary, and archival data could be published in one place, with analyses that emphasized both biological and social interpretation. We hope that *Bioarchaeological International* has become a home for that kind of rigorous and transformative work.

Building a new journal is challenging, particularly with a publisher just starting a journals division from scratch. The nuts and bolts of identifying a manuscript management system and website platform, getting them set up, creating an author/style guide, bringing together a formidable editorial board, garnering interest, soliciting papers, and more, required substantial time and energy. *Bioarchaeology International* was born of this effort, opening for submissions in June 2016. Since then, our initial vision of a journal devoted to publication of contextualized

bioarchaeological research (see Baker and Agarwal 2016, vol. 1, nos. 1–2) has developed into four years of published volumes and a growing reputation in bioarchaeology. Under our editorship, we have shepherded the publication of four volumes and 16 issues (including the present one), with 59 articles. Our initial commentary pieces have addressed timely issues such as collaborative practice and continued conversations around repatriation (Boutin et al. 2017, vol. 1, nos. 3–4; Kakaliouras 2017, vol. 1, nos. 3–4), highlighted state-of-the-art methods in molecular and chemical analyses (Velsko and Warriner 2017, vol. 1, nos. 1–2), discussed a way to identify consumption of fermented beverages in the archaeological record (Gagnon and Juengst 2018, vol. 2, no. 3), and considered biases in facial reconstructions (Wilkinson 2020, vol. 4, no. 1). We have been particularly gratified by the range of the research papers published in these first years of the journal. Topics include taphonomic processes and mortuary practices, individual and population-level health, growth and activity patterns on the skeleton, and discussions that include famine, stress, disability, euthanasia, mortality, and social complexity from a variety of contexts, including cremation and multiple burials as well as anatomical collections. These first volumes cover an extensive geographic breadth with bioarchaeological studies that span the globe, including Australia, Austria, Canada, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, England, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Palau, Peru, Romania, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, the United States, and Vietnam.

During these past years of our editorship, there have been several significant advances and challenges in the field, set in a global landscape of sociopolitical and environmental turmoil and change, including a global pandemic. Bioarchaeology, as a maturing field, continues to provide essential insight into issues of current significance in the modern world. *Bioarchaeology International* offers a home for engaging research on issues of current import, including the social responses to and biological consequences of climate change (e.g., Williams and Larsen 2017, vol. 1, nos. 3–4) and famines (e.g., DeWitte and Yaussy 2017, vol. 1, nos. 3–4; Horocholyn and Brickley 2017, vol. 1, nos. 3–4). Research on past pandemics and epidemics provides insights into social responses, including stigma and blame, and reveals health disparities, just as we are witnessing today with the COVID-19 pandemic. Systemic oppression and marginalization of certain groups of people is also evident in the remains and funerary contexts we study from the recent past and long ago, and the bioarchaeological investigations of such health disparities (e.g., Gowland et al. 2018, vol. 2, no. 1; Olsen et al. 2018, vol. 2, no. 2; Redfern et al. 2018, vol. 2, no. 1; Ward et al. 2020, vol. 3, no. 4), and structural violence (e.g., Dabbs 2020, vol. 3, no. 3; Dittmar and Mitchell 2019,

vol. 2, no. 4) continue to provide a critical long view of the toll over multiple generations. Bioarchaeologists all over the world have engaged deeply in recent years with issues of racism and racialized violence and have begun to contribute to decolonizing practices in the field, lab, and classroom. The future of our field depends on our contributions to these conversations, and the Editorial Board of *Bioarchaeology International* remains committed to highlighting such work. Finally, we believe the journal can continue its mission to increase the contributions of diverse voices, from the journal's editorial board members and its authors. This work has only just begun, and we are confident that the new coeditors, Gwen Robbins Schug and Siân Halcrow, will build on the foundation we have laid.

We thank the University Press of Florida and the Provost of the University of Florida for their investment in *Bioarchaeology International* and their support through its first years of development. Our advisory board, our associate editors, and our editorial assistant have worked hard to make this journal a success. Their efforts are greatly appreciated, and we will miss working with them. We will continue to foster the journal in a supporting role and look forward to its further growth.