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Editorial

It seems as if the world had been put on hold – not by a war, but by a virus that makes people angry and fearful, isolated and depressed. Online meetings should replace and compensate for physical absence, but when the screen is turned off a surreal emptiness remains, as if discussions have dissolved in the depth of the net. With dwindling amounts of money governments try to keep “ever-more” mentalities running, while the opportunities of the pause – understanding the lessons this virus might teach us – appear to be missed. In such a situation: What are our responsibilities as prehistorians in translating our knowledge and understanding of past crises for the sake of understanding current crises? Can’t we prepare crisis lessons from the past for the momentum of change for the better in the present and future? Or are we also trapped in this Neolithic mentality of an ever-productive acceleration and segregation, keeping us going as long and far as possible with what we are used to in research? Doing Crisis Archaeology would be an answer. Although such thinking and approaches appear to enter research agendas in these months: Would we be able to transfer the translation of past lessons to today’s global levels and contexts of crisis? Current global radical confinement strategies, like activating all sorts of borders, far-right national movements, or interventions in nature, need to receive a clear and engaged analysis and intervention by prehistoric expertise and perspectives. However, it seems that we are further from global perspectives and research responsibility than ever. Facing the terrible events in Syria in 2012 H.G.K Gebel and G.O. Rollefson placed a wake-up call in a Neo-Lithics editorial: “Are we historians immune against the historic events we are contemporary witnesses to? Is there a responsibility of us Near Eastern (pre-) historians to raise our voices....?”

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Editorial (continued from page 2)

The Neo-Lithics 2020 issue unites many voices of research from almost all areas of the Near East, and thus is a signal of supra-national unity in research. We are grateful to all the authors. Their efforts let us hope that Near Eastern Neolithic research will be as manifold and splendid as ever. Since 2020, the cover of Neo-Lithics has received a „facelifting“ designed by M. Renger, based on the traditional background once mounted in 1994 by H.G.K. Gebel and A. Gopher. With this issue we would also like to announce a new special issue format of Neo-Lithics, allowing the publication of extensive “interim reports”.

The first example will be the special issue on *ex oriente*’s 13th excavation season at Ba’ja published in parallel with the Neo-Lithics 20 issue, also explaining the good reasons for doing interim reports. We are looking forward to your contributions either for Neo-Lithics or for a Special Issue in 2021!

Marion Benz and Hans Georg K. Gebel

Masthead

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