The Year the World Became a Cognitive Historiographical Lab *En Plein Air*: Musings on the Covid-19 Pandemic as Two Editors Bid Farewell to the *JCH*

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“For a while physicians, in ignorance of the nature of the disease, sought to apply remedies; but it was in vain, and they themselves were among the first victims, because they oftenest came into contact with it. No human art was of any avail, and as to supplications in temples, enquiries of oracles, and the like, they were utterly useless, and at last men were overpowered by the calamity and gave them all up."


“We can pray over the cholera victim, or we can give her 500 milligrams of tetracycline every twelve hours. [...] There is a constant battle between microbial measures and human countermeasures. We keep pace in this competition not just by designing new drugs and treatments, but by penetrating progressively more deeply toward an understanding of the nature of life – basic research.”


The “thin crust” of civilization

2020 came in like a wrecking ball.

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, despicable post-truth policies, social unrest and political turmoil on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the worst sequence of climate change-related disasters (up until then), the spread of toxic online disinformation campaigns and no-vax pseudoscience,
and a series of contested worldwide lockdowns to contain the spread of the pandemic, have shown us how fragile our institutions are. Unchecked by institutional constraints, boosted by real-time communication on social media, and exploited by radical-right political forces, harmful cognitive biases and nasty logical fallacies were finally free to run amok. For a moment, it looked as if the entire world was falling under the guise of wild conspiracy theories and rampant ultranationalism, as demonstrated by the storming of the US Capitol by MAGA and QAnon supporters on 6 January 2021 (Ambasciano 2021).

In his *Golden Bough*, Comparative Religion *maestro* James G. Frazer (1854–1941) stopped short of considering

> “what bearing the permanent existence of […] a solid layer of savagery beneath the surface of society, and unaffected by the superficial changes of religion and culture, has upon the future of humanity. The dispassionate observer, whose studies have led him to plumb its depths, can hardly regard it otherwise than as a standing menace to civilisation. We seem to move on a thin crust which may at any moment be rent by the subterranean forces slumbering below” (Frazer 1890, 1: 236; emphasis added).

Out of metaphor, those “subterranean forces slumbering below” can be easily understood as intuitive cognitive biases exploited by ill-intentioned politicians, and if Frazer was shortly after proved unfortunately right by the outbreak of World War I, 2020 definitely marks another moment in the recent history of humanity where the “thin crust” of our everyday reality was rent to shreds. To all the “dispassionate observers” out there, the world became a *longitudinal cognitive historiographical case study* unfolding in real time (cf. Diamond and Robinson 2011).

The only problem was that dispassionate observation was a luxury we could not afford for long. It was not just something that we were studying or watching live on TV while sitting comfortably in our offices. In addition to all the stress and the anxiety resulting from the pandemic, this *annus horribilis* also hit too close for comfort; and finally, it took a toll on both our families. This forced us to pause and refocus on our personal and professional lives. This is something that neither of us could have foreseen in a million light years. We did our best to postpone this moment for as long as we could, lulled into a false sense of security by the surreal stasis imposed by the several lockdowns we have been through. However, it is now time for us to come to terms with our ‘new normal’ reality. It is thus with equal sadness and pride that we present you our last co-edited issue of *JCH*.

We would like to take this final opportunity to reflect on the unprecedented year we have lived through before presenting you with a summary
of the present, and incredibly rich, double issue. We believe there is an important cautionary tale for all interdisciplinary scholars and researchers interested in the complex interplay between cognition, history, and social sciences there, so please bear with us as we take you back to 2020 in the following section.

When Cognitive Science and Data Modelling Fell Short: a Case Study

The outbreak of what initially looked like a nasty pneumonia epidemic in the Wuhan region of China and its initial diffusion in January 2021 failed to raise widespread international concerns, with different countries preparing differently for the worst-case scenario. While Asian governments mindful of recent epidemics (such as the 2015 Middle East Respiratory Syndrome [MERS] outbreak in South Korea) were already implementing preventive measures, most of Europe and the United States adopted a wait and see strategy – if they adopted a strategy at all (Russell 2021). Between 21 February and 19 March, Italy became the first European hotspot of this highly infectious disease, with a grand total of 41,035 recorded cases and 3,405 deaths. The Italian National Healthcare Service was quickly overwhelmed. The lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), an insufficient number of medical devices, and the unprecedented pressure on the Italian medical personnel exposed the deficiencies resulting from the past widespread privatization of the health care system (Armocida et al. 2020). As the situation was quickly spiraling out of control, the Italian government imposed a national lockdown on 9 March 2020 to flatten the rising infection curve. It became painfully clear at that point that the spreading disease, called Covid-19 and caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, was far from being the usual seasonal flu, and that severe measures were to be taken while waiting for the development of a vaccine. However, no Western government learnt the lesson and acted in time. In Europe, the UK government was particularly dismissive of the sheer gravity of the virus, advocating instead for a misguided herd immunity policy and suggesting the adoption of lax measures like washing hands and disposing immediately of used handkerchieves and tissues (cf. Henley 2020).

The scientific data coming from Italy, China, and Japan showed that hospitalization was rising across healthier and younger age cohorts, that no one was immune (not even children), and that infection could occur twice (Armocida et al. 2020; Qiu et al. 2020; Lawton 2020). Meanwhile, on 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization upgraded the disease to global pandemic status while expressing “concern” about “the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction” (Ghebreyesus
One day later, disregarding this wake-up call, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson addressed the nation to tell its citizens that even though “many more families [were] going to lose loved ones before their time” (mainly referring to the elderly), there was basically nothing to do in terms of prevention (Stewart, Proctor and Siddique 2020). Three days later Sir Patrick Vallance, the government’s chief scientific adviser, explained on live television the decision to do nothing to prevent the epidemiological spread of the virus, saying that the most reasonable thing to do was waiting for 60% of the whole population to get infected and build a national herd immunity (Heffer 2020). The graphs and the modelling provided by the scientists and the UK government itself showed rather clearly that this was enough to avoid future endemic peaks.

The scenario unfolded quite differently. A country-wide lockdown came into force at long last on 26 March, but it was too late. The NHS was over-whelmed. On 30 March, Johnson boasted that the UK was “past the peak” of the pandemic (BBC 2020a). Nine days later, on 8 April 2020, the recorded daily deaths in the UK peaked at 1,445 (Booth and Duncan 2020; Bruce 2020). As of 29 April, the officially recorded deaths in the UK were already 26,097 (BBC 2020b). Having wasted the initial two weeks of advantage over Italy, the UK became the European country most hit by the pandemic on 5 May, with the second highest death toll in the world (Perrigo 2020; Helm, Graham-Harrison and McKie 2020). Despite the claim that the UK government was “following the science”, even more mistakes were made when it came to managing the second epidemiological wave of Covid-19. In January 2021, for instance, the recorded Covid-19 deaths in Britain were 85,000, the “fifth highest figure globally” (Reuters 2021; see Hunter 2020 and Stevens 2020). As historians and managing editors of this journal, we could not help but find this political use of scientific research at the same time interesting and frankly terrifying. Briefly, we identified three main issues at stake.

The first issue is that herd immunity only works through vaccine coverage. As the title of an article written jointly by a biologist and a biostatistician explains in very basic and immediately comprehensible terms, “What the Proponents of ‘Natural’ Herd Immunity Don’t Say: Try to Reach It Without a Vaccine, and Millions Will Die” (Bergstrom and Dean 2020). Apparently, the science was not the UK government’s top priority, as the decision to delay twice the adoption of lockdown measures to contain the spread of the virus, and to relax them too soon, was eminently short-term and economic, and very likely contributed to unnecessary deaths in the country (cf. Elgot 2021).

The second issue is that data modelling is only as good as the data you feed into your software. Since all collected data is data about past events,
and because of the presence of human biases and preferences during the creation of dedicated algorithms, the selection process, and the input of data (Ambasciano and Coleman 2019), politically-informed in silico simulations that projected in the immediate future the patterns emerging from the gathered data tended to minimize the fact that the virus was a novelty in the European pathocoenosis (i.e. the local ecology of pathogens; Sallares 2005), that viruses evolve (as it happened with the evolution of nastier Covid-19 variants; Callaway 2021; cf. Russell 2011), and that there might be considerable but yet unknown health complications for those who recover, potentially with huge consequences for a post-pandemic return to normality (as it happened with the long-Covid syndrome; Marshall 2020).

The third and final issue is that data modelling and advocacy for herd immunity in the UK were informed by a theoretical approach known in behavioural cognitive sciences as “nudge theory.” Basically, nudge theory “uses insights about our mental processes to change our behaviour through coaxing and positive assertion. Rather than forcing us to do things, nudging tweaks the environments in which we make choices” (Yates 2020). This subtle approach proved exceptionally reliable when it came to putting fake flies in urinals to reduce cleaning costs, elaborating opt-in modules for boosting organ donations, and recovering unpaid taxes (Lawton 2013). However, nudge theory has also been abused as one of the main justifications behind the neoliberal deregulation of public sectors such as health care. The nudge theory motto is to avoid forcing people into doing things, let people be free to choose the wrong thing, and “find ways of doing ‘more with less’ under austerity” (Quinn 2018; see Whitehead et al. 2018). When the Covid-19 pandemic broke in, nudge theorists suggested that should schools and mass gatherings be banned, “‘fatigue’ could set in – meaning people will grow tired of the bans and find ways around them” (Yates 2020). However, it takes only one ‘superspreader’ opting not to do the right thing to undo any containment initiative (Adam 2020). When asymptomatic spreaders are factored in (Nogrady 2020), any nudge is nothing more than an epidemiological nightmare. In other words, the UK government relied on a set of cognitive and behavioural precepts prone to misuse and exploited by laissez-faire ideology to try and delay a global pandemic. At the same time, the UK government and its advisers downplayed the problematic cognitive dissonance resulting from the devastating news coming every day from its severely affected European neighbours and the deluge of conspiracy theories and fake news on social media. As a result of this confusion, people lost trust in the government and went on a panic-buying spree before the real outbreak of the epidemic in the UK (Parveen 2020; Smithers and Collinson 2020).
Reality Check: Why We Need More Historical Literacy

It is not our intention to recap here all the recent history of the Covid-19 pandemic and its (mis)management – both of them, unfortunately, still ongoing. This goes way beyond a mere editorial. The task is immense: as of the time of revising these notes, after one year and a half and three major infection waves, the worldwide Covid-19 death toll is 4 million, with over 190 million recorded cases (Johns Hopkins University & Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center 2021). Our main point, instead, is this: as it happened in the United States and everywhere populist, illiberal, or radical-right governments were in power, the situation in the UK was exacerbated by a government whose members actively downplayed or bent scientific knowledge to suit their own agendas, disregarded precautionary measures, or spectacularly failed to comply to basic national guidelines they themselves had imposed (e.g. BBC 2020c; Parkinson 2021; Bacevic and McGoey 2021; cf. also the bibliography in Ambasciano 2021). This is not news. In 2016, the then UK Justice Secretary and Brexit supporter, Michael Gove, infamously stated that “people in this country have had enough of experts” (Mance 2016).

While we can be quite sure that critically informed and potentially dissenting opinions would have been nixed anyway (Stevens 2020), we would like to believe that (cognitive) historians with a background in interdisciplinary scholarship would have been better equipped than most scholars, researchers, and advisers involved in the management of the pandemic. Thanks to their extensive knowledge about past diseases, epidemics, and the implementation of more or less efficient political responses, historians and scholars interested in the history of medicine are well aware that pandemics require extensive and drastic countermeasures to be mitigated and that, in the end, such worldwide cataclysms radically alter societies (e.g. McNeill 1976). They also know that, even though basic and intuitive knowledge on how to avoid being infected was already accessible in the past (e.g. social distancing; Spicer 2020), its availability is usually undercut by social and economic factors, and its effectiveness undermined by pseudoscientific noise, nationalistic hubris, and a proliferation of conspiracy theories – all factors that came into play in 2020 (Barry 2004; Kolata 2011; Spinney 2017; Parmet and Rothstein 2018). Also, while the science gave us unprecedented command over infectious diseases with better hygienic procedures and devices, improved PPE, highly effective medicines, and groundbreaking vaccines, the jaw-dropping technological advances of the 20th and the 21st centuries also facilitated the epidemiology of infectious diseases due to the ease of intercontinental air travel, man-made environmental degradation,
wildlife trafficking, increasing industrial pollution, striking economic inequality, neoliberal health care defunding and, last but not least, the presence of toxic social media disinformation (Quammen 2012; Quammen 2020; Honigsbaum 2020; Romer and Jamieson 2020; Douglas 2021). This is why the widespread political decision to fast-track the return to pre-Covid-19 economic, financial, and industrial ‘normality’ cannot and will not be the solution to our current predicament (Herrington 2021).

The resulting picture is particularly complex. The epidemiology of pandemics involves in-depth knowledge about cognition, psychology, medicine, evolutionary biology, ecology, geography, social sciences, and history, and that is exactly why we need more inter- and cross-disciplinary know-how. We think that academic venues like the JCH could and should be at the forefront of cutting-edge academic research because, as the Covid debacle showed us, quantitative Big Data approaches without qualitative historiographical and epistemological expertise are worse than pointless – they have negative effects on the real world and its denizens (see O’Neil 2017). Indeed, we need more experts than ever before and more interdisciplinary collaboration revolving around history and historiography to tackle the challenges of the modern world. Thus, as we are typing our final editorial, it is our sincere wish for the future of the JCH to see this journal become more and more established as a lighthouse of rational and critical interdisciplinary inquiry able to tie the present and the past to propel historiography into the future.

In this Issue of JCH: Big Data, Big Gods, Shamans, Myths, and Embodied Cognition

In this spirit, we are delighted to host another special section (more precisely, a Discussion) dedicated to Whitehouse et al.’s (2019a) Nature Letter “Complex Societies Precede Moralizing Gods Throughout World History.” Regardless of where the readers may stand in this specific discussion about the evolution, relation, and correlation of complex societies and the presence of so-called Big Gods devotion and beliefs, Whitehouse et al.’s article spawned an astonishingly varied response from the academic community of historians (Slingerland et al. 2019; Beheim 2021; cf. Whitehouse et al. 2019b). The articles by Maik Patzelt, Franziska Naether, and Jörg Rüpke all push the envelope further, tackling the historiographical pitfalls and naiveties of digital databanks to approach and test hypotheses about the development of ancient cultures.

Patzelt reviews the Roman dataset from the Seshat databank built by Whitehouse’s team (http://seshatdatabank.info/; see Turchin et al. 2019) and concludes that “the main data, […] comes already filtered through
various pre-set disciplinary categories and perspectives” which fail to grasp the variety of unrecorded or underrepresented individual, collective, and non-civic beliefs and experiences while privileging and confirming instead the political views and wishful thinking of those in power way back then. Naether examines more closely the ancient Roman and Egyptian datasets and while she finds them “debatable or questionable”, mainly because of the design of the project itself (e.g. data coding mainly driven by personal communications by a few selected scholars and broad, often uncritical, theoretical assumptions), she also acknowledges the need for “more cooperation and synergy with existing projects […] to conduct research about multidisciplinary topics such as the moralizing gods hypothesis.” In perhaps what could be considered as the most critical contribution to the section, Rüpke focuses on how Whitehouse and his colleagues have managed and coded Roman religion, questioning in the end the “very possibility of an exhaustive and stable classificatory grid across cultures.”

Far from being odious disciplinary nitpicking, our contributors’ doubts have proved to be epistemologically and methodologically warranted, because the original Letter by Whitehouse and his team has been retracted by *Nature* as we were writing these very lines. As the team acknowledges, “the differences between [their] revised analyses and the original Letter”, a revision arising from another critical review of the Seshat team’s treatment of missing data (Beheim *et al.* 2021), “are substantial enough to warrant a Retraction of the original Letter.” The authors continue, “we have submitted the enhanced analyses for peer review and potential publication in another journal. We encourage the community to refer to these new papers in future instead of this now-retracted Letter. We apologize to the scientific community for the unintended confusion” (Whitehouse *et al.* 2021).

This is not to be seen as a failure or a setback – this is nothing more than a positive sign that scientific review and academic criticism do work. As we wrote in our *JCH* Editorial at the time, “this sort of confrontation [is] crucial for a healthy science and fundamental to avoid echo chambers, detect mistakes and errors, and steer clear of research stagnation” (Ambasciano and Roubekas 2019: 12). We have obviously invited the team behind the original *Nature* Letter to provide their reply to this issue, and it is our hope to see their contribution in the forthcoming *JCH* issue.

We believe that behind every book there is a story to be told. One of our editorial goals was to provide the authors of new and groundbreaking publications with dedicated spaces where they could explain their research and engage with criticism in a lively format and within the frame of the bigger interdisciplinary picture. This is why we opted to launch two new *JCH* sections, *Discussions* and *Conversations*, and have them as a staple presence in
the journal. We are overjoyed to present three such stunning contributions in this issue.

In the first Discussion, Ambasciano takes advantage of the recent publication of two invigorating books to kickstart a lively discussion on the deep history of shamanism and its critical study: H. Sidky’s neurocognitive account *The Origins of Shamanism, Spirit Beliefs, and Religiosity: A Cognitive Anthropological Perspective* (2017) and Sergio Botta’s poststructural overview entitled *Dagli sciamani allo sciamanesimo. Discorsi, credenze, pratiche* (2018). Ambasciano introduces the checkered historiography behind this complex of practices and beliefs, summarizes the main theories behind the evolution of the neurocognitive abilities coopted by shamanic practices, including the human penchant for the consumption of psychoactive substances, and concludes that “building an epistemological bridge between poststructuralist historiography and cognitive and evolutionary approaches (cf. Ambasciano 2017) […] is a necessary and vital task to heal the epistemic wounds of the past and further the study in this fascinating subfield.” In his reply, Sidky opts to take a look from the outside-in at academia and develops a pungent and necessary critique of an “embarrassing development” in his discipline, that is, the mainstream diffusion and acceptance of paranormal and theistic anthropology. Botta, in turn, delivers a gripping defense of the “reconstruction of shamanism as an analytical category” and highlights the ongoing need to “observ[e] and monito[r] all those social and historical processes behind the production, reproduction, comparison, and interpretation of ‘shamanic data’” to avoid “project[ing] […] outdated clichés onto the past.”

The second Discussion sees Ryan Nichols engaging head-on with the latest interdisciplinary volume by G. E. R. Lloyd, *The Ambivalences of Rationality: Ancient and Modern Cross-cultural Explorations* (Lloyd 2018), a comparative enquiry focused on ancient Greece and ancient China. In his no-holds-barred commentary, Nichols points out how experimental cross-cultural and developmental psychology findings can be easily misunderstood by Humanities and Social Sciences scholars. In his rebuttal of Nichols’ criticism, Lloyd vividly explains how Nichols may have in turn misread and misinterpreted his work. While this confrontation may appear at times quite nasty, both contributions are exceptionally informative, especially for young scholars entering the field(s), and we hope this exchange may help develop a more collaborative spirit and start further conversations between the fields involved. Again, the academic core of all (inter)disciplinary research is confrontation. As Alex Stevens wrote in his assessment of the UK government’s penchant for silencing dissenting scientific criticism before and during the Covid-19 pandemic:
“in their work, scientists deal with criticism all the time. The rudeness of peer reviewers is a standing joke for those of us who have to undergo their judgements to get our work published. We use criticism to improve our knowledge. If ministers are not willing to hear dissenting views, then they are not following science” (Stevens 2020).

Ditto for scholars. We might need some vigorous debates to get things straight and advance our collective knowledge, but we cannot avoid having others (mis)interpret someone else’s works – pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli. It is entirely up to us to set the record straight, correct the reviewers’ opinions, or admit that we were wrong. And so on and so forth, in a continuous back and forth between scholars – that is how we keep in check our intuitions, biases, and fallacies. We may still have a lot of interdisciplinary work to do, more dialogues to foster, and way more collaborative qualitative projects to kickstart before we can really reach a point of mutual understanding between the ‘two cultures’, but we should never suffer a failure of nerve and read, study, or publish only that which confirms our own theses or agrees with our a priori ideas. Renouncing critical but epistemologically warranted debates would be the death of science.

The third Discussion of the present volume is once more spearheaded by Ambasciano and is centred on two eminently interdisciplinary monographs about human cultural evolution, that is, Turner et al.’s *The Emergence and Evolution of Religion* (2018) and Sanderson’s *Religious Evolution and the Axial Age* (2018). As Ambasciano recaps in his evolutionary science-heavy commentary,

“both books are eminently interdisciplinary in their scope: the first displays a distinctive deep-historical and neurosociological attention to the evolution of negative emotions and inter-group competition, while the latter focuses on the contribution of world transcendent religions to help human beings cope with new and challenging biosocial conditions derived from ultrasociality. While the two volumes gain unprecedented multidisciplinary width, they also tend to lose intra-disciplinary depth. However, and for all their differences, they both represent the vanguard of a renewed qualitative, scientific, and interdisciplinary study of the history of religion(s) through cognitive historiography.”

Again, the replies by the respective authors shows two distinct ways of dealing with critical reviews based on Rapoport’s rule (see Dennett 2014: 33–34): while Turner and his interdisciplinary team of colleagues acknowledge that “criticism […] is what drives scholarship forward” and “are grateful for the appreciative and astute reading, which gives us the chance to rethink our arguments and refine them”, Sanderson was apparently at a loss when it came to coming to grips with a cross-disciplinary examination and
criticism of his arguments and seemingly shut down any further dialogue – for the time being, at least. The resulting and multifaceted differences deriving from the professional backgrounds of all the parties involved make this frank Discussion a must read for anyone interested in the multidisciplinary study of human cultural evolution.

The Commentaries are as wide-ranging as possible in terms of topics and approaches. Elizabeth Wayland Barber and Paul T. Barber give us a brilliant presentation of the core arguments originally included in their trailblazing volume, *When They Severed Earth from Sky: How the Human Mind Shapes Myth* (2005). The Barbers approach ancient myth as a way to orally encode relevant and historical information in a collective device – the societal network of individual human brains within a certain culture – which processes data in specific ways. What today may sound childish, absurd, or nonsensical is the end result of particular mnemonic, emotional, and social tweaks and procedures that need a keen historical decoding to be fully understood. In his commentary, Luke Matthews spells out the need for alternative research paradigms in the field of cultural evolution and the evolutionary science of religion. After delivering a quick presentation of two main theories in the field, i.e. the costly signaling hypothesis and supernatural punishment, Matthews concludes that “costly signaling is theoretically parsimonious, well-supported by evidence, but thus far has not explained why religion is religious. Supernatural punishment invokes group selection but to date without gathering the kind of data needed to test this mechanism.” Thus, he ends with a plea (“evolutionary research to explain religion should be testing a more diverse set of hypotheses beyond the two most popular”) and urges more open-mindedness when it comes to the evaluation of theoretical alternatives. Finally, the shortcomings of Big Data research in historiography are, once again, front and center in Gary N. Smith’s piece. Smith contends that:

“data are essential for the scientific testing of well-founded hypotheses, and should be welcomed by researchers in every field where reliable, relevant data can be collected. However, the ready availability of plentiful data should not be interpreted as an invitation to ransack data for patterns or to dispense with human expertise. The data deluge makes human common sense, wisdom, and expertise essential.”

Going à rebours, we end with the opening section of the issue – original research articles dealing with embodied cognition. First, we travel through time with Olympia Panagiotidou to reach ancient Greece. Panagiotidou inspects a most peculiar work, Aelius Aristides’ *Sacred Tales*, written in the 2nd century BCE to record the authors’ dreams thought to be delivered by the
god of medicine, Asclepius. Through the lenses of the embodied cognition paradigm, the *Sacred Tales* become thus a sort of *meta-representation user manual* for other believers to prime their imagination so that they could receive the god’s oneiric visit – and build their own personally meaningful epiphany. With Paul Robertson we land in the Eastern Mediterranean just a few centuries later, following Paul’s cosmopolitan Letters and the differential cognitive processes between Paul as author of written works and his audience, again focusing on embodied cognition and what Robertson labels as the computational differences between “handwriting-thinking” and the oral delivery of information and communication. Finally, we reach back to ancient Egypt as Lilith Apostel presents her research on the metaphorical equivalence between death and sleep. The conceptual metaphors *Death Is Sleep* and *Awakening Is Resurrection* are identified as the result of a conceptual blending process rooted in the common-sense, embodied understanding of universal experiences (such as nighttime sleep and dreaming). The network of resulting cultural metaphors was locally embedded in specific beliefs linking the Netherworld with the world of dreams or the journey of the setting sun, and it is still visible in archaeological artefacts such as beds or headrests.

**The Future of the *JCH*: Appraisals and Goodbyes**

After this spectacular historiographical *tour de force*, a few final words from us. We are happy to be able to leave our editorial positions after not only resurrecting the journal after a few *faux pas* from our managing predecessors, but also by adding to its pages the names of scholars who trusted our vision for the *JCH* – despite the young age of the journal – and are considered to be top notch in their respective fields. To all of them go our most heartfelt thanks. We would like to extend our gratitude also to all our readers, to the editorial team at Equinox for the opportunities for professional growth that they have provided us with, to all the members of the *JCH* Editorial Board and to all the reviewers who assured, both anonymously and unanimously, the high quality of the academic content we published, and, last but not least, to Esther Eidinow and Luther H. Martin for their non-stop support and encouragement. We can only hope that what we achieved during our tenure has somewhat repaid their trust.

We hand the *JCH* managing editorship over to Irene Salvo (University of Exeter) now, confident that she will bring a fresh and new perspective on this exciting and still new interdisciplinary field.

*Long live cognitive historiography!*

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Notes


3. This section re-elaborates some of the materials presented in a preliminary form on the personal blog of one of the authors (Ambasciano): https://www.leonardoambasciano.com/blog/pseudoscience-at-the-time-of-covid-19

References


