

## Editorial

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Present Pasts is a new journal that presents papers from researchers and associates of the Institute of Archaeology in London, in the field of Heritage Studies. We believe that the social, political and economic roles that archaeologists play are important, and that we don't simply do research in isolation and only for the benefit of each other. What we do, and the manner in which we do it have important ramifications, and must be open to vigorous debate. This is highlighted by all of the papers in this issue.

The Forum section contains a paper by Alejandro Haber that was refused publication by WAC because of its critical nature, but which asks some fundamental questions that the organisation needs to face as it moves forwards. The second forum paper, by Gabriel Moshenska, is an exploratory work that seeks to describe public archaeology in terms of a commodity model, and may provide a valuable approach to the current critical dilemma of justifying funding for cultural heritage in the UK and beyond.

In their research paper *Excavating Nazi Extermination Centres*, Gilead *et al.* discuss the importance, issues and difficulties inherent in excavating such sites, using the Sobibór camp as a primary case study. Crispin Paine's paper on anti-religion museums is a fascinating preliminary report on research that will fill an important gap in Western knowledge of how museums in the Soviet Union were used to support Communist ideology. And finally David Gill's paper on the contemporary trade of looted antiquities is a highly illuminating and thorough investigation of the illicit tactics of major dealers and auction houses that continue to flout international law, and the serious implications of this for archaeology in the Classical world and beyond.