

# Editorial

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Welcome to issue one of *AJEC*'s volume 21. In German, a 'volume' of a journal is referred to as a *Jahrgang* – a year (group), a cohort; when I was in my teens, a cohort still used to achieve 'majority' – and be considered 'grown up', 'mature' – with the completion of its 21st year. So as *AJEC* approached the completion of its second decade and ideas for marking the occasion were considered, I suggested to the board that we might celebrate the journal's coming-of-age (as it would have been counted when its founders and subsequent editors were growing up) instead of the more common round figure jubilees. Unlike governments the world over, who decided for pop-cultural or other reasons that 1999 years make two complete lots of 1,000, we at *AJEC* know that the 21st year is completed at its end, not at its beginning, and so the special issue reflecting on the journey so far will be issue two, published at the end of this year.

However, the imminent achievement of a key stage in the life cycle is always an occasion for introducing the celebrant to something new. Since its inception, *AJEC* has been a journal dedicated to special, themed issues, and the present issue is the first in the journal's history not to have a special theme. It consists entirely of work submitted for publication in *AJEC*'s 'general articles' section. Why this break with an established and cherished tradition, and why now?

Since the introduction of a 'general articles' section, *AJEC* has attracted a growing stream of essay submissions from both established and more junior researchers. Once I have assessed a submission's suitability for *AJEC*, in terms of standard of writing and 'fit' with the journal's purpose, all draft essays, whether part of a special themed issue or submitted as a 'general' essay, are read by at least one member of the editorial board and at least one outside referee, appropriate to the topic, from an international pool of experts. We try to conduct this review process as efficiently as possible, and have so far managed an average turn-around time to first feedback of about three months. At that point, most submissions not rejected are returned for reworking and resubmission, while a small number are accepted pending minor revisions. The latter are then only reviewed by me and perhaps a member of the board,



whereas the former, if and when resubmitted, undergo a full review again, involving different reviewers. However, where a reviewer has made very specific requests in the first round, the revised script is also returned to her or him for consideration. The length of time this process takes can vary considerably, depending on people's individual workloads and other factors.

By early 2011 it became clear that a back-log of reviewed essays at various stages of being reworked was building up. Continuing to include only a couple of 'general articles' per issue would create big and increasing time lags between initial submission and publication, and so I asked the board to consider various options, of which the proposal to run the occasional 'unthemed' issue found most support. What better year to launch this format than the year *AJEC* reaches 'majority'?

The suitability of a submission for *AJEC* can be difficult to assess, given our commitment to crossing disciplinary and other boundaries. I am always happy to include work that sits on – or indeed beyond – one or more of such fences, provided I am reassured by members of *AJEC*'s peer review college that the essay contributes to the journal's aims of promoting the anthropological engagement with Europe and issues of European concern. The reader who finds in the following pages articles looking more like history or sociology than anthropology should consider that anthropological engagement with a subject is not limited to anthropology as an academic discipline with canonical boundaries. Here we have contributions from both younger and more established scholars who engage with European issues anthropologically, between, across and beyond such confinements. In the second issue of this volume, *AJEC*'s founding editors, together with colleagues who have accompanied the journal's journey over the years, will reflect on such boundary crossings – past, present and future.