

## Editorial

This editorial was written in the 20<sup>th</sup> week of the Gaza conflict and comes two years after this issue of Neo-Lithics should have been published. We apologise for the delay to our authors, members and our Neolithic family. After almost 30 years, ex oriente publishing Neo-Lithics, experienced its first major crisis, which affected the publication of this newsletter. But this means nothing in the face of the horror we see every day in Gaza and Israel.

In these times, we have been and continue to be increasingly paralysed by the various and accelerating regional and global conflicts and crises that are shaking our sense of life and confidence. But how much more suffer those who are directly and existentially affected, and how unbearable is seeing the many dying and dead? And what do the images and hatred in people's minds to our future? And it doesn't stop. If only the perspectives of mothers would take control of conflicts! Wouldn't women join and make the care and foreseen grief for children and sons the guiding avoidance behaviour in conflicts? Isn't it male behaviour that chiefly perpetuates cycles of violence and war throughout human evolution?

How have we, cultural researchers, dealt with the topic of the emergence of violence up to now? What role conflict research plays in archaeology? How can

we, as prehistorians, finally contribute to such research that at least works out the historical dimensions of this devastating human disposition to invest empathy only for one's own group – and offer it to a better world to come? Is recurring confined empathy really the unchangeable destiny of humankind?

Regarding confined empathy. Our archaeological community is also practising it these days – creating polarisation by one-sidedness and simplification between us without need or care. Systemic constraints demand signatures under open letters where self-responsible conscience should act for empathy with all who suffer, and for peace. This is how violence begins.

We conclude this editorial with a quote from Musharraf ad-Din Abdullah (Sa`adi), Golestan 1, The Conduct of Kings (c. 1259), which hangs in Persian on a carpet on a meeting room's wall in the United Nations building in New York:

*All human beings are members of one frame.  
Since all, at first, from the same essence came.  
When time afflicts a limb with pain  
The other limbs at rest cannot remain.  
If thou feel not for other's misery  
A human being is no name for thee.*

Hans Georg K. Gebel and Gary Rollefson