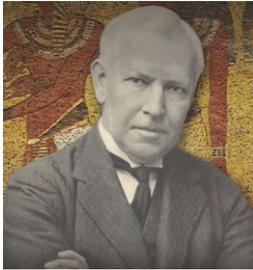


Book reviews

PAUL CROOK. *Grafton Elliot Smith, Egyptology and the diffusion of culture: a biographical perspective*. viii+160 pages, 3 illustrations. 2012. Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press; 978-1-84519-481-9 paperback £19.95



This curious book brings together two distinguished men. Emeritus Professor Crook is an historian of ideas (Social Darwinism, American politics). Grafton Elliot Smith (1871–

1937) was elected a

Fellow of the Royal Society at 36 as “the world’s leading comparative neurologist”, and knighted in 1934 for his role in guiding British anatomy teaching and research. He also pioneered studies of Egyptian mummification and contributed to discussions on human origins. However to archaeologists he is best known for passionately “preaching his gospel” of a grand theory in opposition to the scholarship of his day: what Timothy Champion has called “an embarrassing episode” and former *Antiquity* editor Glyn Daniel, naming it hyperdiffusionism, described as “academic rubbish”.

His basic model was that innovations occurred once only in human history, whether in economic practice, material culture, cultural practice or belief. Therefore if the same phenomenon was found in two parts of the world, however distant in space and time, they had a single origin. To Elliot Smith that origin was usually ancient Egypt: the invention of agriculture, of metalworking, of civilisation; the source of a ‘heliolithic’ cult of the sun/serpent marked by megalithic construction. From the Nile Valley multiple associated cultural elements spread eastwards to Asia, to Australia, Pacific Islands, North and South America, taken by travellers searching for what Elliot Smith described as the “*elixir of life*”, by Phoenicians travelling from East Africa, and other ancient mariners. Unsurprisingly, archaeologists and anthropologists immediately criticised these views as contradicted by the expanding evidence from world cultures.

A new biographical study and appraisal is certainly due. Smith’s widow inspired a tribute volume in 1938. Books appeared from two 1972 conferences held in Sydney and London to mark his centenary. So Crook’s initiative should be welcomed.

This short volume presents a useful summary of Smith’s career with more detail of his writing on cultural diffusion; Smith’s other work is considered only summarily or ignored. The book is somewhat mistitled. After his important studies of mummification and Egyptian crania, Smith devoted little time to Egyptology; his interests were in Egypt’s wider influence. The volume is thus a convenient reference on what Elliot Smith (and his protégé W.J. Perry, whose writings now seem even weirder) wrote and said in this area, and when. Quotes and sympathetic paraphrases on his publication appear alongside citation of the (nearly universal) criticisms of his work by other contemporary scholars.

Missing is the ‘why’, an explanation of what led a distinguished biomedical scientist to try and rewrite world history, and maintain his arguments for a quarter century in the face of almost total opposition by specialists. Crook does not tackle this, though he does advance a view that Smith had some characteristics of autism.

Crook suggests his aim is not just to describe but to rehabilitate Elliot Smith’s reputation. Here lies the problem. Others might do this by emphasising Smith’s work on brain and mummification, evolutionary research and teaching reforms, or praise his personality, or argue that he was over-influenced by Perry and the enthusiasm of popular readers, or that somehow he missed out on information coming from current archaeological research.

The author states that Smith’s writings “were always scientific in their methodology” (p. vi). Few readers of his diffusionist work would agree. In contrast to his anatomical research papers, these books read more like pioneers of the model that would later be described as pseudo-archaeology. Announce a grand and unconventional world view, trawl the vast corpus of available data to select items which seem to fit this view, describe them in detail with scholarly references, denounce traditional scholarship as blind or ignorant or narrow, then leave very vague details of how, when

and why the new model happened. If his medical students had studied their anatomy with as little attention to detail as Smith's diffusionist tracts a lot of patients would surely have died.

The book suggests that Smith's diffusionist model has not been conclusively refuted. Crook, in respecting Smith's passion and commitment, does seem to ignore the gap that existed at the time of Smith's writing between his arguments and the evidence from archaeological work; a gap that has continued to grow decade by decade. If—as Crook suggests—there has been little active criticism of Smith since the 1970s, that is more probably because most people consider there is no case to answer. Crook says “the diffusion controversy has never really ceased” (p. 114), but what has continued is argument about any *specific* cultural sequence of the relative contributions of local innovation and development, population movement and diffusion of ideas; not a total ‘diffusionist’ paradigm.

A minor comment concerns Smith's references to race. Crook notes that in 1934 he wrote two important denunciations of the ‘Aryan’ concept. The rise of Nazism had a dramatic impact on a range of ideas, including eugenics (fashionable with left as much as right) and enthusiasm in physical anthropology for racial classification. Smith would not be unique in his earlier racial descriptions, crediting European civilisation to the virility “especially of those belonging to the blond Nordic race” and writing that “the Negro is a very primitive member of the human family”. His 1934 presentation now seems more of a *mea culpa* for the discipline.

For those wishing to track the detail of Smith's hyperdiffusionist theory, with some impression of the man behind it, this will prove a useful summary book. It is unlikely to achieve its goal and attract modern scholars back to those ideas.

ROBIN DERRICOURT

School of History & Philosophy, University of New South Wales, Australia

(Email: r.derricourt@unsw.edu.au)

MANUEL DOMÍNGUEZ-RODRIGO, LUIS ALCALÁ & LUIS LUQUE (ed.). *Peninj: a research project on human origins (1995–2005)*. xx+284 pages, 199 illustrations, 7 colour plates, 53 tables. 2009. Oxford & Oakville (CT): Oxbow for American School of Prehistoric Research; 978-1-84217-382-4 hardback £20.

Since the 1960s and the advent of the processualist school of the ‘New Archaeology’, Palaeolithic



archaeology has proved to be fertile ground for the testing and development of new scientific paradigms. Investigations in this discipline are nowadays far from arid studies of stone tools and bones;

rather, they constitute an interdisciplinary domain that bridges various sub-fields of evolutionary and earth sciences. Thus the edited volume on Peninj does not merely present the results of ten years of investigations of an important archaeological area, it also exemplifies the aforementioned assets of Palaeolithic research: strong interdisciplinarity, with archaeological reasoning informed by multiple strands of evidence, and a consistent focus on systemic approaches that draw upon human ecology, taphonomic studies, ethnographic analogy and experimental archaeology.

Located in the western Natron basin in northern Tanzania, Peninj is a complex of Early Pleistocene (Oldowan and Acheulian) archaeological sites formed in an alluvial-deltaic and lacustrine setting, dated to *c.* 1.5–1.2 million years ago. The low-energy depositional environment of the Natron palaeo-lake, along with fast burial from alluvial sedimentation and volcanic ash that coated the landscape, created favourable conditions for the preservation of archaeological material. Reconstructed as an open savannah, Peninj offered itself as an ideal palaeo-landscape for investigating controversial hypotheses regarding hunter-gatherer adaptations, subsistence strategies and faunal exploitation.

Domínguez-Rodrigo and Alcalá explicitly portray the methodological trademark of the research in Peninj right from the introductory chapter: a landscape approach with an ecological/adaptive perspective, which pays close attention to site formation processes and uses taphonomy as its spearhead for unravelling the issues of carnivore competition and hominin scavenging. The next two chapters (Alcalá *et al.*) provide a comprehensive overview of the geological context, geomorphology, palaeo-environment and landscape evolution at Peninj, with thorough accounts on the palaeo-relief and the tecto-sedimentary processes conditioning the degree of preservation. Aided by detailed photographs,

informative maps and geomorphological models of landscape development, these sections offer an excellent background for the critical reader to assess the later discussions on site integrity, site formation processes and the contextual associations of the archaeological material.

While the isotopic study of van der Merwe (Chapter 5) reports on the diet and habitat of the Peninj fauna, it is in Chapters 4 and 6—the highlights of this volume—that rigorous zooarchaeological and taphonomic analyses are to be found. One of the most remarkable features of the Peninj archaeological area is the ST site complex, a kind of mega-site on a horizontally exposed palaeo-surface. Fossils and stone tools, preserved encrusted on volcanic tuff thanks to carbonate cementation, were found concentrated in discrete patches. Meticulous taphonomic and spatial distribution analyses demonstrate that the accumulation of archaeological material in the ST complex is the result of hominin activities rather than post-depositional, natural agents. The researchers convincingly show that the bulk of the archaeological remains has been preserved in its original depositional configuration, which makes this palaeo-landscape a unique opportunity to study the behaviour of early hominins. Indeed, the examination of the ST archaeofauna provides compelling evidence that hominins used those localities as an area for obtaining and butchering carcasses. Chapter 6 (Domínguez-Rodrigo *et al.*) focuses on site 4 of the ST complex, a site “with the third-highest number of cut-marked bones [...] among all Pleistocene archaeological sites older than 1 Ma” (p. 135). The evidence from percussion and cut marks (e.g. percentages, distribution, frequencies and anatomical occurrences) suggests disarticulation and intense defleshing; it contradicts the scenario of passive scavenging and instead indicates primary access to carcasses by hominins. In fact, considering the solidity of the data presented in this chapter, it will be hard to challenge the assertion that the “ST4 site shows, together with FLK Zinj at Olduvai [...], the earliest likely evidence of carcass transport, complete or partial” (p. 143).

The remaining sections of the volume (Chapters 7, 8 and 9) examine the lithic material from the ST complex and the chipped-stone assemblages from the Acheulian sites with equal thoroughness: the typo-technological analyses of those chapters are well-structured and supported by instructive tables, figures and artefact photographs. The identification

of planned technological strategies in the reduction methods of the Oldowan collection is of note, as are the phytoliths found on the edges of handaxes, indicating the use of those tools for chopping wood.

In sum, the geological, geomorphological, paleontological, taphonomic, zooarchaeological, isotopic and lithic studies presented here provide critical evidence that Early Pleistocene hominins exhibited complex behaviour, which included planned knapping methods for the production of stone tools, primary access to fleshed animal carcasses and their butchery, in turn indicating elaborated predatory strategies and, possibly, hunting. Carcass exploitation, hunting and carnivore behaviour are among the most intensely debated subjects in human origins research, and this volume makes an important contribution to this debate. All things considered, the Peninj monograph will fascinate readers, not only for the sheer significance of the evidence it presents, but also for the disciplinary clarity and the rigorous way in which this evidence is presented.

VANGELIS TOURLOUKIS

Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Archäologie
des Mittelalters & Senckenberg Center for Human
Evolution and Paleoecology, Eberhard Karls
Universität Tübingen, Germany
(Email: vangelis.tourloukis@ifu.uni-tuebingen.de)

RIVKA RABINOVITCH, SABINE GAUDZINSKI-WINDHEUSER, LUTZ KINDLER & NAAMA GOREN INBAR. *The Acheulian site of Gesher Benot Ya'aqov. Volume 3: mammalian taphonomy, the assemblages of Layers V-5 and V-6.* xlii+269 pages, 183 illustrations, 65 tables. 2012. Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London & New York: Springer Science+Business Media; 978-94-007-2158-6 hardback €99.95, CHF143.50, £90 & \$139; 978-94-007-2159-3 e-book; DOI: 10.1007/978-94-007-2159-3.



The last 40 years have seen remarkable advances in our understanding of how our remote ancestors procured meat along their evolutionary track from casual foraging by small-brained, tool-assisted bipedal primates to routine hunting by large-brained, tool-dependent primates-turned-carnivores. Before a million years

© Antiquity Publications Ltd.

ago, the best evidence is African, notably sites 1.6–1.9 million years old at Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania and Koobi Fora in Kenya, which probably show opportunistic scavenging and food-gathering. For the last 600 000 years, the best data comes from Europe, where sites such as Boxgrove in Britain and Schöningen in Germany indicate what appears to be systematic hunting with spears of horses and (at Boxgrove) rhino some 400–500 000 years ago. Where and when the transition occurred from scavenging to hunting as the primary means of obtaining meat is less clear but is likely to have occurred *c.* 1 million to 800 000 years ago when hominin brain sizes began to increase (perhaps as a result of more meat in the diet). Sites of this age with abundant faunal evidence are few and far between, and currently the best is arguably the Acheulian site of Gesher Benot Ya'aqov (GBY), Israel, *c.* 780–700 000 years ago.

As one of the Early Palaeolithic 'flagship' sites of Asia, GBY may have the earliest evidence for elephant hunting, nut processing, the shaping of wood and routine use of fire (Goren-Inbar *et al.* 2000, 2002a, 2002b). It lies in the Dead Sea Rift by the River Jordan. The site contains 34m of lake or lake-margin deposits, capped by some fluvial ones. It is stratigraphically complex, and the excavation and subsequent analysis required considerable patience and skill. Palaeomagnetic analyses show that the main archaeological horizons occur shortly above the Brunhes-Matuyama boundary of 0.78 million years ago: the information considered here is thus 750 000 years old.

This volume presents a detailed account of the faunal evidence from one particularly informative part of the site, known as Area C, directly by the River Jordan, and adjacent deposits exposed along the river bank. Here, a small but intensive excavation of layers V-5 and V-6 produced *c.* 4000 bones, of which *c.* 1500 could be identified to species, genus or family level. Seventeen taxa were identified, varying in size from fox to hippopotamus. By far the largest proportion was from *Dama*, the fallow deer. Analysis of cut-marks showed that butchering and defleshing were done on entire carcasses (adult and juvenile, male and female), which is not the expected pattern if hominins were scavenging the left-overs from carnivore kills. Additionally, there was little evidence that carnivores had gnawed many of the bones. However, stone tools and carnivore teeth are not the only agents that can modify bone surfaces, which can, for example, be

scratched by rubbing against sharp edges (such as shell or stone), modified by trampling, or altered by the movement of sediment against bone in a stream-bed. Each of these may add its own type of marks, and/or obliterate earlier damage (such as cut-marks). Here, the researchers break new ground by replicating these types of damage in experiments (with sediment-induced damage ingeniously replicated by using a cement-mixer). What these showed was that there was minimal evidence of sorting by water (as confirmed by other lines of evidence): the main damage was caused by trampling, after butchery and before final burial. The same may be true for the other large mammals at GBY that are less well represented. In short, GBY appears to indicate that hominins *c.* 750 000 years ago were systematically butchering complete carcasses of medium to large-sized animals that had most probably been hunted. This at present constitutes the earliest reasonably definite evidence for hunting medium-to large-sized animals, and may in turn imply that in Europe, hunting skills were introduced and not developed indigenously.

As with the previous volumes (Goren-Inbar *et al.* 2002b; Alpersen-Afil *et al.* 2010; review by Dennell 2011), the presentation is exemplary. This one begins with an outline of the excavations of 1996–1997 (Chapter 2), an account of the materials and methodology (Chapter 3), and a comprehensive palaeontological review (Chapter 4). Taphonomic analysis of hominin- and animal-induced bone damage is covered in Chapter 5; Chapter 6 presents a lengthy account (supported by no fewer than 111 figures!) of the various experiments for modifying bone surfaces, and this leads to a reconstruction (Chapter 7) of the taphonomic history of GBY, including its lithic assemblages and evidence for fire. The final chapter presents a summary and conclusions of the research. Although a very specialised (and expensive) volume, it is an essential text for any serious student of faunal taphonomy and the study of early hominin subsistence, setting new standards for the analysis of early Palaeolithic faunal assemblages. All those involved in this research must be congratulated for an outstanding piece of research.

References

- ALPERSON-AFIL, N. & N. GOREN-INBAR. 2010. *The Acheulian site of Gesher Benot Ya'aqov. Volume 2: ancient flames and controlled use of fire.* Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London & New York: Springer Science +Business Media.

- DENNEL, R.W. 2011. Review of Alpers-Afil & Goren-Inbar, *The Acheulian site of Gesher Benot Ya'aqov. Volume 2: ancient flames and controlled use of fire. Antiquity* 84: 1202–3.
- GOREN-INBAR, N., C.S. FEIBEL, K.L. VERSOUB, Y. MELAMED, M.E. KISLEV, E. TCHERNOV & I. SARAGUSTI. 2000. Pleistocene milestones on the Out-of-Africa corridor at Gesher Ya'aqov, Israel. *Science* 289: 944–47.
- GOREN-INBAR, N., G. SHARON, Y. MELAMED & M. KISLEV. 2002a. Nuts, nut-cracking, and pitted stones at Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, Israel. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science USA* 99(4): 2455–60.
- GOREN-INBAR, N., F. WERKER & C.S. FEIBEL. 2002b. *The Acheulean site of Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, Israel. 1: the wood assemblage*. Oxford: Oxbow.

ROBIN DENNELL

Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield,
UK (Email: r.dennell@sheffield.ac.uk)

MICHEL LORBLANCHET. *Art pariétal: grottes ornées du Quercy*. 448 pages, numerous colour & b&w illustrations, tables. 2010. Paris: Rouergue; 978-2-8126-0164-4 hardback €49.



Much like its subject matter, Michel Lorblanchet's 2010 volume, *Art pariétal: grottes ornées du Quercy*, is a spectacular work of both art and science. It represents forty years of research by Lorblanchet and his colleagues on the painted caves of the Quercy in southwest France. While this volume contains

detailed information on the type, frequency and layout of the images in each of the caves, the associated faunal and archaeological remains, the geological and environmental contexts, and the results of pigment analyses and dating initiatives, the one thing the reader will not discover in this book is what it all 'means' and for this Lorblanchet makes no apologies.

In his introduction, the author emphasises that Palaeolithic images most probably had multiple, diverse meanings that may never be fully understood. In this, Lorblanchet joins other scholars such as Margaret Conkey who have long argued that the search for grand, vitalistic schemes to explain

Palaeolithic art (e.g. hunting magic, fertility magic or shamanism) has become stale and that instead of seeking specific meanings researchers should consider why the making of imagery might have been meaningful to certain people in certain places at certain times (Conkey 1997: 359; see also Nowell 2006). This shift away from grand explanatory frameworks towards a consideration of the art as local, historically-situated phenomena has resulted in two different but interrelated approaches to studying Palaeolithic imagery. The first emphasises the social production of Palaeolithic visual cultures and the place of painted caves within the physical and cultural landscapes of Ice Age peoples (e.g. Conkey 1993, 2010; Dobres 2001). The second focuses on the meticulous, almost forensic, reconstruction of context, the materiality of cave art and the knowledge and gestures of Upper Palaeolithic peoples as they moved through space creating the imagery (e.g. Tosello & Fritz 2007; Menu 2009). As Conkey (1993) has argued, the latter approach is perhaps our surest way towards reconstructing the former and with this volume, Lorblanchet is well positioned to move the field forward.

The book is divided into three parts flanked by an introduction and conclusion. The first part, 'Grands sanctuaires archaïques', and the second, 'Petit sanctuaires archaïques', focus on the six principal and the dozen or so smaller painted caves in the region that date to the Gravettian. Half the volume is devoted to a detailed study of the richest cave in this group, Pech-Merle, best known for its spit-painted 'Panel of the spotted horses' and its enigmatic 'Wounded man' (an anthropomorphic figure with what looks like multiple spears stuck into it); researchers have however also recorded more than 600 non-figurative signs, 74 images of animals and approximately 20 figures identified as human in this cave. The third part of the book, 'Sanctuaires magdaléniens', presents research on eleven caves painted between 16 000 and 13 000 BP which, according to Lorblanchet, differ from the earlier caves, in theme, technique and style. The volume's conclusion departs from the previous 400 pages of relatively straightforward facts and presents instead a descriptive and warmly personal account of the art and 'ritual feel' of these underground 'sanctuaries' based on a lifetime of observations.

Among the strengths of this book are the detailed descriptions and inventories of the cave images and clear and precise maps locating these. This level of

© Antiquity Publications Ltd.

detail is most welcome as it allows other researchers to build on Lorblanchet's work. For example, instead of the frustratingly brief 'seven geometric signs' that characterise some reports, Lorblanchet tells the reader exactly what they are, where they are located and what they look like. This is supported by the beautiful colour photographs and drawings that illustrate the volume throughout; physically, it is short and wide and this landscape format is ideal for laying out a series of photographs, progressing, for example, from barely visible engraving to enhanced photograph to reconstructed drawing. Numerous foldouts that reveal a large panel in its entirety are of further help. While one may not agree with all of Lorblanchet's interpretations (I personally could not see 'femaleness' in natural rock formations that were clearly obvious to the author and his team) there are truly no shortcomings in a book which really sets the standard for the regional analysis and presentation of Palaeolithic art data.

This book will please many readers: advanced undergraduates, graduate students and professionals with an interest in rock art of any period will find its methodological approaches useful; those who are more specifically concerned with the lives and visual cultures of Upper Palaeolithic peoples will find sustenance here; and, for its stunning photographs alone, non-specialists with an appreciation of Palaeolithic art will also enjoy this wonderful book.

References

- CONKEY, M. 1993. Humans as materialists and symbolists: image making in the Upper Palaeolithic, in D.T. Rasmussen (ed.) *The origin and evolution of humans and humanness*: 95–118. Boston: Jones & Bartless.
- 1997. Beyond art and between the caves: thinking about context in the interpretive process, in M. Conkey, O. Soffer, D. Stratmann & N.G. Jablonski (ed.) *Beyond art: Pleistocene image and symbol* (Memoirs of the California Academy of Sciences 23): 343–68. San Francisco: California Academy of Sciences.
- 2010. Images without words: the construction of prehistoric imaginaries for definitions of "us". *Journal of Visual Culture* 9: 272–83.
- DOBRES, M.-A. 2001. Meaning in the making: agency and the social embodiment of technology and art, in M.B. Schiffer (ed.) *Anthropological perspectives on technology*: 47–76. Albuquerque (NM): University of New Mexico Press.
- MENU, M. 2009. L'analyse de l'art préhistorique. *L'Anthropologie* 113: 547–58.
- NOWELL, A. 2006. From a Palaeolithic art to Pleistocene visual cultures. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 13: 239–49.
- TOSSELLO, G. & C. FRITZ. 2007. The hidden meaning of forms: methods of recording Palaeolithic parietal art. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14: 48–80.

APRIL NOWELL

Department of Anthropology, University of
Victoria, Canada (Email: anowell@uvic.ca)

MICHAŁ KOBUSIEWICZ, JACEK KABACIŃSKI, ROMUALD SCHILD, JOEL D. IRISH, MARIA C. GATTO & FRED WENDORF. *Gebel Ramlah: Final Neolithic cemeteries from the Western Desert of Egypt*. 276 pages, 179 colour & b&w illustrations, 23 tables. 2010. Poznań: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences; 978-83-89499-69-1 hardback \$95.



Until recently our knowledge of fifth-millennium BC Egyptian mortuary contexts was limited to a handful of sites, all seemingly dated to the latter part of the millennium: el-Omari (south of Cairo), Merimde Beni-Salame (western

Delta), the Badari region (northern Upper Egypt) and a few isolated graves in the Eastern Desert. This has been increasingly matched by much richer discoveries to the south in central Sudan, such as at el-Ghaba and Kadero, along with those in the Dongola Reach, including Kadruka and R12. Notably, from the Middle Egyptian Nile to Khartoum the forms that these funerary structures take and the material performances they encompass are remarkably similar. Nevertheless this still left a conspicuous gap in the archaeological record around Egypt's southern margins. Fortunately, just over ten years ago, the *Combined Prehistoric Expedition* discovered a series of Neolithic sites in the Egyptian south-western desert at Gebel Ramlah. Amongst their number were three small Neolithic cemeteries. This volume represents the final publication of the material from these important burial grounds and

the data presented here affords the opportunity to assess the nature of social networks around the Nile Valley in this period.

Gebel Ramlah lies along the shores of a fossil playa, approximately 20km from Nabta Playa, site of the so-called 'megalithic' structures. The three individual cemeteries, E-01-2, E-03-1 and E-03-2, each contained a dense concentration of largely intact graves, totalling 39 across all three and containing the interments of 69 individuals. The presentation of these finds in this volume is organised into eight sections: cemetery overviews (Kobusiewicz and Kabaciński), chronology (Kobusiewicz and Kabaciński), pottery (Gatto), environment (Schild and Wendorf), skeletal remains (Irish), mollusc shells (Kurzawska), archaeobotanical remains (Lityńska-Zajac) and conclusions (Kobusiewicz and Kabaciński). Surprisingly, there is no section devoted to the analysis of the lithics found, despite their potential for illuminating lifeways and social networks. The illustrations are superb, and all the photographs are in colour, capturing some of the vibrancy of the material world of the pastoralist communities that once inhabited this landscape. It is just a shame that the listings of the grave contents are difficult to cross-reference with these figures on account of the different numbering systems employed.

Despite the small number of burials, the associated offerings were numerous, including abundant beads and pendants, large numbers of flint implements, several bone tools and distinctive pottery containers. The range of materials articulated together here is striking, attesting to the existence of networks that permitted the acquisition of raw materials from equatorial Africa, the Red Sea and Sinai. It is the pottery, however, that is particularly significant in terms of evaluating the temporal and spatial relationships of ancient communities. Therefore, whereas many of the observations and finds published here have been communicated elsewhere previously, Maria Gatto's discussion of the pottery is one of the most significant new contributions offered in this excavation report. Her thorough treatment of fabrics, manufacturing processes and vessel forms, particularly when juxtaposed with data from elsewhere (such as known Tasian calciform beakers), is exceedingly useful. Similarly thorough are the environmental and skeletal data analyses, the latter strongly indicating an absence of cereal consumption given the healthy nature of the teeth studied.

Since Gebel Ramlah lies at such an important juncture between Neolithic communities in the Sudan and the Badarian groups of the Middle Nile, the rigorous assessment of chronological position is crucial. It is a pity, therefore, that the section devoted to the discussion of this is so short, being just two pages long, and hinging largely upon a very cursory overview of only four radiocarbon dates from the site. From comparative analysis with the handful of dates available elsewhere it is concluded, in this section at least, that this "confirms the dating of the Ramlah cemeteries to the beginning of the first half of the V millennium BC calibrated age" (p. 120). This would seem to privilege the oldest of the radiometric dates obtained, namely the one from burial 5, which would definitely position this cemetery as the oldest known in Egypt. Yet it is too briefly mentioned here, but more clearly elaborated elsewhere in the volume, that the charcoal fragments which yielded these dates were most probably secondary, deriving from hearths within which the burials were dug. It hard to adjudicate this, however, as the contexts from which these fragments were extracted are not sufficiently documented in the section discussing the burials, and several candidates are listed in the archaeobotanical portion of the text. Overall, considering the material affinities with other sites, a mid-fifth millennium date is much more likely, as the measurement of ^{14}C in bone collagen from one of the burials indicates. This later date overlaps with the oldest radiometric dates currently available for the Badarian. At this temporal distance from dynastic Egypt, and given the diversity of practices evident in the intervening period, a direct lineage from the Gebel Ramlah interments to dynastic constructions of death are perhaps overstated in the final conclusions, with comparisons remaining somewhat generalised. There is no denying, however, that this site represented a significant focus of social engagement for these late Neolithic groups.

While the information collated in this monograph is useful, the volume would have benefitted from a stronger editorial hand, given that English is not the first language of many of the contributors and their otherwise meticulous observations are marred by the occasional awkward sentence or odd turn of phrase. There are also, unfortunately, a fairly high number of typographical errors throughout the text. That aside, this publication will form a valuable reference point for years to come as the mosaic of fifth-millennium BC Neolithic communities across the entire Nile Valley comes into better focus.

ALICE STEVENSON
Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, UK
(Email: alice.stevenson@prm.ox.ac.uk)

HALFORD W. HASKELL, RICHARD E. JONES, PETER M. DAY & JOHN T. KILLEN. *Transport stirrup jars of the Bronze Age Aegean and East Mediterranean* (Prehistory Monographs 33). xxx+192 pages of text, 120 b&w & colour illustrations, 30 tables. 2011. Philadelphia (PA): INSTAP Academic Press; 978-1-931534-62-8 hardback \$80.



A controversy arose in Oxford in the early 1960s over the dating of the Linear B tablets from Knossos, which were conventionally dated *c.* 1400 BC, but seemed so similar to their Pylian counterparts on the Peloponnese, dated to the late LH IIIB [Late Helladic IIIB]

period, *c.* 1200 BC. In this controversy, a set of ceramic transport-storage vessels (*c.* 0.40m high, with a capacity of 12–14l, called ‘stirrup jars’; henceforth TSJs), at the time only known on mainland Greek sites, offered potentially important data: because many bore Linear B inscriptions painted before firing, including some place-names known on the Knossos documents, they appeared to be part of the Knossos administration; if they could be shown to have been made on Crete, then they might hold a key to the dating of Linear B administration. The question framed is a ‘classic’ in ceramic provenance studies: given vessels (TSJs) found in region B (Greek mainland), probably manufactured in region A (Crete, implied by independent evidence, the place-names), could analysis of the TSJs’ clay composition provide objective confirmation of their origin? The present volume has its ultimate origins in pioneering work on exactly this question, published by Hector Catling and Anne Millett in 1965. They analysed, using Optical Emission Spectroscopy (OES), 25 of the stirrup jars excavated at Thebes in 1921 by Keramopoulos and demonstrated a Cretan origin, most likely in eastern Crete.

Some 50 years on, this volume represents probably the best answer currently possible to the question, based on a much larger sample of over 500 TSJs from

the Aegean, the central and eastern Mediterranean, including three Late Bronze Age shipwreck sites. The first of its eleven chapters summarises the history of the question, a *cause célèbre* in Aegean ceramic analysis (pp. 23 & 41). Catling and Millett’s original study was challenged on analytical grounds and by Linear B scholars, including Killen, who pointed out that the textual associations of the Cretan place-names pointed to the west, not the east of the island. A much larger sample was analysed, and new conclusions presented in 1980 by Catling, Jones, Cherry and Killen, re-assigning the origin of many TSJs to western Crete, around modern Chania, and deploying Killen’s expertise as an experienced Linear B scholar. Subsequently, the ‘team’ responsible for this volume developed these conclusions, analysing a still larger sample and employing a different chemical technique—Atomic Absorption Spectrometry (AAS)—as well as marrying chemical characterisation with petrographic analysis of 195 samples and macroscopic assignment to types.

The volume is organised first to present each analytical technique separately, before they are integrated and then compared with the Linear B epigraphic data. Haskell presents a macroscopic typological analysis, identifying 22 narrow ‘typegroups’ and four ‘broader groups’. Jones and Day then review the science applied and the project’s analytical aims (Chapter 3), honestly showing the development of the analytical programme, which did not build all three types of analysis (chemical, typological and petrographic) into the project design from the start (pp. 27–8). Chapters 4 (Jones) and 5 (Day) then present the chemical and petrographic analyses respectively, Day’s including detailed fabric descriptions of the 24 fabrics identified among the 195 thin-section samples. Two co-authored chapters (Chapters 6–7) first reconcile the chemical and petrographic data, then summarise the implications of chemistry, petrography and typology for geographical associations. Killen’s close analysis of the 135 inscribed TSJs (out of over 170 known examples) analysed here follows (Chapter 8), before Haskell summarises the broader cultural implications in two chapters entitled ‘Chronology and Power’ (Chapter 9) and ‘Trade’ (Chapter 10). A catalogue (Chapter 11), with basic information on each of the 509 objects analysed, follows, preceding an Appendix that lists all the reported Late Bronze III TSJs from 90 sites in the eastern and central Mediterranean. Extensive references, two concordances correlating the current samples with existing publications of

inscribed vessels, and a concise general index end the 192 pages of text. A further 160 pages of tables (1–30), graphs (1–30), figures (1–18) and plates (1–36) present supporting and summary information for the analyses and a representative sample of TSJ illustrations (drawings and photographs) plus four colour plates documenting petrographic thin-sections of the 24 fabrics identified.

As one might expect, the picture has become sharper and also more complex in the wake of the analytical programme. The current suite of analyses not only distinguishes two basic chemical compositions (labelled α and β) in western Crete, but petrography suggests three or four fabrics within them. Significantly, another chemical type, classified in the 1970s as indistinguishable between central mainland Greece (Boeotia) and central Crete, can now be separated, again with the assistance of petrography, into Cretan (the majority) and mainland origins. There is a good overall ‘fit’ between the three techniques.

There are inevitably some details that remain unclear, but the larger picture has come into sharper focus. It is even clearer that production and exchange of TSJs is largely a Late Bronze IIIA2–B (c. 1350–1200 BC) phenomenon. TSJs are widely attested at over 90 sites in the Aegean as well as the central and eastern Mediterranean, but they are commonest in the Aegean, almost always in settlement contexts. Within the Aegean about 30 per cent of surviving examples are inscribed, but the authors consider this to be a skewed picture, given the high ‘visibility’ of inscribed examples. The majority were manufactured in western Crete, in the Chania region, and TSJs from here predominate among those found at Thebes on the mainland. Another significant region of manufacture was central Crete, both north and south, common among TSJs at Mycenae. Entirely new findings of the present work include a probable eastern Cretan production centre and the identification of a few TSJs not currently attributable to a known Aegean source, notably one from the late 13th-century BC Gelidonya shipwreck. What remains frustratingly unclear is the nature of the exchange(s) that the TSJs represent. Unlike Roman amphorae, which offer similar possibilities to combine textual and analytical data, here no clear answers emerge about the nature of palatial involvement in the filling and movement of TSJs or on their (potentially multiple?) re-use beyond. There is thus more to be done conceptually, as there is on analysing vessel

contents (certainly olive oil, possibly wine too); as the authors recognise (p. 28), this science was in its infancy when most of the work presented here was carried out; it was also prohibitively expensive and impracticable to add it to the project on the scale required.

This volume is a thoroughly documented case-study showing how a question of ceramic provenance linked to the economic operation of complex entities can be tackled through a combination of approaches. It should be of interest to anyone concerned with these issues in the Aegean or elsewhere. For Aegeanists, it represents the fullest presentation of a topic that became a *cause célèbre* in the field, but it does not provide all the answers and there is still plenty to be done.

JOHN BENNET

Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield,
UK (Email: d.j.bennet@sheffield.ac.uk)

CARL KNAPPETT. *An archaeology of interaction: network perspectives on material culture and society*. x+251 pages, 50 illustrations. 2011. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 978-0-19-921545-4 hardback £60.



Carl Knappett has written a much-needed book that provides an overview of existing approaches to human interaction as well as a new networks perspective for archaeology. The key issue addressed in the

book is that theories of human interaction generally do not incorporate materiality. The author suggests *network thinking* as a perspective that succeeds in combining theoretical and methodological approaches to interaction in a single framework and “foregrounds the relations between objects and people more effectively” (p. 7). Knappett argues that *An archaeology of interaction* is by no means relevant to the archaeological discipline alone, but aims to illustrate the potential that archaeology can have for understanding social interactions in general. A number of issues are stressed repeatedly in the volume: the incorporation of materiality, the need to consider assemblages of objects rather than objects in isolation, and the crossing of scales of analysis.

© Antiquity Publications Ltd.

The author's search for compatible theoretical ideas and methodological techniques takes him on a multi-disciplinary journey guided by a few critical issues and illustrated throughout with archaeological examples largely from the Bronze Age Aegean. The result is a highly readable volume that is close to exhaustive in its description of issues and approaches, as well as focused on providing an innovative, but above all useful, framework for understanding social interactions.

The book has three parts subdivided into three chapters each. The first part provides a strong argument in favour of new methods and theories for understanding human interactions by stressing the absence of objects in existing theories, highlighting issues in existing relational approaches and suggesting network analysis as a formal methodology. In the first chapter Knappett states that humans have a drive to interact with each other as well as with objects. He suggests *network thinking* as a research perspective to understand these interactions and argues that "By combining SNA [Social Network Analysis] with ANT [Actor-Network Theory] we can bring together people and things both methodologically and theoretically" (p. 8). The second chapter highlights some broad trends in scales of analysis of relational and non-relational approaches to interaction in archaeology and the social sciences, and stresses the need for concepts and methods to traverse multiple scales; a networks perspective might provide an appropriate solution. Part one of the book concludes that network analysis (1) forces one to think through relationships, (2) is explicitly multi-scalar, (3) can integrate social and physical space (topology and geometry), and (4) both people and things can be included. The author also mentions some of the potential issues the archaeological use of formal network techniques raise. Firstly that network analysis is by no means a unified social theory; secondly, that the advanced level of mathematics might challenge the proficiency of many archaeologists; and thirdly, that there is a clear tendency to be overly structuralist and descriptive.

Throughout the second part of the volume the potential of a multi-scalar networks perspective to interactions between people and objects is explored, with chapters focusing on micro-, meso-, and macro-scales of analysis. Knappett argues that existing approaches to interaction at the micro-scale need to be elaborated. He goes on to suggest a method aimed at mapping out hypothetical relations between

objects (e.g. pottery types) and people (e.g. potters) as affiliation networks. Network thinking at this scale is applied through a combination of Peircean semiotics with 'communities of practice', an idea which is considered to have useful links with the affiliation networks approach of chapter four. Knappett then argues in chapter six that it is on the macro-scale that "network thinking comes into its own" (p. 124), because it is at this level of analysis that we can begin to see *how* macro-scale structure emerges from micro-scale interactions and *why*, i.e. what function gives rise to a specific structure.

The third part moves away from discussions of *how* to create and explain hypothetical network structures of objects and people to ask *why* it is that humans interact in the first place. Three themes are explored: firstly the benefit of object networks is explained, secondly Knappett discusses the tension between networks of objects and meshworks of things, and thirdly the importance of 'biographical care' is stressed.

The aim and scope of the book are ambitious to say the least and it is therefore not surprising that in places the arguments are not as convincing as they could be. The underrepresentation of method and how theory could inform method are particularly vulnerable to this mild criticism. Indeed, archaeologists might not always find the suggested network methods and their archaeological examples very persuasive (as Knappett himself admits, p. 215). They are largely limited to visualising archaeological hypotheses as networks or describing general trends in the archaeological record by using a relational vocabulary. I believe this is a necessary evil in light of the sheer number of approaches covered. *An archaeology of interaction* provides a critical and much-needed framework, offering a range of methods and theories to any scholar eager to explore human interaction through network goggles.

TOM BRUGHMANS

Archaeological Computing Research Group,
University of Southampton, UK
(Email: t.brughmans@soton.ac.uk)

AURELIO BURGIO. *Il paesaggio agrario nella Sicilia ellenistico-romana: Alesa e il suo territorio* (Studi e Materiali del Dipartimento di Beni Culturali Sezione Archeologica Università di Palermo 12). xxxiv+277 pages, 186 illustrations. 2008. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider; 978-88-8265-483-2 paperback €210.



Archaeological survey reports can appear as a mass of findspots and numerical values; 'landscape' interpretations as a more subjective enterprise. Burgio's work provides the best of both: systematic, informed

by multiple disciplines, interpretatively nuanced, and very well presented.

The title suggests a relatively narrow focus of period and place, but the contents are relevant to the Mediterranean and beyond. It is the result of 15 years' work in central northern Sicily. Burgio and his colleagues' principal aim is to understand rural settlement and production, in relation to the former Hellenistic and Roman centre of Alesa (Halaesa), a few kilometres inland from the centre of the north Sicilian coast. Halaesa was founded as a colony by Archonides, tyrant of the indigenous inland settlement of Erbita, in 403 BC, during the conflict between the Sikels and Carthaginians. It was in effect a frontier town and place of settlement for displaced Greeks, Sikels and the landless of Erbita. It became an important centre for trade between interior and coastal Sicily and Italy and Rome, especially in Republican times, but was abandoned in the ninth century AD.

Notwithstanding the focus on the hinterland of Alesa, the survey was intensive and multi-period. Yet only eight locations produced prehistoric or protohistoric material; no ceramics later than the sixth century AD were recovered from the surface. In all 157 archaeological locations (excluding remains of the aqueduct) were identified. The most densely-settled and dynamic period was the 'Hellenistic-Roman' (the mid-third to first centuries BC), with 57 relevant locations. Immediately around Alesa one can recognise the rapid growth of a countryside divided into small plots, intensively cultivated, including terraced zones, and generally a highly-productive agricultural and horticultural landscape. Olives and cereals are the suggested primary products. Areas further away, depending on vegetation cover, hydrology, topography and geology, were typically more suited to 'agro-sylvan-pastoral' uses, a mixed economy which perhaps continued until the modern day. Activities included tanning,

pig-herding, butchery and cultivation, and arguably involved more extensive properties. Proposed site types identified include large and small farms, olive presses, sanctuaries and temporary structures (p. 238). During this period there was, Burgio suggests, a dispersed rural population exploiting the territory in a variety of ways appropriate to the local topography and conditions. The primary residential type would have been single-family small- and medium-sized properties, even within state lands (p. 241).

Just 39 sites (only four being new locations) are assigned to the succeeding Early Imperial period; in the second and third centuries AD this number declines further to 21 (two new). While some of this may represent consolidation of landholdings, Augustan times see a fall of about a third in what are interpreted as permanent settlements. Burgio links this to the general mid-imperial economic crisis, with Alesa perhaps particularly affected by the post-Augustan increase in direct trade between North Africa and Rome (p. 249).

Other lines of evidence support these interpretations. In a theoretically-informed preface, Belvedere considers approaches to landscape through analysis of literature, land division, archaeological data and routeways. Such sources provide 'parallel analyses' because the same landscape elements are potentially present in all of them, albeit mediated through our own eyes and experiences (p. 2). A relevant source here is the inscribed slabs (the *Tabulae Halaesinae*) offering detailed description of the territory including roads and land redistribution after the Second Punic War. All the authors in this volume follow Belvedere's dictum: Di Maggio investigating the road networks in a developmental perspective; Pampalone exploring the results of the multi-spectrum aerial survey; and above all Burgio in his various sections and contributions. His introduction and methodological discussions of the factors affecting survey and interpretation (and uses of GIS and related analyses) are highly thoughtful; sensitive and knowledgeable, he is fully aware of the factors, past and present, which might have played a role in the location, distribution, shift, transformation and visibility of the archaeological and other remains. One point of especial interest: Burgio confirms (p. 39) the general lack of 'background scatter', as found for example in central Greece, which is often taken as the norm for Mediterranean survey. Meanwhile here the central catalogue (pp. 53–185), written with Di Maggio and Tigano, is anything but a

dry list of types, dates and numbers. It displays an intimacy with the landscape, surface materials, and modern and historical practices and conditions which enable thoroughly convincing interpretations of the context and meaning of each location, and contribute to a synthetic whole. The result is an excellent multi-disciplinarily-informed archaeology enabling archaeologically-informed history. Highly recommended.

MARK PLUCIENNIK

School of Archaeology & Ancient History,
University of Leicester, UK (Email:
m.pluciennik@le.ac.uk)

ANDRÉ TCHERNIA. *Les Romains et le commerce*. 431 pages, 10 illustrations, 1 table. 2011. Naples: Centre Jean Bérard; 978-2-918887-06-5 paperback €30.



André Tchernia is one of the leading experts on amphorae as a source of economic history, a pioneer of maritime archaeology, and author of a wealth of articles on Roman trade, notably the

wine trade. This excellent publication brings together twelve previously published essays (many in obscure conference proceedings), updated with more recent notes and prefaced with an entirely new synthesis of his views on Roman commerce with a particular emphasis on the people involved in it. The result is almost two books in one: as the author notes in the foreword, the introductory essay ballooned in the writing into something approaching a book in its own right. Part I of this volume thus consists of an introduction and five chapters, whose themes the collected essays in Part II serve to develop at greater length.

The introduction sketches the book's main topics, and Chapter 1, 'Landowners and traders', examines the role of elites and in particular the senatorial aristocracy in long-distance trade. Tchernia argues that in spite of the growth of villa estates and market-oriented agriculture, the norm was a separation of agricultural production and long-distance trade. Although some senators did engage in large-scale exports, most remained landowners and increased their revenues further by lending surplus capital to merchants and traders, who were often their own freedmen. Elites

thus had a means of recovering wealth from trade, from interest on the loans they made to traders, and from their share of their freedmen's inheritance, which guaranteed that a large share of the profits (but not the losses) would revert to them, all the while minimising their exposure to risk. This was not a secret engagement in trade, but a separation of function that maintained social norms.

Chapter 2, 'The fortunes of merchants', traces the persistence of some family trading networks over several generations in the Red Sea/India trade, and the trade of olive oil and fish products from Baetica (modern-day south-west Spain). It also considers some very wealthy families who could but did not become local town councillors, a choice attributed to a reluctance to pursue political honours and a preference for concentrating on money-making. Chapter 3, 'The question of the market', argues that the debate over whether the Roman world was "an enormous conglomeration of interdependent markets" has been framed in the wrong terms (the original phrase envisaged not geographical market regions, but product market sectors). Market integration was variable and often regionally limited, but there were nevertheless close links between some different regions. The careful use of archaeological distribution maps shows not merely how the costs for different means of transport affected distribution along particular routes, but also how and why different regions dominated or competed in various markets at different times. This leads onto Chapter 4, 'The role of the state', which shows that public and private activities were not always clearly separated and there was often a close imbrication of merchants carrying state cargoes and trading on their own account; likewise, soldiers occasionally describe themselves as 'merchants'. Chapter 5, 'Transporting what is lacking', looks at some of the biggest trade flows in the Roman world, such as the wine-for-slaves trade between Italy and Gaul in the late Republic, accounting for much of the peak in the number of western Mediterranean shipwrecks at that time. It argues that they are explicable not so much by Keith Hopkins' 'taxes and trade' model as by the ability of Roman merchants to spot gaps in the market and organise distribution to regions under-supplied in certain goods from areas where those goods were produced in quantity and cheaply; Roman markets were rarely fully saturated.

Part II, *Scripta varia*, forms a very coherent collection of selected essays treating related themes: loans and

maritime commerce; the sale of wine vintages; the Republican limits on the size of ships that senators could own; the credit crisis of AD 33; the food supply of Rome (three papers); trade with India; Baetican merchants (two papers); trading patterns on the grain route between Alexandria and Rome (entrepôts, return cargoes and complementary cargoes); and the supposed crisis of agriculture in Italy as a result of provincial competition. In this last paper Tchernia shows that the supposed crisis is a modern fiction and deliberate competition by merchants to drive others out of a market sector was rare; rather, they expanded into markets already vacated by others.

An important feature of this book is its identifications of intersections between some of the major political events recorded in ancient sources and the development of trade into new areas, e.g. the new stimuli to mercantile activity in Gaul that resulted from Augustus' decision to establish a headquarters at Lyon in 16 BC to prepare for the invasion of Germany; or the suggestion that the credit crisis of AD 33 is to be related to the development of the lucrative trade with the Red Sea and India, the scale of which required large sums for maritime loans and encouraged the growth of lending to colossal proportions. Overall, the book contains a wealth of insights into the workings of ancient trade and expertly combines discussion of the material evidence—especially of amphorae and wrecks—with the prosopographical approach derived from epigraphic, papyrological and historical data. It deploys masterfully a broad range of archaeological and documentary sources, and should be read by anyone interested in the Roman economy.

ANDREW WILSON

Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford, UK
(Email: andrew.wilson@arch.ox.ac.uk)

JOANN FREED. *Bringing Carthage home: the excavations of Nathan Davis 1856–1859* (University of British Columbia Studies in the Ancient World 2). 264 pages, 137 illustrations, 9 colour plates. 2011. Oxford & Oakville (CT): Oxbow: 978-1-84217-992-5 hardback £48.



A visitor to the British Museum might well be forgiven for missing the series of magnificent Roman mosaics which hang on the wall of the

building's remote north-west staircase. They include several pieces of a large polychrome pavement showing images of the Months and Seasons found at Carthage in 1857 by the Reverend Nathan Davis. This pavement forms part of a larger collection of antiquities—including mosaics, inscriptions and pottery—which Davis shipped back to England from Tunisia in the mid nineteenth century. It is this collection which serves as the starting point for Freed's new investigation of their discoverer and of his archaeological work at Carthage during the last years of Ottoman rule. The author's long professional association with Carthage and her obvious passion for its archaeological history combine to give this book a varied texture: it is part biography, part archaeological history and part scientific investigation.

In the opening chapters we are introduced to Nathan Davis and his circle of friends in Tunisia at a time when Davis was a Protestant missionary there. We learn how he came to be involved in the world of archaeology and of the bitter rivalry which arose between Davis and his French contemporaries, some of whom tried hard to obstruct his archaeological ambitions. Despite this in 1856, with funding from the Foreign Office, he began his excavations at the site of Carthage hoping to bring to light its hidden Punic treasures. In the event what he found were mainly Roman remains (although he often insisted they were Punic!) which, if portable, he immediately dispatched to the British Museum.

In 1861 Davis published a "chaotic and whimsical" account of his excavations at Carthage in a book entitled *Carthage and Her Remains*. Freed's enthusiasm for her subject is evident in her attempt to rehabilitate this work which the French scholar Audolent once dismissed as "unbearable blabber" (p. 19). She revisits Davis' narrative of his excavations with rigorous scrutiny, subjecting every detail of his account to lengthy analysis in light of more than a century of archaeological work carried out at Carthage since Davis' time. The result is not just a meticulous recreation of Davis' archaeological career but, more importantly, an exhaustive re-interpretation of many of his most significant finds and of the circumstances in which they came to light. Among these finds was the mosaic of the Months and Seasons, to which Freed devotes an entire chapter of the book (Chapter 7) arguing that its original find-spot lay in the valley between the Hill of Juno and the Odeon Hill and,

© Antiquity Publications Ltd.

less convincingly, that the building from which it came at one time served as the official residence of the Roman proconsul at Carthage (p. 103). Other buildings found by Davis are given new definition as a result of Freed's thorough examination of his unpublished notes and drawings which for years remained unnoticed in the British Museum and Foreign Office archives. Among these documents, and revealed here for the first time, are a previously unknown plan of a Roman house (or possibly bath-house) located on the northern edge of Carthage (p. 143) and a rare colour drawing of the full 'Vandal' Hunt mosaic from Borj Jedid which Freed, following other recent scholars, re-dates to the fifth century AD (p. 186). Emphasis is also put on one of Davis' little known achievements, the invention of a new technique for lifting mosaics using 'carpenter's glue' and canvas which he developed when faced with the need to lift the mosaic of the Months and Seasons for transport to London (p. 105). According to Freed this invention has never been given the recognition it deserves.

What emerges from the book is a portrait of Davis as an energetic and resourceful adventurer struggling to establish his reputation as an archaeologist in a climate of unremitting hostility from the French colonial establishment who regarded Carthage as their own exclusive sphere of influence. In the end, Davis' career as an archaeologist was short-lived. His funding lasted only four years during which time his prolific activity in the field was never matched by a corresponding scholarly rigour, a failing which left him vulnerable to criticism by other professional archaeologists. While it may be easy to dismiss Davis' archaeological activity at Carthage as mere treasure hunting, this new reappraisal of his excavations and discoveries does much to restore his reputation as a worthy pioneer of North African archaeology. It is essential reading for anyone interested in the early exploration of ancient Carthage.

JEREMY ROSSITER
Department of History and Classics,
University of Alberta, Canada
(Email: jeremy.rossiter@ualberta.ca)

WILLIAM BOWDEN & RICHARD HODGES (ed.).
Butrint 3: excavations at the Triconch Palace. xviii+382
pages, 560 b&w & colour illustrations. 2011.
Oxford & Oakville (CT): Oxbow; 978-1-84217-980-
2 hardback £45.

Following a visit by Lord (Jacob) Rothschild in 1993 to the Albanian mainland opposite Corfu, a foundation was created to protect the ancient remains of Butrint and their picturesque surroundings that had changed little since they were sketched and painted by Edward Lear in



1857. Since then the Butrint Foundation has, with support from the Packard Foundation for the Humanities, assisted conservation of the existing remains, initiated a series of excavations and surveys, inaugurated a series of monographs (*Byzantine Butrint* 2004, *Roman Butrint* 2007) and made accessible to the public the considerable archive that survives from the pre-war Italian excavations. These include the unpublished records of Carlo Maria Ugolini, who with Mussolini's support led the investigation of Virgil's 'Little Troy', where Aeneas had an emotional reunion with other refugees from Troy (*Aeneid* 3, 352), but whose sudden death in 1936 left the work unfinished. Now comes the third volume in the Butrint series, an account by Richard Hodges and William Bowden of the excavation of a late Roman complex alongside the Vivari channel that encloses three sides of the Butrint hill.

Discarding Ugolini's belief that throughout Butrint's long history from Hellenistic to Venetian times the settlement consisted of a small urban nucleus on the hill and its upper slopes, a large and experienced team investigated visible remains on the lower 'skirt' of the hill just inside the late city wall. The work lasted a decade (1994–2003, mostly supervised by Oliver Gilkes and Kosta Lako) and revealed two substantial and adjacent structures whose remains provided a permanent matrix for the occupation levels and deposits of subsequent eras. A late Roman town house (*domus*), with a central court and a private bath suite, was constructed around AD 400 on the site of an earlier dwelling. Enough survived of the mosaic floors and wall decoration to allow a full analysis by John Mitchell (pp. 231–76). Within a few years, apparently by c. AD 420, the *domus* was replaced by a palatial complex covering around twice the area of its predecessor, and of which the architectural focus was a triconch designed for formal dining (pp. 296–7). The creator of this 'Triconch Palace' would appear to have had the power to close streets and secure

unobstructed vistas from the building, not to mention the means of removing architectural elements from public buildings elsewhere in the city. Yet this grand residence was not completed and soon abandoned. It is possible that this was the result of flooding, which is the excavators' preferred explanation; they firmly rule out any connection with the construction of the adjacent city wall which is now dated some 80 years after the abandonment of the Triconch (pp. 297–300).

The remains of the smaller 'Merchant's House' proved more instructive for both the late antique and the medieval eras. In the former, occupation continued until the construction of the city wall, while in the latter new timber structures were added adjacent to the refurbished wall. The examination of the mid-fifth to mid-seventh century levels of the Triconch (pp. 56–117) as well as the Merchant's House and City Wall (pp. 152–202) are outstanding examples of how the 'hard yards' in the investigation of the antique/medieval transition can be tackled. Not the least of the difficulties were deposits of mussel shells across the area, suggesting that at least some of the activities detected in this period may have been connected with local fishermen cooking their catch. Be that as it may, a demonstrable cessation of occupation between the middle of the seventh and the middle of the ninth century, even though valid for no more than the vicinity of the Triconch, appears to be ascertained fact: "The absence of mid 7th to mid 9th occupation in the Triconch Palace and the Merchant's House area is real. It is not an absence of material culture or the presence of the forms of material culture that we were unable to recognise. Whatever the ambiguities of the archaeological sequence of the Triconch Palace were, this was not one of them" (Bowden, p. 317).

A reluctance on the part of the authors to import 'events' into their historical reconstructions may appeal to some but less to others. These include the presence in the area of Alaric and the Visigoths between AD 397 and 401, the shift in power to the East caused by the removal of an usurper and the installation of Valentinian III as ruler in the West by an imperial expedition in AD 425. The impact of the sixth-century Slav migrations is considered (pp. 199 & 317) but any links with the adjacent island city Corcyra (Corfu) are, by omission at least, entirely discounted.

This is an excavation report that, when complete (there is more to come, including a study of the pottery by Paul Reynolds), will offer guidance and

inspiration to future excavators. It surely furnishes proof, as Hodges asserts (Preface, p. viii), that "although large-scale long-term excavation is by far the most costly and unfashionable of archaeological techniques, the results of the Butrint project suggest that it remains an essential element in the study of abandoned Roman towns".

JOHN WILKES
Wolfson College, Oxford, UK

RICHARD BRADLEY. *Stages and screens: an investigation of four henge monuments in northern and north-eastern Scotland*. xxiv+196 pages, 130 illustrations. 2011. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland; 978-0-903903-38-7 hardback.



The stages and screens of the title are a neat touch by which Richard Bradley forewarns the reader that there

is more to henge monuments than might at first appear. The encircling bank with its internal ditch may be seen as the screen and the interior as the stage, and the surface features that survive today mask the complexities of the role played by individual monuments in their contemporary landscapes.

The book opens with a discussion of the term 'henge' and of the problems encountered in attempting to define a henge monument, concluding that the earthwork element should be seen as one event in an often long history. In Scotland, by choosing Broomend of Crichtie in Aberdeenshire and Pullyhour in Caithness as targets for research excavations, Richard Bradley aimed to close the geographical gap between previously excavated and published henge monuments in Orkney and Perthshire and to construct an absolute chronology for them. Moreover, Broomend of Crichtie is a large henge associated with a complex of prehistoric structures, while Pullyhour is a very small and apparently isolated example, and both offered the potential of wider landscape interpretation. The opportunity has also been taken to publish sites previously excavated by others at Lairg and Loch Migdale in Sutherland.

Part 1 encompasses the excavation and interpretation of Broomend of Crichtie, a site with both a long prehistory of its own and a venerable place in antiquarian research. The henge is one element in a complex landscape which began around 2450–2150 BC with an avenue of standing stones leading north

© Antiquity Publications Ltd.

from a cist cemetery through an arc of monoliths to a possible recumbent stone circle. Around 2150–1900 BC the henge was added round the arc or ‘cove’ with its associated burials, and burial continued with the addition of cremations until finally a timber circle was built just south of the henge around 1850–1500 BC.

The Broomend of Crichtie henge is thus later in date than might have been expected, and with Pullyhour and its Sutherland compatriots (Part 2), we encounter a new breed of diminutive henge monuments which belong entirely to the Bronze Age. They “might be interpreted as domestic shrines” in which the “rituals seem to have been small-scale and short-lived” (p. 166). They are often associated with sources of water, and Richard Bradley makes an interesting connection with the use of water as a place of deposition for metalwork. He also suggests that there may be links between these small late henges and Irish ring-barrows.

There is wide-ranging discussion of henge monuments throughout Scotland and England, which highlights both their variety and the apparent contrasts in role and longevity. The earliest known henge monument was built in Orkney and the use of henges lasted longer in northern Britain than in the south, reaching over a thousand years in some cases, whereas the huge henges of Wessex developed later and were in use for a shorter period, for social rather than commemorative purposes. Bradley suggests that one reason for the lasting connection in the north between henge monuments and the dead may be that the interiors of many chambered tombs remained accessible and thus the remains of the dead could be inspected. My only reservation about this splendid book concerns scales in the otherwise highly informative illustrations. Though the point of most of the drawings of monuments is not comparison of size, nonetheless one’s eye, seeing several plans of similar size, assumes that they are drawn at the same scale, whereas in fact this is rarely so. The double-page spread of eight henge plans on pages 102 and 103, for example, requires eight scale-bars, while the comparative plans of six ‘coves’ on page 109 includes two at twice the size of the rest (and the north points are wildly disparate). Further, the pottery from Broomend of Crichtie was clearly drawn all to be published at the same scale but the drawings have been reproduced at varying scales.

As always when Richard Bradley is writing, there is great clarity in the argument and the reader’s interest is engaged and retained throughout the book.

The publication of this study of northern henge monuments, coming after Bradley’s investigations of the Clava Cairns of Inverness-shire and the recumbent stone circles of Aberdeenshire, completes a trio of field projects which have been of outstanding value to Scottish archaeology.

ANNA RITCHIE

Edinburgh (Email: anna@anagrams.plus.com)

ADAM WELFARE, edited by STRATFORD HALLIDAY. *Great crowns of stone: the recumbent stone circles of Scotland*. xiv+317 pages, numerous colour & b&w illustrations. 2011. Edinburgh: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland: 978-1-902419-55-8 hardback £30.



Late in 2011 the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs in Scotland tasked its agency, Historic Scotland, to undertake a “strategic options appraisal” on the future of the

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS). The latter are the guardians of Scotland’s National Monuments Record, with a remarkable history of publishing seminal works on Scotland’s past and innovators of some of the finest online heritage resources in Europe. In times when a “strategic options appraisal” more often than not means drastic cuts and a paring back of core research, these are worrying developments for Scotland’s world class archaeology. The volume under review epitomises what the RCAHMS does and what we would miss without it. No other than the RCAHMS could write such a volume. It has had a long gestation, extending back to RCHAMS’s programme of field survey in the rich Strathdon valley of northeast Scotland begun in the 1990s (*In the shadow of Bennachie*, 2007). In the era of the Research Exercise Framework at universities and the pressures of the commercial world elsewhere such painstaking and exacting research would be difficult if not impossible.

The volume describes and interprets some of the most spectacular megalithic structures in Europe: the recumbent stone circles of northeast Scotland. Located in an area of Britain that tends to be overlooked in favour of the better-known wilds of the north of the Highlands and Orkney, these

monuments are not nearly as well known as they should be. Loosely defined, they are a distinctive type of stone circle consisting of a ring of orthostats that tend to rise in height towards the southern arc where a horizontally laid stone (the recumbent) is found framed by two flanking stones.

Chapter 1 sets the scene with a detailed account of the origins of the terminology used to describe recumbent stone circles, from Hector Boece's sixteenth-century 'temples of the gods' (*deorum fana*) to the more objective (and duller) descriptions of the twentieth century. One essential element of this volume is first outlined in this chapter—RCHAMS's rigorous review of the monuments that have been attributed to the class: in the end 71 monuments were confirmed as recumbent stone circles out of a much larger collection of monuments identified as recumbents at one time or another (85 were rejected). While some were simple misidentifications others are other forms of stone circles and settings, demonstrating that a much greater diversity of megalithic architecture was present in this region. Clearly a target for future research would be to define more clearly this diversity.

Chapter 2 contains an essential examination of the survival (and reasons for survival) of these monuments—the sort of study that should be integral to all future distributional studies. It tells the sad tale of the destruction and degradation of many of these monuments (only 9 are thought to be largely intact), including the use of gunpowder to blow-up recumbents—vividly portrayed in the shattered remains of Montgoldrum in fig.3.29—and the cultivation of the interiors of these monuments in more recent times (fig.2.20).

The monuments' architecture is considered in detail in Chapter 3; it includes the presence or absence of cupmarks, platforms and cairns, the sizes of monoliths and recumbent stones amongst other attributes. As elsewhere in this beautifully produced volume, discussion is liberally peppered with excellent photographs and drawn illustrations (e.g. fig.3.62, a striking illustration of the profiles of recumbent and flanker settings). Chapter 4 concentrates on mainly hidden features (internal pyres, cairns and other features) and on chronology. That these monuments were built over earlier pyres is a recurring and attractive idea, but rests on largely inconclusive evidence for cremated bone in early phases at two monuments. Elsewhere the evidence for pre-cairn activities frequently includes traces of extensive burning. What is also outlined in this chapter is the frustratingly poor chronology we

have for these monuments despite a major campaign of excavations by Richard Bradley in recent years (*The moon and the bonfire*, 2005). Chronology rests on scattered Beaker sherds at a small number of monuments; a pit sealed below the rubble foundation for the recumbent stone at Tomnaverie providing a *terminus post quem* of around 2500 cal BC; Beaker sherds sealed below the surrounding platform at the same monument and charcoal associated with a Beaker from a pit dug into the ring-bank at Berrybrae providing a *terminus ante quem*. Set against these dates suggesting an Early Bronze Age *floruit* are the numerous Late Bronze Age dates for cremated remains from the centre of these monuments, mainly from their supposed re-use, but also a Late Bronze Age date from the packing of the kerb at Aikey Brae. All in all, the chronology of recumbent stone circles is not at all secure—neither their first construction nor their longevity can be precisely pinpointed. Therefore whether these are Early Bronze Age monuments or indeed structures with an earlier origin (perhaps even Later Neolithic if cremation was an important element of their use) is still infuriatingly out of our reach. It is this uncertainty over chronology that will continue to inhibit the incorporation of recumbent stone circles in our wider narratives of Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain and Ireland.

Throughout the volume accepted 'facts' and traditions of interpretation are rigorously scrutinised and in some cases strongly rejected. This is a welcome departure for RCHAMS, whose previous volumes have tended to be written as beacons of objectivity. In Chapter 5 some post-processual research, on colour for example, is questioned and found wanting (although in the same chapter the idea that the circles were laid out using chordal pairs can also be questioned). Likewise in Chapter 6 decades of assertions regarding the lunar orientations of these monuments are convincingly unpicked. Detailed studies show that the recumbent settings of these monuments are orientated between WSW and SSE—a wide spectrum that is difficult to associate with anything other than a fairly general sighting—perhaps a broad focus on the midwinter sunset. However, if these monuments are truly Early Bronze Age monuments then it is important to note that inhumations in Beaker cists in Aberdeenshire are orientated according to gender—males with heads to east, females to west, but importantly both facing south. There may, therefore, be important links here to examine between these monuments and the wider

north-eastern Scottish context, which may extend beyond simple solar (or lunar) concerns.

The penultimate chapter is dedicated to an extensive historiography of recumbent stone circle studies and an attempt to track the origins and inspirations that led to the creation of this distinctive tradition. The historiography is welcome, showing the origins of many of the classificatory and interpretative traditions that still underpin current studies. What is less convincing is the lengthy discussion arguing that recumbent stone circles were simulacra of the much earlier chambered cairns of northern Scotland. This is largely inspired by Bradley and narrowly focused on megalithic architecture. Nowhere are the potential wider links to timber architecture and other third-millennium architectural traditions fully explored. Likewise the idea that the recumbent represents a blocked doorway is not explored in relation to the (albeit very sparse) settlement architecture of the third millennium BC.

Overall, this is an important volume. The interpretations may not always be cutting-edge, but the volume contains important refutations of much perceived (and false) wisdom concerning these monuments. It is an incredible resource and a major development for anyone interested in Scotland's rich heritage. Consequently any detrimental change to the RCAHMS that may emerge from the current review would be a blow to archaeology and heritage not just for Scotland but for the world more generally. Scotland possesses some of the most inspiring, life-enriching remains of our past and RCAHMS is a recent but essential part of that past. Surely it should also be an important part of its future?

GORDON NOBLE

Department of Archaeology, University of Aberdeen,
UK (Email: g.noble@abdn.ac.uk)

REBECCA H. JONES. *Roman camps in Scotland*. xxix+353 pages, 221 colour illustrations, 4 tables. 2011. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland; 978-0-903903-50-9 hardback £30, fellows £25.



Britain is particularly fortunate in possessing an unrivalled portfolio of Roman military installations surviving as earthworks. The frontiers and the forts are most visible today,

but there is also an extensive range of camps: marching camps, labour camps, practice camps and siege camps. Those in England have been published by Humphrey Welfare and Vivien Swan (HMSO 1995) and the Welsh examples by Jeff Davies and Rebecca Jones (University of Wales Press 2006). Now Jones has turned her attention to the camps in Scotland.

Camps are the most intractable type of military site. Most were large, sometimes very large, most were occupied for a short period so that dating evidence is slight, and few have been subject to intensive excavation. Yet, the range of camps in Britain is unique within the whole Roman empire. Beyond Britain, siege camps are known, but marching camps have only *predominantly* come to light since aerial survey took off in eastern Europe while practice camps are rarely recognised. Most camps in Britain have been discovered since the start of aerial survey in the 1930s, but Jones provides a useful discussion of the earlier discoveries in the mid-eighteenth century which again emphasises the particularly British contribution to this aspect of Roman studies.

The book consists of two parts, a gazetteer of over 170 known, probable and possible camps running to 215 pages and with every camp in the first two categories illustrated by a clear map, preceded by 10 chapters in which are discussed the history of research, distribution, the field evidence and historical context, supported by plans, maps, aerial photographs and early drawings. The most important chapter is the discussion and analysis of the field evidence. This runs from consideration of the orientation of individual features, with 19 illustrations encompassing all camps, to internal features and the re-use of camps by the Romans and their successors. The evidence of aerial survey, from which the distribution of pits can be plotted, and modern extensive excavations which have revealed internal features such as ovens, offers a way forward in understanding the interior planning of camps and give the lie to this reviewer's earlier bleak comments about such a possibility.

The final two chapters review the evidence for dating and grouping into series. This careful assessment reveals the paucity of our evidence. What there is consists of a few sherds of pottery, a handful of radiocarbon dates mainly from one camp, and the stratigraphic relationships between some camps as revealed by excavation and observation. It is not surprising that few series of camps can be securely dated. These include the three largest series, assigned

by St Joseph to the Severan campaigns of the early third century AD. Recent archaeological excavations by David Woolliscroft have cast doubt on St Joseph's dating of one of these series, and Jones is suitably cautious on the traditional attribution.

Any attempt to relate the series of camps to known historical events would not meet the approval of Richard Reece, and indeed is difficult to prove. While broadly maintaining the traditional (St Joseph) attributions of the main series of camps, Jones is well aware that there were several other occasions when Roman armies campaigned north of Hadrian's Wall and that the current allocations relate to "the main attested incursions into this territory of which we are aware" (p. 98).

Roman camps in Scotland emphasises that the study of these archaeological leviathans has come a long way in the last 30 years. We are no longer reliant upon the testimony derived from small trenches to identify and date camps. Developer funding has led to larger excavations revealing, in particular, evidence for re-use of camps—previously unimagined—and internal features, as well as providing material for radiocarbon dating. Here the success story is Kintore in Aberdeenshire where Murray Cook's excavations have uncovered 180 field ovens and revealed much information about the operation of a Roman army in the field; the many radiocarbon dates obtained not only date the use of the camp but hint at its re-use, leading, inevitably, to the formulation of a new range of questions about the use of Roman camps.

The publisher is to be warmly congratulated on the quality of this hardback—it is simply sumptuous—and its price. The book is well designed with each plan usually on the same page as the related text, and the whole is supported by a full index. This volume and its English and Welsh companions provide archaeologists with an excellent springboard for further research. It is also an incomparable guide to those wishing to explore visible remains in the field, investigations made easier by the excellent plans and site descriptions.

DAVID J. BREEZE
Edinburgh, UK

DAGFINN SKRE (ed.). *Things from the town: artefacts and inhabitants in Viking-Age Kaupang* (Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series 3, Norske Oldfunn 24). 484 pages, numerous colour & b&w illustrations & tables. 2011. Aarhus & Oslo: Aarhus University Press & Kaupang Excavation Project,

University of Oslo; 978-87-7934-309-2 hardback \$80 & £50.



A bold archaeological enterprise is drawing to a close with the publication of the third volume in the series on the Viking port of Kaupang in Norway, the target of

large-scale research excavation in 2000–2003. The guiding principle of the publication series, as set out by the editor and project director, Dagfinn Skre, is to present problem-oriented research rather than a traditional excavation report. Despite its title, Kaupang III is supposedly not the 'finds volume' in the series, but a collection of studies relating to a key site in early medieval northern Europe.

The contributors have responded in different ways. Some, like Heid Resi, pay homage to the traditional genre of artefact studies. The temptation is understandable, since Kaupang presents substantial and well-recorded artefact groups, some of which have seen no comprehensive study for decades. Resi's chapters on amber, jet and gem stones (with technical analysis of jet-like objects by Unn Plahter) as well as on whetstones and other stone objects, contain general surveys of these materials in Norway. It constitutes a point of reference, which has long been missing.

Giving greater attention to social context, Ingvild Øye demonstrates that textile production in Kaupang followed patterns which are consistent with other early urban sites in Scandinavia. Irene Baug's attempt to provenance soapstone finds through mass spectrometry reveals that most vessels are probably from a single (unidentified) quarry, indicating large-scale production for exchange. The subtle modelling of deposition patterns and recovery rates of glass artefacts presented by Bjarne Gaut (with a contribution by Julian Henderson) points against the received notion that glass sherds arrived mainly as raw material for bead production. Glass vessels, Gaut argues, were part of the inhabitants' cultural baggage.

The analysis of pottery by Lars Pilø, integrated with petrological and chemical analyses by the late Alan Vince, identifies a range of imported wares not previously noted in Scandinavia. Yet what is missing is no less important: there are no continental wares from the late ninth and tenth century and no pottery from Britain or Ireland. This pattern shows that wares were associated with specific groups and flows. The study

© Antiquity Publications Ltd.

of non-Scandinavian metalwork by Egon Wamers, with a chapter on pins and penannular brooches by James Graham-Campbell, likewise observes that insular objects are mostly re-worked and are unlikely to represent visitors from the British Isles. The continental jewellery, by contrast, is not modified for use with Scandinavian dress, and may—like the continental pottery—have been used and lost by visitors or residents from the continent.

Birgitta Hårdh's study of Scandinavian jewellery reveals a weak spot of the excavations. It was hoped that Kaupang might help resolve problematic elements in Viking chronology, but the stratigraphic evidence is weak, and Hårdh is wisely inconclusive. She suggests that much metalwork in Kaupang was brought as scrap for recycling. However, the high degree of fragmentation and predominance of early material that she notes apply equally to other find groups, and the "scrap model" is questioned by Skre (p. 423) with reference to observations in the forthcoming fourth volume on Kaupang. This issue might have merited closer discussion among the research team.

Dagfinn Skre's three concluding chapters seek to characterise Kaupang's inhabitants and define the political and economic context of the town. Most notably the people of Kaupang, as identified by objects judged to be the personal possessions of travellers, came from many corners of Europe: Frisians, Danes, (West) Norwegians, Slavs, but none from the British Isles. Slavs, Skre notes, were frequent visitors, but he is uncertain whether they were permanent settlers (p. 418). One might suggest that, by the logic of the study, they were not present as family groups, since artefacts typically associated with females on Slavic sites in the Western Baltic, e.g. biconical clay spindle whorls, are absent from Kaupang.

In a thought-provoking analysis Skre proceeds to attribute an ethnic and functional identification to individual plots and buildings. In order to filter out random debris, Skre compares find categories in terms of weight of finds relative to preserved floor area. This may be useful for materials trampled into floor deposits, e.g. slag, glass waste or pottery sherds; but for large and relatively robust artefacts like loom-weights or iron objects any difference is likely to reflect what was removed or left behind when the building was abandoned. The nature of associations may also evade us. We can accept that weaving and metal casting are attested in the same building and phase. But does

this mean that they took place side by side? Or were they undertaken by successive occupants in separate decades?

One well-preserved building, whose floor layers yielded unmodified Frankish dress fittings and a high proportion of imported Rhenish pottery and glass, is plausibly identified as "a Frisian merchant's house" (pp. 411 and 431). Identifications of other buildings as "a Dane's house" (based on six identifiable sherds of pottery) or "a Northman's smithy?" (based essentially on a fragment of soapstone and the absence of pottery) are less convincing; especially so since strong reservations are raised elsewhere in the volume concerning the quality of the deposits in the areas in question (pp. 23 and 287).

Skre's interpretation of the 'Frisian merchant's house' is an innovative attempt to flesh out the social archaeology of a North Sea emporium. Skre notes a robust association of iron artefacts with the building and suggests that iron was a key commodity handled by the occupants. Curiously, he makes no mention of the faunal analysis presented in a previous volume, according to which the intrepid inhabitants of this particular plot also skinned cats and stored hides (volume I, pp. 299 and 307). Strictly speaking, the dress items (and cooking pots?) may denote the presence of a single Frankish/Frisian woman; the possibility of a mixed-marriage merchant family might have warranted consideration.

The 'Frisian merchant's house' is also the source of a small group of silver artefacts and weights, which caused sensation when presented in Kaupang volume II as the earliest dated evidence for the use of hack-silver as economic instruments in Viking-age Scandinavia. The basis for identifying the silver as economic instruments is that "the evidence for metalcasting in A301 [the 'Frisian merchant's house'] is so slight that the silver and weights can hardly be associated with any such activity" (p. 411). Yet the 'Frisian merchant's house' is adjacent to a contemporary building identified as "a metalcaster's workshop" (p. 410). Both belong to the same elongated strip, presumably facing a high street, a situation which elsewhere in early North European towns would be taken to indicate common ownership. In addition the 'workshop' does not present the usual features associated with habitation. To argue that these buildings were separate households seems therefore to be a case of special pleading and the argument for an early use of silver as an economic

instrument, rather than as raw-material for casting, might deserve to be revisited.

This volume raises exciting new questions: can the vision of an ethnically mixed community of urban entrepreneurs be maintained, or was the diaspora 'Frisian merchant' a more typical inhabitant? Was the urban character sustained into the tenth century, or did Kaupang enjoy an early ninth century 'emporium moment', followed by a long twilight? There is no question however that this book makes new strides in refashioning our image of Norway's first town, and leaves enduring new knowledge and visions of early North Sea urban centres.

SØREN M. SINDBÆK

Department of Archaeology, University of York, UK
(Email: soren.sindbaek@york.ac.uk)

ELIZABETH GRAHAM. *Maya Christians and their churches in sixteenth-century Belize*. xx+436 pages, 100 illustrations. 2011. Gainesville (FL): University Press of Florida; 978-0-8130-3666-3 hardback \$79.95.



Elizabeth Graham's book deserves great praise and should be read by anyone interested in Mesoamerican and Iberian worldviews. The archaeological and ethnohistorical study of religion is

extremely problematic and Graham is not shy about pointing out its failings. Many studies of ancient worldviews are plagued by little to no definition of what is meant by 'religion' or how or if it can be studied from the material record. A key feature in Graham's scholarship is her recognition that "rethinking problematic terms is not trivial, but essential" (p. 59). Graham acknowledges that it is no longer possible to proceed with discussing Maya worldviews without highlighting the problems inherent in universally applying Western theological concepts. Since her book is mostly a discussion centred on the colonial period, social-cultural ethnographies of Mesoamerican worldviews were deliberately not included in her analysis.

Researchers interested in descriptive fare reifying religion as if archaeologically tangible might be uneasy with Graham; on the other hand, critically-minded

scholars seeking to understand worldview processes in-depth will find much here to engage them in a study of Mesoamerican peoples that is presented in a mostly impartial manner. A case in point is Graham's non-idealised treatment of the socially-sanctioned killing typically categorised as 'human sacrifice' done to *worship the gods*. Graham establishes the difference between the giving up of something that one does not want to surrender, hence *making it sacred*, and that of killing someone, even if executed in highly ritualistic style, when direct political gain is to be achieved from this action: the difference between the two are *not* nuances and are highly significant for understanding all-too-human motivations. Graham portrays the ancient and colonial-period Maya as the pragmatic peoples they were, steering clear of another Eliadian-like foray into mystical shamanic activities as is commonly attempted when describing 'Maya religion'. She tries, as much as she can, to present the reader with a study of Maya religious processes in a holistic, and therefore non-separated, sphere engaging politics and economics. Our construction of ancient Maya ritualistic practices as a theologically codified religion is a distortion that Graham is acutely aware of; she strives to distance herself from this but is not always completely successful in her attempt.

Getting over the entrenched, academic, reified view of assumed codified pre-Columbian beliefs based on supernatural gods is however extremely difficult given our Western social backgrounds, even when we are making the point that 'belief' and 'religion' are tenuous concepts, as is the case here. Graham, from an insider's point of view, explains that Roman-Catholic images and statues of virgins, saints, angels and demons do not represent gods; growing up as a Roman-Catholic, like Graham, I know to be accurate too, but she does not extend this same logic to Maya worldviews concerning their imagery and statues. Herein lies the difficulty: although Graham explains that the uncritical application of the terms worship and deity abound (p. 305) assumptions regarding an actual pantheon of gods for pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, and therefore a lingering notion that its inhabitants made our Western scientific distinction between supernatural and natural worlds and the Judeo-Christian-Muslim distinction between sacred and profane, is surprisingly still present. Why the colonial Maya kept animal bundles, such as that of Cortes' horse, and made offerings to them as if sentient is not clear. Also not clear is why the colonial Maya were attracted to Roman-Catholic crosses,

© Antiquity Publications Ltd.

despite the fact that quadripartitioning abounded in pre-Columbian imagery.

Graham points out that the colonial Maya accepted a medieval style Roman-Catholicism. She admits though that these same people kept performing pre-Columbian style rituals even among what might be seen as Maya Christians, for example those belonging to her sixteenth-century, relatively small, Indian Church communities at Tipu in Belize. Though Graham titles her book *Maya Christians and their churches*, this is not its main focus nor is it the study of Maya cosmologies. The book is about how academics arrive at their individual interpretation, through their own socially conditioned background, of what the concept of 'religion' means to them, and then uncritically apply to the peoples they study. Graham's book is not for insecure researchers who fear analysing Maya worldviews within their indigenous historical and cultural context. As a Mayanist cultural anthropologist and archaeologist, specialising in the study of religion and working within a department dedicated to its study, Graham's scholarship is highly welcome. I strongly recommend her book to those seeking to understand the problems of studying Maya religion and wanting to move forward with a more realistic view of Mesoamerican peoples' actions and behaviours.

MIGUEL ANGEL ASTOR-AGUILERA
School of Historical, Philosophical & Religious
Studies, Arizona State University, USA
(Email: maaguile@asu.edu)

LAYLA RENSHAW. *Exhuming loss: memory, materiality and mass graves of the Spanish Civil War*. 260 pages, 14 illustrations. 2011. Walnut Creek (CA): Left Coast; 978-1-61132-041-1 hardback \$89; 978-1-61132-042-8 paperback \$34.95; 978-1-61132-043-5 e-book.



The phenomenon of mass graves exhumations in Spain has attracted the attention of anthropologists, forensic scientists and archaeologists from all over the world. This is not surprising: unlike in

other scenarios of human rights violations, in the Spanish case forensic work did not start shortly after

the atrocities took place, but over sixty years later. To be exact, exhumations were carried out by the Francoist dictatorship immediately after the end of the war (1939), but they only targeted the graves of the 50 000 people killed in Republican territory. Instead, a veil of silence was imposed on Nationalist violence, which caused 130 000 deaths. The situation started to change in 2000 when the first mass grave of victims of Nationalist violence was exhumed using scientific methodology. The combination of long-delayed mourning, private initiative in the recovery of the dead and absence of a legal framework for the exhumations is quite unique and is aptly explored by Layla Renshaw in her outstanding book.

The author studies the recent spat of exhumations of Republican victims from an ethnographic point of view through two case studies, where she follows the process from its inception to the reburial ceremonies. Despite the specific geographic focus in the Burgos region, the analysis is representative of the phenomenon all over Spain and anybody who has followed exhumation processes elsewhere in the country will find many points in common. As the subtitle indicates, the book addresses two main interrelated issues: memory and materiality.

Regarding memory, Renshaw perceptively clarifies the diverse agendas, conflicts and tensions that surround the exhumation process. She describes the perspectives of relatives, activists and scientists, which sometimes coincide and sometimes do not. The first group, especially older people, are affected by an abnormally long repressed mourning or even a condition of post-memory, as many of them do not have direct remembrance of their killed relatives. They tend to focus on emotional aspects and often provide a depoliticised version of the atrocity, whereas activists understand the intervention as a political issue and a quest for justice. Renshaw eloquently shows that the perceived divide between the two main associations, the communist Foro por la Memoria and the non-militant Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory (ARMH), is not as stark as presented by the former and, in fact, both lay claim to a Republican memory and try to effect a change in Spanish politics. At the same time, she also points out that ARMH's memorialising acts tend to eschew overt political signals and, in doing so, they unwittingly reproduce the climate of consensus that emerged from the democratic transition which has been subject to so much criticism in recent years. Another main topic is the way

individual and collective identities are reconstituted by means of exhumations and particularly through the different materialisations that occur through the process. The author explains that the repression of mourning led to an atomisation of the Republican collective identity that the memory campaign is keen to redress: exhumations successfully engender new collective identities and networks amongst relatives, despite persistent restrictions surrounding the public representation of the dead.

In relation to the second main theme, materiality, this work differs from similar publications in the importance given to objects. While issues of memory have been dealt with by other authors, the strong material focus is original. Things (photographs, personal possessions, monoliths and the bones themselves) have been regularly mentioned in ethnographies (e.g. Ferrándiz 2010), but they have not been approached systematically until now. For Renshaw, material things are not mere props, but key elements in the making of memory and identity. Some objects, such as eyeglasses, watches and pencils, seem to be particularly powerful in triggering memory and emotional responses. They also blur the clear-cut distinction between the body and its affordances.

In sum, the author offers us a subtle analysis of the exhumation process in Spain and a first-rate ethnography, where she demonstrates a great ability to transmit in a poignant but sober way the emotions involved in the exhumation process and in the frustrated mourning of the relatives' victims. Moreover, the theoretical and comparative perspective helps to put the Spanish exhumations in an international context. The book represents a milestone in a variety of fields, including archaeological ethnography, the anthropology of death and the body, the archaeology of memory and material culture studies.

Reference

- FERRÁNDIZ, F. 2010. The intimacy of defeat: exhumations in contemporary Spain, in C. Jerez-Farran & S. Amago (ed.) *Unearthing Franco's legacy: mass graves and the recuperation of historical memory in Spain*: 304–25. South Bend (IN): University of Notre Dame Press.

ALFREDO GONZÁLEZ-RUIBAL
Institute of Heritage Sciences, Spanish National
Research Council (Incipit-CSIC)
(Email: alfredo.gonzalez-ruibal@incipit.csic.es)

P.R. DINGWALL, K.L. JONES & R. EGERTON (ed.). *In care of the Southern Ocean: an archaeological and historical survey of the Auckland Islands* (New Zealand Archaeological Association Monograph 27). 317 pages, 193 illustrations. 2009. Auckland: New Zealand Archaeological Association; 978-0-9582977-0-7 paperback NZ\$57.



This fascinating volume brings together the results of field survey undertaken in 2003 on the remote Auckland Islands. Located approximately 50°S, this group of five islands, the largest of which is Auckland

Island (smaller ones include Enderby and Adam Islands), lies between South Isle New Zealand and the Antarctic Peninsula. The islands are unoccupied today and managed for their natural heritage, currently the breeding grounds of Hooker's sea lion, albatross and yellow-eyed penguins, with nearby the main breeding ground in the SW Pacific for the southern right whale. This rich natural resource is crucial to gaining any understanding of occupation on this truly remote island complex. The archaeological survey brought together a surprisingly extensive historical record for the islands, highlighting the issues surrounding the recovery of archaeological evidence in extreme conditions, but also gathering data following the partial removal of wooden and ephemeral structures on abandonment of the settlements. The results are intended to form a basis for sustained heritage management of the island group, which receives visits, by restricted permit, of small groups of eco-tourists between December and February (Austral summer).

Remarkably, given the remote location some 450km south of New Zealand, human presence has a long history on the islands. This occupation ranges from early colonisation by Polynesian groups in the thirteenth century, through shipwrecked sailors awaiting rescue and whaler groups, to the establishment of farming in the 1870s and clandestine operations between 1941 and 1945. The initial very brief colonisation by Polynesians was confirmed at Sandy Bay on Enderby Island: middens and ovens indicate settlement possibly via the South Isle of New Zealand. Claimed for the British Crown in 1806 (and subsequently becoming part of New Zealand's territories in 1863), the islands saw European sealers

arrive in the early 1800s who decimated the fur seal population in just 30 years. The physical evidence for these camps is ephemeral, with twelve potential sites identified for further investigation. British-based whalers arrived in 1850, establishing a base and farms of the Southern Whale Fishing Company on the shores of Port Ross. Poor returns and dire farming conditions led to the collapse of this enterprise after just three years. The planned colonial town (Hardwicke) was never built but a temporary settlement named Enderby was created. Its thirty buildings were largely removed on abandonment (and indeed some of the wooden houses were later sold in Australia!). The 2003 survey, combined with the study of diary records, has enabled a much fuller understanding of the settlement layout and location of outlying farms.

The 1840s brought Antarctic exploration vessels from America, France and Britain, which used the islands for shelter and repairs (between 1864 and 1907 eight sailing vessels were wrecked on the shore). This activity created ephemeral structures, such as tussock huts, Government-supplied castaway depots and signal fingerposts located at strategic coastal locations. In 1874, German astronomers established a temporary station at Terror Cove, Port Ross and successfully observed the transit of Venus. Once more the evidence had to be sought through archaeological survey. Farming was also practiced in the 1870s, notably in the Erebus Cove area, but the imported sheep eventually ran wild; they, and the pigs introduced by the first Europeans as well as successive phases of burning the undergrowth, all had a lasting impact on the current vegetation.

Between 1941 and 1945 there were two coastal watching sites on the Auckland Islands, established for a clandestine operation (named Cape Expedition) charged with looking for enemy ships and aircraft in the vicinity. Their 66-strong complement of men undertook the first detailed coastal topographical survey at this time. By definition their settlements were hard to see but had good vantage points, and the 2003 survey located and recorded the masts and buildings from this period.

The final chapters deal with the impact of the human presence on the vegetation and landscape. This includes the reduction of giant flowering herbs by foraging mammals, clearance of tracts of trees and lush vegetation for settlement and fuel supplies for passing steamships (still traceable in the forests) and accidental introductions such as medicinal plants.

There are several appendices, including a diary which gives an insight into the problems of undertaking fieldwork in such remote conditions! Several original monochrome images have been reproduced in the volume; they are quite dark, and this seems to be a problem for all the photographs used regardless of antiquity. The maps are models of clarity. It would have been useful to have a few colour images, particularly of the landscape and the rata forests where the ephemeral features are so well camouflaged. In terms of archaeological methodology, exigencies of time required extensive test pitting rather than larger area excavation. As a report on a short 6-week season, this would appear at first glance to be just another archaeological report. However, such are the results of this first ever full archaeological survey of the Auckland Islands, combined with a remarkably rich historical record, that it provides a way forward for those of us who work in remote locations and in areas where the natural resources so crucially influence past and current human presence and vice versa. For this island group, an understanding of both elements in this symbiotic relationship allows for the protection of the whole.

COLLEEN E. BATEY

Archaeology, School of Humanities, University of Glasgow, UK (Email: Colleen.Batey@glasgow.ac.uk)

NATASHA FIJN. *Living with herds: human-animal coexistence in Mongolia*. xxvi+274 pages, 52 illustrations, 11 tables + online video. 2011. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-107-00090-2 hardback £60 & \$90.



The past two decades, since the establishment of a modern Mongolian Parliamentary Republic, have seen a significant increase in archaeological and anthropological research conducted by Mongolian universities and the Mongolian Academy

of Sciences, in stark contrast to the previous 70 years of virtual isolation under Soviet influence. Archaeological and anthropological research in Mongolia is now flourishing and often conducted in collaboration with foreign scholars and institutions. This has fostered a great deal of growth in

academic discourse and has vastly contributed to our understanding of traditional nomadic lifeways in this region. Furthering this understanding is Natasha Fijn's recent monograph, *Living with herds*.

This beautiful book presents a detailed, personal description as well as an occasionally challenging evaluation of the author's stay with two nomadic extended families in the Mongolian aimags (provinces) of Bulgan and Arkhangai. Fijn's ability to become a trusted and functional member of the two families and her impressive talent for obtaining information are the strengths of this book. Her emphasis is on the social interaction between humans and animals: how this interface influences and directs the daily lives of people and their herds and how traditional behaviour, as observed in games and other activities, may be a product of this closely-knit human-animal coexistence.

The reconstruction and understanding of Mongolian nomadic behaviour has been a subject of study for many years. Clearly nomadic pastoralist production has proved successful for securing the Mongolian people's biological and social continuity for the last 3500 years. Such success is possible only when people understand, respect and adapt to their environment (here characterised by low population density, extremely harsh and variable climate as well as limited resources) and use resources effectively. These adaptations can be based on kinship networks, group cooperation, the domestication of animals and applied knowledge of animal breeding practices to animals as well as humans. Fijn's elegant narrative focuses on how interaction between man and beast dominates behaviour, culture and the continuing development of nomadic pastoralism. However, as Fijn's research is based on experience in central/northern Mongolia, some observations may not apply to the same degree in other parts of the country. The northern aimags of Mongolia are comparatively affluent and lush, reflecting a relatively high degree of land carrying capacity. In contrast, the southern aimags, especially within the Gobi Desert region, possess fewer natural resources and significantly less access to water and grazing land. These factors can thus entail more extensive seasonal migrations for southern groups. If nomadic behaviour is defined, among others things, by seasonal movements between grazing areas, then it may be possible to describe northern groups as somewhat less 'nomadic'. Indeed, recent research on mortuary practices in northern Mongolia during the Bronze

Age (*khirigsuur* burials) suggests groups securing ownership or access to land in certain areas. It may be that the northern situation is better suited to the type of a social system described by Fijn, though of course her work can provide a comparative basis for ethnographic investigations in other parts of Mongolia.

The volume is organised into three parts, summarised below. All sections and chapters are illustrated with images (including four sets of plates representing spring, summer, autumn and winter), figures and tables; the use of genealogy diagrams, for humans and animals, significantly enhances the understanding of the text. There are also video segments online. Since the author makes extensive use of Mongolian words in her narrative, she has included a five-page glossary which lists the English equivalent to most if not all the Mongolian terms used. An Appendix includes a table categorising horse colours and the most common medicinal plants. The list of references is appropriate, but the Index could be more extensive.

In Part 1 Fijn describes in abundant detail life in the Khangai Mountains, the location of her host families and daily activities. The introduction reviews the literature pertinent to animal domestication and presents the argument for domestication as a "co-evolutionary symbiotic process" that involves a well-developed and equal interaction between herders and animals; emphasis is on animals as subjects rather than objects and the subsequent chapters reflect this approach.

Part 2 concentrates on the social landscape and the social animal. The landscape is the accumulative understanding of a geographical and social entity, with camp, location and group composition within this landscape adjusted to the seasons. Fijn proposes that each animal and group of animals represent different social entities and survival is based on the ability to express and 'practice' individual social behaviour. Animals are free to live by their own rules and instincts. However, in order to maximise control and productivity, the process is controlled through encouraging 'leadership' behaviour and through castration and cross-breeding. Control of animals and herds is enhanced by marking animals with symbols. Communication between herders and animals is thoroughly described. Fijn argues that co-domestic animals have been subject to 'phylogenetic enculturation' and that this process has taken place over generations, allowing for communication based on vocalisation and body language.

© Antiquity Publications Ltd.

Part 3 consists of chapters on the horse, seasonal cycles, wild animals, sacred animals and the conclusions. The horse chapter (Chapter 7) includes a historical review of the importance of the horse and the annual Naadam festival, celebrated each year around 10 July. The review does however contain some inaccuracies, such as “Turkic *khirigsuur*”, which actually are Bronze Age burial mounds dating to 3500–2700 BP in Mongolia and possibly part of the Russian Altai Mountains and eastern Kazakhstan tradition. In addition, the horse heads and cervical vertebrae found in smaller mounds adjacent to the *khirigsuur* are not necessarily associated with any spiritual beliefs related to “carrying the dead into the afterlife”. These matters apart, the review is informative, educational and accurate. The Naadam festival is an important event dedicated to honouring Mongolian culture and history and Fijn has described the event accurately and with flair.

The life cycle chapter (Chapter 8) comprehensively describes the seasonal activities of a typical household, following the groups through the seasons, and shedding light on the problems and challenges the households face and solve through adaptation to various social and environmental circumstances. The wild animal chapter (Chapter 9) introduces animals other than domesticates, in particular the wolf and how this animal and other wild animals are perceived. It also briefly describes *modern* hunting culture, most probably introduced by ‘city dwellers’ and possibly tourists. The chapter ends with a section on illnesses, ailments, medicinal plants and magic medicine.

The sacred animal chapter (Chapter 10) deals with the very special connection between herders and

animals in death. The killing of an animal for food is a natural part of the relationship between humans and animals, carried out with dignity and with a concern for causing the least amount of pain. It is linked to spirituality (not the word Fijn may have selected) and respect for the animal. Fijn’s final chapter may be the most ‘powerful’; it is certainly in keeping with the book’s focus on the “co-existence between man and animals”. The concluding chapter contains a summary and brief discussion of some of the changes currently taking place in the herders’ lifestyle as they increasingly come under pressure from Mongolia’s modern market economy. These pressures may, over time, eliminate a significant culture and way of life that has proven successful for thousands of years. Today, Mongolia faces numerous major issues associated with its economy, education and healthcare. The introduction of both clandestine and legal mining operations, especially in the Gobi region and eastern parts of the country, may be beneficial for the economy but will greatly endanger the survival of traditional nomadic pastoralism. I would strongly recommend that anybody involved in these profound transformations read Natasha Fijn’s wonderful book to fully understand this way of life as well as its cultural and practical value. In fact, anybody who plans to live or work in Mongolia, carry out research there or simply visit it should read this most informative and educational volume.

BRUNO FRÖHLICH

Department of Anthropology, National Museum of
Natural History, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington D.C., USA (Email: frohlich@si.edu)



<http://www.springer.com/series/6978>

Vertebrate Paleobiology and Paleoanthropology

Series Editors: Delson, E.; Sargis, E.J.

ISSN: 1877-9077