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H. FOKKENS, B.J.W. STEFFENS & S.F.M. VAN AS. *Farmers, fishers, fowlers, hunters: knowledge generated by development-led archaeology about the Late Neolithic, the Early Bronze Age and the start of the Middle Bronze Age (2850–1500 cal BC) in the Netherlands* (Nederlandse Archeologische Rapporten 53). 2016. 345 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. Amersfoort: Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands; 978-90-5799-263-6 hardback.



I have long admired Dutch archaeology, particularly for its integration of palaeoenvironmental and settlement data, and for the quality of its prehistoric land-use modelling. Over the years, many of its fieldwork techniques have

been highly innovative and, here in Cambridge, we have adopted a number of them.

Part of the Dutch Government's 'Valletta Harvest' programme (see Groenewoudt 2015), this volume's somewhat unwieldy title well expresses its aims: to assess and synthesise what knowledge has actually

been gleaned through 15 years of developer-led fieldwork across the Netherlands relating to the Late Neolithic through to the Middle Bronze Age. Its first six chapters provide the background. They outline the legislative basis and nature of developer-led archaeology in the Netherlands (Chapter 1), its key research themes and an assessment of the state of knowledge prior to 2001 (Chapters 2–3). Chapter 4 addresses the study's methodology and sources, and the following two chapters concern the basis of the analyses and house-plan reconstructions. Taking up fully two-thirds of the book's length, Chapter 7 consists of 51 site summaries, each of 2–16 pages. The next chapter provides a synthesis of what knowledge has been achieved since 2001, with the final chapter outlining directions for future research.

Fokkens *et al.*'s book becomes all the more relevant for British readers in the light of the new pan-European Beaker DNA study (Olalde *et al.* forthcoming). This not only suggests large-scale migration into Britain, but also that the closest genetic ties of these migrants were with the Lower Rhineland. If, through the application of such scientific techniques, more mobile prehistories are now to be explored, then it is all the more imperative that British archaeologists develop much greater familiarity with the prehistoric sequences of the Near Continent. Indeed, this is an issue already addressed by Bradley and colleagues in *The later prehistory of north-west Europe: the evidence of development-led fieldwork* (2016). In comparison, however, *Farmers, fishers, fowlers, hunters* is far more regionally and chronologically focused; it presents the data in great depth, especially in relation to material culture. Not only is it clearly written (in English), but its copious illustrations—site-location maps, building/feature plans and related finds—are of terrific quality and of a standard to which most academic publications today can only aspire.

All of this raises the question of exactly what we want and need out of period-based, development-led fieldwork overviews: ideas, authoritative synthesis, hard data and/or suggestions for future research? Ideally, of course, one would wish for all of these. Recently, a number of such overviews have been issued in Britain, and more are on the way. Their content and approaches vary greatly, and this, naturally, is partially determined by their target audience: students (of varying levels), other

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researchers and/or practitioners. For the reviewer—falling into the last two of these categories—the authoritative use-value of such overview volumes ranks high. Accordingly, of the British programmes and their arising publications, the University of Reading's 'Roman Rural Settlement Project' (Smith *et al.* 2016), directed by Mike Fulford, comes top and, in some respects, it is this volume to which that by Fokkens *et al.* is most akin. Put simply, *Farmers, fishers, fowlers, hunters* is a really useful book and that in itself is of no small value.

Aside from making so much data available, the volume exposes us to another way of doing developer-funded archaeology. The Dutch system is more centrally controlled and there is stricter maintenance and implementation of its officially sanctioned research frameworks (see Bazelmans 2012). Generally, this appears to work well, and there is a stricture that a site's final report must be issued within two years of the completion of fieldwork. All this is entirely laudable, but it has promoted something of a divorce of academic departments from developer-related projects (in which they used to participate more). Practising large-scale site-stripping, a number of the sites suffer from a 'methodological sameness'. For example, there seems to be little sampling interrogation of buried soils and their chemical/artefact distributions (although see excavations at Oldeboorn). As a result, what we have is a mostly house-based settlement archaeology, mainly focusing on either single farmsteads or larger hamlet settings. There are, however, notable exceptions such as the Late Neolithic post alignments at Den Haag Wateringseveld, or the Beaker pit settlements (with graves and a post-circle) at Hanzelijn and Bedrijventerijn Zuid.

Despite the recognition of the need to explore seasonal land-use dimensions of the periods covered here (i.e. the fishers, fowlers and hunters), surprisingly few artefact cluster sites have been identified (see fig. 5.5), and it is these that are likely to represent any kind of seasonal foraging component. While some sites have yielded significant 'wild' assemblages (e.g. tabs 7.6, 7.10, 7.13), the Dutch planning regulations seem to have led to relatively little 'off-site' archaeology. Perhaps because the 'home settlements' are so well-defined and evident (not least by their hallmark longhouses), relatively few palaeochannel systems have been investigated; where they have been examined, the evidence is promising, such as the fish traps recovered at Emmeloord-J97.

Hopefully, with this volume's clear future research framework—in which such issues and others are explicitly highlighted—this situation will soon be addressed.

There is a seriousness of intent in this volume's synthesis that reflects a genuine commitment to knowledge generation and research orientation. Certainly it is of an entirely different order than what widely passes as regional research frameworks in the UK. Given the manner in which this book reflects upon developer-funded practices generally—plus the wealth of data presented—it marks a major achievement and deserves to be widely read.

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