

UK one of these days, and I will appreciate the early humans of Britain more so for it.

## Reference

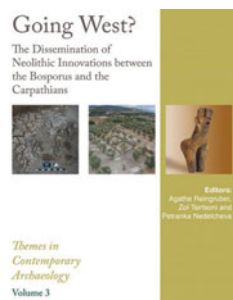
- ASHTON, N.M. 2015. Ecological niches, technological developments, and physical adaptations of early humans in Europe: the handaxe-heidelbergensis hypothesis, in F.F. Wenban-Smith, F. Coward & R. Hosfield (ed.) *Settlement, society, and cognition in human evolution: landscapes in mind*: 138–53. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139208697.009>

METIN I. EREN

Department of Anthropology,  
 Kent State University, USA  
 (Email: [meren@kent.edu](mailto:meren@kent.edu))

- A. REINGRUBER, Z. TSIRTSONI & P. NEDELICHEVA (ed.). *Going west? The dissemination of Neolithic innovations between the Bosphorus and the Carpathians. Proceedings of the EAA Conference, Istanbul, 11 September 2014* (Themes in Contemporary Archaeology 3). 2017. London & New York: Routledge; 978-1-138-71483-6 £105.

This volume contains nine articles, most of which were initially presented at a session at the EAA



Conference in Istanbul in 2014. It is the third volume in the Themes in Contemporary Archaeology series of the European Association of Archaeologists. The volume also contains a 50-page annotated C<sup>14</sup> database prepared by Thissen and Reingruber from 128 sites that

have produced dates between 6600 and 5000 cal BC in the region under discussion ((parts of) north-west Turkey, north-east Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine). As expressed in the title, the central question put by the editors is whether the view that the dissemination of the Neolithic (whether conceptualised as farming, as a package, as a way of life or, as the editors propose, as innovations) in south-east Europe and adjacent west Anatolia as a matter of movement from East to West is still fruitful, or whether it limits our ability to understand better the complexities of developments

in the region during the seventh and sixth millennia BC? The editors usefully provide their conclusion in the Introduction, arguing that as some characteristics of south-east European archaeological assemblages, including burial rites, incised pottery decoration and stone tool assemblages, point to influences from north of the Balkans, the dissemination was “not a linear expansion but rather multi-directional influences from both the south and the north led to the Neolithisation of the Balkan Peninsula” (p. 4).

While the articles generally seem to support this conclusion, few explicitly engage with the question posed. Several papers discuss the state of research for individual regions (Karul for north-west Anatolia; Erdoğan for the (northern) Aegean), or look for connections between regions (Özdoğan for Anatolia and the western Black Sea region; Reingruber for the Lower Danube Region and the Pontic Region). Other papers examine specific archaeological categories in narrower or broader geographies (Thissen on ceramic traditions in the Lower Danube Region; Gatsov *et al.* on lithic industries; Nikolov on ceramics in Thrace; Lichter on burial customs). Focused on a single site, Dikili Tash in northern Greece, the chapter by Lespez and colleagues differs from the others by advocating the integration of methodologies from the sciences (in this case the soil sciences) into archaeological research. Most other papers largely rely on well-established archaeological sources and methods. There is a striking gap among the set of papers with the almost complete absence, let alone critical evaluation, of insights from analytical techniques and theoretical perspectives that are firmly exerting their influence on Neolithisation studies elsewhere. Stable isotopes, genomes, lipid residues and other elements of the ‘Third Science Revolution in Archaeology’ (Kristiansen 2014) remain, by and large, undiscussed, as do humanistic approaches that aim to grasp a sense of past life through materiality in the Neolithic (e.g. Hodder 2012).

What explains this absence? Is this a reflection of the current state-of-the-art of Neolithic archaeology in the region between western Anatolia and the Carpathians? Or is it an unintended result of the genesis of the volume as a conference session, and the tendency of these to attract mainly speakers that are already part of the same informal network? Probably this second explanation has something to do with it, and in my view this is not always the best recipe for an edited volume that aims to

© Antiquity Publications Ltd, 2018

tackle a tightly focused research question. To be fair, the primary ambition of the organisers/editors was not to forge connections between cultural and scientific approaches to archaeology, but instead appears to have been to stimulate dialogue and comparison between regional archaeologies. Here it should also be mentioned that the editors situate their undertaking in a series of now four meetings and ensuing volumes on roughly the same topic (p. 1). Previous volumes were edited by Lichter (2005), Gatsov and Schwarzberg (2006) and Krauß (2011). It is a good sign that the broader topic of Neolithisation between Anatolia and Europe receives sustained attention by an international group of scholars, and the editors and authors should be commended for keeping the conversation going.

Reading the current volume with the previous ones in mind, however, leaves this reviewer a little disappointed. Much in the volume comes across as too familiar, treading old ground, addressing the same questions and stumbling on the same hiatuses in our knowledge. To mention a single example, several authors grapple with the question of the Mesolithic impact on Neolithisation in the region (e.g. Erdoğu, Karul, Lichter), as was done in all previous volumes mentioned. But our conceptual or methodological toolkits to identify forager influences on Neolithic communities (cultural, demographic, technological or other) remain as inadequate as they have done for the last decades. Still the default argument is that if something is not typically (Near Eastern-/Anatolian-derived) Neolithic, then it must be a hold-out from Mesolithic times. Quite possibly, but how do we know? Rather than repeat ourselves, should we not discuss how to get beyond this impasse? There are already too few studies that critically challenge established wisdom or aim to set the agenda for the coming years, and this volume will not rectify this issue. With the steady expansion of our regional datasets, and the increasing handle on absolute and relative chronologies, we may not be able to provide answers, but we should be able to define better the questions that we need to address in the coming years.

In conclusion, it is very useful to have this volume on bookshelves (although at a hefty price of 105 British pounds, it may not find its way to as many as are deserving of it), to continue the dialogue that was begun in the previous volumes on the topic. But for a next volume, let us incorporate a wider range of perspectives and techniques, from the sciences and

the humanities. It will enrich our discussions and take our understanding of Neolithisation between Anatolia and the Carpathians another step forward.

## References

- GATSOV, I. & H. SCHWARZBERG. 2006. *Aegean, Marmara, Black Sea: the present state of research on the Early Neolithic. Proceedings of the Session Held at the EAA 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting at Thessaloniki, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2002*. Langenweissbach: Beier & Beran.
- HODDER, I. 2012. *Entangled: an archaeology of the relationship between humans and things*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- KRAUß, R. 2011. *Beginnings—new research in the appearance of the Neolithic between north-west Anatolia and the Carpathian Basin. Papers of the International Workshop, 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Istanbul*. Rahden: Marie Leidorf.
- KRISTIANSEN, K. 2014. Towards a new paradigm? The third science revolution and its possible consequences in archaeology. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 22: 11–34.
- LICHTER, C. 2005. *How did farming reach Europe? Anatolian-European relations from the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> through the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium cal BC. Proceedings of the International Workshop, Istanbul, 20–22 May 2004*. Istanbul: Ege.

FOKKE GERRITSEN

Netherlands Institute, Istanbul, Turkey

(Email: [fa.gerritsen@nit-istanbul.org](mailto:fa.gerritsen@nit-istanbul.org))

JOHN M. MARSTON. *Agricultural sustainability and environmental change at ancient Gordion* (Gordion Special Studies 8). 2017. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 978-1-934536-91-1 \$59.95.

Gordion, occupied between the Early Bronze and the Middle Ages (c. 2500 BC–AD 1500), is



among the most important settlements in central Anatolia (Turkey). During its long history, it rose to the status of regional centre and shrank to the size of a modest hamlet, reaching its

apogee between the ninth and early seventh centuries BC as the capital of the Phrygian kingdom. As an archaeological site, Gordion started to be investigated in 1950, and the project surrounding it gradually developed into a multifaceted scientific programme

© Antiquity Publications Ltd, 2018