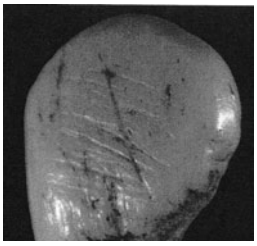
Book reviews

David Lubell (ed.). *Holocene prehistory in the Telidjene Basin, eastern Algeria: Capsian occupations at Kef Zoura D and Ain Misteheyia*. 2016. vi+255 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology 978-1-78491-373-1 paperback £38.



The Epipalaeolithic of the Maghreb is relatively poorly understood. Socio-political concerns have long cast a shadow over research activity in this region and, as a result, archaeological investigations have often been intermittent. Issues have been particularly acute in recent years following the wave of political protests and ensuing power struggles associated with the Arab Spring.

This volume is the final report on the research project 'The Prehistoric Cultural Ecology of Capsian Escargotières' that began in 1972 under the direction of David Lubell. In the 1970s, excavations were undertaken at several archaeological sites in the Télidjène Basin of eastern Algeria, but fieldwork was prematurely terminated at the end of that decade due to changes in foreign policy. This final report on the work is both long overdue and very welcome.

The volume focuses primarily on the results of fieldwork at the site of Kef Zoura D (hereafter KZD) and, to a lesser extent, Aïn Misteheyia (AM). Both sites are of critical importance for understanding the development of the Capsian, as they are the only stratigraphic sequences to have been excavated using modern techniques, to have been securely radiocarbon dated and to show the succession of the *Capsien typique* and *Capsien supérieur* (hereafter *Ct* and *Cs* respectively). The Capsian immediately precedes the Neolithic, and is therefore critical to understanding the emergence of salient behaviours such as sedentism and agriculture in the Maghreb.

In Chapter 1, Jackes and Lubell provide a useful description of the geographical context, excavation, stratigraphy and chronology of KZD, alongside a brief comparison of the sequence with the nearby site of Relilaï. A major focus is the depositional history of KZD, as highlighted by the 21 available radiocarbon dates, which the authors suggest indicates the possibility for erosion and/or abandonment events at *c.* 9000–8500 cal BP (separating the *Ct* and *Cs*) and around 8000 cal BP related to wider climate events observed in the Mediterranean Basin and elsewhere (e.g. Berger & Guilaine 2009). Much of this has already been discussed in a preliminary fashion by the authors elsewhere (Jackes & Lubell 2008).

Chapter 2 by Peter Sheppard describes the lithic assemblages, and broadly follows the style of other reports in the area, focusing on the typo-technological aspects of the assemblage. A few external comparisons are drawn with other sites, but the value of the work derives principally from the detailed reporting of the technological aspects associated with the emergence of the pressure-flaking technique and the transition from *Ct* to *Cs*. Many of the more interesting points on this topic have already been discussed in a broader fashion elsewhere (Rahmani & Lubell 2012).

Chapter 3, by Mulazzani and Brugal, looks primarily at the typo-technological aspects of the bone tools from KZD and AM, which help us to understand the stages involved in point production, from the selection of raw materials through to manufacturing processes. Chapter 4, by Petrullo, provides the results of use-wear traces on the bone tools, highlighting the evidence for repetitive actions such as the processing of vegetable materials or animal hides. Chapter 5, by Reese, is a brief catalogue of marine shell finds from KZD and AM, which, although limited in discussion, points to long-distance contacts with the Mediterranean. Chapter 6, by Rahmani and Lubell, describes the abstract engraving of an ostrich found on a rock fragment at KZD and discusses its wider significance for understanding belief systems in the Capsian and the subsequent Neolithic. Chapter 7, by Jackes and Lubell, presents the results of the study of the faunal assemblage from KZD, which indicates some differences in the taphonomic conditions of the *Ct* and *Cs* assemblages. Chapter 8, by D'Andrea *et al.*, gives the results of wood charcoal analysis from KZD, which suggests a transition from woody vegetation to shrubland with the shift from the *Ct*

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to *Cs*. Chapter 9, by Gassin and Gibaja, provides the results of a functional analysis of the stone tool assemblages, largely complementing Chapter 2. There have been surprisingly few functional studies of lithic assemblages from the Epipalaeolithic of the Maghreb, and this preliminary functional analysis forms a good basis for future work. An addendum contains previously unpublished illustrations of the lithic artefacts from AM.

Given the early termination of the fieldwork, the authors have done a good job at providing detailed analysis of the most important aspects of the assemblages from KZD. The contributions focusing on the bone tools (Chapters 4 and 5) and the functional analysis of the stone tools (Chapter 9) are particularly welcome. Nonetheless, there is some additional work that could have been undertaken to expand upon the results of the project. In particular, additional AMS radiocarbon dating of paired samples of wood charcoals and faunal remains, alongside subsequent Bayesian modelling of the results, could have been undertaken to help provide a more robust understanding of the depositional history of KZD and the exact timing and length of erosion and/or abandonment events.

The report also ends relatively abruptly, lacking a wider discussion that draws together the information on the different behavioural proxies. Many researchers will be interested to know how the evidence fits into broader cultural and behavioural trends associated with the development of the Epipalaeolithic in the Maghreb, such as the emergence of new subsistence strategies and increasing sedentism. There was more to be said about the data presented in the volume and the potential for comparisons with other sites, including those of the preceding industries and succeeding Neolithic. The current volume, however, serves as an important body of data for those working in this area, and complements more discursive work already published by the contributing authors.

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Pierre Petréquin & Anne-Marie Petréquin (ed.). *Clairvaux et le 'Néolithique Moyen Bourguignon'*. 2016. 1430 pages (2 volumes), numerous colour and b&w illustrations. Besançon Cedex: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté; 978-2-84867-535-0 hardback €60.

The lake village sites of the Circum-Alpine region, with their extremely well-preserved organic remains, water-logged pile-dwellings and detailed dendrochronologies, provide rich histories of Neolithic and Bronze Age life. Relationships between different communities and trajectories of regional social change, however, continue to be interpreted from pottery and its stylistic variations. As in neighbouring European regions, archaeological cultures are named after pottery types, with chronology built from stylistic changes. This is a legacy of a 'culture history' approach, but one that by no means disqualifies this method as a means of establishing important accounts of sequence and change; nor does it prevent the posing of important and interesting questions about the archaeologies of these regions—such sequences may, in fact, be essential (Ebersbach *et al.* 2017). As a result, a key challenge for, and the great potential of, the archaeology of the lake villages is to achieve the full integration of the sequences and social groups identified on the basis of the pottery, with the wealth of other evidence: material culture, architectural and environmental.

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