

- Ibáñez, J.J., González-Urquijo, J.E., Teira-Mayolini, L.C. & Lazuén, T. 2018. The Emergence of the Neolithic in the Near East: A Protracted and Multi-Regional model. *Quaternary International*, 470: 226–52. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quaint.2017.09.040>
- Peltenburg, E. 2004. Cyprus: A Regional Component of the Levantine PPN. *Neolithic: The Newsletter of Southwest Asian Neolithic Research*, 1(4): 3–7.
- Vigne, J.-D., Briois, F., Zazzo, A., Willcox, G., Cucchia, T., Thiebault, S. et al. 2012. First Wave of Cultivators Spread to Cyprus at Least 10,600 y ago. *PNAS*, 109: 8445–49. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1201693109>

JUAN JOSÉ IBÁÑEZ

*Institució Milà i Fontanals, Spanish National Research Council, Barcelona, Spain*

doi:10.1017/eea.2019.33

Penny Bickle, Vicki Cummings, Daniela Hofmann and Joshua Pollard, eds. *The Neolithic of Europe: Papers in Honour of Alasdair Whittle* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017, 313pp. 143 figs, 10 tables, hbk, ISBN 978-1-78570-654-7)

Alasdair Whittle is one of the most prominent European archaeologists. His outstanding contributions to the prehistory of Britain and Hungary, as well as his substantial research on chronology, enclosures, and farming in Neolithic Europe, make him one of the rare figures in archaeology whose depth of knowledge is matched by his breadth of interests. This breadth gave rise to his monumental work on Neolithic Europe (Whittle, 1996), still one of the most widely appreciated publications in the study of the first farming societies. He has often been awarded for his achievements and many of his colleagues have praised the impact he has had on European archaeology. It was thus only a matter of time before a publication appeared to honour his work and his contribution to the study of prehistoric societies.

This moment came when a few of Whittle's collaborators and former students decided to make a surprise for him on the occasion of his retirement, resulting in this wonderfully prepared edited book, which brings together many authors and topics associated with his research

interests. It is entitled *The Neolithic of Europe* in apparent reference to Whittle's colossal book *'Europe in the Neolithic'*, that puts forward his knowledge on a broad geographical scale. Consequently, this publication—edited by Penny Bickle, Vicki Cummings, Daniela Hofmann, and Joshua Pollard—aims to bring many European regions together in one place and to assert some of their features in the Neolithic. Such an approach is always risky as it is hard to make a consistent geographical overview of a continent—and to cover the entire spectrum of farming economy, chronology, landscape, architecture, crafts, representations, rituals, and society among many others—all in a few hundred pages. Therefore, the volume focuses on those topics most closely related to Alasdair Whittle's work. Geographically it covers the majority of European regions, from the British-Irish Isles to the Mediterranean, although some are missing, such as Scandinavia.

Thematically, the chapters primarily deal with architecture (Chs 2, 4, 6, 10, and 15), burials (Chs 5, 6, 11, and 16), tells (Chs 3, 4, and 6), enclosures (Chs 6,

11, and 17), diet (Chs 7 and 9), symbols (Chs 8 and 14), monuments (Chs 13, 18, and 19), and chronology (Chs 17 and 19). The majority of these topics align closely with Whittle's expertise, for example in radiocarbon dating (Whittle et al., 2011), enclosures (Whittle, 1997; Whittle et al., 2011), diet (Whittle & Bickle, 2014), burials (Whittle & Benson, 2006), and symbols (Whittle, 2003). Likewise, the topics covered here match the geographic scope of Whittle's work, including Britain and Ireland (Whittle, 1977; Whittle et al., 2011), Central Europe (Whittle, 2007), and also southeast Europe in the context of dating (Whittle et al., 2002). Rarely has a volume in honour of an archaeologist been so consistent with his/her research and regional interests, and the editors' success in this regard must be highlighted.

A second aim of the editors, as set out in their introduction, was to bring together authors who work on similar subject areas in different regions, but had never previously co-authored a publication. This served several purposes. First, due to space limitations it would not have been possible individually to accommodate the numerous archaeologists who have collaborated with Whittle or admire his work and were keen to contribute to a volume in his honour. One solution was to bring some of them together for joint chapters. Second, the editors aimed to explore (dis) similarities in particular Neolithic phenomena among societies in distant regions.

On the one hand, this approach might seem questionable as it is already evident that the first farmers in northwest and southeast Europe produced different material culture and architecture and consumed similar food, so therefore it seems obvious that they were different in terms of social and symbolic practices and similar in diet. On the other hand, evident dissimilarities in pottery and buildings do not always imply differences in social

notions of the community or houses, and conversely access to similar subsistence products does not mean that the same were favoured by distant societies. And that was the key intention of the editors here: to test whether there are similar practices in distant regions, or whether diversity in environment stimulated diverse practices and societies. Surely, in some papers this approach was more or less successful, but it is notably rare that we see in one paper research results from Greece and France (Ch. 2), Serbia and Great Britain (Ch. 7), or France and Spain (Chs 13 and 14).

The first of these explicitly comparative papers is a study of settlement practices in Northern Greece and the Paris basin (Ch. 2 'Very like the Neolithic': The Everyday and Settlement in the European Neolithic', by Penny Bickle and Evita Kalogiropolou) that unsurprisingly indicates similarities in long-term engagement of community and making of enclosures despite evident differences in building appearance and construction materials. Chapter 7 by Rick Schulting and Dušan Borić ('A Tale of Two Processes of Neolithisation: South-East Europe and Britain/Ireland') also deals with southeast Europe, attempting in this case to integrate it with research in Britain. The dietary strategies of early farming communities are compared in order to examine variability across different environments. While the diet in the Iron Gates gorges gradually shifts with the transition from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic, dietary change in Britain and Ireland seems to be more abrupt.

Two chapters bring together sites in Western and southern Europe. Chapter 13 ('Sudden Time? Natural Disasters as a Stimulus to Monument Building, from Silbury Hill (Great Britain) to Antequera (Spain)') by Richard Bradley and Leonardo García Sanjuán challenges existing

knowledge on regions in Brittany (north-west France) and Málaga (southern Spain) associated with building of monuments. Although quite distant from each other, the monuments at both Locmariaquer and Menga were seemingly built in response to similar stimuli, i.e. different natural events. Chapter 14 ('Art in the Making: Neolithic Societies in Britain, Ireland and Iberia') by Andrew Meirion Jones, Andrew Cochrane, and Marta Díaz-Guardamino considers rock art and decorated artefacts in Britain, Ireland, and Atlantic Iberia that, despite apparent visual differences, shared frequent modifications such as remarking, erasing, and repainting of pre-existing patterns.

The final set of comparative chapters covers the not-so-distant islands of Britain and Ireland. This comparison is not unusual, having been made amongst others by Whittle himself in the context of enclosures (Whittle et al., 2011). The chapters here, by contrast, concern house building practices and burial traditions in passage tombs. The first of the pair (Ch. 15, 'Community Building: Houses and People in Neolithic Britain', by Alistair Barclay and Oliver Harris) accents the intraregional relationship between Neolithic settlement in Britain and Ireland in terms of building techniques and particularly the elaboration of timber, despite apparent differences in the houses. Chapter 16 ('Passage Graves as Material Technologies of Wrapping') by Vicki Cummings and Colin Richards deals with the encapsulation of British and Irish passage graves and the common understanding of 'wrapping' the sacred or otherworldly area that was arguably a more significant process than the approach to those deposited inside.

The remaining papers each concentrate on one region and mainly concern Whittle's interests, such as the use of Bayesian modelling in dating. Alex Bayliss

and colleagues (Ch. 17, 'Rings of Fire and Grooved Ware Settlement at West Kennet, Wiltshire') consider the new radiocarbon dating of the West Kennet long mound in England, based on samples excavated nearly forty years ago, which shifted its chronology back by almost a millennium. Chapter 19 ('Interdigitating Pasts: the Irish and Scottish Neolithics') by Alison Sheridan also refers to dating alongside cultural interaction on the level of pottery and axes.

Several papers concern architecture, both of houses and of monuments. Chapters 2 and 15 were mentioned above, while Chapter 10 ('Size Matters? Exploring Exceptional Buildings in the Central European Early Neolithic') by Daniela Hofmann and Eva Lenneis deals with the tripartite houses of the LBK, centering on case studies from five Neolithic sites.

Turning to monuments and enclosures, Chapter 18 by Joshua Pollard and colleagues ('Remembered and Imagined Belongings: Stonehenge in the Age of First Metals') explores Stonehenge's character in later prehistory, aiming to verify that it retained its significance after its Neolithic peak, maintaining a role in the establishment of symbolic relationships.

In Chapter 11 ('Feasts and Sacrifices: Fifth Millennium "Pseudo-Ditch" Causewayed Enclosures from the Southern Upper Rhine valley'), Philippe Lefranc and colleagues deal with a specific phenomenon of the Alsace region, namely 'pseudo-ditches' consisting of numerous pits excavated in multiple episodes, thus emphasizing more the continuous process than the function of enclosure. In 'The Chosen Ones: Unconventional Burials at Polgár-Csőszhalom (North-East Hungary) from the Fifth Millennium cal BC' (Ch. 6), Pál Raczky and Alexandra Anders set the ditched tell site in Hungary in relation to burials, showing that inhumations on the

tell had clearer symbolic significance than those performed on the neighbouring flat settlement.

Two further chapters deal with tell settlements. The relationship between tells and riverine landscapes is exposed in Chapter 4 ('Encounters in the Watery Realm: Early to Mid-Holocene Geochronologies of Lower Danube Human–River Interactions'), in which Steve Mills, Mark Macklin, and Pavel Mirea highlight the necessity of building tells in a wetland setting in Romania, and the abandonment of these sites with an increase in Danube activity (i.e. more frequent flooding) in the fourth millennium BC. In Chapter 3 ('The End of the Tells: the Iron Age 'Neolithic' in the Central and Northern Aegean'), James Whitley discusses a less frequently considered aspect of southeast European tells, namely evidence for activity long after they were supposedly abandoned, i.e. in the Iron Age. Several case studies from Greece indicate that certain tells were quite active in this period, with some continuing into the Hellenistic era.

A final broad topic covered by several chapters, some already mentioned above, is that of burial. Eszter Bánffy and colleagues (Ch. 5, 'Buried in Mud, Buried in Clay: Specially Arranged Settlement Burials from the Danubian Sárköz, Neolithic Southern Hungary') examine burials in the Sárköz region, Hungary, specifically emphasizing those placed in ovens, hearths, and ceramic vessels, that evidently exhibit a relationship with similar ritual practices of Balkan burial traditions. In Chapter 12 ('From Neolithic Kings to the Staffordshire Hoard. Hoards and Aristocratic Graves in the European Neolithic: the Birth of 'Barbarian' Europe?'), Christian Jeunesse presents a successful study of burials of highly ranked individuals in Europe in late prehistory and early history, a diachronic approach that

echoes much of Whittle's work (e.g. Whittle, 2003). Such a diachronic perspective is also apparent in Chapter 8 ('Stag Do: Ritual Implications of Antler Use in Prehistory'), in which László Bartosiewicz, Alice Choyke, and Ffion Reynolds present an overview of red deer symbolism from the Mesolithic to Medieval periods.

In sum, *The Neolithic of Europe* provides detailed insights into specific case studies and the majority of chapters will be useful for many archaeologists involved in research on enclosures, tells, houses, burials, diet, monuments, or chronology. Clearly the volume is far from a comprehensive overview of the crucial economic, social, and symbolic processes of Neolithic Europe, with many regions and also some research areas missing. But of course such an overview was not the aim of the editors who compiled these nineteen papers, nor is such a publication necessary given the recent handbook co-edited by Hofmann (Fowler et al., 2015). Rather, the editors' main goal was to present a range of new research results and data while keeping close to Whittle's areas of expertise, and in this they have been successful.

I believe that Alasdair Whittle will be proud to have such a volume prepared in his honour by his collaborators and former students, and the editors should be applauded for their success in the difficult task of bringing together authors who never previously collaborated. *The Neolithic of Europe* should also be inspirational to readers, stimulating them to look for more challenging directions in prehistoric archaeology.

## REFERENCES

- Fowler, C., Harding, J. & Hofmann, D. eds. 2015. *The Oxford Handbook of Neolithic Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Whittle, A. 1977. *The Earlier Neolithic of Southern England and its Continental Background*. British Archaeological Reports International Series 35. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Whittle, A. 1996. *Europe in the Neolithic: The Creation of New Worlds*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Whittle, A. 1997. *Sacred Mound, Holy Rings. Silbury Hill and West Kennet Palisade Enclosures: A Later Neolithic Complex in North Wiltshire*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Whittle, A. 2003. *The Archaeology of People: Dimensions of Neolithic Life*. London: Routledge.
- Whittle, A. ed. 2007. *The Early Neolithic on the Great Hungarian Plain: Investigations of the Körös Culture Site of Ecségfalva 23, County Békés* (Varia Archaeologica Hungarica 21). Budapest: Institute of Archaeology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
- Whittle, A. & Benson, D. 2006. *Building Memories: The Neolithic Cotswold Long Barrow at Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire* (Cardiff Studies in Archaeology). Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Whittle, A. & Bickle, P. eds. 2014. *Early Farmers: The View from Archaeology and Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Whittle, A., Bartosiewicz, L., Borić, D., Pettit, P. & Richards, M. 2002. In the Beginning: New Radiocarbon Dates for the Early Neolithic in Northern Serbia and South-East Hungary. *Antaeus*, 25: 63–117.
- Whittle, A., Healy, F.M.A. & Bayliss, A. 2011. *Gathering Time: Dating the Early Neolithic Enclosures of Southern Britain and Ireland*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

GOCE NAUMOV

*Goce Delčev University of Štip, Republic of North Macedonia*

doi:10.1017/eea.2019.34