

- Trouillot, M.-R. 1995. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Viejo-Rosé, D. 2011. *Reconstructing Spain: Cultural Heritage and Memory after Civil War*. Brighton: Sussex Academic.
- Wollentz, G. 2017. Making a Home in Mostar: Heritage and the Temporalities of Belonging. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23(10): 928–45. doi:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1347891>

GUSTAV WOLLENTZ

Graduate School Human Development in Landscapes, Kiel University, Germany

doi 10.1017/aaa.2018.75

Charles French. *A Handbook of Geoarchaeological Approaches to Settlement Sites and Landscapes* (Studying Scientific Archaeology 1. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015, 144pp., 33 colour and 25 b/w illustr., pbk, ISBN 978-1-785-70091-0)

This work is the first in a new series of handbooks from Oxbow which have great potential as introductory texts for students, or for academics who require an introduction to an unfamiliar area of research. There is a particular need for such a book within geoarchaeology, a sub-discipline whose contribution to the wider field of archaeology has grown enormously in the last couple of decades (as reflected by the increase in the number of annual issues of the journal *Geoarchaeology*—established in 1986—during the 1990s). Previous textbooks and manuals, including Goldberg and Macphail's *Practical and Theoretical Geoarchaeology* (2013) and Rapp and Hill's *Geoarchaeology: The Earth-science Approach to Archaeological Interpretation* (2006), provide greater detail across methods and certain types of case studies. Likewise, other volumes address more specific or themed aspects of geoarchaeology, including French's own 2003 volume, *Geoarchaeology in Action: Studies in Soil Micromorphology and Landscape Evolution*, and Tony Brown's *Alluvial Geoarchaeology* (1997). French's new handbook is not designed to replace these, but rather to complement them, as a 'gateway' to the sub-discipline before moving on to these longer, more comprehensive volumes.

The handbook follows a logical structure; starting from theoretical frameworks and approaches to the geoarchaeological study of the main landscape types, then moving on to fieldwork and sampling strategies. The core chapters broadly move from the landscape scale, down through settlements, and onto specific structures. Following these chapters, we are presented with a useful discussion of data integration.

The Introduction provides a convincing and lucid rationale for geoarchaeological and micromorphological approaches, and we see immediately—and understandably—an emphasis on micromorphology; a methodology in whose advancement French has played no small part. One significant and positive theme present in the introduction, and indeed throughout the volume, is the focus on geoarchaeology as a sub-discipline concerned with understanding human-landscape interactions and not merely with the elucidation of taphonomic processes.

Chapter 2 ('Approaches to Investigating Landscapes') introduces the reader to the wider landscape scale and approaches to its study, starting with an interesting overview of various international meanings of 'landscape'. The chapter continues in this vein via an elegant combination of method

and theory, followed by a discussion of taphonomic processes, centred on explanations of different sedimentation processes. Here, as elsewhere in the book, the text is supported by high-quality figures. A discussion of project design and consequent sampling strategies constitutes the next section. Using wetland, dryland, and to a lesser extent temperate landscapes as the contexts for different approaches, French explains how geoarchaeology contributes to our understanding of human-environment interactions and the development of agricultural systems, via the study of wider landscape features, topography, and buried sediments. French also explains how geoarchaeology intersects with, or complements, palaeoecological approaches.

Having established the characteristics of the major landscape types and the potential for geoarchaeological research therein, Chapter 3 ('Examples of Fieldwork Strategies and Sampling Applications for Investigating Landscapes') moves on to the logical next scale or stage in the geoarchaeological endeavour: that of fieldwork strategies and approaches to sampling. As before, French explains taphonomic issues and how these relate to our sampling choices. For each of the five case studies—including the southern English chalk downlands, valleys in New Mexico and Peru, and Herm Island (Channel Islands)—we are presented with a description of fieldwork strategies and a lucid synthesis of the key results. In this way, French ably demonstrates the utility of geoarchaeological approaches, their contribution to the interpretation of the wider archaeological record, and their relevance to our understanding of the relationship between settlement, economy, and environment.

The first example—the lower Welland Valley and the Cambridgeshire fen-edge (eastern England)—demonstrates how geoarchaeological approaches can be

applied across a landscape. The aim here was to investigate and understand the landscape and geomorphological context for several existing archaeological sites. The fieldwork included rescue/salvage excavations prior to gravel extraction and road building. French explains the multi-scalar and staged approach, moving from desktop studies, employing maps and imagery, through to fieldwork that included augering, geophysics, and geochemical analyses. The key methodological focus of this and other examples in this chapter is the question of sampling strategies; the spacing, size, and number of samples depends on the research question and the type of material we are hoping to work on in the laboratory—large samples might be required for sedimentary analysis, geochemistry, or mollusc, insect, and seed extraction, but small samples will suffice for palynology. The importance of on- and off-site sampling is also introduced, with examples of how an initial interrogation of topography and geomorphology should inform choices of where and how to sample.

A second case study from Chapter 3 is associated with the *Life and Water in the Ancient Southern Andes* project. Centred on the Rio Ica Valley in southwestern Peru, this study articulates the complex links between people, climate, and landscape. The project considers the relationship between climatic processes (the importance of El Niño-Southern Oscillation events) and their consequences for land-use and water management. As with the previous example, the geoarchaeological research comprised desk-top survey and combined archaeological and geoarchaeological prospection, followed by targeted sampling of certain sites. Broadly, the results thus far reveal periods of successful and stable high altitude field and irrigation systems between 1800 m and 3800 m. In addition, work at lower altitude

demonstrates cycles of soil stability interrupted by phases of erosion, the latter possibly related to El Niño events and/or human impact.

Each of these case studies deals with different human-environmental issues. The final example, from Herm Island (Channel Islands), explicitly refers to evidence for ploughing and the possibility of artificially created or enhanced soils. Each case study is illustrated with useful figures and photographs that greatly facilitate comprehension, and this graphical material will certainly be appreciated by students who lack relevant field experience.

Moving to a new scale of study, Chapter 4 ('Approaches to Investigating Settlement Sites') addresses the use of geoarchaeological approaches on settlements. The chapter commences with some general principles regarding ideal situations for sampling on sites and is followed by a description and explanation of sampling strategies and techniques. One important point is the need to sample beyond the site: for control purposes; as a means for the definition of the transition between a site and the wider landscape; and to elucidate environmental processes such as flooding. This section also includes an explanation of judgemental and continuous sampling and the situations when these different strategies are suitable.

There is a subtle difference between the themes of Chapters 4 and 5; the latter ('Examples of Fieldwork Strategies and Sampling Applications for Investigating Settlements') dealing specifically with settlement structures (that is, remains of buildings). The first example in this chapter is Saar (Bahrain) where well-preserved floor deposits were investigated via micromorphology. By contrast, the next example is that of Kaupang in Norway, where complex taphonomic issues rendered comprehension of the

contexts within the structures difficult. Micromorphological and geochemical analyses helped elucidate the nature of this complex domestic stratigraphy. A similar geoarchaeological strategy is presented in the final example from this chapter, a single, well-defined structure at the site of Crossicrown on Orkney.

Chapter 6 ('Integration: Sampling and Method Combinations') acts as a synthesis of the key themes and methods presented in the preceding chapters. The theme here is that of integration. French starts the chapter by explaining the rationale for, and importance of, experimental work, i.e. testing our methods on 'artificial' or modern phenomena, such as tillage zones; the experimental earthwork at Overton down (Wiltshire, England); or areas where specific activities such as threshing take place. Perhaps most importantly, French cautions against specialists who 'breeze in' for a few hours of sampling. The most efficient and rewarding strategies demand time, commitment, and particular attention to the wider landscape context that will have influenced both on- and off-site processes. The other key message is that we must adapt sampling and analytical strategies to each site, landscape, and project.

A brief conclusion (Ch. 7) is centred around a diagram that articulates the relationships between data types, information generated, and their outcomes *vis-à-vis* processes that lead to sustainable landscapes and processes that can cause degradation. This diagram takes the form of a flow chart articulating the links between data-types (e.g. pollen, phytoliths, geoarchaeology), information generated (e.g. past vegetation, soil-types), and potential inferences regarding cultural and environmental sequences as well as evidence for ecosystem resilience.

The handbook ends with three useful appendices. The first briefly explains key

methodologies, such as the measurement of pH, loss-on-ignition, magnetic susceptibility, phosphate measurements, and multi-elemental analysis. The second provides details on soil and micromorphological sampling methods, while the third, written with Tonko Rajkovača, describes the process of making soil thin sections.

In summary, this is an extremely useful and readable handbook. Despite the fact that the Studying Scientific Archaeology series of handbooks are conceived as short introductions, French does an admirable job of integrating key concepts, strategies, methods, and case studies. Although other books do adopt a structure that articulates the same ‘nested’ or hierarchical approach—from desktop studies of maps and imagery down to high-resolution sampling of individual contexts—French manages to do this effectively within a short space, employing many examples from various environment types across the globe. As noted above, this work will be particularly useful for students who may well find the longer textbooks daunting—French’s handbook is not a replacement for these other volumes, but an invitation to delve deeper. In addition, field archaeologists who wish to grasp the

basics prior to calling out specialists will also find this volume useful. The fact that the author has been personally involved in such a wide range of projects around the world results in an extensive set of examples spread throughout the handbook that are both modern and rigorous. Also, as noted earlier, these examples are illustrated with helpful photographs and diagrams that support the explanations of sampling strategies and methods, as well as often providing the all-important landscape context for the various sites.

REFERENCES

- Brown, A. 1997. *Alluvial Geoarchaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 French, C. 2003. *Geoarchaeology in Action*. London: Routledge.
 Goldberg, P. & Macphail, R. 2013. *Practical and Theoretical Geoarchaeology*. Oxford: Wiley.
 Rapp, G. & Hill, C. 2006. *Geoarchaeology: The Earth-science Approach to Archaeological Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

KEVIN WALSH
University of York, UK

doi 10.1017/eea.2018.76

Timothy Insoll, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Prehistoric Figurines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, 960pp., 273 b/w illustr., hbk, ISBN 978-0-19-967561-6)

I want to say outright that this is a book worth reading in its entirety, despite its discouraging size, and not just by prehistorians. On my second run, as I write this text, I keep thinking of a potential alternative map, like the one in Cortázar’s *Hopscotch*, which would accentuate its

many virtues. One could read it from cover to cover, as I did the first time, but one could also use Insoll’s remarkable work in the Introduction to follow recurrent issues and joining threads. The chapters themselves are organized geographically, grouped by continents;