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Book Reviews

Evangelia Pişkin, Arkadiusz Marciniak and Marta Bartkowiak, eds. *Environmental Archaeology: Current Theoretical and Methodological Approaches* (Basel: Springer, 2018, 248 pp, 62 illustr., 39 in colour, hbk, ISBN 978-3-319-75082-8)

This edited volume consists of eleven papers, some of which were presented at a session held at the EAA Conference in Istanbul in 2014, with others written specially for this publication. The book opens with an introduction by Evangelia Pişkin and Marta Bartkowiak, followed by a very short piece (two pages) by Umberto Albarella, somewhat ominously titled 'Environmental Archaeology: The End of the Road?'. The remaining papers can be rather roughly split into two groups: the first includes reviews of particular methodologies, sometimes with a geographical focus: Maria Lityńska-Zając outlines the development of archaeobotany in Poland; Ceren Kabukcu reviews the evolution of archaeological charcoal analyses (anthracology); Gary Crawford considers palaeoethnobotany, with a particular emphasis on his work in Japan; and Ophélie Lebrasseur, Hannah Ryan, and Cinthia Abbona review the development of ancient DNA analyses in archaeology. Kurt Gron and Peter Rowley-Conwy's summary of the development of environmental archaeology in southern Scandinavia can be included in this group. The second group may be defined as case studies: Angelos Hadjikoumis discusses the role of ethnoarchaeology in zooarchaeology, drawing on his work in Cyprus; Ying Zhang presents the results of analyses of fish and plant remains from a middle Neolithic site in China; and Mustafa Nuri Tatbul's paper describes the spatial analysis of a medieval Turkish site. Slightly out on its own in various ways is the paper by Campbell, Barnett, Caruthers, Pearson, Pelling, and Smith, which considers the trials and tribulations of collaboration between individuals on large projects, drawing on academic, commercial, freelance, and curatorial experiences.

There is much to admire about this volume. The review papers in particular are authoritative and comprehensive; Lityńska-Zając's offering 'A Man and a Plant: Archaeobotany' (leaving aside the gender-specific title!) is a substantial review of the development of archaeobotany in Poland; the references for this chapter run to seven pages. Likewise, Kabukcu's paper presents a useful discussion of the historical development of methods and approaches in anthracology. Gron and Rowley Conwy's chapter is an excellent account that rightly draws attention to the fact that data from environmental archaeology have formed a critical, foundational component of so many debates, not least that of the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition in Europe. The authors make the provocative claim that: 'Those who argue that theoretical posturing sets the archaeological agenda need to accept that environmental archaeology just as often sets the theoretical agenda' (p. 35). Although not directly referred to, this seems to allude to previous, at times academically heated, debates concerning the nature of the Neolithic transition in northwest Europe (e.g. Rowley-Conwy, 2004). Campbell, Barnett, Caruthers, Pearson, Pelling, and Smith's

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paper can also be highlighted as it represents a reflexive piece of writing, of a sort which is not often found within archaeological science. It uses the concept of 'communities of practice' to consider the demands and pressures on different individuals involved in research projects, what 'success' looks like for different research collaborators, and practical ways to improve the process.

This brings us round to what I think are some of the slight problems with the volume. Whilst the papers are interesting, engaging, and generally well written, I rather struggled with the overall purpose of the book and the corresponding balance of content. Firstly, considering the composition of chapters in terms of 'methodologies', there is a distinct bias towards archaeobotany and archaeozoology. Although a couple of papers mention pollen analysis, there is no chapter specifically devoted to palynology. Given the importance of this technique within environmental archaeology and the various advances that have been made in this field in recent years (e.g. Edwards et al., 2015), this makes for a significant gap in coverage. Other such omissions might be identified: calcareous microfossils, palaeoentomology, and land snails for example are all conspicuous by their absence. Whilst this is, no doubt, in part a reflection of the contributions to the original conference session, it is disappointing that these important methods do not feature, especially given the statement in the preface that some papers were specially commissioned following the session. Some chapters also consider theoretical developments more explicitly than others: Crawford, for example, reflects on human behavioural ecology and niche construction, while Hadjikoumis outlines his use of ethnoarchaeology for interpreting zooarchaeological and archaeobotanical data.

These issues could have been mitigated in part had the volume been divided explicitly into sections, perhaps along the lines identified above, with some sort of rationale outlining the selection of papers and themes. The introduction by Pişkin and Bartkowiak, 'Environmental Archaeology: What Is in a Name?' consists of an historical account of the development of environmental archaeology that takes us back to nineteenth-century roots, through various historical debates and problems concerning the definition and role of environmental archaeology, especially with respect to what is referred to as 'mainstream archaeology'. I'm afraid this chapter in particular is let down by poor copy editing, which I'd say reflects badly on the publishers rather than the editors.

I also found myself rather thrown by the subheadings in chapter one, with titles such as 'What's Montague?' and 'It Is nor Hand nor Foot, nor Arm nor Face' (sic). My Shakespeare must be a bit rusty, but it took me a while, and the assistance of a colleague, to work out the references to Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet* in particular. That aside, the reason I dwell on the introduction is that the opening to an edited volume of this sort is important. Whilst this includes interesting discussion of the historical development of 'environmental archaeology', there is no outline of the structure of the volume, nor even reference to the papers included or the rationale for their selection! The inclusion of the chapter on aDNA could be flagged here; whilst there is no doubting the quality of the contribution, or importance of this area of archaeological research, it isn't clear why this was included as opposed to a wider review of, say, the role of biomolecules in environmental archaeological research.

The overall background and aim of the book, insofar as this is explicitly stated, is found in the preface and that is to: 'showcase that environmental archaeology is nothing else but archaeology' (p. vi). This rather makes me wonder if the volume could have been better titled, as the title

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seems to imply or sustain a definition that the content is essentially arguing against. This also brings us to the debates concerning the definition and 'purpose' of environmental archaeology referred to in the opening chapter. A key touchstone for these discussions is Albarella's (2001) edited volume, which was itself based on papers given at a Theoretical Archaeology Group conference in 1998. This is referred to in the introduction, and Albarella's short second chapter tackles the issue of the definition of environmental archaeology head-on, making it very clear that he regards all and any attempts to separate spheres of archaeological enquiry as redundant: '"Environmental archaeology" is the product of a misunderstanding of what archaeology means, as well as the position of humans in the world of nature' (p. 18).

I have a lot of sympathy with this statement, although it does leave the fact that the term 'environmental archaeology' is unlikely to disappear from the common archaeological lexicon overnight, nor do I believe that we should encourage this. The simple explanation for its persistence and utility, in my opinion, is that the term is useful shorthand for a set of methods/techniques, irrespective of the way that the data produced by these are employed, and irrespective of corresponding *implicit* or *explicit* theoretical frameworks. The looseness of the term is its strength as well as its weakness, as per the selection of papers referred to and my own reflections on this above: for example, what techniques do we include, or exclude, as part of 'environmental archaeology'? To this end, for us to keep asking questions such as: what is the 'meaning of environmental archaeology?' or 'what is the theory of environmental archaeology?' are doomed to keep us going round in ever decreasing circles, rehashing old arguments about the 'social' and the 'natural'.

To this extent, I think that both Pişkin and Bartkowiak, and Albarella in particular, are right: environmental archaeology *is* nothing but archaeology, and we *have* reached the end of the road for the utility of the *term* 'environmental archaeology'. But the latter applies only so far as we need to stop using it in debates and discussion around problems of integration, interpretation, and communication outlined in Chapter 1. Perhaps it would be more productive to think in terms of the praxes of environmental *archaeologists*, which are as diverse and individual as those encountered elsewhere in archaeology more broadly. In this context, the chapter by Campbell and colleagues gives food for thought in the sense that it seeks to analyse and understand the different pressures (personal and professional) and motivations involved in bringing research projects to completion. We need more of this form of introspective, critical reflection. I would also suggest that part of this entails acknowledging that everything we do as archaeologists, whether 'environmental' or not, is inherently theoretical, and arguments to the contrary tend to result from overly narrow definitions of 'theory' (e.g. see Johnson, 2010).

These reflections aside, this book would be a useful resource for undergraduate and postgraduate students or practising archaeologists seeking up-to-date reviews and summaries of particular techniques such as anthracology, or geographically specific summaries, as in the chapters on southern Scandinavia, Poland, and Japan.

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Eileen Murphy and Melié Le Roy, eds. *Children, Death, and Burial: Archaeological Discourses* (Society for the Study of Past Childhood Monograph Series 5, Oxford & Haverton, Oxbow Books, 2017, ix and 273 pp., 71 b/w illustr., 37 tables, pbk, ISBN: 978-1-785-70712-4)

This book is the fifth volume of the monograph series of the Society for the Study of Childhood in the Past (SSCIP). The SSCIP has concentrated, in recent years, a significant effort on discussing infancy, children, and childhood not only in its journal and monographs, but also at its annual conference. The monograph series was established in order to offer scholars from all disciplines a venue in which to present new, groundbreaking, or challenging research into children and childhood. All the volumes have an interdisciplinary focus and cover all historical periods from the Paleolithic to the nineteenth century (Brockliss & Montgomery, 2010; Mustakallio & Laes, 2011; Hadley & Hemer, 2014; Sánchez Romero et al., 2015; Baxter & Ellis, 2018; Sánchez Romero & Cid López, 2018). Among the multiple themes are violence, space, identity, death, burial, religion, motherhood, socialization, and ritual.

The present volume brings together fifteen case studies dedicated to children, death, and burials from the Neolithic to the nineteenth century AD; examples that, beyond their particularities, offer a window onto the debate of relevant issues for the archeology of children. The volume includes papers from the session entitled, 'Archaeological Approaches to the Burial of Children', held at the twenty-first annual conference of the European Association of Archaeologists in Glasgow in 2015. Contributions share a common starting premise, that the study of non-adults is fundamental to understanding societies fully, as well as a series of concerns about methodological issues that should be taken into account during the coming years in order to improve this perspective.

Two main aspects stand out regarding funerary contexts, not only in this particular volume but also in research on childhood more generally: on the one hand the body, explained through bioarchaeological studies; on the other hand the emotions, both those that deal with the ability of populations to grieve, and those that try to use a crucial moment in the life of communities to sustain, challenge, or modify identities.

Regarding the body, one of the approaches that has become a popular line of research in the archaeology of childhood during the last years is bioarchaeology (Lewis, 2007; Mays et al., 2017). All the chapters in this volume present this perspective, to a greater or lesser extent. Certainly, information provided by osteoarchaeological studies, isotope analysis, or DNA constitutes