
Reviews

The Materiality of Stone: Explorations in Landscape Phenomenology, by Christopher Tilley, 2004. Oxford: Berg; ISBN-13 978-1-85973-892-4 hardback £55 & US\$99; ISBN-13 978-1-85973-897-9 paperback £17.99 & US\$30.95; xv+241 pp., 90 ills.

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A decade separates the publication of *The Phenomenology of Landscape* (Tilley 1994) from the publication of the *Materiality of Stone*. The former revolutionized landscape archaeology (and spawned a legion of doctoral students studying prehistoric landscape). It was a landmark which altered the way in which archaeologists thought about the relationship between monuments and the natural world. That relationship has been explored in a number of key works, including general works looking at the significance of natural places or the influence of natural places on the location of monuments, and more specific journal articles examining the relationship between monumentality and natural elements, such as water and stone, and the significance of colour in the selection of stones during monument construction. While the archaeological world was deeply influenced by *The Phenomenology of Landscape*, it is not clear if the abundant literature on landscape phenomenology, which sprang up after its publication, has influenced the writer of the *Materiality of Stone*. The text of the *Materiality of Stone* is better characterized by what is left out than what it actually contains, almost as if it has been written in a kind of academic vacuum.

The book has a substantial introductory chapter dealing with the philosophical underpinnings of the landscape phenomenology approach. There then follow three detailed case studies examining megaliths in Neolithic Brittany, megalithic architecture in Neolithic Malta, and rock art in the southern Scandinavian Bronze Age. A short conclusion follows.

The case study dealing with menhirs and megaliths in Neolithic Brittany offers a new typology of menhirs on the basis of the nature of the stones used in their construction — shape, weathering, cracks and fissures and colour are all employed as a means of

characterizing difference, and menhirs are argued to form regional groups characterized by shape or form. Curiously, Tilley overlooks French regional surveys of these monuments, and papers by Scarre (e.g. 2002) examining the materiality of stone, in particular colour), which may have added depth to his interpretation of regionalized materialities. The overall interpretation of menhirs symbolizing rootedness in a changing world is neat, however I would prefer to see this interpretation reinforced by more detailed data for sea-level change: how rapid and dramatic were these sea-level changes? Tilley represents them in an almost apocalyptic light, but would this truly have been the case? While sea-level change would undoubtedly have altered the ancestral geographies of the Mesolithic, would these have been cast as traumas or would they have been accommodated as part of the expected flux, flow and change of a transient lifestyle?

The second case study chapter deals with the temples and hypogeums of Malta. In some senses, this chapter is the most coherent. It begins by building on John Robb's insight concerning Malta — that its apparent difference from mainland Italy is deliberately constructed. Tilley's task, then, is to examine the cultural metaphors by which the Neolithic Maltese constructed themselves. His argument rests on the differences in the limestones used to construct different classes of monument and their possible metaphorical association with honey (which Malta is famous for) and ochre. The difference between honey and ochre is then associated with distinctions between the living and the dead. In addition, honey is linked to the island, while ochre is linked with distant origins (being mined in Sicily). He further links the sweetness of honey with the cloying smell of death. In many ways, the Maltese chapter offers an example of the synaesthetic phenomenological approach he argues for in the opening chapter. This interpretation was beautiful and poetic, much as the interpretation of the rootedness of menhirs offering a salve against the changing Mesolithic tides was poetically charged.

These kinds of interpretations are 'vintage Tilley': provocative and intriguing; they reminded me why archaeology needs thinkers of Tilley's original cast of mind. However, while I was moved and fascinated by these interpretations, I did not feel moved to believe them; what substantial evidence is there for linking

honey with death in this specific cultural context, for example?

The final case study deals with Bronze Age rock art in Scania, southern Sweden. Here Tilley examines the relationship between rock-art images and the nature of the rocks upon which they are carved; fissures, cracks and undulations in the surface. Many of the observations concerning the organization of motifs in relation to rocks are excellent. However the basic observation that the qualities of the rock effect the carving of motifs has long been made in Scandinavian rock-art research. For example, Knut Helskog (1999) uses precisely this observation to understand the deep cosmological significance of northern rock art traditions. Similarly, Katty Hauptman Wahlgren (2002) discusses the role of the undulations in rock-carving traditions in the Swedish Bronze Age. Neither work is cited by Tilley.

Despite this, Tilley offers something new and different. He goes beyond the simple observation that the qualities of stone affect carving to argue that the over-all form of rocks offers an over-arching medium for generating meaning. For example, rather than treating the Järrestad figure as a 'dancer' upon the surface of the rock, he argues that the figure is a 'swimmer' within the wave-like medium of the rock. This interpretation appears to be fundamentally correct, given the nature of the rock upon which it is carved, and it is difficult to believe it has not been mentioned before.

Curiously, despite the intellectual step forward in the analysis of the region's rock art, the discussion of the motifs in the famous Kivik cairn is very traditional. The assumption that the burial in the cairn represent a chief, shaman or other 'big man' (in the framework established by Kristiansen & Larsson (2005)) is uncritically adopted. This jars with the intellectually critical flavour of the remainder of the chapter.

One of the striking aspects of the book is its focus upon big stones, megaliths. While the book claims to investigate the materiality of stone, the stones analysed are almost entirely large and visually striking, be they menhirs, the temples of Malta or the rock-carving surfaces of Scania. Missing from this account are other contemporary stone objects; where is the discussion of axes, flint or other materials, grits used in pottery temper, etc.? Yes, the book claims to be a 'landscape phenomenology' so it understandably focuses upon large stones set in the landscape; but this is to overlook the manifold practices associated with stone (extraction, manufacture, the biography and re-use of stone artefacts, the incorporation of stone in other mediums such as pottery): do these not also belong to the contemporary landscapes discussed by Tilley? In this sense, another book on the materiality of stone published in the same year (Boivin & Owoc 2004) offers a fuller pic-

ture of the multiple uses of stone, earth and clay from rock art and stone axe manufacture to the use of clay and earth in building and monument architecture.

A final question I want to consider is the extent to which Tilley provides an understanding of the *materiality* of stone. As he states in the final chapter (p. 224), a pure phenomenological account is inadequate; it needs to be linked to an understanding of the hermeneutics of interpretation. In practice, this involves the addition of a structuralist framework to his phenomenological observations, as we observe in many of the case studies, where various aspects or qualities of the stone are defined by their structural opposition to each other. This provides a curiously two-tiered approach to the material world in which the world is first bodily experienced and then cognized, thereby re-enacting the body-mind distinction which phenomenology explicitly attempts to overcome. This issue was explored in much greater detail in Tilley's excellent *Metaphor and Material Culture* (1999) and it would have been worth developing in the present publication. I believe the problem lies less with the use of phenomenology than with the retention of a hermeneutic framework founded upon Saussurean linguistics. I believe we need to be developing approaches which seamlessly link the felt qualities of the material world with their meaningful aspects. It seems to me that, by employing the device of 'solid metaphor' (Tilley 1999, 260–73) at the close of his last book, Tilley was close to harmonizing the disjunction between experience and cognition, however the chasm between the two appears to have re-opened in the present work.

There are, then, striking gaps in the book. Much of the relevant literature for the case studies appears to have been omitted: while many of the interpretations offered are new they are created in an intellectual vacuum. We are left wondering how a deeper reading of the literature would have effected interpretations. It is not only other scholars' work that is absent but also the intellectual framework previously developed by Tilley himself. This leaves the book lacking in intellectual and methodological weight. It is hard to believe this volume will have the impact of *The Phenomenology of Landscape*.

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The Ethics of Archaeology: Philosophical Perspectives on Archaeological Practice, edited by Chris Scarre & Geoffrey Scarre, 2006. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; ISBN 0-521-84011-2 hardback £45 & US\$80; ISBN 0-521-54942-6 paperback £19.99 & US\$34.99; xi+318 pp., 1 table

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The Ethics of Archaeology has been carefully planned and assembled by the archaeologist Chris Scarre and the philosopher Geoffrey Scarre; and rewarding this book certainly is. The editors determined that an about equal number of contributions from archaeologists and philosophers should be able to advance important debates in archaeological ethics, for the benefit of both disciplines. Such a project is rare, and one wonders if it takes the chemistry between two brothers to make it happen. Together they compiled a truly unique volume which brought together ten archaeologists, four anthropologists and seven philosophers. Among the fifteen chapters, four have been co-authored by at least one archaeologist and one philosopher whereas the others are written within the context of only one discipline.

The issues addressed in this volume are some of the most important ones archaeologists are facing today, and they are political to the same extent as they are ethical. Just like other recent volumes on archaeological ethics (Lynott & Wylie 2000; Karlsson 2004;

Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006), the present volume underlines the political currency of the broadly defined field of archaeology. Topics addressed include ongoing conflicts regarding the legitimate ownership of archaeological finds; the complicated relations between professional archaeologists on the one hand and Native American groups on the other hand; the existence or otherwise of moral rights of the dead in relation to archaeologists excavating their graves; and controversies regarding the idea and use of the concept of 'world heritage'. Archaeologists are thus well advised to consider seriously the arguments made in this book. Members of other disciplines are likely to gain significant new insights about the amazing politics of the past in the contemporary world.

One specific issue addressed is the problem of 'illicit antiquities' and the 'looting' of archaeological sites. Julie Hollowell reminds us that it is inappropriate to condemn outright the so-called looting of ancient artefacts. She rightly points out that the term 'looter' lumps together people with very diverse motivations and interests, none of whom would refer to themselves as 'looters'. Hollowell's prime attention is to poor people engaged in what she calls 'subsistence digging', the finding and selling of archaeological finds to support their basic requirements of subsistence. From an ethical position, people may indeed be justified under certain conditions of poverty to treat archaeological goods as an economic resource. This ought not to be controversial, given that most archaeologists are likely to agree that concern for artefacts or sites should never come before concern for human life. Hollowell cites one Alaskan who digs for ancient ivory artefacts and stated that 'our ancestors used ivory to make the tools they needed for survival. We have a different use for ivory today, but it is no less important for *our* survival' (p. 79). Bob Layton & Gillian Wallace similarly emphasize in their paper that 'the meaning of things inevitably changes' as they move from one realm of use and appropriation to another (p. 57) — archaeological uses constituting no more than one such realm.

Some of the larger underlying issues are also addressed in Leo Groarke & Gary Warrick's critique of the Society for American Archaeology's (SAA) principle of stewardship. Among others, they raise the important question of why a professional organization like the SAA should tell any non-Western community how they should and should not use their ancestral heritage. The archaeological preference for the preservation of heritage does not arise from a special awareness and ethical duty of archaeologists but simply from one particular perspective on the past and its remains that is shared by (many) archaeologists but not by all existing stakeholders including, for example, subsistence diggers.