

My earlier point about the onus on the osteologist to take charge of the social inferences made with osteological data can be illustrated by the use of non-metric trait evidence to support the identification of family groups in cemeteries. Rick Schulting's appraisal of the evidence for violence in prehistoric Europe and Paul Pettitt's review of Upper Palaeolithic burial rites both cite anthropological studies that have used shared, ostensibly rare osteological traits to infer close kin-based genetic relationships between individuals. There are fundamental problems underlying such analyses: firstly, the expression of non-metric skeletal and dental variation is, on average, as much determined by shared environment as by shared genes, and, therefore, at the individual level the data speak only to either genetic or environmental propinquity between persons sharing the trait. Secondly, the ascertainment of whether a particular trait is rare or common must be based on background frequencies within the prehistoric population concerned rather than on trait frequencies established in modern or historical samples, but this important condition has not been fulfilled in the examples cited. Some prehistoric European populations, especially those of the Upper Palaeolithic and the early Neolithic, experienced severe genetic and demographic perturbation including genetic bottle-necking and rapid expansion of populations from small founding groups of colonizers. These populations are likely therefore to exhibit quite varied baseline skeletal trait frequencies owing to founder effects, rapid genetic drift and responses to varying environments, and at best the shared possession of particular traits between individuals indicates nothing more than shared membership of (or life experience within) a particular community. In this instance a particular osteological method has been promulgated as a tool for social inference without highlighting the appropriate caveats; the results of its application have been incorporated by others into social archaeological analyses, in good faith but without the appropriate measure of circumspection that should have been insisted upon by the originators of the method.

On a more positive note, and despite the continuing and frustrating academic apartheid that exists between archaeology and anthropology within European institutions, this volume sets out some pioneering yet very readable examples of how skeletal and funerary analysis can be employed in an integrated and holistic fashion to generate interpretations that maximize the contributions of each discipline to archaeological research. The volume is timely, as many of the contributions originated as presentations in a session at the European Association of Archaeologists conference in Lyon in 2004, and the editors are to be congratulated

for bringing this rich material to a wider audience after a relatively short interval.

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The Archaeology of Time, by Gavin Lucas, 2005.
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Paul Lane

Given that a consideration of time is so central to any kind of archaeological endeavour, it is surprising that relatively little attention has been given by archaeologists to understanding its nature and the theoretical implications of adopting different time perspectives. Even though such issues are now being discussed in greater detail, many archaeologists still seem content to treat time simply in terms of dating and chronology, and to regard improving dating techniques as the area likely to yield the greatest benefits to the discipline. Yet, as a growing body of case studies and theoretical overviews illustrate, time is more than just chronology. Those inspired by the theories of practice outlined, especially, by Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, have tended to emphasize the point that all human action takes place within time and is structured by a series of temporal rhythms of different amplitude and frequency. Others have drawn on recent theoretical developments in evolutionary biology and geology, in support of non-linear models of punctuated evolution and social change.

Gavin Lucas offers a synopsis of many of these studies while also summarizing key arguments made over the centuries by philosophers. His book forms part of a series of brief introductions to core themes within archaeology, aimed primarily at students but of value to anyone seeking a handy over-view. It comprises just five chapters, and can be read in one sitting or dipped into as the need arises.

In Chapter 1, Lucas outlines some of the reasons why a consideration of time in archaeology is more

than just about dating and chronology, although he in no way diminishes the importance of chronological controls to archaeological interpretation. He then offers a brief synopsis of different philosophies, beginning with Zeno's observation that an arrow in flight is, paradoxically, conceivably also always at rest, before moving on swiftly to consider the work of various twentieth-century philosophers including McTaggart, Bergson and Husserl. He emphasizes McTaggart's distinction between time as duration and time as succession, and Husserl's more complex notion of retention. The purpose of this excursion is to show that any consideration of time in archaeology has to encompass an understanding of the processes, rates and rhythms of change and continuity, the duration of events and material phenomena, and social understanding and representations of these, as well as matters of dating and sequence.

Chapter 2 examines aspects of the temporality of the archaeological record in more detail, taking, as its starting point, the common tendency to spatialize time such that a dated artefact or context often comes to stand for the date of an entire horizon or site. Drawing on some of McTaggart's and Husserl's arguments, Lucas proceeds to demonstrate that all archaeological phenomena, from individual artefact attributes to entire landscapes are imbued with multiple temporalities. A glance round any room will quickly illustrate this: some objects contained therein will be older than others, in some cases even older than the structure in which the room itself is located. The room may have been modified at different times, redecorated, or had fixtures added. The motifs and attributes of some of the artefacts in the room may have quite a long and distinguished ancestry, while others may be entirely novel, and so on. Considered together, this type of historicity, which adheres to things and places, can inform us about the temporal duration of individual events and processes. These ideas are at the heart of Husserl's notion of retention and, as an example, one might cite Lucas's book, which although published in 2005 contains echoes of much older events and process extending back through time at least to the invention of the printing press. Of course, not all processes or events share the same longevity in terms of their temporal echo or retention, and it is part of Lucas's argument that documenting and explaining why such differences occur is a central goal of archaeology.

One reason why certain things or attributes endure longer than others is because humans deliberately, and also unconsciously, curate them while also abandoning or deliberately destroying others. Much of this selection takes place continuously as part of human practice but it also occurs as part of more overt forms of 'memory work' by individuals and social groups. In Chapter 3,

Lucas discusses various examples of the use of the past in the past, and some of the different ways in which time may have been understood and represented. Most of the examples are now well known but the chapter still serves as a useful summary of the linkages between studies of time reckoning and recognition in the past, on the one hand, and those more concerned with understanding ways in which past societies may have employed elements of the material world to construct their own historical narratives. That this process can have a direct consequence for what survives for archaeological study, and on the spatial form and composition of the archaeological record of a particular community, has only recently been recognized, and ways of accessing how past societies used, understood and represented time are only now being developed.

One approach which has received considerable interest is through the construction of artefact and site biographies. In Chapter 4, Lucas provides an illustration of how this can be achieved with the biography of Romano-British jar, from its date of probable manufacture in the mid-second century AD, via its deposition as part of a cremation burial, and subsequent recovery during archaeological excavations in AD 2000 to its present status as a curated object. The chapter also serves as a detailed case study concerning the relevance of some of McTaggart's, Husserl's and others' ideas about the nature of time and how these can be applied in archaeological analyses. In the final chapter, Lucas summarizes his key arguments before going on to suggest that contemporary archaeology exhibits a number of tensions in its approach to time and temporality, which include that between 'history' and 'prehistory'. Far from being simply a distinction based on methods and sources (i.e. written versus material), Lucas regards this contrast as one that emanates from the manner in which archaeology constructs its object in such a way that it always concerns both 'the other' and ourselves. More specifically, by studying the material remains of 'the past' (or perhaps, more correctly, 'a past'), archaeology tends to place its subject matter outside time, or at least in another time that was (or is) qualitatively different from the time in which archaeologists find themselves. It is this kind of time, irrespective of the date of the material remains in question, that Lucas regards as prehistory. Yet archaeologists also endeavour, simultaneously, to relate their discoveries to historical narratives held within broader society concerning shared origins as a people, community, nation or even species, and thereby to place them within 'history'.

Over all, this is a helpful and stimulating book, of value in particular to anyone looking for a readable introduction to the significance of time, its perception and representation in archaeological thought and

practice. Lucas's closing chapter also introduces some important ideas about the nature of archaeological knowledge that warrant broader consideration. There are perhaps two weaknesses to some of his arguments, however. Specifically, while I found his attempts to employ Husserl's notion of retention so as to demonstrate the multi-temporal nature of a simple artefact convincing, the practicalities of attempting a similar analysis for every context, artefact, attribute and so on would seem unattainable. For all their potential benefits, the kind of analyses Lucas proposes could only be applied in just a few cases for any particular site or major horizon. How one decides on which phenomena to subject to such exhausting temporal study we are not told, nor is it discussed as to whether this would make any difference to our assessments of the temporality of the remains we uncover. The second weakness, as I perceive it, is that Lucas has not really sought to examine or explain evolutionary time in any detail. Brief reference is made to some recent debates on the topic, but little more is offered and nothing is said about how the analytical approaches to time outlined in Chapter 4 might inform (if, indeed they can) an understanding of evolutionary processes that operate on vastly different temporal scales to anything which humans can experience. These points notwithstanding, Lucas is to be congratulated for producing such an interesting book.

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Archaeology and Modernity, by Julian Thomas, 2004.
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 £20.99 & US\$39.95; xii+275 pp., 30 figs.

Mark Pluciennik

Julian Thomas has never been afraid to engage with philosophy, most obviously in *Time, Culture and Identity* (1996), where the archaeology of Neolithic Britain was read through a Heideggerian lens. In this continuation he hopes to 'identify the conditions from within

which we presently conduct our archaeology', and 'to consider whether archaeology's attachment to modernity can be transcended' (p. x). His argument is that archaeology is inextricably and inescapably bound up with modernity, defined as 'a particular philosophical outlook, and by particular ways in which human beings have operated socially' (p. 2). Indeed, he asserts that modernity has provided the necessary conditions for the practice of archaeology as we know it today, though here it is worth citing Thomas's summary assessment of contemporary archaeology as one which 'seeks clarity, objectivity, and a reduction to law-like or mathematical terms. It demands precision, unambiguous resolution, universality and the transcendence of local conditions. All of this is achieved by declaring the world to be object-like and free of meaning' hence bracketing 'out ethics, rhetoric and social relations' (p. 247). Many will have difficulty in recognizing this as a fair characterization of their archaeological practices and might rather see it as a caricature of arguments rehearsed some twenty years ago. Nevertheless, given the problems of summarising, distilling and selecting authors and trends from 500 years of Western thought, Thomas presents an impressive and coherent argument, though not without its problems. In effect, it is a lengthy prologomenon, the vast majority of which is an historical review, after which Thomas rightly dismisses as impossible either a return to pre-modern sensibilities or adoption of a non-modern approach, and outlines his own transcendental programme.

The bulk of the text comprises linked and intentionally overlapping chapters or essays, each typically considering the philosophical background before moving onto wider ramifications and then specifically those for archaeology. The benefit of this format is that it produces a sense of the variety of factors, themes and strands which have come together to produce the intellectual *milieux* of modernity, while highlighting continuities of thought and the specifically archaeological. In many ways, then, Thomas produces what he has admitted elsewhere is a fairly conventional history (meta-narrative?) of ideas, curiously asocial and full of 'great men'. In this way, he looks at a series of themes including modern rationality, ordering and classification, nature and culture, mind and matter, the concept of the individual, and models of surface versus depth (and the use of 'archaeology' as a metaphor). It should be stressed that this is a book written for archaeologists: much of the story and many of the critiques may be familiar, but these are usefully drawn together into a synthesis with an archaeological focus. One might argue that Thomas makes too much of the contrast between pre-modern and modern. For example, the divisions between myth and 'rational' history are anything but