

**ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Graham Connah.** *Forgotten Africa: An Introduction to Its Archaeology.* London: Routledge, 2004. xiii + 193 pp. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. \$33.95. Paper.

Graham Connah has produced a book that should be very useful to a wide range of readers. He makes four million years of the African past accessible to a general readership through this book of twenty-nine short chapters, each written in clear and nontechnical language. In his introduction, Connah comments that while there are a number of solid works on African archaeology, they are generally directed to fellow archaeologists, and thus are frequently overlooked by the nonspecialist reader. The chapters in this book, averaging about six pages each, are organized around specific themes, such as the birth of humanity, hunting and foraging, rock art, food production, and trade and interaction. They are also organized geographically, so that, for example, there are separate short chapters on South African rock art and rock art of the Sahara. Similarly, food production is addressed in two chapters, each focusing on the very different trajectories of West Africa and Northeast and East Africa. The chapters focusing on later prehistory deal with specific regions, such as the Inland Niger Delta, Nubia, Egypt, the forest states of West Africa, and so forth.

Particularly refreshing for a book dealing with the archaeology of Africa, this book addresses the entire continent and includes chapters on Carthaginian, Greek, and Roman settlements in North Africa, Islamic North Africa, the Indian Ocean world, and the establishment of European settlements and later colonies on the coasts of Africa. Uniting these various regionally and temporally specific chapters are several key themes addressed throughout. These include the importance of trade and exchange within and between African societies, demonstrating that the regions and peoples discussed did not operate in isolation; the importance of religion, ritual, and symbolism to daily life in African societies; and the ways in which social and political power are obtained, displayed, and used.

As Connah notes in his concluding chapter, the archaeology of Africa is a vast subject, with much information unpublished or published in a bewildering array of languages and very difficult to find. *Forgotten Africa* offers a digest of the key points of that massive material, while for those readers wishing further information a list of additional reading is provided, along with two widely available references for each chapter. The book will thus be useful for classes aimed at introducing students to the many ways archaeology contributes to our understanding of the African past without bogging them down in terminological and chronological morasses. Similarly *Forgotten Africa* may prove welcome to scholars—whether historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, musicologists, or art historians—who have

forgotten something of the richness of parts of the continent outside their own areas of specialization.

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