Johnson, M. 2010. *Archaeological Theory: An Introduction*. London: Wiley Blackwell.

Rowley-Conwy, P. 2004. How the West was Lost: A Reconsideration of Agricultural Origins in Britain, Ireland and Southern Scandinavia. *Current Anthropology*, 45(S4): S83–113. doi: https://doi.org/10.1086/422083

BENJAMIN GEAREY
Department of Archaeology, University College Cork, Ireland

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

essential evidence regarding the specific lives of children in the past, and brings us closer to the reality of these populations. A good example of this approach is the study of the biological markers of stress and status among medieval sub-adults in England presented in this volume by Heidi Dawson-Hobbis (Ch. 14).

Moving beyond the significance of this approach, in terms of knowledge production, several matters should be considered. First, from a methodological point of view, we must define (or at least try to define) coherent age groups that permit us to compare sites and cultures. At this moment we have a multitude of terms to refer to the different stages through to adulthood: foetus, stillborn, newborn, infant, child, toddler, juvenile, inmature, sub-adult, or non-adult. It is crucial to make clear which age groups we are working with in each case, in order to allow cross-cultural studies on the diversity of social behaviours. This would let us understand how different biological ages could denote different social age and, ultimately, differentiated mortuary behaviours. For instance, Jayne-Leigh Thomas (Ch. 6) points out that during the Anatolian Chalcolithic children below four and five years-old were buried in jars, while those older were deposited in pits; on the other hand, Katerina Konstanti (Ch. 8) highlights differential treatment in Mycenaean necropolises, where children under twenty-four months were buried intramurally, while older children were buried in the necropolis outside the walls with the rest of the adults. Burial changes mean, in all these cases, changes in the social status of the buried person.

The second challenge, from a bioarchaeological perspective, is the restricted capability we currently have to attribute sex to the bodies of children, a task that has experienced some advances in recent years but that still remains uncertain. The development of an accurate methodology for this, for example ZooMS-based analysis on enamel proteins, would allow us to overcome the complex and delicate assignment of sex through comparison with adult grave goods, which cannot always provide the adequate approximation that Natalia Berseneva (Ch. 9) presents for the Bronze Age in the southern Trans-Urals.

Regarding the emotions provoked by child deaths, we must consider communities' capacity for mourning, and the material expression of that grief. Good examples are the cases presented by Christine Cave and Marc Oxenham (Ch. 12) for children buried in the Anglo-Saxon cemetery of Great Chesterford (England), whose grave goods—mostly personal items—manifest the sorrow for each individual; or the stones placed on the bodies of children in the medieval cemetery of St. Clemens (Copenhagen) that have been interpreted by Jean Jark Jensen (Ch. 13) as an emotional act related to the protection of the buried individuals. Bodies of children were also dressed and protected or transformed with postmortem treatments, as recognized by Kathleen McSweeney and Krum Bacarov (Ch. 7) in children from the Early Bronze Age population of Bulgarian Thrace.

But we must also understand that these emotions, in a very critical moment, can be easily used to challenge, maintain, or modify the individual and collective identity of people in the past. Child burial strategies reflect an enormous variability in funerary behaviours, even within the same community, and often show greater fluidity than in the adult world. This implies different social, cultural, and emotional responses to the death of a child. The diversity of behaviours could reflect, for instance, the different moments in which each social group fully ascribes children to the community, once again demonstrating

the liminal and constructed nature of childhood. A good example of this transition from juvenile to adult can be traced in the archaeological record in the study by Emma Maine, Pascal Sellier, Philippe Chambon, and Olivier Langlois (Ch. 4) of the Nubian Neolithic. The variability of behaviours also confronts us with the impossibility of metanarratives (fortunately, in my opinion); on the contrary, it compels us to use a micro-historical, almost biographical, approach to each of the case studies. Strategies for the social expression of identities began, for example, with the choice to bury or not a child, as is shown in two chapters dealing with the Neolithic: Le Roy (Ch. 2) and Tibbets (Ch. 3). While Milie Le Roy refers to an absence of children in the French Neolithic, Belinda Tibbets considers 'perinatal' as a category socially recognized in Çatalhöyük and associated with the use of a very specific ritual.

As I have mentioned above, the analysis of the funerary treatment of non-adults could make us consider the potential of such burials to manifest the individual and/or collective identity of individuals. For instance, Catalin Lazar, Ionela Craciunescu, Gabriel Vasile, and Mihai Florea (Ch. 5) speculate about the decision-making capacity of the dead (whether adults or children) regarding their own funerary ritual, and note that a funeral is an opportunity for the rest of the community to reinforce collective identities. Calliauw (Ch. 10) observes a similar situation in the juvenile burials of funerary contexts (i.e. necropolises) from Pre- and Proto-Palatial Crete, where kinship would be still the main relationship expressed in death. These identity tensions could be expressed even through the shape and arrangement of infant burials, which can reveal—as Eileen Murphy points out (Ch. 15)—the tension between the family group and the ecclesiastical establishment in medieval Ireland.

But these burial strategies could also mean a practice that reveals anomalies: children excluded from society and placed outside the norm through their sepultures. Valeriu Sirbu and Diana-Crina Davinca (Ch. 11) propose such exclusion for some infant burials in Geto-Dacian society found in non-funerary contexts, with abnormal positions, traces of violence, or missing body parts; an exclusion (or forgetting, or shame) that also seems to manifest itself in the non-consecrated cemeteries of hundreds of children who died during the Great Famine in Ireland, as Jonny Geber points out for Kilkenny's workhouse (Ch. 16).

The papers included in this volume are a good example of the feasibility, relevance, and versatility of considering children in archaeological interpretations and narratives. This is a consolidated field of research which has proved highly productive across wide-ranging topics (Sánchez Romero, 2017; Crawford, Hadley & Shepherd, 2018) and which not only enhances our knowledge about the societies of the past but also improves the discipline of archaeology with its continuous theoretical and methodological challenges.

REFERENCES

Baxter, J.E. & Ellis, M.B., eds. 2014. *Nineteenth Century Childhoods in Interdisciplinary and International Perspectives* (Childhood in the Past Monograph Series 6). Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow.

Brockliss, L. & Montgomery, H., eds., 2010. *Childhood and Violence in the Western Tradition* (Childhood in the Past Monograph Series 1). Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow.

Crawford, S., Hadley, D.M. & Shepherd, G., eds., 2018. *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Childhood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hadley, D.M. & Hemer, K.A., eds. 2014. *The Dark Side of Childhood in Late Antiquity*

and the Middle Ages (Childhood in the Past Monograph Series 3). Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow.

Lewis, M.E. 2007. *The Bioarchaeology of Children: Perspectives from Biological and Forensic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mays, S., Gowland, R., Halcrow, S.E. & Murphy, E. 2017. Child Bioarchaeology: Perspectives on the Past Ten Years. *Childhood in the Past*, 10(1): 38–56.

Mustakallio, K. & Laes, C., eds. 2011. *The Dark Side of Childhood in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Childhood in the Past Monograph Series 2). Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow.

Sánchez Romero, M. 2017. Landscapes of Childhood: Bodies, Places and Material Culture. *Childhood in the Past*, 10(1): 16–37.

Sánchez Romero, M., Alarcón, E. & Aranda, G., eds. 2015. *Children, Space and Identity* (Childhood in the Past Monograph Series 4). Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow.

Sánchez Romero, M. & Cid López, R., eds. 2018. *Motherhood and Infancies in the Mediterranean in Antiquity* (Childhood in the Past Monograph Series 7). Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow.

MARGARITA SANCHEZ ROMERO
University of Granada, Spain

Colin Renfrew, Iain Morley and Michael Boyd, eds. *Ritual, Play and Belief, in Evolution and Early Human Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, xii and 339pp., 117 b/w illustr., hbk, ISBN 978-1-107-14356-2)

This engaging, interdisciplinary, cogently written volume takes a welcome and timely look at the intersection between play and ritual and how they reinforce and are reinforced by belief—it is about how we make belief and make-believe. It stems from a symposium held at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge University, entitled 'From Play to Faith: Play, Ritual, and Belief in Animals and Early Human Societies'. As someone who studies play (principally board games) and the overlap between play and ritual and play and religious practice in the European medieval period I was not disappointed by the long dureé espoused by the book and its pertinent set of case studies. The volume is elegantly structured to lead us on a journey of cultural diversity and shared human nature along a chronological horizon. The book's broad chronology is prehistoric and the broad geography is Eurasia, with a trio of first millennium AD examples from Mesoamerica. A key absence from this assemblage is any specific examination of Palaeolithic art, which offers an equally fertile performance interface between play, ritual, and belief.

Drawing together the work of twenty authors, the book comprises twenty-one chapters, two of them introductions and the remainder split unevenly across four sections and supported by a comprehensive index. The brace of introductions covers the background to the book and its coverage and the symposium it grew out of (the first of three chapters by one of the project leads, Iain Morley) and then the precursorial link between play and ritual, in which Colin Renfrew explores the evolutionary strand. This fundamental question of the project is pursued through comparing animal behaviour and early hominin behaviour and looking for correspondences between the two and whether we can trace