

problem reflects the theoretical and data-base problems of the whole South and East Asia region: the lack of dating, artifacts, environmental background, a concentration on typology and a dominance of preconceptions based on Western work which relates to problems of terminology (see paper by Irving & Bryan).

In light of the inclusion of the 'New World' part the omission of Australia and the Pacific islands is striking. While the latter's omission might be explained in their late colonisation, the data from Australia are very well recorded, have strikingly early dates and provide an alternative 'peopling' problem.

As a whole, this volume presents a very informative set of studies into a poorly explored region. The theoretical and methodological problems such an area presents are not explicit in this work and the overall conclusion one reaches is that much more detailed work and data is needed. Despite this, and the publication of more recent work, the volume is not out-dated and provides an essential introduction for those interested in the Palaeolithic of this region.

References

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CHRIS SCARRE (ED.), Ancient France, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1983. 390pp. £19.00 (Hard) ISBN 0 85224 441 X

Reviewed by Grant Chambers.

The appearance of a synthetic and fairly comprehensive work on the French Neolithic, incorporating a considerable amount of original analysis, in addition to an up-to-date account of the cultural material, is much to be welcomed, especially as an undergraduate teaching aid, and, as the blurb on the dust-jacket puts it, may "point the way ahead for further research". This volume offers a series of regional analyses of the French Neolithic, and descriptions of the cultural material, with some kind of interpretative unity given by the common "environmentalist" approach employed. Although the coverage is not strictly comprehensive, in the sense that each and every department is given explicit attention, all the major geographical zones and cultural groupings are dealt with by contributors who have specialised in regional analysis, with a general synthesis of problems, approaches, and tentative conclusions provided by the editor. The laudable intention is to combine detailed knowledge of specific areas with the most recent research, into a satisfactorily unified synthesis of the "French Neolithic". It is fortunate for this enterprise that the last five years have seen continuous British involvement in French archaeology in many regions, permitting one of the few adequate syntheses of French Prehistory (in English).

As a general account this has the advantage of being less superficial than Guilane's recent "France d'avant la France" (1980), or the appropriate chapter in Piggott, Daniel and McBurney (1974), without restricting itself to simple classification and description in the manner of most

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standard regional works (Bailloud, 1974; Burnez, 1976; Courtin, 1975; etc.) Moreover, the advantage of up-to-dateness is particularly evident in, for example, Ilett's chapter on the early Neolithic of the Paris Basin, with its account of the recent work on the Linear-bandkeramik settlements of the Aisne Valley. One is made keenly aware of the rapid pace and crucial significance of current work in this area. Thus the extensive faunal assemblages from the Aisne Valley sites, not yet fully analysed, should revolutionize our knowledge of the "neolithisation" of this area. As Dr. Ilett puts it, "As far as the investigation of (social and economic) processes is concerned, it would not be unfair to conclude that early Neolithic research in N.E. France has only just begun." Indeed, although full-scale Childean cultural paradigms are not offered, much useful information can be gleaned from this book. It is particularly valuable to get away from the standard English conceptualization of the French Neolithic in terms of the oft-mentioned "highlights": Breton megaliths, sequences of Impressed ware showing gradual neolithisation, and the like. Thus Scarre's chapter on the Centre-Ouest offers a valuable account of an area not very familiar to English archaeologists, yet containing highly interesting comparative material such as the late Neolithic "Peu-Richardien" interrupted ditch enclosures. Similarly, Bahn, Lewthwaite and Burkill give extensive accounts of fairly neglected areas (the Pyrenees, Corsica, and Burgundy-Jura, respectively). Useful tables of C14 dates are included with each chapter in addition to adequate illustrations of the basic cultural materials; the plates are, however, rather indistinct and disappointing.

Having given some attention to the descriptive side of the book, some attention must be paid to the

original interpretations and analyses of the contributors, (all of whom have undertaken research in the relevant areas). Thematic unity is provided by a concentration on subsistence systems, settlement patterns, palaeo-environmental change and their role in the decisive socio-economic developments of the French Neolithic. Specific methodology and orientation varies between regions according to the nature and limitations of the relevant data-base. Thus Howell and Scarre concentrate on settlement location and palaeo-environmental change through the Neolithic sequence, as they work in areas where relevant faunal and botanic assemblages are few or not yet analysed. However, Bahn and Lewthwaite concentrate more directly on the analysis of faunal-botanical assemblages and their integration with patterns of site-location. In most cases some attention is paid to the history of fieldwork in the relevant area, in order to determine basic patterns of regional bias, in addition to paying some attention to the difficult problems of reconstructing the Neolithic environmental setting of the site distribution pattern. Mills and Scarre, for example, give detailed accounts of the problems of interpreting site location in such terms. Most of this analysis is "new" and some of it attempts quite an ambitious level of overall integration: notably Howell's hypothesis of a Kruk-type pattern, of gradual settlement expansion from valley-floor to interfluvium throughout the Neolithic of the Paris Basin.

In general, the unity of approach, and the fact that there is some specific interpretation of the material is a welcome relief from simple cultural classification, a weakness of French archaeology noted by Audouze and Leroi-Gourhan (1981:170-189). Most of the authors recognise the need to integrate economic analysis with a more

all-embracing study of social change: hence the recurrent references to Hodder(1979:446-454), and Renfrew(1976:198-220), and are aware of the difficulty of integrating their economic analyses in an attempt to analyse the most "glaring" problems of the French Neolithic: the appearance of megaliths at diverse periods and in diverse cultural contexts, the problems of cultural regionalisation and "supra-cultural" exchange (e.g. the notorious difficulty of interpreting the "Chasseen", a problem mentioned by most of the contributors), and the widespread adoption of coarse, undecorated ceramics by some late Neolithic groups as opposed to fine-wares in other areas. It is here that one feels the main potentialities for future work are located.

Most attempts to deal with these sorts of problems by the contributors are tentative, though such a modest and "prudent" approach is doubtless preferable to grandiose generalisations, especially as much of the detailed economic work remains to be done. Scarre offers a useful summary of these problems in the concluding chapter, including the very basic, but as far as I know, quite original observation that in many areas the distribution of spectacular settlement structures and collective burial in tombs are mutually exclusive, and that this seems a genuine reflection of the archaeological material, rather than a consequence of differential fieldwork. It is just this kind of diversity of context and patterning which is not taken into account by most generalised explanations of "megalithism", and which helps define areas for further research.

All in all, a very valuable guide to a complex and culturally rich area and period, with an abundance of data relevant to many of the current problems of prehistoric European archaeology.

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OLE KLINDT-JENSEN, A History of Scandinavian archaeology. Thames & Hudson, London, 1975. 144pp. £4.95 (Soft) ISBN 0 500 79006 X

Reviewed by Chris Chippindale.

This book was written ten years ago, and it must first be explained why it should be reviewed now. Simply, it is a short book, it is cheap, and it gives an admirable academic history at essay length (80 pages) of that long period from the 16th to the beginning of this century, when Scandinavian archaeology was, in all sorts of ways, far in advance of the rest of Europe. The book-binding is shoddy, so you may have to read a copy quickly before it falls apart; and there never was a hardback edition because (the story goes) the sheets for it went missing at the printers