

of theoretical issues is a useful introduction. There follow several case studies, two of which stand out. Firstly, taken in conjunction with another paper on heat pre-treatment, the contribution by Rosemary Bradley and Chris Clayton which describes the effect of the microstructure of flint on micro-wear trace formation, forms a breakthrough in understanding the variability of such traces which has been the major problem in microwear interpretation. More controversially, the paper by Newcomer *et al.* would have been a rather damning reflection on microwear inferences from polishes had it not been published in almost precisely the same form about a year ago (Newcomer *et al.* 1986) and had its findings not been brought into question by a scathing rejoinder by Moss (1987).

Whether or not the contributions reflect accurately the proceedings of the Brighton symposium, they form an important collection of papers -- important not only in that they provide a baseline against which we can measure progress in, say, another five years, but also in that they make accessible a range of scientifically-allied methods and a range of references. These latter reasons will, no doubt, contribute to the aforementioned progress.

Is the book good value? It certainly helps to think of the papers as only costing £2 each, since this makes some of the contributions excellent value. Perhaps too many of the papers are preliminary statements, but this simply reflects the 'frontier' nature of the work being presented, and also contributes to that 'conference atmosphere' mentioned earlier. Several papers are of the

calibre to be long-lived and repeatedly referred-to, and the bibliographies are generally accurate if not entirely consistent. My final comment is "nice book; shame about the title!"

References

- Moss, E.H. 1987. A review of 'Investigating microwear polishes with blind tests'. Journal of Archaeological Science 14, 473-481.
- Newcomer, M., Grace, R. and Unger-Hamilton, R. 1986. Investigating microwear polishes with blind tests. Journal of Archaeological Science 13, 203-217.
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J. STREET-JENSEN (ED.), Christian Jürgensen Thomsen und Ludwig Lindenschmidt, eine Gelehrtenkorrespondenz aus der Frühzeit der Altertumskunde (1853-1864). (Monographien: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte; Bd 6). Habelt, Bonn, 1985. 143 pp. £27.50 (Hard) ISBN 3-88467-014-X.

Reviewed by John Moss-Eccardt

The major part of this book consists of letters exchanged between C.J. Thomsen of 'Three Age System' fame and Ludwig Lindenschmidt, Curator of the Mainz Zentralmuseum, who, in later years, was opposed to the overall application of that system to European prehistory. However, this did not prevent a warm professional friendship developing between the two men during the

years 1853-64. The letters are preceded by a most useful introduction by Street-Jensen who shows a scholarly appreciation of the material, both in the longer background sections and in the numerous and precise footnotes to the correspondence. The first 45 pages are devoted to Personalities; National Institutions; Antiquities Legislation; Other museums and collections; Lindenschmidt, Engelhardt and Iron Age ritual bog deposits; finance, collections and staff; Thomsen's exhibitions; Lindenschmidt, the Museum for Northern Antiquities and the Three-Age System; the museums of St Germain-en-Laye, Mainz, and Copenhagen. Additional letters are from other people essential to the unfolding of the action during these years and include all nationalities; the editor supplies thumb-nail sketches of these persons wherever necessary.

The book should be of value to those with an interest in the history of museums and the growth of archaeological collections because it covers some crucial years in museum development. The letters begin in the year following Lindenschmidt's founding of the Mainz Museum and almost provide a 'blow by blow' account of the build-up of its collections. The editor's introduction gives a lot of background information about the institutions concerned and covers such subjects as staff size, responsibilities, salaries, titles and other matters which would be familiar to modern-day museologists. There is a great deal about the provision of the replicas and casts which were to form a substantial part of Lindenschmidt's collections. The information is very detailed,

including prices, methods of transport, currency to be used in payment and the collections which were involved. There is a 'collecting' atmosphere in the letters which I found unpleasant but today we have not the same attitude to private collections as our predecessors. After all Sir Augustus Franks found it possible to be both a British Museum official and a private collector at the same time. Nonetheless, the objects were treated very much like commercial commodities and dispatched like freight. Finance features prominently in the texts with the all-too-familiar complaints about insufficient funds and low salaries.

Of particular interest is the point that Street-Jensen makes concerning Lindenschmidt's objection to the "Three Age System" (p. 34). It would seem that what was shown to him on his only visit to Copenhagen, couched with Thomsen's indecisive exposition of his collections, caused his doubts, rather than any fundamental disagreement with Thomsen's scheme. It was this visit which led him to say, after Thomsen's death, that he felt the necessity for "a close examination of the completely isolated position of the bronze implements, their foreign character and the contrast which they offer against the evidence of the culture of the country in the preceding and following periods" (Lindenschmidt 1876, quoted in Böhner 1981, 123).

This also applied to other nineteenth century scholars who visited Copenhagen; Gräslund making a similar point in his paper at the 1978 Aarhus Conference (Gräslund 1981, 49) while Böhner, on the other hand,

at the same gathering (Böhner 1981, 121) felt that the disagreement was more serious. If the latter were the case, it is strange to find no sign of strain in the friendship, especially during the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein by Prussia. I am not clear if Gräslund and Böhner were aware of the existence of the Thomsen/Lindenschmidt letters in 1978; certainly the tone of the correspondence does not appear to be that of two men holding strongly opposed views. The explanation may be that Lindenschmidt did not wish to offend a man for whom he had respect and affection, or more cynically, that he did not want any problems with his supply of replicated antiquities! There is also the possibility that the German classically-based education system had much to do with the matter and that there was a great contrast in the attitudes of German and Danish scholarship.

By the time the letters were written Thomsen was an old man and he made frequent reference to this fact, particularly that he was not as energetic as he used to be. He still managed to travel considerable distances: in 1861 he journeyed to France to hand over 130 objects to Napoleon III from Frederick VII of Denmark. The French Emperor, who was an authority on Julius Caesar, had encouraged a number of French military men to study the sites of *De Bello Gallico* to provide material for a book of his on this subject: the Danish donation went to the famous museum of St Germain-en-Laye. Thomsen had an agreeable interview with the Emperor but the diplomatic aspect of the visit

was a fiasco because the decorations given to the Danes were inferior to those given by them to the French: naturally, Thomsen was quite oblivious to such values!

The illustrations are excellent, comprising 'atmospheric' portraits of some of the dramatis personae, and reproductions of documents including Lindenschmidt's drawings of finds from the Hallstatt excavations. Especially touching is the final page with a last photograph of Thomsen sent to Lisch who wrote to Lindenschmidt "We have lost our good old Thomsen! The loss has touched me deeply. Nowhere in the whole of Germany is one of the succeeding generation fit to follow him. In Prussia there is nothing but vain idle twaddle...." (my translation).

After reading the book one can echo these sentiments with sincerity. Those who produced it are to be congratulated on making available not only documents valuable for the historian of archaeology in museums but also for the manner in which they were presented. I hope that Street-Jensen may be persuaded to produce further work of this kind.

References

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