Reviews

New Book Chronicle

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People and environment—past, present and future

DAVID FRANKEL, JENNIFER M. WEBB & SUSAN LAWRENCE (ed.). Archaeology in environment and technology: intersections and transformations. ix+216 pages, 33 b&w illustrations, 13 tables. 2013. New York: Routledge; 978-0-415-83201-4 hardback £80.

MAXIMILIAN O. BALDIA, TIMOTHY K. PERTTULA & DOUGLAS S. FRINK (ed.). Comparative archaeology and paleoclimatology: socio-cultural responses to a changing world (British Archaeological Reports international series 2456). xi+299 pages, 135 b&w illustrations. 2013. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-4073-1064-0 paperback £45.

JUTTA KNEISEL, WIEBKE KIRLEIS, MARTA DAL CORSO, NICOLE TAYLOR & VERENA TIEDTKE (ed.). Collapse or continuity? Environment and development of Bronze Age human landscapes. Proceedings of the international workshop "Socioenvironmental dynamics over the last 12,000 years: the creation of landscapes II (14–18 March 2011)" in Kiel. Volume 1 (Universitätsforschungen zur prähistorischen Archäologie 205). 279 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. 2012. Bonn: Habelt; 978-3-7749-3763-5 hardback €63.

JOHN D. WINGARD & SUE EILEEN HAYES (ed.). Soils, climate and society: archaeological investigations in ancient America. xvii+233 pages, 34 b&w illustrations, 29 tables. 2013. Boulder: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-203-0 hardback \$70.

LUDOMIR R. LOZNY (ed.). Continuity and change in cultural adaptation to mountain environments: from prehistory to contemporary threats. x+410 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. 2013. New York: Springer; 978-1-4614-5701-5 hardback \$129.

It is not so long ago that human society was perceived to be at the mercy of climate and environment, struggling to survive the vagaries of weather, poor soils and geographical isolation. Today—in the Anthropocene—barely a day passes without new research reporting the growing impact of human society

on climate and environment: burgeoning population, increasing CO₂ emissions and declining biodiversity. When the natural world does demonstrate its power—hurricanes, floods, droughts, earthquakes—responses are divided: are these freak events or reminders that climate and environment are dynamic and unpredictable? Are humans (partly) responsible? What can and should we do? Will offsetting the emissions from transatlantic flights and offering more empty plastic bottles to the god of recycling save us? None of the five volumes under review here claims it will save the world, but each provides as much food for thought about the present and the future of human-environment relations as it does about the past.

Three of the volumes derive from conferences, and all five are edited collections. Between them, they encompass 72 papers (plus introductions and conclusions) and over 120 authors, attesting both the quantity of current research and its specialist and collaborative nature. There is clearly not space to consider every contribution, so a sample of the most important and interesting, and those with crosscutting themes, will have to suffice.

The first volume, FRANKEL et al.'s Archaeology in environment and technology, comprises 12 papers, half of which derive from a workshop at La Trobe University. The editors note that most of the contributors are based in Australasia and that half of the papers concern Australian hunter-gatherers, asserting that this Antipodean outlook is "no bad thing" as a counterpoint to "more familiar northern-hemisphere perspectives" (p. 3).

The focus concerns the complex relations between environment, technology and culture. The editors' introduction provides a concise statement on how this sprawling topic can be focused down before the volume launches into 11 case studies spanning the period from the Late Pleistocene to the present.

Cosgrove *et al.* present a comparison of huntergatherer societies in Late Pleistocene south-west France and south-west Tasmania. They aim to assess similarities and differences between culturally distinct Palaeolithic groups from *c.* 40 000–13 000 BP, and to relate these patterns to changing climate and

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environment. Using lithic and faunal remains, the authors identify a number of similarities in discard patterns which they relate to global temperature fluctuations. Then, around 13 000 years ago, in the context of ameliorating climate, societies in both areas abandoned long-established subsistence practices—hunting either wallabies or reindeer—for different solutions: becoming increasingly settled in Europe, migrating in search of new landscapes in Tasmania.

While Cosgrove et al. assert the need for an explicitly comparative approach, Holdaway et al. argue that the imposition of European models on the Australian landscape has led to profound misunderstanding of this unique continent. The authors argue that Australia has a unique ecology which does not fit any standard model; the continent needs to be understood on its own terms. Holdaway et al. demonstrate how ethnographic studies of inadequate duration have come to fix human environmental risk management at a seasonal scale, punctuated by a series of dramatic environmental shifts. In contrast, they argue that it was resilience to longer-term cycles of continuous environmental change that was key to survival. Using a case study from New South Wales, the authors illustrate how this alternative temporal perspective allows them to dismiss the notion of specialised seasonal sites and to better explain the high levels of observed interand intra-site lithic assemblage variability.

From Australia to the eastern Mediterranean. Falconer and Fall compare sites in Bronze Age Jordan and Cyprus to assess similarities and contrasts between contemporary agrarian societies in different environmental and political contexts. The authors compare faunal and botanical samples to demonstrate highly localised patterns of animal management, crop cultivation and pyrotechnology with significant implications for the hinterland of each site. Conversely, Webb reverses the equation, exploring how two technologically and socially distinct societies respond to the same environment. She compares the fortunes of the established Chalcolithic hoe-based agricultural societies of Cyprus with the newly-arrived Philia Early Cypriot population (c. 2400–2300 BC), bringing cattle and plough-based agriculture. This new group presented the existing population with a "radical adaptive challenge" (p. 145). The evidence is patchy, but Webb suggests that the rapid success of the new population may reflect the inability of Late Chalcolithic societies to reconcile not only the technology but also the associated change in social values.

Other papers concern short-lived imperial success in the challenging environment of early Islamic Afghanistan and the changing basis of horticulture in Papua New Guinea; the final paper assesses why there are so few 'cultural landscapes' nominated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, drawing attention to the continuing bias towards built structures and 'pristine' natural places at the expense of dynamic, non-monumental landscapes which result from sustained human-environment interaction.

The next volume, Comparative archaeology and paleoclimatology, edited by BALDIA et al., shifts from technology to climate. The 21 chapters, plus introduction and conclusion, fall into three sections: New World, Africa and Europe, the latter comprising just over half of the papers. The editors start by asserting the unique opportunity for archaeologists to construct a necessary bridge between the 'hard' and social sciences in the study of palaeoclimate—as well as future climate. They also assert the need for a comparative approach for understanding the complexity of human-climate relations and, like Frankel el al., note the important mediating role played by technology and social organisation.

The volume opens with Gunn et al. who compare social complexity in the Yucatán Peninsula and the Carolinas. The authors demonstrate that the asynchronous cultural chronologies of the two regions relate to the contrasting effects of changing global temperatures on the Bermuda High weather system. For example, higher global temperature increases precipitation and extends the maize growing season in Yucatán, but brings a reduction in precipitation and shorter growing season to the Carolinas (the latter already at higher latitude with a shorter growing season). The authors illustrate how changes before, during and after the Medieval Maximum resulted in shifts back and forth in social organisation between cities and towns/villages in the Yucatán, and, in the Carolinas, between towns/villages and hunting/gathering and even regional abandonment. Still in the Americas, in a short but useful paper, Snow puts the people back into the equation, highlighting how individual actions aggregate into longer-term patterns which may be mistaken for different intentions. He points to the incremental northward shift of the Iroquoians in search of better conditions for maize cultivation, questioning the notion of any pre-planned long-distance 'migration' in search of ecologically suitable land.

Crossing the Atlantic, Wright presents new data for the presence of cattle in Kenya during the second millennium BC, addressing the question: 'why did domesticated animals 'trickle' before they 'splashed' into sub-Saharan Africa?' The patchy uptake of pastoralism prior to 1000 BC was followed by rapid and wholesale replacement of lithic, ceramic and subsistence technologies after that date. Wright speculates-in his own words-that this trickle-splash scenario may relate to epizootic disease in the highland and riparian zones into which groups had been pushed by climatic change between 2000 and 1000 BC. Hunter-gatherers could experiment with domesticated animals (perhaps using specimens captured during raids), but disease effectively inhibited systematic adoption.

In a related paper, Vogelsang and Keding compare the comprehensive uptake of pastoralism in north-east Africa with the slower and more selective adoption documented in south-west Africa. Comparing the Wadi Howar in Sudan and Opuwo District in Namibia, the authors suggest very different social responses to environment and changing climate. In Namibia, smaller social groups practised highly mobile non-specialised subsistence strategies; in contrast, the more permanent and abundant food resources of the Wadi Howar reduced the need for mobility and facilitated a potentially easier transition to pastoralism. That transition came c. 3000 BC when increasing aridity demanded the adoption of risk-reducing strategies in the Wadi Howar (initially cattle pastoralism, followed by the addition of sheep/goats). In contrast, the much greater climatic stability of the Opuwo District permitted long-term continuity of hunter-gatherer strategies supplemented by highly selective adoption of pottery and domesticated animals.

The third group of papers focus on Europe and present a diverse panorama, in some cases only loosely tied to the topic of palaeoclimate. Among the most interesting are Baldia's immense article synthesising three millennia's worth of archaeological and palaeoclimate data spanning from the Carpathians to Scandinavia; Mitchell on the use of testate amoebae—small, abundant, diverse and fast to respond—as proxies for climate change; and Sümegi *et al.* on the 'ecological trap' which stalled European neolithisation in the Carpathian basin. Menotti tackles the abandonment of Alpine lake dwellings during the Middle Bronze Age using the results of excavations in advance of motorway construction to

demonstrate how communities responded to rising lake levels by retreating short distances inland, taking both ceramic traditions and building techniques with them, before returning to the lake shores when water levels dropped during the Late Bronze Age.

The environmental problems of the lake dwellings of Bronze Age Europe are also considered in the next volume under review: Collapse or continuity? Environment and development of Bronze Age human landscapes edited by KNEISEL et al. This collection of 17 papers forms one of three volumes resulting from a workshop on socio-environmental dynamics held at Kiel in 2011. The Kiel Graduate School of 'Human development in landscapes' has established itself as an important player in European landscape archaeology, promoting a highly interdisciplinary approach spanning the humanities and sciences in pursuit of key questions about past societies and environment.

As with those volumes already discussed, *Collapse or continuity?* presents a diverse collection of papers of variable length, quality and relevance to the overarching theme. The absence of an introductory chapter is partially compensated by the concluding remarks from the editors; nonetheless, the provocative title demanded more sustained discussion than could be provided by any individual paper (cf. McAnany & Yoffee 2009). Again, the volume is divided geographically, moving from the southeastern Mediterranean, through northern Italy and the Alps, via the Balkans, to Germany and finally Poland.

Fiorentino *et al.* start the ball rolling with the use of stable isotopes ¹²C and ¹³C for climate modelling. They use AMS radiocarbon-dated charred plant macroremains from Ebla and Qatna in Syria to identify variation in the availability of water—a proxy for fluctuating rainfall. The results broadly correspond with other Near Eastern climate proxies indicating long-term aridification from the third millennium BC and illustrating the wider potential of the methodology. The authors go on to observe correlations between centennial fluctuations in rainfall and the rise and fall of a number of Bronze Age states across the wider region, including a period of drought *c.* 1600 BC corresponding with Hittite invasions.

Still in the Mediterranean, Beckman presents research on the uplands of north-eastern Crete. Her survey work has mapped the extraordinary remains of a Minoan landscape comprising buildings, enclosures

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and roadways of Protopalatial date (c. 2000–1700 BC) extending over 30km². Beckman talks of a "Minoan landnám" (p. 35), or rapid and planned intake of territory, for agricultural production based on horticultural gardens, tree crops and animal husbandry. Surface finds include many tripod vessels—possibly indicating cheese production—and silos which suggest the storage of significant surplus, most likely for export. Despite potentially high productivity, the domestic structures remain modest, a sign which Beckman takes to indicate tenant or dependent status.

Beckman's fascinating study draws on ethnographic parallels but is careful to identify differences (e.g. the archaeological evidence points to year-round occupation rather than seasonal exploitation, as has been more typical in recent centuries). Presumably—like the Dead Cities of the Limestone Massif in Syria—the astonishing preservation of this landscape is explained by its rapid and long term abandonment (it was not reoccupied until the nineteenth century AD). And this, in the context of a volume on environment and collapse, is the weakest part of the paper; Beckman tentatively suggests a possible correlation with the Theran eruption. Otherwise, this collapse and the role of the environment remains to be more fully explored.

Moving north, Jennings takes us back to the Alpine lake dwellings and provides a timely warning about the dangers of circularity in reasoning, where rising lake levels explain the absence of settlement, at the same time that the absence of settlement is used to indicate higher lake levels. He goes on to explore the different social strategies used to mitigate environmental change, with particular attention to (long-distance) exchange. Meanwhile, Scholz maps the location of 178 metal hoards in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in search of spatial and chronological patterns; the author notes a number of correlations between changing climate and hoard deposition, especially around 1100 BC, but is sensibly guarded about any explicit causation.

Finally, arriving in western Poland, Kneisel assesses the fate of Early Bronze Age societies at the transition to the Middle Bronze Age, c. 1600 BC: 'did the Únětice society collapse?' The paper draws on palaeobotanical evidence from the site of Bruszczewo, south-west of Poznań, to confirm what the regional archaeological evidence—or lack thereof—suggests: a significant reduction of human activity followed by regenerating tree cover and ameliorating water quality. The author

is too canny to ascribe this situation to entirely environmental causes, drawing attention in particular to shifting long-distance exchange networks. This general position—explaining change in Bronze Age society as the product of complex relations of environment and social organisation—is soundly supported in a short contribution by Johannes Müller, the coordinator of the Kiel Graduate School.

From Bronze Age Europe, it's back across the Atlantic to consider Soils, climate and society, a collection of nine papers derived from an SAA session and edited by WINGARD and HAYES. This volume narrows the human-environment theme by focusing on agricultural societies, the changing productivity of soils, and the implications for demography and social organisation. Woods et al. address the question of the population size of pre-Columbian Amazonia using different modelling techniques. They note previous estimates vary by an order of magnitude or more (from fewer than one million to over ten million). The authors model the populations which could be supported by the so-called Amazonian dark earths (black terra preta soils derived from village middens and the more extensive terra mulata derived from intensive cultivation). The basic method multiplies dark earth area (assuming 50 per cent usage and 1:4 crop:fallow ratio) by an average maize yield (3925kg per ha) and divides by average annual maize consumption per person (c. 160kg) to produce a figure of 3.09 million. A second independent method uses concentrations of phosphorus and calcium incorporated into dark earths to estimate population size; this is a rather more complex calculation involving a number of significant assumptions, but producing a figure of 3.3 million. This population, concentrated on just 0.2 per cent of the land surface, might have been accompanied by an additional 5-6 million in the remaining 99.8 per cent of Greater Amazonia, producing a total pre-Columbian population of 8-10 million-at the high end of previous estimates (see also Arroyo-Kalin's review of Rostain in the Book Reviews section of this issue).

Hayes turns her attention to the Maya and deploys the Environmental Policy Integrated Climate (EPIC) package to model the impact of soils and climate on crop yields. Using a case study in the Belize valley—the wonderfully named site of Baking Pot—Hayes is able to identify five different soil classes, with highly variable levels of productivity. Adopting the same basic method as Woods *et al.*, she then divides the total production (minus various losses)

by average annual maize consumption per person (136.7kg—rather less than their Amazonian cousins) to produce a population estimate of c. 3000. Once that population was fed, the most likely cash-crop for regional exchange was cacao. Again, Hayes attempts a second method to cross-check her calculations, multiplying standard families of five across Baking Pot's 300 domestic residences for a population of 1500, leaving room for shifting cultivation and cash cropping.

Wingard also deploys EPIC modelling in his paper on the Classic Maya in the Copán Valley, Honduras. He uses soil core sampling to develop detailed models of maize productivity and its slow decline over time as a result of soil exhaustion. He then simulates supported population across the first millennium AD to assess which model best fits the accepted peak population of 20 000-25 000 in AD 822 before its subsequent collapse. The results suggest that high Early Classic and high Late Classic population levels are incompatible, since such extended exploitation of the agricultural base could not have been sustained. As the evidence for the Late Classic population is rather stronger, Wingard argues we must accept a much lower figure for the Early Classic with implications for the exercise of elite power.

Other papers in this volume explore the 'Mississippi Vacant Quarter', Peru and El Salvador. The concluding paper on the 'Epistemological foundation of ecological modeling in archaeology' by Schroeder seeks "to raise awareness of Western colonial economic philosophies and their potential impact on our estimates of ancient resource productivity" (p. 217). It reviews various ethnographic sources and highlights the effects of early colonial attempts to attract immigrants by exaggerating productivity. Its most powerful observation, however, is that "the values used to model ancient maize productivity more than doubled from pre-World War II to the 1970s, as did Anglo-American yields across the Corn Belt" (p. 208). In other words, the ever-improving sophistication of computer modelling counts for naught if our input variables are determined by subconscious preconceptions about productivity based on our own experiences.

With the final volume in this quintet, Continuity and change in cultural adaptation to mountain environments, edited by LOZNY, attention shifts from soils to mountains. Despite the coherence of the volume's theme, in the context of the current review, this is a book of two halves. The first deals with

archaeological and historical surveys in the Alps and the Pyrenees; the second half focuses on studies of contemporary mountain communities, addressing the social, economic and political challenges faced by those living in upland areas of countries including Bolivia, Nepal, China and the Philippines. In the thematic context of the volume, these later chapters intersect well with the earlier ones—not least, these communities demonstrate strong historical identities and provide potentially interesting models for other mountain societies in the past, as well as ideas about sustainable social and economic organisation for the future. For present purposes, however, we will focus on the chapters which deal explicitly with archaeological material and/or palaeoenvironmental data.

Galop et al. review pollen data to assess longterm human-environment relations in the French Pyrenees, tracking various pulses of activity associated with the Neolithic transition (c. 4000 and 3300 cal BC), the Bronze Age (c. 2000 BC) and the Bronze Age-Iron Age transition (c. 1000 BC). Abandonment c. 850 BC may be connected with deteriorating climate; there is limited evidence for expansion during the Roman period, followed by new colonisation in the sixth/seventh centuries and, especially, the ninth/tenth AD. Depopulation in the fourteenth/fifteenth centuries was followed by significant deforestation during the Industrial Revolution and, finally, another phase of depopulation in the twentieth century. These broad trends provide a framework for other contributors, principally Guédon's survey of the upper Lavedan, Lévêque's survey of the Campan and Lesponne Valleys, and Lozny's survey of the Bouleste/Labas Valley. Guédon's fieldwork concerns structures associated with pastoral exploitation including cuyéou (cabanas or huts with associated animal enclosures), formadgeres (cheese dairies) and leytés (milk stores constructed over springs and streams). He makes the point—common to all these studies, as well as other mountain contexts—that archaeological prospection in the uplands is the 'reverse' of that practised in the lowlands; in the latter, we have chronologically diagnostic artefacts but no structures, in the former we have structures but few artefacts and consequently limited chronological control. His preliminary aim is therefore to construct a typology of site types to be investigated by future excavation.

Lévêque presents rich documentary detail for the exploitation of the Haut Adour as context for the

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c. 250 sites (and 1000 structures) documented in the region; again, structural typology is the initial classificatory framework, with excavation the key to future chronological categorisation. He concludes with a plea for the recognition and documentation of this neglected vernacular architecture; it is, he concedes, "not very exciting" (p. 120) but here—and in mountainous regions across Europe—it is threatened by encroaching forest. Lozny's paper presents similar experiences, presenting 44 new sites which are easier to typologise structurally than chronologically, and developing a 'historical ecology of the commons'. He uses statistical analysis to identify various clusters of sites which he relates to specific altitudinal bands and husbandry practices.

In summary, each of these five volumes is wideranging-chronologically, geographically, methodologically and conceptually. Although each volume is packaged around a specific theme—crudely, in order of discussion: technology, climate, soils, the Bronze Age and mountains—quite a few of the papers could have been happily swapped between them, a sure sign of their breadth and interdisciplinarity. Such diversity is part of the attraction of these volumes. Here, we encounter the cooperation of specialists enabling new multiproxy measures to improve confidence about the ecological impact of settlement or the existence of genuine breaks in human occupation. Equally, such diversity is a weakness; despite the editors' efforts to define specific research avenues within such a vast theme as human-environment relations, the contributions do not always add up to more than the sum of their parts.

At some point or other, all of the volumes introduce—and juxtapose—processual and postprocessual archaeology, drawing attention to, on the one hand, "biological needs" and, on the other, "cultural beliefs and values...beyond those of basic nutrition" (Soils, climate and society, p. xiv). Most then go on to seek an intermediate route intended to recognise the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of each approach— "little about the why" and "just-so stories" (p. 131) respectively. All have some sense of the important role played by social organisation and, especially, technology in human-environment relations, whether new crops (e.g. maize), new tools (e.g. ploughs) or new practices (e.g. transhumance, migration). The degree to which correlations between social developments and changing climate and environment are accepted as causation depends heavily on the scale of analysis

and when/which societies are under discussion (see also Petraglia's review of Rabett in the Book Reviews section of this issue). In this context, there is a notable emphasis on prehistoric societies (Late Pleistocene, Bronze Age Europe, pre-Columbian Americas) and/or societies occupying very specific 'niches' (high mountains, dry deserts, lake shores). These are all fascinating and of potential relevance to current and future environmental challenges such as resilience, sustainability, adaptation and even collapse. Yet, arguably, they focus on landscapes where small changes have dramatic consequences, or on societies with less complex social structures. The environment, however, did not simply stabilise as a scenic backdrop for classical Mediterranean civilisation or medieval states (e.g. Ellenblum 2012). Indeed, if, as each of these volumes asserts, we can learn from the past, these more complex and expansive polities might provide closer analogies for how contemporary Western societies might cause, respond to and mitigate environmental and climate change. The point is reinforced by the observation that in the contemporary world 'the West mitigates and the rest adapt'; these case studies provide sustainable models for communities in Patagonia or Papua New Guinea but ironically those are often the regions which will experience not only more extreme climate change but also greater pressure to adapt in order to underwrite the unsustainable lifestyles of our increasingly populated and urbanised planet. Perhaps the clearest lesson from these volumes is that technological fixes and social reorganisation can outpace ecological change—but not indefinitely.

On the road

J.H. CROUWEL. Chariots and other wheeled vehicles in Italy before the Roman Empire. xxii+234 pages, 179 illustrations. 2012. Oxford & Oakville (CT): Oxbow; 978-1-84217-467-8 hardback £48.

HSIAO-YUN WU. Chariots in early China: origins, cultural interaction, and identity (British Archaeological Reports international series 2457). iv+135 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. 2013. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-4073-1065-7 paperback £28.

Books about the archaeology of chariots, it seems, are a bit like buses; you can wait for ages for one to appear, then suddenly two come along at once. Their destinations—China and Italy—are 5000 miles apart

but their chronological scope is the same: the mid first millennium BC, a period immediately predating the rise of the powerful Qin/Han and Roman empires respectively. What similarities and differences can be discerned in the adoption of chariot technology in these two regions? And how do these two books compare?

J.H. CROUWEL is a noted scholar of ancient wheeled transport, having previously published volumes on chariots in the Near East, Egypt and Greece. In *Chariots and other wheeled vehicles in Italy* he turns his attention to the adoption of chariots in Iron Age Italy and through to the reign of Augustus (i.e. pre-Ben-Hur!). From the outset, he makes clear that this is a primarily technical treatise. It provides in-depth technical discussion of the typology (i.e. chariots, carts, wagons) and component parts (e.g. axles, wheels, harnessing) based on extant vehicles as well as their representation in texts, models and images on ceramic vessels.

Crouwel notes that, until recently, horse-drawn chariots were believed to first appear in Italy during the late eighth century BC, but two recentlydiscovered miniature models from the Colli Albani push back the arrival of this technology, or at least knowledge about it, to the eleventh/tenth centuries. Nonetheless, this relatively late adoption of the chariot is explained by geographical distance, limited trade and "less advanced socio-political development" (p. 106), the latter in particular relating to the high cost of not only acquiring vehicles and horses but also acquiring specialist skills. Careful comparison with chariot technology in Greece, Cyprus and the Near East reveals subtle differences indicating multiple knowledge transfer routes (e.g. via the Greek colonies of southern Italy and, especially in relation to bits and other horse equipment, via northern Italy) as well as local innovations (e.g. narrow U-shaped floors).

In the brief concluding remarks, Crouwel finally strays from his technical remit to consider the motives for the adoption of chariots and their social significance. Despite the underlying functionalist presumption of the previous chapters (chariots = war vehicles; wagons = transportation of goods), he concedes—literally on the final page of the conclusion—their role "as status symbols rather than instruments of war" (p. 108). In reality, it will be hard for many readers to reach page 108 without having already decided 100 pages earlier that chariots are less about transport and military tactics, and very much about competitive elites displaying prestige.

The presence of chariots in wealthy aristocratic tombs (including one example entirely clad in bronze) and on the terracotta decoration of temples points towards their rich symbolism and social power. Given his stated aim, criticism of this lack of contextual interpretation is perhaps unfair. Nonetheless, the principal reason provided for this format is the "paucity of explicit information available for the period under consideration" (p. xi)-an extraordinary statement which will come as a surprise to Etruscologists and other scholars of pre- and early Roman Italy. The evidence is certainly no worse than, for example, Shang China (below). Crouwel leaves the reader impressed with technical detail, but a little disappointed in terms of assessment of the social significance of chariots in pre-Roman Italy.

In a 1974 Antiquity paper, Stuart Piggott noted the strong similarities between chariots in the Caucasus and China and clearly identified these vehicles as a Western Eurasian steppe technology introduced to China c. 1200 BC, becoming more widespread under the Zhou (c. 1046–221 BC). HSIAO-YUN WU's Chariots in early China has the explicit aim of explaining why the Chinese elite adopted steppe technology into the ritual and institutional frameworks of the settled Chinese kingdoms.

The volume begins by tracing the arrival in Shang period China of chariots—and horses—via southern Siberia. Wu makes clear that chariots were adopted for military motives, facilitating more effective competition with steppe warriors. The approach differs markedly from Crouwel, focusing not on chariots as objects but rather as a set of skills. From the off, c. 1200 BC, two-horse chariots decorated with bronzes, and sacrificial horses and handlers, are associated with wealthy tombs. Very rapidly, within a century or so, weaponry disappears from these chariot burials, putting the emphasis squarely on the social status rather than military prowess of the deceased, though such burials remained exclusively male during the Shang period.

The real focus of the volume is the proliferation of chariots during the subsequent Zhou period. Some 700 examples are known, again primarily associated with wealthy elite burials. Particular developments include the appearance of four-horse chariots, new weaponry sets, and new decorative and functional fittings, including *luan* jingles. Wu associates these changes with renewed influence from the steppes, and the great increase in chariot burials generally as evidence for enhanced elite competition, particularly in

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the context of the Zhou's successful military defeat of the Shang state. Gifts of chariots from Zhou rulers to local representatives served to promote the social and political significance of chariots and hence their inclusion in tombs. In the most impressive cases, the dismantling of multiple vehicles and the careful arrangement of component parts (wheels, fittings, etc.) must have constituted elaborate funeral performances.

It is, however, the regional differences which demonstrate how elites adapted this model to local needs, negotiating between Zhou authority and steppe neighbours. Wu argues that the specialist skills needed to successfully adopt and maintain horse-drawn chariots would have involved foreign specialists and enduring contacts with the steppes. Three case studies illustrate the variability including the example of the Jin elite who asserted a particularly powerful military image with spectacular horse-and-chariot pits containing armoured vehicles; Jin female consorts, potentially of steppe origin, were also buried with chariots, though of notably smaller dimensions and more typical Zhou fittings. With the introduction of another steppe technology—cavalry—during the Warring States period (307-221 BC), the role of chariots as fighting platforms in warfare declined; chariots and carts for passenger transport became more common as attested in the mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang.

During the Han period (206 BC-AD 220), Confucian discourse radically reinvented the symbolism of chariots. Specifically, the virtue of the Zhou king and, therefore, the Zhou state became associated with the image of the king's chariot; the luan jingle, for example, became a symbol of harmony and balance. Through a rapid survey of chariots in other historical and modern contexts (including Boudicea [Boudica] on the Embankment), Wu stresses the common association of these vehicles with social and political power; in China, however, the Confucian model suppressed the role of these chariots in the militaristic and competitive context of Zhou society. Only recently have the archaeological reality and the Confucian ideal come into contact. Arguably, the deconstruction of this Confucian revisionism could have served as the framing device for the volume as a whole—appearing in the introduction rather than delayed until the conclusion.

This is a fascinating book which clearly demonstrates that the adoption of chariot technology cannot be divorced from social context. Despite a few semi-detached flourishes, it is the careful theoretical positioning of this volume which allows this perspective to come through. Chariots were not adopted because they were technologically superior, but because they were socially useful.

The basic chariot found in pre-imperial Italy and Shang/Zhou China is very similar, with some inevitable differences in technical detail which are only to be expected in contexts which are 5000 miles apart. There are also some similarities in the social practices associated with these chariots, most notably burial in the entrances of elite tombs (generally males, but also some females), as well as differences, such as the rather more impressive number of examples in China and the lack of associated human sacrifice in Italy. The authors also identify and respond to slightly different assumptions about the significance of chariots: Crouwel, eventually, dismisses military function in favour of social competition; Wu confronts the Confucian virtue of harmony with a more aggressive reality.

So, standing at the bus-stop, which of these two books to choose? It very much depends on your preferred destination; for the technical know-how, Crouwel; for the why, Wu.

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Books received

The list includes all books received between 1 March 2013 and 1 June 2013. Those featuring at the beginning of New Book Chronicle have, however, not been duplicated in this list. The listing of a book in this chronicle does not preclude its subsequent review in *Antiquity*.

General

ARJUN APPADURAI. The future as cultural fact: essays on the global condition. viii+328 pages. 2013. London

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