

Review

New Book Chronicle

Madeleine Hummler

Children, they say, should be seen, not heard. But are we seeing enough of them in the archaeological record? This is what we shall first consider, reviewing a couple of very different books on the subject. The step from children to food is easily taken, and we shall pass into the kitchen to look at a crop of books that focus on preparation consumption and identity. Ancient History does not often feature in *Antiquity* but gets a brief mention here, as do the antiquities of Cyprus.

Children

MARY E. LEWIS. *The Bioarchaeology of Children: Perspectives from Biological and Forensic Anthropology*. x+256 pages, 37 illustrations, 15 tables. 2006. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-0-521-83602-9 hardback £70 & \$130.

TRACI ARDREN & SCOTT R. HUTSON (ed.). *The Social Experience of Childhood in Ancient Mesoamerica*. xxii+310 pages, 73 illustrations, 11 tables. 2006. Boulder (CO): University Press of Colorado; 978-0-87081-827-1 hardback \$45.

‘The study of non-adult skeletal remains is finally gaining the recognition it deserves and it continues to be one of the most challenging and exciting areas of research in bioarchaeology’ (p. 188). That is how MARY LEWIS ends her *Bioarchaeology of Children*, an overview of the subject that I would highly recommend, not just to those who deal with the primary data and their interpretation, but to any archaeologist who, in the course of his or her work, recovers human remains or is in a position to commission work upon them. Indeed, it is thanks to greater awareness of child remains, coupled with recent advances in biological and forensic anthropology, that much more can be said about children, once archaeologically almost invisible. That there are taphonomic issues (chapter 2) as well as social and cultural factors, not to mention biases in curation or the skills of excavators, that contribute to the under-representation of children is acknowledged. Nevertheless, attempts at aging

ANTIQUITY 81 (2007): 818–827

and sexing children (chapter 3) are meeting with a measure of success and allow us to follow the growth of children (chapter 4), a veritable *parcours du combattant* that takes the child from birth (chapter 5), through weaning (chapter 6), to disease (chapter 7) and trauma (chapter 8). Reading this, it seems incredible that any child actually managed to survive. But of course ‘children in an archaeological sample represent the non-survivors of any given population, and their pattern of growth or frequency of lesions might not be an accurate reflection of the living population of children who survived into adulthood’ (p. 185). Conversely, there are many causes of death or illnesses in children that would leave no trace in the osteological record (or minute traces not always recovered: for example, ear infections may be detected, but ‘diagnosis relies on the individual recovery of the tiny ear ossicles, or the use of an endoscope *in situ*’ (p. 138). If these points are obvious, they are still well worth making. *The Bioarchaeology of Children* is an excellent way for non-specialists to understand what can and cannot be deduced from the data; sentiments are not spared – there are extensive passages on infanticide or child abuse – but the author is always very careful to warn us not to jump to conclusions and to provide alternative models.

Diametrically opposed is the *The Social Experience of Childhood in Ancient Mesoamerica*, a collection of papers from a 2002 meeting of the American Anthropological Association, edited by ARDREN & HUTSON. They approach children, not as biologically defined non-adults, but as ‘historical agents who have voices and agency in any civilization, however muted’ (Ardren, p. 16), as social beings ‘progressively indoctrinated into the gendered roles of adulthood’ (McCafferty & McCafferty, p. 45), a process traced in stages (equivalent to Lewis’s biological stages): ‘children do not reach adulthood passively . . . but by cultural achievement, the culmination of a long material transformation of raw infants into socially produced agents’ (Hutson, p. 109). And so on, preached with evangelical fervour. As anyone who has had to clean a raw infant at one end and argue the finer

points of personal freedom with a near-adult at the other will know, there is no need to invoke Heidegger or Bourdieu to appreciate that young humans are biological *and* social beings, and the passage from one to the other not a one-way trajectory. That is not to say that there are no excellent contributions in this volume (for example a fine analysis by Storey & McAnany of children's burials in the Formative Maya village of X'acob, or an interesting comparison of child martyrs and murderers in late medieval/Renaissance Europe and Mesoamerica, by Elsworth Hamann), but these lie hidden in a fog of verbiage. To wit: 'the way that children . . . participated in daily practices in the household has the potential to provide crucial multivocalic perspectives about the processes of structuration' (Lopiparo, p. 134). Right, next time I ask my own offsprings for such participation and meet ipod-induced incomprehension, I'll know to put it down to multivocalic perspectives. Quipping apart, this book is at once useful and irritating. Irritating because it veers towards wishful thinking (there is, for example, a lot pinned on the find of a single shell in an abandoned house at Chunchucmil (Hutson, chapter 5); notice too the change in mood in Lopiparo, who tells us that children *might* have been involved in the production of artefacts – moulded figurines in the Ulúa valley, Honduras – and abandons the conditional in her concluding paragraph (p. 161: 'they learned', 'they participated', 'they embodied', etc.). But useful too, as the collection reminds us that 'children are everywhere', that the entire archaeological record is owed to them, whether their lives were interrupted or whether we see their achievement as adults.

Food

KATHERYN C. TWISS (ed.). *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (Center for Archaeological Investigations Occasional Paper 34). 2007. xii+340 pages, 67 figures, 16 tables. Carbondale (IL): Southern Illinois University Carbondale; 978-0-88104-091-6 paperback \$42.

CHRISTOPHER MEE & JOSETTE RENARD (ed.). *Cooking up the Past: Food and Culinary Practices in the Neolithic and Bronze Age Aegean*. xii+380 pages, 103 illustrations, 20 tables. 2007. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-84217-227-8 paperback £35.

H.E.M. COOL. *Eating and Drinking in Roman Britain*. xvi+282 pages, 30 illustrations, 43 tables. 2006. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-0-521-

80276-5 hardback £55 & \$99; 978-0-521-00327-8 paperback £19.99 & \$36.99.

EUGENIA SALZA PRINA RICOTTI, translated by RUTH ANNE LOTERO. *Meals and recipes from Ancient Greece*. vi+122 pages, illustrated. 2007 (first published in Italian in 2005 by l'Erma di Bretschneider, Rome). Los Angeles (CA): J. Paul Getty Museum; 978-0-89236-876-1 hardback £15.99.

DAVID PEACOCK & DAVID WILLIAMS (ed.). *Food for the Gods: New Light on the Ancient Incense Trade*. xiv+152 pages, 76 illustrations. 2007. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-84217-225-4 hardback £35.

SUSAN STEWART. *Cosmetics & Perfumes in the Roman World*. 160 pages, 43 illustrations. 2007. Stroud: Tempus; 978-0-7524-4098-9 paperback £16.99.

Brillat-Savarin's adaptation of the old proverb '*Dis-moi qui tu hantes, et je te dirai qui tu es*' (tell me what company you keep and I shall tell you who you are) to '*Dis-moi ce que tu manges . . .*' is particularly apt since company and food are so inextricably linked. The adage heads *The Archaeology of Food and Identity*. This collection, edited by KATHERYN TWISS, and, even more so, the collection edited by CHRISTOPHER MEE & JOSETTE RENARD, *Cooking up the Past*, probe deeply into the way food, how to prepare and eat it, conviviality and commensality reveal and shape identity. Twiss's edited volume is wide-ranging, with papers dealing with the Americas, the Near East and Europe, from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Levant to eighteenth century Illinois, comprehensively summarised by Christine Hastorf and Mary Weismantel in a concluding chapter (15). Recurrent themes – the relationship between the domestic and wider spheres, social stratification, religious connexions, shifts, development and continuity, to name but a few – also appear in *Cooking up the Past*. Amongst chapters in Twiss, I particularly enjoyed, if that is the word, Nicole Boenke's analysis of food remains from 104 samples of human faeces from the Iron Age saltmine at the Dürrnberg bei Hallein in Austria, revealing the diet and the parasites of the saltminers (chapter 4). Other contributions that caught my eye include, still for the European Iron Age, a re-appraisal by Marijke van der Veen of luxury foods in Iron Age and early Roman southern Britain (chapter 6): she proposes that the grain kept in storage pits was not, as previously suggested, for seed corn but for communal feasting and that later 'the use of grain surpluses may have been switched from feasting towards the purchase of luxury goods' (p. 122). She also touches on the concepts of high and