

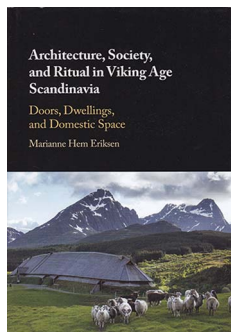


New Book Chronicle

Claire Nesbitt

Like most of the world, I am in lockdown, writing this NBC during the social distancing measures designed to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus. Restrictions in travel, movement and social encounters, and being fully reacquainted with domestic surroundings, lead us all to re-evaluate the routine actions of our daily lives. It is appropriate then that the volumes that are the focus of this NBC each, in their own way, consider the value of the prosaic norms that we usually overlook. They include detailed, thoughtful studies concerning what we can learn about societies from their domestic architecture; the social networks that underpin craft technologies and shape urban existence; the social frameworks and everyday life that belie objects and images, often regarded as having been symbols of power; and the ordinary lives and identities negotiated in border zones.

MARIANNE HEM ERIKSEN. 2019. *Architecture, society, and ritual in Viking Age Scandinavia: doors, dwellings, and domestic space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-10846-6704-3 hardback £75.



The seemingly prosaic aspects of domestic architecture are explored by Marianne Hem Eriksen in *Architecture, society, and ritual in Viking Age Scandinavia: doors, dwellings, and domestic space*. Beginning with entrances to buildings and spaces, Eriksen deftly navigates the various aspects of Viking architecture and settlement so that the book echoes a phenomenological journey through the built environment, pausing to consider the routine and ritual uses of each locus, and exiting with a call for a social archaeology of the Vikings. The volume is divided into three parts that set out to challenge perceptions of the domestic sphere as “unproblematized, familiar and somewhat trivial” (p. 5). Part I deals with theoretical concepts of

entranceways, thresholds and gateways. In two chapters, Eriksen considers the entry points of the house, the ritualisation of doors and the liminality embodied in threshold areas. The chapters ably combine a theoretically informed approach with a grounding in archaeological material evidence. The meaning of doorways is fully unpacked, from their role as a functional transition from one space to another, to their powerful representation as liminal portals between social roles, situations and even life and death.

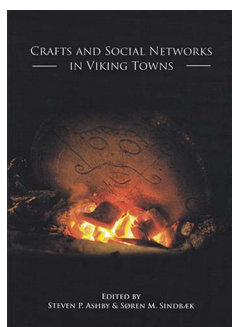
Part II presents a corpus of data on Late Iron Age dwellings in Norway. The focus is placed on the social dimensions of the architecture rather than its functional role, to understand the use of space for everyday activities by the diverse households that included men, women and children in the roles of master, subordinate, mother and mistress. Eriksen deals with the way

social spaces worked in houses and households, reflecting social hierarchy, movement and differentiated access. Taking the view that Viking longhouses have forms of agency and that they could have social lives, Eriksen sets out to examine the practice of habitation through the physical remains of architecture. The result is a presentation of longhouses as “both a result and instigator of social order in the Viking Age [...] not merely a neutral backdrop to a somewhat trivial domestic life, but a significant venue and player in the making of a stratified society on the brink of statehood” (p. 43). Eriksen contends that the house may be even more significant than burial evidence in shaping our understanding of Viking society, after all the burial is a staged event, while the domestic sphere represents the real lived experience of individuals, families and households. Eriksen takes unflinching aim at previous studies of settlement archaeology that have neglected the human agents, and tackles, head on, the subject of previously marginalised characters—women, children, guests, and vagrants, all of whom must have had a place in domestic life.

Part III considers ritual objects and spaces in domestic architecture. This includes a study of sexualised ritual attached to doorways, the power of deposited items of different types, the ritual significance of thresholds and the evocation of domestic architecture, and doorways, in mortuary monuments.

The final chapter emphasises the need for a move towards a social archaeology of the Vikings, the framework for which has been expertly constructed in this volume. Eriksen’s book overturns claims that there is insufficient settlement evidence to reveal domestic life in Viking Norway, and instead to propose new understandings of architectural space.

STEVEN P. ASHBY & SØREN M. SINDBÆK (ed.). 2019. *Crafts and social networks in Viking towns*. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78925-160-9 paperback £38.



Ashby and Sindbæk’s edited volume derives from the ‘Craft Networks in Viking Towns’ project. The latter investigated the distribution of technologies in urban areas and how modes of making and behaviour can be mapped through the networks of early medieval Northern Europe. The volume offers detailed insights into textile production, iron-working, non-ferrous metal working, antler and bone working and ceramics—the best evidenced and more distinctive crafts of the period. The contributors investigate how particular technologies and practices were disseminated between communities in early medieval Northern Europe. They consider how far culturally acquired craft knowledge is evident in the process of production, how the sharing of knowledge and methods of craftspeople reflects long-range communication in Viking Age Northern Europe and how that operated in complex social networks. These factors all shape our understanding of the societal change catalysed by early towns. This research shifts the focus on the impetus for changing styles away from technological innovation and towards cultural and traditional motivations.

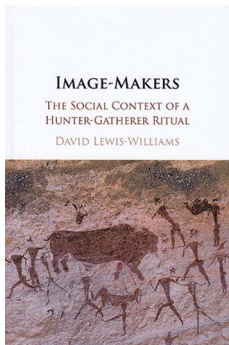
Collectively the papers highlight “the centrality of craft-working to the development of urbanism and networked communication” (p. 21). The chapters problematise previous assumptions about

craftspeople, such as the gender demographics of textile manufacturers (Penelope Walton-Rogers) and the itinerant nature of comb-making industries (Johan Callmer). The volume uses thoroughly researched studies of material evidence, underpinned by social network theory, to construct a compelling argument for the interdependence of craft, communication networks and urbanisation in Viking Age Northern Europe. Perhaps one of its most interesting conclusions comes in Chapter 10, in which Ashby and Sindbæk argue that composite objects requiring collaboration of different expert craftworkers—such as equestrian harnesses, locks and keys, and weapon scabbards—may have created the impetus for craftspeople to coalesce in one place, making craft networks instrumental in the development of Viking Age urbanism.

Images of everyday life

DAVID LEWIS-WILLIAMS. 2019. *Image-makers: the social context of a hunter-gatherer ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-1084-9821-0 hardback £75.

ANDREW MEIRION JONES & MARTA DÍAZ-GUARDAMINO. 2019. *Making a mark: image and process in Neolithic Britain and Ireland*. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78925-188-3 paperback £40.

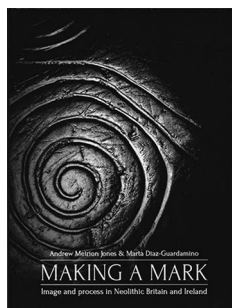


Lewis-Williams's volume views hunter-gatherer rock art through the lens of social frameworks of production. Examining the rock art of the San peoples of the Kalahari Desert, he uses ethnographic accounts to explore how art was used not simply to record symbolic or important events, but also to sustain social networks and status. Lewis-Williams's approach is innovative in that it shifts the focus of rock art from the meaning of the images themselves to the process of production as part of a social framework. In this way it is the making of the image, rather than its content, that is most important. This methodology is made possible by an archive of nineteenth-century southern San ethnography recorded in the original San language. This archive contains

“authentic indigenous comments on images that, read in the context of San thought and belief rather than Western notions of art, point to an overarching social context” (p. xvi).

The author comes to understand that the images that are the focus of the study were “part of a cognitive and social framework” (p. 98), concluding that image-making may have played a role in shamanic ritual practices, and that the images also spoke to other aspects of social life including ritual, myth and politics. He argues that clusters of related images may have been created in a piecemeal fashion by individuals engaging in the same cultural event at separate moments; this reflects the reality of the San community, comprising small and distinct groups and forming part of the larger collective at the same time. The volume includes an investigation of neuropsychology that considers how the San images may relate to known physical phenomena in the form of visions created by an altered state. This leads to an interpretation of the images in the context of “neurologically generated but culturally interpreted experiences” (p. 141). In this way, images may represent the experience of a shaman, captured for the whole community to see; the location of these images may also be significant, perhaps representing portals where the spirit world could be accessed through the veil of rock.

The volume closes with a discussion of the adoption of San imagery in present-day South African society and politics, and therefore its continued adaptive cultural significance. Lewis-Williams is clear that it is not possible to use the San examples as a simple analogy for other rock art, but rather that the evidence garnered from this study raises questions about the extent to which image-making can be understood as a record of events, myths or significant themes, and how far it may be a reflection of social and cognitive frameworks.



Taking a decidedly more technological approach, *Making a mark* uses state-of-the-art digital technology to identify practices of erasure and reworking in the artwork on portable objects, aiming chiefly to fill the lacuna that exists in the study of art in Neolithic Britain and Ireland. The volume also explores the links between image and process, and cautions against privileging finished artefacts over the processes of creating.

Like Lewis-Williams, the authors of *Making a mark* see in art a reflection not only of the powerful, the symbolic and the noteworthy, but also the quotidian. Beginning from the premise that “the notion of ‘symbols of power’ is a ‘sophisticated delusion’ based on an abstract, and imposed model of ranked society and on the perceived high status of well-made artefacts” (p. 9), the volume aims to reassess the evidence of the decorated artefacts of Neolithic Britain and Ireland to move towards new theoretical interpretations. Geographically, the volume focuses on three regions: the south of England from the south coast to the Thames Valley, and from Cornwall to East Anglia; Wales, the Isle of Man and eastern Ireland; and north-east Scotland and Orkney.

Chapter 2 sets out how to achieve a four-dimensional approach to prehistoric art that eschews traditional static methodologies, whereby the final condition of the artefact is recorded two-dimensionally and analysed for stylistic parallels. This approach introduces changes in the appearance and processing of artefacts over time as another significant dimension of research that takes the study beyond the spatial distribution of motifs.

The identification and mapping of this fourth dimension is made possible by reflectance transformation imaging (RTI), a digital imaging technique that can reveal the stratigraphy of carving and marks on surfaces, allowing individual phases of the working of carved or incised imagery to be reconstructed on artefacts made of a range of materials, including stone, chalk, antler, bone and wood. Analysis of archaeological artefacts reveals distinct patterns in the different study regions. For example, objects from the south of England show a trend for repetitive incisions and reworking. In addition, the more completely or better finished artefacts from this region are more likely to have been decorated—rough or poorly made objects are not decorated with complex designs. Wear analysis shows that objects were often deposited very soon after working, particularly chalk artefacts. The deposition of incomplete or unfinished artefacts is also common. All of these factors suggest that categorising these objects as prestige goods or symbols of power is unsustainable.

The volume revisits several well-known artefacts including the Folkton Drums, the Windmill Hill chalk phalli, the Graig Lwyd plaque and the Knowth macehead to explore what RTI reveals about their production. The enigmatic carved stone balls from Scotland form one of

these case studies. Reanalysis of these artefacts has revealed that there are regional distinctions in the types of stone balls, and that each region represents a node of a wider network of practice. Ultimately, Meirion Jones and Díaz-Guardamino conclude that far from being symbols of power or prestige objects, carved stone balls were most likely didactic objects designed to practice the techniques of carving stone and were discarded or deposited or perhaps exchanged at various stages of production.

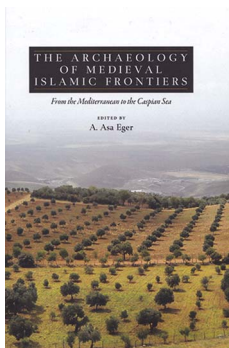
The themes that emerge from the volumes by Lewis-Williams and by Meirion Jones and Díaz-Guardamino are that the process of image-making is just that, a process, which may have been as important or more so than the product itself, and was often part of a relationship with the artefact that involved revisiting and changing it. Or in the case of the San rock art, engaging with the images in a temporal or liminal manner. Both volumes emphasise that the images may not be related simply to status or power, but rather may have had varied roles, for example as teaching tools. They also highlight the importance of the engagement of individuals with artefacts and images as part of a lived experience of an object and of image-making.

Borderline differences

A. ASA EGER (ed.). 2019. *The archaeology of medieval Islamic frontiers: from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea*. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-878-0 hardback \$58.

CRISTINA I. TICA & DEBRA L. MARTIN. 2019. *Bioarchaeology of frontiers and borderlands*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press; 978-1-6834-0084-4 hardback \$110.

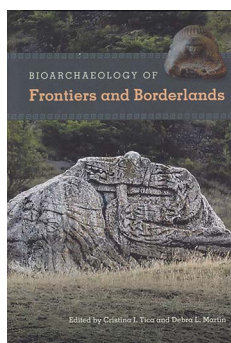
Our final two volumes take different approaches to the study of frontiers and borders. Both volumes explore the dynamics of identity formation on frontiers but approach the subject using different types of evidence. Asa Eger and his co-contributors problematise the core-periphery model to give borders and frontiers a central focus, and to reassess them in terms of religion, identity, economy, environment, demography and the intangible cognitive borders. Tica and Martin meanwhile use bioanthropological studies from a variety of sites to understand negotiated identity and contested power in frontier zones.



The archaeology of medieval Islamic frontiers uses eight case studies to investigate three areas. The frontiers explored in this volume are traditionally considered minor frontiers in that they are relatively poorly documented in historical sources, but they were frontiers nonetheless. They are the western frontier of the Mediterranean Sea and the Maghreb during the eighth to thirteenth centuries, the southern frontier between twelfth-century Egypt and Nubia, and the eastern frontier in the Caucasus region between the eighth and thirteenth centuries.

Ian Randall (Chapter 4) tackles the concept of the sea as a maritime frontier zone. Using mainly material evidence, supplemented by historical texts, he considers Crete, Cyprus and the islands of the Aegean to explore connectivity, insularity and isolation. The conclusion is that these islands were zones of interaction in which the inhabitants had “a unique relationship with space, distance, and the meaning attached to objects traveling from distant lands” (p. 95). In this way, the maritime frontier is a focus for the negotiation of identity. Karim Alizadeh investigates some of these negotiations in Chapter 7, which considers the borders of the Sasanian Empire and the Muslim Caliphate in the Caucasus. Alizadeh explores overlapping social and political borders as areas of interaction that include confrontation and cooperation. The results suggest that these boundaries were intended to restrict interaction, consolidate territory and reduce the permeability of boundaries.

In her chapter on medieval Armenia, Kathryn Franklin flips the subject around; rather than classifying the nature of the border that Armenia was part of during the tenth to thirteenth centuries, she considers how far “the ‘frontier-ness’ of Armenia was always a component within cosmographic projects, or material and historical strategies for understanding the world” (p. 195). Arguing that centres and peripheries are aspects of the imagined worlds created by their inhabitants, Franklin considers Armenia from the perspectives of both Western historical narrative and the Armenians themselves. She builds a convincing case that frontiers are first imagined and then constructed, and that the question we should be asking is “not ‘what kind of frontier’ but, ‘A frontier for whose world?’” (p. 215).



Continuing Franklin’s theme of imagined frontiers and Randall’s negotiation of identities, *Bioarchaeology of frontiers and borderlands* brings together 11 papers considering the bioarchaeology of a range of frontier areas. These are grouped under the themes of ‘The complexity and liminality of the frontier’, ‘Movement across borders’, ‘Adaptability and resilience on the frontier’, ‘Violence on the frontier’ and ‘Challenges and limitations of bioarchaeological methods and theory’, focusing variously on mobilities, the effect of frontier life on health and socio-economic status and the challenges faced by borderland populations.

The principle underpinning the volume is that borders are not stable or immutable, but subjective, negotiated and contested; that borders are contingent on political history and their meaning and function is determined by the people they separate. The aim of the volume is to “explore how people in the past might have maintained, created or manipulated their identity while living in a place of liminality” (p. 4); this is approached in a variety of ways. Christina I. Tica (Chapter 1) undertakes a comparative study to consider the differences in pathological conditions, trauma and general health between two contemporaneous populations in the region of the Roman frontier of Scythia Minor (modern Romania) during the third to sixth centuries AD. She compares skeletal evidence of frontier provincials living under Roman-Byzantine rule with those across the border in what would have been considered barbarian lands. The result is that while those in Roman territory enjoyed greater longevity, they experienced poorer health; those living north of the border, outside of Roman

lands, had a shorter life expectancy but enjoyed better physical wellbeing. Tica suggests that further investigation using biogeochemical and biomolecular studies as well as larger skeletal samples are necessary to understand further how the interplay between daily social practices and power relations can be read in the bioarchaeological evidence.

A contrasting study by Selin E. Nugent reveals a different situation on the Rome-Parthia frontier, which apparently was a more advantageous location. Nugent analyses the burial of one seemingly high-status, foreign (non-Roman) young man to contextualise the relationship between local and foreign people on the frontier. The grave goods that accompanied this urn burial are characteristic of Roman funerary practices, but the treatment of the body echoes traditional local mortuary practice. The burial represents negotiation and interaction between peoples in the South Caucasus in the first century AD. The blurred distinction between empire and frontier, and the negotiated and perhaps multiple identities evident in the funerary treatment of this individual echo those seen in other parts of the Empire, frontiers where the individuals and communities resist conforming to a single identity.

The volume includes a range of studies dating from the Bronze Age to the seventeenth century AD and covering a broad geographic area from Azerbaijan to Egypt, and northern Iceland to the American Southwest. Each uses bioarchaeological evidence to examine the ways in which the strains of frontier life can be inscribed on the bodies of those living in these liminal and often contested zones. The editors argue that as globalisation makes territoriality even more significant, the complexity of borders as “active forces that shape societies” (p. 277) is an important area of study.

Each of the volumes in this NBC addresses the seemingly ordinary and the quotidian in some way. They caution against focusing too heavily on the obvious, the power-focused, high-status evidence, and instead encourage us to look again at the evidence for the everyday, which, properly explored, can reveal more about societies and social frameworks than can the evidence for the exceptional.

Books received

This list includes all books received between 1 January 2020 and 28 February 2020. 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*.

European pre- and protohistory

ALISTAIR BARCLAY, DAVID FIELD & JIM LEARY (ed.).

Houses of the dead? 2020. Oxford: Oxbow;
978-1-7892-5410-5 paperback £40.

DAVID FONTIJN. *Economies of destruction: how the systematic destruction of valuables created value in Bronze Age Europe, c. 2300–500 BC*. 2019. New York: Routledge; 978-1-1380-8839-9 paperback £34.99.

SONJA B. GRIMM (ed.). *From the Atlantic to beyond the Bug River: finding and defining the Federmesser-Gruppen/Azilian*. 2020. Heidelberg: Propylaeum; 978-3-948465-05-6 paperback €24.90.

KARIM MATA. *Iron Age slaving and enslavement in Northwest Europe*. 2019. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-7896-9419-2 ebook Open Access.

Mediterranean archaeology

WILLIAM BOWDEN. *Butrint 5: life and death at a Mediterranean port: the non-ceramic finds from the Triconch Palace*. 2019. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-7857-0897-8 hardback £45.

RALPH ARAQUE GONZALEZ. *Inter-cultural communications and iconography in the Western Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age*. 2018. Rahden/Westf. VML; 978-3-8964-6797-3 hardback €54.80.

CARLOS CABRERA TEJEDOR (ed.). *From Hispalis to Ishbiliyya: the ancient port of Seville, from the Roman Empire to the end of the Islamic period (45 BC–AD 1248)*. 2020. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-7896-9058-3 paperback \$72.

NANCY THOMSON DE GRUMMOND. *Cetamura del Chianti*. 2020. Austin: University of Texas Press; 978-1-4773-1993-2 paperback \$29.95.

The Classical world

KATJA SPORN & ALEXANDRA KANKELEIT. *Die Abteilung Athen des DAI und die Aktivitäten deutscher Archäologen in Griechenland 1874–*

1933. 2019. Berlin: Harrosswitz; 978-3-447-11359-5 paperback €49.

The Roman world

MICHAEL BLÖMER & RUBINA RAJA (ed.). *Funerary portraiture in greater Roman Syria*. 2020. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-57633-6 paperback €100.

SARAH COURT & LESLIE RAINER. *Herculaneum and the House of the Bicentenary: history and heritage*. 2020. Los Angeles: Getty; 978-1-60606-628-7 paperback \$29.95.

ELERI H. COUSINS. *The sanctuary at Bath in the Roman Empire*. 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; hardback 978-1-1084-9319-2 £85.

PAUL REYNOLDS. *Butrint 6: excavations on the Vrina Plain. Volume 3: the Roman and Late Antique pottery from the Vrina Plain excavations (Butrint 6)*. 2019. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-7892-5221-7 hardback £60.

Anatolia, Levant and the Middle East

BLEDA S. DÜRING. *The imperialisation of Assyria: an archaeological approach*. 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-108-47874-8 hardback £85.

ELEANOR ROBSON. *Ancient knowledge networks: a social geography of cuneiform scholarship in first-millennium Assyria and Babylonia*. 2019. London: UCL Press; 978-1-78735-594-1 paperback £27.99 & Open Access.

Africa and Egypt

HUSSEIN BASSIR (ed.). *Living forever: self-presentation in ancient Egypt*. 2019. Cairo: The American University in Cairo; 978-9-7741-6901-4 hardback £49.95.

AIDAN DODSON. *Afterglow of empire: Egypt from the fall of the New Kingdom to the Saite renaissance*.

2019. Cairo: The American University in Cairo; 978-9-7741-6925-0 paperback £14.95.

JONATHAN DOWNS. *Discovery at Rosetta: revealing ancient Egypt*. 2020. Cairo: The American University in Cairo; 978-9-7741-6926-7 paperback £14.95.

NIGEL FLETCHER-JONES. *Abu Simbel and the Nubian Temples*. 2019. London: Bloomsbury; 978-9-7741-6878-9 hardback £24.95.

Americas

JOHN F. CHERRY & KRISTA RYZEWSKI (ed.). *An archaeological history of Montserrat in the West Indies*. 2020. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-7892-5390-0 paperback \$40.

BRIGITTE FAUGÈRE & CHRISTOPHER BEEKMAN (ed.). *Anthropomorphic imagery in the Mesoamerican highlands: gods, ancestors, and human beings*. 2020. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-994-7 hardback \$103.

JULIA GUERNSEY. *Human figuration and fragmentation in Preclassic Mesoamerica: from figurines to sculpture*. 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-1084-7899-1 hardback £75.

KATARZYNA MIKULKSA & JEROME A. OFFNER (ed.). *Indigenous graphic communication systems: a theoretical approach*. 2019. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-6073-2876-6 hardback \$93.

Asia

ASKO PARPOLA, BRIJ M. PANDE & PETERI KOSKIKALLIO (ed.). *Corpus of Indus seals and inscriptions* (volume 3.2). 2019. Helsinki:

Suomalainen Tiedekatemia; 978-951-41-1040-5 hardback.

Britain and Ireland

ROBERT ENTWISTLE. *Britannia surveyed: new light on early Roman Britain through the work of military surveyors*. 2019. Pewsey: Armatura; 978-1-9102-3817-2 paperback £15.

PETER HALKON (ed.). *The Arras Culture of eastern Yorkshire—celebrating the Iron Age: proceedings of 'Arras 200—celebrating the Iron Age'* (Royal

Archaeological Institute Annual Conference 2017). 2019. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-7892-5258-3 paperback £38.

ALAN LANE & MARK REDKNAP. *Llangorse Crannog: the excavation of an early medieval royal site in the Kingdom of Brycheiniog*. 2019. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-7892-5306-1 hardback £40.

Historical archaeology

KATHERINE FENNELLY. *An archaeology of lunacy: managing madness in early nineteenth-century asylums*. 2019. Manchester: Manchester University Press; 978-1-5261-2649-8 hardback £80.

SARAH VOWLES. *Piranesi drawings*. 2020. London: Thames & Hudson; 978-0-5004-8061-8 paperback \$29.95.

Heritage, conservation and museums

KOJI MIZOGUCHI & CLAIRE E. SMITH. *Global social archaeologies: making a difference in a world of strangers*. New York: Routledge; 978-1-6295-8307-5 paperback £29.99.

LUCA ZAN, BING YU, JIANLI YU & HAIMING YAN. *Heritage sites in contemporary China: cultural policies and management practices*. 2019. New York: Routledge; 978-1-1380-5462-2 hardback £120.

General

- MARTIN BELL. *Making one's way in the world: the footprints and trackways of prehistoric people*. 2020. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-7892-5402-0 hardback £50.
- MAXIME LAMOUREUX-ST-HILAIRE & SCOTT A. MACRAE (ed.). *Detachment from place: beyond an archaeology of settlement abandonment*. 2020. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-814-8 hardback \$72.
- SANDER VAN DER LEEUW. *Social sustainability, past and future: undoing unintended consequences for the Earth's survival*. 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-1085-9524-7 ebook Open Access.
- CARLOS RODRÍGUEZ-RELLÁN, BEN NELSON & RAMÓN FÁBREGAS VALCARCE (ed.). *A taste for green: a global perspective on ancient jade, turquoise and variscite exchange*. 2019. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-7892-5274-3 hardback £45.
- PAUL A. SHACKEL. *An archaeology of unchecked capitalism: from the American rust belt to the developing world*. 2019. New York: Berghahn; 978-1-78920-547-3 hardback £99.