

# Reviews

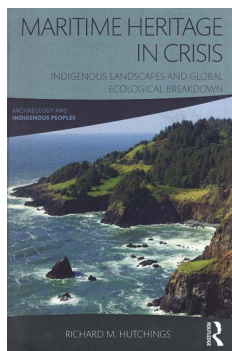
## New Book Chronicle

Claire Nesbitt

Recent months have seen the publication of a sobering report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (Masson-Delmotte *et al.* 2018) on the future of the planet. Sea-level rises are already displacing communities in low-lying island nations (Holland & Babson 2017); the Environment Agency are predicting water shortages in the UK within 25 years (2018), and scientists warn that we are already seeing the effects of climate change in the droughts, severe storms and extreme weather events that have made the news recently. In the news at the same time are the young people inspired by Greta Thunberg to support the Fridays for Future school strikes, demanding action to prevent further climate change, and the international Extinction Rebellion movement protests staged in London in April. It is timely therefore that archaeologists are beginning to engage with these discussions too. This NBC opens with three volumes focused on climate change that consider the role archaeology has to play in protecting heritage and informing future sustainability. These books demonstrate the contemporary relevance of archaeology as it is presented as both part of the problem and part of the solution.

### Archaeology and the climate crisis

RICHARD M. HUTCHINGS. 2017. *Maritime heritage in crisis. Indigenous landscapes and global ecological breakdown*. Abingdon: Routledge; 978-1-62958-348-8 £31.99.



The crisis of Hutchings's title is that sea-level rise over the next century will destroy many of the coastal archaeological sites of the Pacific Northwest. The major tenets of this volume are: that global capitalism is the prime driver of planetary climate change; that the resulting global ecological

crisis negatively affects human health and well-being; and that while the global crisis affects everyone,

some are more severely affected than others. The author details the physical impacts of climate change on indigenous maritime heritage along the Pacific Northwest coast, responses to these changes and the problematic relationship between cultural resource management (CRM) and development. This volume considers the threat to indigenous archaeological sites through the lenses of colonialism, imperialism, modernity and memory.

Hutchings spends a good deal of time defining terms and setting out what exactly the book will deal with. He highlights the blurred distinction between natural and cultural resources, and defines indigenous maritime heritage landscapes as coastal places valued by groups because of long-established and complex relationships with the landscape. Heritage here includes both tangible and intangible remains, and even place names that memorialise indigenous peoples' beliefs. There are some laboured definitions and semantics, but the volume tackles the issues head on.

A case study spotlights the shísháhl Nation and their approach to heritage stewardship, considering a self-government agreement intended to give the shísháhl greater control over archaeology and heritage sites. The conclusion is that in reality the shísháhl people have very little control over how their landscapes are stewarded. Given that archaeology and CRM have been ineffective at protecting shísháhl heritage sites from development, there is a lack of confidence that they will successfully protect them from rising sea levels. Hutchings considers the power-elite dynamic and problematises the heritage crisis. He sees archaeology as a tool of the Western power elite, with indigenous peoples under-represented in the sector. In this hard-hitting and controversial volume, Hutchings levels some serious charges at the academic and commercial archaeology sector, challenging the underpinning ethics of management and concluding that they are responsible for the depletion of heritage sites through failure to act as stewards, rather than managers, of the resource. In a damning final chapter, he concludes that archaeology in the Pacific Northwest is a billion-dollar industry whose economic structure ensures it will remain a tool of a neoliberal state, and

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ANTIQUITY 93 369 (2019): 838–844

<https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2019.77>

that it is not designed to protect or conserve cultural heritage landscapes. This volume will be discomforting for archaeologists who believe that they are working for a common good.

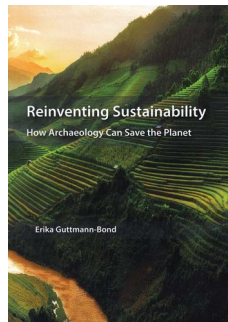
TOM DAWSON, COURTNEY NIMURA, ELÍAS LÓPEZ-ROMERO & MARIE-YVANE DAIRE (ed.). 2017. *Public archaeology & climate change*. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78570-704-9 £38.

Reflecting more positively on archaeology, *Public archaeology & climate change* brings together themes that emerged from a session at the 2015 EAA in Glasgow, on ‘engaging the public with archaeology threatened by climate change’. Each chapter has its own view of what exactly constitutes ‘public archaeology’, and from the outset the editors acknowledge the diversity of approaches. The overarching theme that unifies the papers is how to reduce the gap between the disparate points of view of specialists, communities, visitors, managers and policy makers; the shared conclusion is that there is no single answer to the issue of archaeology under threat from climate change, but that engaging the public in dialogues about threats to heritage can lead to imaginative and novel solutions. The first chapter serves in part as an outline to the contents, but more than that, it introduces the concepts that are reflected upon by the other chapters. The multi-vocal concepts of heritage and public archaeology are discussed briefly with signposting to more in-depth studies. The fluidity of definitions of heritage echoes the issues raised in Hutchings’s volume, with acknowledgement that heritage can be immaterial and embedded in the identities of groups and communities.

Taking a global view, Adam Markham’s paper (Chapter 2) considers the impact of climate change on iconic World Heritage sites. Markham outlines the problems posed by sea-level rise, melting glaciers and wildfires, along with severe storms and coastal erosion. He identifies indigenous peoples as particularly vulnerable to rapid alterations in climate. Markham believes that, if fully implemented, the recommendations of the UNESCO report on climate impacts and World Heritage sites—including using data on past human responses to climate change in order to increase resilience for the future—could transform the way World Heritage sites are managed and monitored. This in turn could galvanise public opinion so that the same standards can be applied to other, lesser-known, sites. Focusing on a more local scale, Lilja Pálsdóttir and

Frank Feeley describe the unexpected benefits of a rescue project to save the archaeological record of a medieval fishing station on the west coast of Iceland. The project’s open-access policy that allowed visitors to tour the site engendered cultural links between past and modern fishing practices among the local community and especially fishermen. Outreach projects have generated interest in the site and increased visitor numbers; in a positive feedback loop effect, the increased interest has meant that photographs uploaded onto geocaching logs have allowed remote monitoring of site erosion between field seasons. More citizen science is evident in Chapter 8, in which Elías López-Romero and colleagues describe a crowdsourcing initiative to rescue archaeological remains in north-west Iberia. A call to action through a media campaign on recording the heritage of Guidoiro Areoso, a small, low-lying island in Galicia, produced an archive of public photographs and videos that enabled 3D reconstruction of several of the island’s archaeological ruins, which have been lost. The volume provides a range of studies detailing how innovative ways of engaging the public in archaeology can contribute to the management of all heritage that is threatened by climate change.

ERIKA GUTTMAN-BOND. 2019. *Reinventing sustainability: how archaeology can save the planet*. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78570-992-0 £25.



In contrast to Hutchings’s text, Erika Guttman-Bond’s volume shifts archaeology from vulnerable resource to instrument of change. Promising to be an optimistic book, *Reinventing sustainability* looks at examples of successful sustainability in the past and considers whether these could be reintroduced; it does not disappoint. Guttman-Bond does not shy away from the harsh realities of climate change, but instead emphasises the solutions, approaching the issue with an optimism that it can be avoided or at least survived. The main premise of the volume is that wetlands and deserts, the types of landscapes that are increasingly being created by the changing climate, were successfully farmed in the past, and therefore could be again, using the sustainable agricultural practices of the past and the

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engineering works that supported them. It is global in its scope and focuses broadly on the last 11 000 years since the beginnings of farming. This broad approach allows Guttman-Bond to take the long view of agriculture and farming as a lengthy process of trial and error where successful methods persist. It also allows for a comparison of approaches to similar landscapes in different regions; for example, how water was managed to allow the deserts of North Africa, the Middle East and the Americas to be farmed. Guttman-Bond cites the methodologies of anthropology, environmental archaeology, experimental archaeology and the science of climate change as ways of understanding the ecologies and agricultural techniques of the past. This approach champions “symbiotic mutualism” (p. 155) whereby understanding the cyclical nature of soil fertility and crops allows planning for sustainable land use that does not exhaust the soil, and “intermediate technologies” that benefit developing countries because they are easily maintained without significant cost. These technologies use local materials and do not rely on fossil fuels.

Highlighting the need to find ways of working with nature rather than dominating it, Gutmann-Bond argues that “the sophistication of early farmers has often been overlooked or underestimated” (p. 4), and that properly implemented sustainable agriculture can, and often does, produce higher crop yields than conventional industrial methods. She points to a case study in Bangladesh where industrial farming using high-yielding seeds and pesticides saw productivity fall, after the initial brief peak, and with it the condition of soil, animal welfare and even human health. The solution in this case was a ‘New agriculture’ based on traditional methods and organic inter-cropping; it revitalised the agricultural economy. *Reinventing sustainability* looks at how archaeological methods have been and can be used to chart climate change in the past, and therefore how they can be used to understand, and replicate, the sustainability of traditional farming and production techniques. Chapter 7 concludes by drawing together the ways in which ancient technology can be revisited to solve water shortage and soil loss. A case is made for the innovative use of vernacular architecture, soft engineering and better city planning, for green walls and roofs that store rainwater and naturally regulate the temperature of buildings, reducing the need for high-energy climate control. While this is an optimistic volume, it does not gloss over the challenges of achieving sustainability: overcoming inherent inertia; incentivising businesses

and employing a bottom-up approach to change; these are investigated, but Guttman-Bond maintains that archaeology has a role in the rediscovery and understanding of ancient technologies that have been lost or forgotten. These volumes share a confidence that archaeology has an active role to play in the prevention and management of climate change, that the past is worth preserving and that the memory embedded in heritage sites is important not only because of its cultural significance, but also because of how it can inform our resource management in the present.

The cultural memory that draws people to significant places is bound up with ancestral belonging and the commemoration of the dead. With no less sense of the cyclical and connection to the past, our next set of volumes all deal with treatment of, and attitudes to, the dead.

## Facing death

HOWARD WILLIAMS, BENEDICT WILLS-EVE & JENNIFER OSBOURNE (ed.). 2019. *The public archaeology of death*. Sheffield: Equinox; 978-1-78179-959-34 £80.

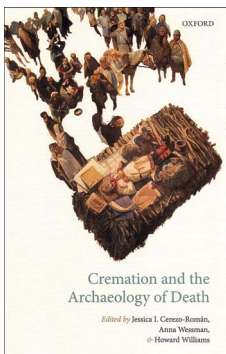
JESSICA CEREZO-ROMÁN, ANNA WESSMAN & HOWARD WILLIAMS (ed.). 2017. *Cremation and the archaeology of death*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 978-0-19-879811-8 £85.

HOWARD WILLIAMS & MELANIE GILES (ed.). 2016. *Archaeologists and the dead. Mortuary archaeology in contemporary society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 978-0-19-875353-7 £85.

*The public archaeology of death* introduces the growing subfield of public mortuary archaeology that “encapsulates the ethics, politics and practices of recording, surveying and digging up the dead” (p. 2). It is also concerned with issues of contestation and the communication of aspects of death and the dead to the public. Taking the approach that all mortuary archaeology should be considered public archaeology, this volume analyses the context of the archaeology of death and its relevance in contemporary society. An interesting and refreshing aspect of this book is that many of the contributors are undergraduate students, strengthening the cause for research-led teaching, and, as Jodie Lewis notes in her Foreword, promoting the place of students as researchers.

The volume is broadly concerned with perceptions of the dead, how their remains are presented, or

reconstructed, and the narratives that are built around them. Issues that come to the fore are how prominent individuals, marked out either by preservation or perceived status, are privileged over other individuals or communities. The volume reveals inconsistencies in the treatment of individuals, highlighting the difference between, for example, the ‘victims’ of the Pompeii eruption—viewed sympathetically and considered deserving of a narrative—and the ‘sand bodies’ of the Sutton Hoo execution graves who are denied personhood by being largely omitted from the literature. The papers consider the extent to which death and the treatment of the dead permeates all aspects of our culture, from museum displays (in the Llangollen Museum) to television dramas (*Vikings*) and video (archaeo)gaming. Ways of engaging the public directly with the process of mortuary archaeology, including excavation, are considered in an evaluation of the ‘St Patrick’s Chapel Excavation’ project by Marion Shiner *et al.*; this highlights the different emotions that are evoked by encounters with infant burials compared to those of adults. The emotive aspects of how we deal with death both as archaeologists interpreting the individual or society and as a receiving public are further explored in Chapter 8. Here we are invited to reflect on portrayals of mortuary practice in art and archaeology to consider how art might challenge the preconceived ideas about funerary rites, and cremation in particular as an increasingly common practice in modern mortuary practice.



Continuing the same theme, *Cremation and the archaeology of death* deals with the logistics of the transformation of the dead through fire (Part I); the commemoration of the dead (Part II); and space and time in cremating societies (Part III). The volume aims to challenge simplistic narratives

that surround cremation in the past and present. Its geographic scope is mainly European, with one contribution focusing on North America, and the chronological range spans the Mesolithic to the present, taking in case studies from the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, the Middle and Later Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, the Late Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods, and includes two chapters concerned

with modern cremation, for analogy. The ritualised public performance of cremation, often in liminal places, in the past, is juxtaposed with the private, secular and more mechanical process of modern cremation. Papers document how cremation changed from a process of defleshing, disarticulation and exposure prior to burning in the Mesolithic (Amy Gray Jones), to the complexities surrounding the choices of who was cremated and who was buried in the Iron Age (Katherina Rebay-Salisbury), and whether this was driven by social or spiritual factors. Douglas H. Ubelaker considers the role of forensic anthropology in offering fresh perspectives on the processes involved in cremating a body and the challenge of taphonomic factors. Collectively, the papers take a “practice oriented and historically situated perspective” to address the complex processes and meanings that can be embedded in cremation (p. 11).

The final volume in this NBC, *Archaeologists and the dead. Mortuary archaeology in contemporary society*, is a product of conference sessions at TAG 2010 and the Southport IfA annual conference 2010. It includes 18 case studies spread over three sections broadly addressing: archaeological practice (method); the context of the museum (theory); and the wider interaction between society and mortuary archaeology (practice). In his Foreword, Mike Parker Pearson calls for a robust defence of the value and significance of human remains and mortuary archaeology in studies of disease and health, ancestry and mobility, as well as changes in cultural belief and mortuary practice. This is in response to the unsatisfactory legislation regarding recovery of the dead, which does not factor in archaeological bodies and consequently hampers research and divorces the public from their archaeological heritage. This leads on to the broader theme of the volume, which is the relationship between the living and the dead, and how that affects the ways archaeologists excavate and present the dead, how the public engage with the dead and how legislation is produced to regulate these procedures. In Chapter 7, Faye and Duncan Sayer challenge the necessity of screening human remains from the public gaze and question why an interest in death should be considered wrong. They contend that we are guilty of imposing our modern social morality onto the dead and of perpetuating ideas of death as a taboo. The results of a survey during excavations at Oakington in Cambridge revealed complex relationships between archaeologists, the public and the dead. The complexities stemmed from local politics,

personal experience and socially embedded attitudes to death. The project demonstrated, however, that most visitors became comfortable with viewing the dead relatively quickly, and many felt a connection to them. The display of human remains after excavation, the ethics of how they are displayed and the issue of repatriation is examined by Hedley Swain (Chapter 8) and Sarah Tatham (Chapter 9). Both chapters consider the importance of context and understanding of cultural practices far removed from those of contemporary society. Swain takes a global view, considering worldwide examples of curation of the dead, while Tatham's study is UK-based. The motivation of requests for repatriation are challenged by Howard Williams in Chapter 14, where he argues that these requests are "predicated on the corporeal integrity" of the subject (p. 291). Williams considers themes such as commodification of the body, whereby bodies that are articulated, or more obviously intact, are viewed as 'evidential' and able to provoke emotive engagements in a way that disarticulated or cremated remains do not.

To whom the dead belong is a question that emerges in each volume, with repatriation of the dead and claims to ancestral kinship featuring heavily in debates surrounding human remains. The privileging of individuals or groups with a narrative and more careful treatment is a recurring theme. Archaeological corporeal celebrities such as Richard III are frequently cited as examples of how this process unfolds. By far the dominant theme, however, is attitudes to the dead; how archaeologists and the public deal with human remains and the ethical, cultural and political factors that govern how we engage with the archaeology of death.

The volumes included in this NBC remind us of the need to challenge assumptions about archaeology, whether that is attitudes towards treatment of the dead, or our understanding of how archaeology operates as a tool of CRM. While some of the texts may make discomfiting reading, either in their condemnation of archaeologists (Hutchings) or their warning of the threats facing archaeology (Dawson *et al.*), they all call for a re-evaluation of our role as archaeologists, and for a robust defence of the value and relevance of archaeology in the modern world.

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## Books received

This list includes all books received between 1 January 2019 and 28 February 2019. 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

PETER M. ASTRUP. *Sea-level change in Mesolithic Southern Scandinavia: long- and short-term effects on society and the environment*. 2018. Højbjerg: Jutland Archaeological Society; 978-87-93423-29-9 DKK 435.

CLIVE FINLAYSON. *The smart Neanderthal: bird catching, cave art, and the cognitive revolution*. 2019. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 978-0-19-879752-4 £20.



## Mediterranean archaeology

RICHARD T. NEER. *Art & archaeology of the Greek world*. 2019. London: Thames & Hudson; 978-0-500-05208-2 £45.

CLAIRY PALYVOU. *Daidalos at work: a phenomenological approach to the study of Minoan architecture*. 2018. Philadelphia (PA): INSTAP Academic; 978-1-9315-3494-9 \$45.

## The Roman world

LAURA PFUNTNER. *Urbanism and empire in Roman Sicily*. 2019. Austin: University of Texas Press; 978-1-4773-1722-8 \$55.

## Anatolia, Levant and the Middle East

RICK BONNIE. *Being Jewish in Galilee, 100–200 CE: an archaeological study* (Studies in Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology 11). 2019. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-55532-4 €104.

ANTHONY COMFORT & MICHAŁ MARCIAK. *How did the Persian king of kings get his wine? The upper Tigris in antiquity (c. 700 BCE to 636 CE)*. 2018. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-78491-956-6 £32.

INE JACOBS & HUGH ELTON (ed.). *Asia Minor in the long sixth century: current research and future directions*. 2019. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78925-007-7 £38.

CRAIG W. TYSON & VIRGINIA R. HERRMANN. *Imperial peripheries in the Neo-Assyrian period*. 2018. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-822-3 \$75.

## Asia

ANKE HEIN. *The burial record of prehistoric Liangshan in southwest China: graves as composite objects*. 2017. Cham: Springer; 978-3-319-42383-8 £99.99.

JOYCE C. WHITE & ELIZABETH G. HAMILTON (ed.). *Ban Chiang, northeast Thailand, volume 2A: background to the study of the metal remains* (University Museum Monograph 149). 2018. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; 987-1-931707-21-3 \$59.95.

## Africa and Egypt

MARIA C. GATTO, DAVID J. MATTINGLY, NICK RAY & MARTIN STERRY (ed.). *Burials, migration and*

*identity in the ancient Sahara and beyond* (Trans-Saharan Archaeology Volume 2). 2019. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-11084-7408-5 £100.

## Americas

KAREN BASSIE-SWEET & NICHOLAS A. HOPKINS. *Maya narrative arts*. 2018. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-741-7 \$36.95.

JANE EVA BAXTER. *The archaeology of American childhood and adolescence*. 2019. Gainesville: University of Florida Press; 978-0-8130-5609-8 \$80.

THOMAS G. GARRISON & STEPHEN HOUSTON (ed.). *An inconstant landscape: the Maya kingdom of El Zotz, Guatemala*. 2018. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-763-9 \$90.

KRISTINA M. GILL, MIKAEL FAUVELLE & JON M. ERLANDSON (ed.). *An archaeology of abundance: reevaluating the marginality of California's islands*. 2019. Gainesville: University Press of Florida; 978-0-81305-616-6 \$100.

KAREN G. HARRY & BARBARA J. ROTH (ed.). *Interaction and connectivity in the greater Southwest*. 2019. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-734-9 \$95.

THOMAS R. ROCEK & NANCY A. KENMOTSU (ed.). *Late prehistoric hunter-gatherers and farmers of the Jornada Mogollon*. 2018. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-794-3 \$75.

RAFAEL SUÁREZ & CIPRIAN F. ARDELEAN (ed.). *People and culture in Ice Age Americas: new dimensions in Paleoamerican archaeology*. 2019. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press; 978-1-6078-1646-1 \$60.

## Britain and Ireland

KIRSTY DINGWALL, MATT GINNEVER, RICHARD TIPPING, JÜRGEN VAN WESSEL & DON WILSON. *The land was forever: 15 000 years in north-east Scotland: excavations on the Aberdeen western peripheral route/Balmedie-Tipperty*. 2019. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78570-988-3 £40.

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

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### Byzantine, early medieval and medieval

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

### Heritage, conservation and museums

STEPHEN L. DYSON. *Archaeology, ideology, and urbanism in Rome from the Grand Tour to Berlusconi*. 2019. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-0-5218-7459-5 £75.

### Other

LUCIO CECCARELLI. *Contributions to the history of Latin elegiac distich* (Studi e Testi Tardoantichi 15). 2018. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-57459-2 €105.

FRANCA E. CONSOLINO (ed.). *Ovid in Late Antiquity* (Studi e Testi Tardoantichi 16). 2018. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-57808-8 €115.

TIMOTHY EARLE. *An essay on political economies in prehistory*. 2017. New York: Eliot Werner; 978-3-7749-4115-1 \$17.95.

DIANE F. GEORGE & BERNICE KURCHIN (ed.). *Archaeology of identity and dissonance: contexts for a brave new world*. 2019. Gainesville: University of Florida Press; 978-0-8130-5619-7 \$85.

PETER JORDAN & KEVIN GIBBS (ed.). *Ceramics in Circumpolar prehistory: technology, lifeways and cuisine*. 2019. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-1071-1824-9 £75.

ASHLEY K. LEMKE (ed.). *Foraging in the past: archaeological studies of hunter-gatherer diversity*. 2018. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-773-8 \$73.

FAYE SAYER. *Public history: a practical guide*. 2019. London: Bloomsbury; 978-1-3500-5129-4 £27.99.