

(p. 49) and that socio-political organization is best studied as the means by which order is maintained in society etc. (p. 17). These views are also very much in line with the Leiden school of state formation, exemplified by the work of Claessen in particular, one of the supervisors of the thesis from which this work is derived. An anthropological approach is also described as holistic, systemic, comparative and processual which may well describe some variants of American neo-evolutionism so influential in the American new archaeology, but scarcely exhausts the theoretical potential of anthropology.

Given the mechanical nature of the approach, it is still all the same a useful volume in providing good overviews of some important areas such as the circulation of gold or mortuary ritual, an inventory of river finds of metalwork and an up-to-date summary of cult places in Northern Gaul. The chapters on settlement patterns and Mediterranean trade contacts are also very useful surveys with valuable summaries of the evidence for unfortified rural settlements and findspots for imports. In this respect the volume is a mine of useful information.

But what is really irritating is the rather arbitrary groupings of evidence based on assumed and arbitrary functional importance such as mortuary rituals, settlements or sociopolitical organization. That a chapter on the circulation of gold does not have implications for socio-political organization or that religion and society should be chapter 4 and mortuary ritual chapter 9 seems absurd. The reader interested in sacrifice, for example, would have to scout through the volume to make interesting connections between cremation rites for 'persons' (obviously defined ethnically), the decapitation of war captives for head trophies/blood sacrifice, the inhumation of disarticulated body parts in cult centres and the ritual killing of weapons etc. in river deposits. The reason for all this irritation is, of course, the compulsion to answer the big question of how and when a segmentary tribal structure changed to a more centralized *civitas* administration in different parts of Northern Gaul. Whether this is a serious question at all, rather than a 19th-century sociological abstraction, is never raised. Instead, a structural functionalist language of élites, peasantries, detribalization and state formation flattens the imagination. It is equally depressing to read Norbert Elias' subtle and sensitive ideas on the emergence of European modernity used to justify a 'primitivist' account of how people in tribal societies are incapable of exercising control over their emotions (p. 269). As this volume makes clear, the archaeological record available is rich and fascinating, scarcely tapped and obscured by 19th-century sociological language, and is just waiting for a sensitive and subtle approach.

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For 1992 the annual subscription is:

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UK & Europe	£47	£28
USA and rest of world	\$94*	\$58

* special third-world institutional rate of US\$58.

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who accept payment by cheque, bank draft, money order or credit card; their phone number is (0)(865) 882283, and FAX (0)(865) 882890.

'ANTIQUITY is published quarterly by Oxford University Press. Subscription is \$94 per year. Second Class pending at Newark, New Jersey. ISSN 0003-598X.

'POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to Antiquity, c/o Virgin Mailing & Distribution, Building 150, Newark International Airport, Newark NJ 07114, USA.'

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Single copies of 1992 issues and of recent back-numbers (volume 64 for 1990, and volume 65 for 1991) cost:

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ISSN 0003 598X.

Set in Linotron 202 Melior.

Printed and bound in Great Britain.

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