

**Review of: Crawford, S., Hadley, D. M. & Shepherd, G. (eds.) (2018). *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Childhood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.** Hardback and ebook, 784 pages; ISBN 978-0-19-967069-7

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Oxford University Press describes its handbooks on their website as, “authoritative and up-to-date surveys of original research” including, “specially commissioned essays from leading figures in the discipline, ‘that’ give critical examinations of the progress and direction of debates, as well as foundation for future research.” Archaeological offerings in the handbook series seem to be developed opportunistically, rather than systematically by the press, but all volumes have editors that are at the top of their respective fields and who are in an exceptional position to create volumes of high caliber. The latest volume in the series on the archaeology of childhood is no exception. The editors are well established researchers whose work has been foundational to this area of scholarship, and who continue to help shape and drive the direction of work in the field.

This impeccably-produced volume, edited by Sally Crawford, Dawn M. Hadley, and Gillian Shepherd, is substantial at over 700 pages, and contains 37 works divided into eight sections, including Defining Children and Childhood; Children, Family, and Households; Learning, Socialization, and Training; Self, Identity, and Community; Health Disease and Environment; Death, Memory, and Meaning; and Seeing, Presenting, and Interpreting the Archaeology of Childhood. These sections aptly capture the current areas of archaeological inquiry surrounding children both past and present, and combine the voices of expected, well-known scholars with those making among their first contributions to childhood studies in archaeology. This collection is useful for research and teaching, because each chapter stands on its own, presenting a case study that can be used effectively without the context of the entire collection. Collectively, the chapters require the reader to engage with an array of interdisciplinary evidence and perspectives spanning many traditional divides in archaeological practice and inquiry, and offer a wide-ranging view of the types of work that shed meaningful light on children in the past, and the worlds in which they lived.

The volume is notably characterised by the juxtaposition and occasionally the sophisticated integration of works from social archaeology and bio-

archaeology. The relationship of these two fields is set up well in the introductory chapter as an interwoven narrative of how an interest in children emerged both from studies of human skeletal remains and investigations of non-mortuary archaeological sites and materials, particularly in British and European archaeology. The placement of bio-archaeological and archaeological chapters under the various section/topic headings of this volume are illustrative of the intersections and divides between these two areas of inquiry, and point to the different kinds of work each field is doing to provide insight into children and childhood in the past. These connections also illustrate the often highly divergent perspectives, questions, and outcomes that drive researchers and that characterises the archaeological study of childhood in the past, and as such give the reader a chance to grapple with ideas of where future scholarship is heading.

Archaeological work in the volume that focuses on non-mortuary remains brings to light how archaeologists have built on foundational works of 15-20 years ago to offer new understandings of children and new types of narratives for writing the archaeology of childhood. Because the study of childhood has grown exponentially over the past two decades, it is easy for many current authors to overlook that the first scholars working on children were operating in a discipline where no interest or emphasis on children existed. Some of the works described as pioneering in the introduction to this volume were, in fact, cautionary tales using experimental and ethnographic data to dissuade archaeologists from pursuing children and childhood as topics of study. In such an environment, scholars had to extract children from broader conversations in archaeology in order to shine light on the viability and importance of children and childhood for archaeological interpretations of the past. Narratives about children in archaeology were focused, in large part, on demonstrating that children were archaeologically visible and an intellectually viable topic for the field.

The works in this volume actualise many of the hopes and promises encouraged by these earlier archaeological works. Children are not treated as a separate analytical category of person by most authors, but rather as significant people integral to their families, communities, and societies through their participation in daily activities as members of households and their vital roles in the social and cosmological structures that underpin society. The works in this volume are also largely liberated from a singular emphasis on child-specific material culture, and rather integrate toys,

child-rearing devices, and educational objects into much broader analyses of archaeological evidence and interpretive frameworks. Finally, these works are free of the language of justification and promotion that characterised earlier narratives on children in archaeology, which allows much more theoretically rich and sophisticated interpretations of children and childhood through material, documentary, iconographic, and ethnographic lenses to emerge.

The chapters focusing on bioarchaeological approaches present a thorough overview of current methodological and theoretical issues in the sub-field, from a mostly varied geographic and temporal perspective. The UK and US focus of many of the chapters is reminiscent of where most of the research is undertaken in the field, however there is an inclusion of work from South America, South Asia and Europe. Similar to the archaeologically focused chapters, the collection of bioarchaeological focused works often include evidence from adults, moving the attention from children in isolation to an integrated analyses of human experience over the life course and the relationships between children and adults. In Section II "*Defining Children and Childhood*" bioarchaeological topics cover a broad foundation of theoretical and methodological approaches including biological approaches to assessing age and sex, childhood growth as a measure of population stress, and social theoretical approaches to understanding the infant life course and the relationship with the maternal body. The challenge is now for a meaningful integration of biological and social approaches to age and the life course in archaeology and social bioarchaeology. Section IV "*Learning, Socialisation and Training*" includes a sophisticated historical and socially grounded investigation of childhood mortality and health in the in the context of child labor. In section V "*Self, Identity and Community*" mortuary analysis drawing on bioarchaeological data is used in some of the chapters to assess care and migration of children. Section VI "*Health, Disease and Environment*" contains the bulk of the bioarchaeological analyses of this volume. This section includes chapters that investigate biocultural adaptation in a variety of spatial and temporal contexts using methods of assessment of bone growth and limb robusticity, stable isotopic evidence for infant and child weaning and diet and migration, palaeopathology and trauma, and artificial skull modification. Section VII "*Death, Memory and Meaning*" includes chapters that investigate the recovery and preservation of the skeletal remains of children within archaeological contexts and an exploration of purported child sacrifice.

We recommend this book as a thorough synthesis of the study of archaeology and bioarchaeology of childhood. This volume would be useful for scholars and students working across the fields of humanities, social sciences, and biological sciences including archaeology, biological anthropology, history, classics, visual anthropology, and gender and childhood studies. Although the price of this comprehensive volume may be out of reach for some students and emerging researchers in the field, as is the case with most works of this length, we highly recommend this as a central book in the archaeology of childhood. Importantly, the attempts to meld the archaeological and bioarchaeological approaches to studying children are commended, making this work a key piece for the emergent field.

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