

[Oxford 2014]; D. MICHAELIDES (ed.), *Medicine and Healing in the Ancient Mediterranean World* [Oxford 2014]).

This is a book that creates many more questions than it answers and provides a foundation for many interesting research questions for future work. This is a positive and welcome contribution, opening up the possibility of studying both temporary and permanent bodily modifications. If you are interested in the archaeology of embodiment, it offers useful groundwork and new insights into an overlooked aspect of embodiment.

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SARAH RALPH (ed.), *The Archaeology of Violence. Interdisciplinary Approaches*. SUNY Series, The Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology Distinguished Monograph Series volume 2. State University of New York, Buffalo 2013. \$ 95.00. ISBN 978-1-4384-4441-3. 306 pages, 61 figures, 11 tables.

Since 2006 the Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology (IEMA) at the University at Buffalo has been hosting an annual international Visiting Scholar Conference on contemporary theoretical issues in European and Mediterranean archaeology. *The Archaeology of Violence* is the proceedings volume that followed the 2007 conference, devoted to discussing violence in the past.

Based on the certainty that violence must have played a major role in the different sociopolitical systems in past epochs, Sarah Ralph, the editor of the volume, outlines the book's main goal in her introduction: to provide an interdisciplinary forum where evidence of violence may be contrasted and we may improve our understanding of its "causes and consequences in its broader social and cultural contexts" (p. 3). For this purpose, the editor brings together archaeologists, anthropologists, classicists and art historians whose expertise spans periods and territories from the Mesolithic to the Modern age, and from northern Europe to the Mediterranean Basin and Central Anatolia. The result is a collection of papers and case studies grouped in three main sections: Contexts of Violence, Politics and Identities of Violence, and Sanctified Violence. And, while readers might miss stronger cross-disciplinary links between the rather disparate cases presented in each individual chapter, they will nevertheless appreciate their variegated nature and the opportunity they provide for the expansion of knowledge on this topic.

Theoretical-methodological issues affecting the study of violence in the distant past are to be mainly found in the first section of the volume, including conceptual efforts to define violence. Drawing from previous publications, it is here where the four authors discuss, to a greater or lesser extent, the pluses and minuses of archaeological evidence informative of violence (material culture, settlement patterns, iconography and skeletal remains). Especially instructive is Rebecca C. Redfern's review of the different types of bone trauma. All the authors seem as well to share the opinion that direct archaeological evidence of violence may be scarcer than instances of actual violence, but it is Simon T. James who gives the most compelling argument by highlighting the discrepancy between written sources and archaeological data in Roman times.

It is also in this section where discourses of violence and warfare constructed for Prehistory are presented (especially Helle Vandkilde), and where it is claimed that, at least until the mid-1990s, both have been ignored or downplayed in most accounts of the past. Given this paucity of theori-

sations, the authors plea for the urgent need for archaeology to fully address the issue of violence. While I concur with the authors on the need for an in-depth theorisation on the topic, I nevertheless think that violence, warfare and warriors are deeply entrenched in our explanations of the social dynamics in the past and play a key role (for instance) in accounts of phenomena such as the increasing social complexity in prehistoric Europe. This may actually be part of the problem, since prevailing assumptions have not favoured a profound scholarly debate, nor a truly in-depth search for supporting archaeological evidence. Many of Europe's Bronze Age societies, such as El Argar in south-eastern Spain, where I work (G. ARANDA-JIMÉNEZ / S. MONTÓN-SUBÍAS / S. JIMÉNEZ-BROBEIL, *Conflicting evidence? Weapons and skeletons in the Bronze Age of south-east Iberia*. *Antiquity* 83, 2009, 1038–1051), constitute good examples. This is connected with a discussion topic that I miss in the book, and that might be formulated as follows: Why do many archaeological publications take violence for granted but never explain it? And why in many cases is the emergence of warriors and warfare *pronounced* to have occurred rather than explained?

Going into a more detailed analysis of each of the contributions, the two first papers in this section provide an overview of evidence of conflict and its changing nature in the European Neolithic (Rick J. Schulting, with some incursions into the Mesolithic and Bronze Age) and Northern Europe's Bronze Age (Helle Vandkilde). On the basis of information from various published papers, Schulting suggests that different patterns of violence may be observed from the Mesolithic to the Calcolithic: on the one hand, large organized conflict – mainly involving males, as suggested by projectile injuries on male bodies –, and on the other hand, close quarters fighting, which would affect both males and females, as unhealed and healed cranial injuries seem to indicate. Importantly, though, the raw data leading to such conclusions are not presented, and we remain ignorant on important questions such as the types of cranial injuries mentioned or the percentages of injured subjects among the population. Interestingly enough, although Schulting accepts that specialized male warriors do not emerge until the Late Neolithic, he also suggests that some LBK male burials in central Europe with stone axes and projectile points should be reconsidered in this light.

In chapter 3, Helle Vandkilde explores weaponry (especially in burials and in votive deposits), dealing with weapon technology, fortifications, skeletal trauma and iconographic representations. Her conclusion is that although war was present in Bronze Age Europe, it was not endemic. She provides very interesting case studies (which actually leave readers wanting more information) as well as a significant discussion on the socio-politics of the study of violence in the past.

In chapter 4, Rebecca C. Redfern examines evidence for trauma in the lifecourse of late Iron Age women from Dorset (GB). Her sample consists of 72 subadult individuals and 53 adult females from 12 different sites. Evidence of trauma in females has only been found in Maiden Castle, which also contains the higher number of female skeletons (24 in total). From this fact, Redfern deduces that these agricultural communities were not generally involved in warfare, but nevertheless conflicts did occur from time to time and affected women. She further suggests that the women from Maiden Castle could have died during the Claudian conquest of Britain in A. D. 43. Even though this paper is mainly the presentation of a case study – and a very thorough one at that, except for a comparison between male and female traumata which I believe should have been included –, it also provides a useful and relevant sketch of gender-related patterns of violent behaviour in present day times.

Simon T. James closes this section with an evaluation of violence in the wider Roman World in chapter 5. As I have pointed out above, he elaborates on the enormous gulf that he believes separates evidence for violence in archaeological remains and in written literary sources. He concludes that, in this particular case, there is an archaeological misrepresentation of violence, which should

give us pause when it comes to interpreting lack of evidence of violence in other archaeological contexts.

Section 2 underlines the interrelation between identities and the politics of violence through three case studies and a critical genealogy of the archaeology of conflict. Together with the papers in section 3, it also demonstrates how productive it is, whenever possible, to combine archaeological and written historical evidence. In his very well illustrated contribution, Eric R. Varner (chapter 6) examines systematic violence enacted against likenesses of “bad” Roman emperors. He provides many different examples – and very good pictures – that cogently demonstrate how the mutilation and transformation of images in times of violent political transitions functioned as mechanisms for the “subtle negotiation and manipulation of visual memory” (p. 139).

Chapter 7 takes us to Northern Albania where Michael L. Galaty introduces us to the Shala Valley Project (SVP) and the Shala tribe, one of the last surviving tribal groups in Europe. This is a very interesting long-term study of a “frontier area”, as the Shala tribe are located in the boundaries of larger, ever-expanding states. Combining archaeological, ethnographic and archival evidence, Galaty analyses traditions of warfare and violence in this area and their long-term effects on the landscape – from the 15th century to the present day. The paper also seeks to “discuss the implications” of this “research for archaeology elsewhere and in different periods”, but, unfortunately, this remains a desideratum rather than an actual achievement.

In chapter 8, Michael J. Carter brings us back to the Roman period in his discussion of the martyrdom of Polycarp in Smyrna in the mid-second century A. D. Drawing from the meager literature on this event and considering the seriousness of the performance and the engagement of the spectators, he puts forward an interpretation of such acts as “cultural performances” also in this area of the Greek world. Although this opens up intriguing perspectives, unfortunately we are not given compelling textual evidence beyond the author’s belief in his own claims.

Closing this section, John Carman contributes a comprehensive biography of conflict archaeology in chapter 9. He goes at some length into the three major strands within this field (prehistoric warfare and conflict, historic pre-20th century warfare and conflict, and 20th century conflict), summarising the specific features of each one. Besides this, the paper also formulates a number of desiderata regarding the future role that conflict archaeology may have in the context of a growing European Union. Conflict Archaeology, Carman believes, has “the capacity to explore aspects of the development of European identities that arise from past conflict in a way that does not merely reconfirm old hostilities but contributes to our understanding of identity creation and our willingness to build new forms of identity” (p. 176). Only time will tell whether – and how – this hope may actually come true.

Sanctified Violence, the third and last section in the book, brings together contributions that scrutinize violence within the framework of sacrifice, ritual and religion. Anne Porter, in chapter 10, presents an in-depth discussion of two archaeological case studies: the case found at Arslantepe (Turkey) and the royal cemetery of Ur (Iraq). After some useful insights into the differences between *murder*, *ritual killing* and *sacrifice*, she convincingly argues that the cases studied constitute two of the four situations that fit the profile of human sacrifice in 3rd millennium Greater Mesopotamia.

Human sacrifice is also one of the hypotheses that Mary M. Voigt advances to explain her case study in chapter 11. In a carefully structured and graphically impacting paper, she analyses the human and animal remains from Hellenistic times recovered from the southern Lower Town of the Citadel Mound at Celtic Gordion (Turkey). Evidence of decapitation and strangulation, display of trophy skulls, careful redistribution of body parts and animal bones mixed with human bones lead

the author to suggest these remains may result from violent ritual practices, including human sacrifice. Voigt cautiously admits, however, that at present the specific causes of these violent deaths are still subject to speculation.

In another graphically impacting paper, Eamonn P. Kelley (chapter 12) posits a suggestive hypothesis for two well-preserved Iron Age bog bodies found in Ireland: the Old Croghan Man and the Clonycavan Man. Evidence points in both cases to people of high-status, perhaps deposed kings. Like some other bog bodies in the country, these corpses were found close to significant territorial boundaries. Despite mention of executions in Roman sources, Voigt prefers to consider them as victims of ritual killing that would have been deposited along boundaries with a protective mission in the framework of “sovereignty rituals associated with sacral kingship and kingly inauguration” (p. 237). Voigt also calls for systematic research that might elucidate whether bog bodies from Great Britain and continental Europe also follow the boundary pattern.

Finally, in chapter 13, John Pollini confronts the positive image of early Christianity as preserver of Ancient Art in both scholarship and popular culture. Through multiple, quite significant examples from Greece, he draws attention to Christian destruction and desecration of images in Late Antiquity. He also addresses the denial or silencing of these facts in current times, especially in countries with a Christian background. Although thought-provoking and compelling in their argumentative force, the author’s claims sometimes go a bit too far, in my view, as when for instance he casts doubts on the legitimacy of the Greek government’s demand for the return of the Elgin Marbles. It is one thing to expose the role of Fundamentalist Christianity in Late Antiquity, uncovering political distortions and manipulations of the past, and quite another to question a sovereign state’s right to manage its own archaeological heritage.

After this brief tour through the book, by way of conclusion I would like to highlight three features of this work that I find rather important:

First, the different papers in the volume provide a representative overview of the study of violence in some inter-related disciplines (archaeology, art history and anthropology), offering us a glimpse of the terms of current debates in these fields. This facilitates access to case studies and discussions that – were it not for compilations of this type – might otherwise go unnoticed by researchers specialising on other specific subjects.

Second, as Sarah Ralph mentions in the introduction, this is not simply a book about *warfare*. ‘Warfare’ and ‘violence’ are terms that have been all too often – and mistakenly – used as if they were interchangeable, and many contributors to the volume help unravel this confusion.

And third, although the book formulates open hypotheses and looks forward to future challenges – which is undeniably positive –, the opportunity for a more in-depth exploration of some of the issues touched upon is nevertheless missed; and likewise, one has the impression that a more thorough editing job might have reinforced the connections between the different papers in each of the sections. This means, therefore, that a comprehensive, in-depth theoretical reflection on violence (and also warfare), as called for by some of the authors themselves, is still pending.

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