

texts would have glued the contributions together, and some figures would have been better comprehensible with better specifications (e. g. p. 35, 77, 78) or simplification (p. 10, 57).

However, altogether the volume offers us a wealth of information in a condensed format, combining two German traditions. The traditional one of 'firm' texts, that need attentive reading, and a newer one of full colour culture maps and photo's in the line of *Spuren der Jahrtausende* (U. VON FREEDEN / S. VON SCHNURBEIN [eds], *Spuren der Jahrtausende. Archäologie und Geschichte in Deutschland* [Stuttgart 2003]) and the *Atlas der Vorgeschichte* (S. VON SCHNURBEIN [ed.], *Atlas der Vorgeschichte. Europa von den ersten Menschen bis Christi Geburt* [Stuttgart 2009]). As such it is a good window on recent research, and a good acquaintance with the various approaches of leading researchers of this period.

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**CLARE MANEN / THOMAS PERRIN / JEAN GUILAINE (eds), *La transition néolithique en Méditerranée. Actes du colloque « Transitions en Méditerranée, ou comment des chasseurs devinrent agriculteurs »*, Muséum de Toulouse, 14–15 avril 2011. Editions Errance / Archives d'Ecologie Préhistorique, Arles 2014. € 59.00. ISBN 978-2-87772-574-3. 462 pages.**

The publication of this volume emerged from a colloquium in Toulouse in 2011 which focused on the latest findings on the theme of the transition to agriculture in the Levant and Mediterranean area. Much important work is brought together and it makes an original addition to knowledge on this pivotal region by linking work across this vast zone. The ambition was to present the current state of knowledge, and demonstrate advances in new interdisciplinary approaches that explore the complex socio-economic-environmental changes that domestication and farming imposed on hunter-gatherers. How successful can such a wide-ranging collection be however? Are the contributions consistently novel or interdisciplinary and are the scholars all aiming at the same goal here? It is always difficult to maintain consistency with many diverse contributions from sub-disciplines of archaeology that reflect regional and temporal diversity. Nevertheless, the discussion is firmly placed in current theoretical and scientific approaches and presented as 26 papers by 42 authors, in French or English, most with translated summaries, illustrated by excellent colour photographs and diagrams. The first section deals with the Near East and Anatolia, the second focuses on the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean-Adriatic area, whilst the third examines the central and western Mediterranean. Given the current military disruption to field research in Syria and Iraq, this important collection of ideas and data may be the major statement on the field research for some time to come.

One evident difference that emerges between the three regions is in the scholarly questions and perhaps expectations, posed to examine the theme of Neolithic transition. The eastern zone presents fundamental questions of socio-economic transformation dealing with a world of the 10<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, whilst the mode and speed of Neolithic transmission in the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC dominates scholarly work in the west. The balance between such different approaches is difficult to achieve, and the core differences in approach are stark, but a critical discussion of these different views is not apparent in many of the papers. Possibly the linking theme, outlined by Guilaine in the introduction, needs to be heeded further. Nevertheless, comparison of the earliest Neolithic over the full extent of the Mediterranean is a valuable exercise, and it raises enticing questions about how we measure and interpret the evidence for final hunter-gatherers and first farmers every-

where. It raises, too, the question of the nature of our assumptions about transitions, when sites often present conflicting data that implies conservatism of one technology but innovation or adoption of another.

Jean Guilaine opens the debate on the transformation from hunter-gatherer populations to farmers. He speculates on the diverse Neolithic forms that moved, mutated and became established around the Mediterranean basin, from the Near Eastern emergence and pre-pottery Neolithic societies of the Levant and Anatolia, to the western Mediterranean world beyond. The importance of scientific applications to examine those changes (ancient DNA, dating etc.) is made explicit, and the role of science and DNA studies is mirrored in the concluding paper by Marie Lacan et al., which describes the great promise it has for interpreting the origins and diversity of early populations. Regardless of these scientific goals, not all the papers applied scientific approaches other than absolute dating.

The first section entitled “The Near East Change” describes new discoveries with theoretical summaries and overviews, especially of work in Syria that reports on research in advance of dam projects. Frédéric Abbés’ intensive 4 km<sup>2</sup> survey in the Bal’as mountain steppe produced over 100 sites and excavation of a rare 9<sup>th</sup> millennium BC PPNA village site at Wadi Tumbaq 3. The Mureybetian sequence emerged from an earlier Khamian hunter-gatherer stone built camp, and the extraordinary detail of its PPNA houses shows subdivided cellular forms, set radially around a central post, but the lithic blade industry remains a conservative Mesolithic technology. A contemporary site at Jerf el Ahmar (9500–8700 BC), presented by Danielle Stordeur, reveals remarkable details of an early 1 hectare village and its eleven levels of occupation. The high degree of planning and hierarchical organisation employed terraces, paving, subterranean features and stone foundations, whilst the circular houses surrounded a central space. Hunted animals may have provided the base for complex symbolic behaviour and mythologies, expressed by horns / bucrania of game hung around the house interiors, whilst engraved animal-human images adorned stone panels. Much of this symbolism resembles the pillars of Göbekli Tepe and neighbouring sites, and raises the question of interaction between northern Syria and eastern Anatolia. Similar Syrian symbolic material is reported by Éric Coqueugniot’s discussion of 10<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> millennia BC Dja’de-el-Mughara on the Euphrates. Alongside evidence of richly painted houses and funerary practices employing anthropomorphic images (like that from Nevalı Çori), bucrania cults compare with those in central Anatolia. The plant food base from the Kebaran (c. 20 000 BC) to the emergence of the Neolithic in these early settled societies is examined by George Willcox. He argues that AMS dating present a clear coincidence of identifiable domestication by the mid-11<sup>th</sup> millennium BC across the region. Key sequences at the north Syrian sites of Abu Hureyra and Dederiyeh demonstrate the significant pre-domestic phases for over a millennium before cereals revealed morphological change.

The PPN of the southern Levant is discussed by Adrian Nigel Goring Morris and Anna Belfer-Cohen in a wide-ranging paper that focuses on sedentism and social changes. Their model identifies population growth as a major driver of villages and the “megasites”, coupled with the economic changes of emerging agro-pastoralism and regional networks. These, they argue, acted to dissipate socio-economic stress but in turn promoted intensification, new technology, elaboration of architecture, and social and ritual complexity. Archaeologically this was expressed in a proliferation of cultic installations and paraphernalia, with settlements increasingly retaining special symbolic areas suggestive of continuity with hunter-gatherer symbolic behaviour. The model is persuasive and engaging, and demonstrates the role of better understanding of the Levant region in comprehending the Neolithisation of the wider Eurasian area. The consolidation of large Neolithic settlements is examined by Miquel Molist in his assessment of Tell Halula. He suggests a process

moving from nucleated PPNA sites to more dispersed patterns of large sites in the PPNB. This coincides with the ovicaprids becoming a dominant food source, before the desertification in the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium led to the abandonment of many settlements.

New discoveries across Anatolia are summarised by Mehmet Özdoğan. Formerly Anatolia was considered to be the recipient of south-eastern Neolithic ideas, but it is now seen as a socio-economic core, providing inspiration to its neighbours. A wealth of compelling evidence exists for an incipient Neolithic from the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> millennium BC that spanned different environments and evolved into distinct identities. These regions represent different economic and belief systems, manifested in special buildings, shrines, art and objects. Özdoğan speculates about the nature of the social organisation that triggered Neolithic responses in different ways (summarised as knowledge sharing, attitudes to change and adoption of craft specialisation). He introduces the notion of maritime as well as terrestrial movement of people and ideas, which potentially filtered aspects of the “Neolithic Package” over time and space.

Section two moves to Cyprus, the Aegean and Adriatic areas, where easily defined Neolithic evidence is far more elusive. Here the papers focus on processes and the timing of acculturation / diffusion between the final hunter-gatherers and indications of the Neolithic. Jean-Denis Vigne assesses interaction between Cyprus and the Levant and the introduction of domestic species into the island context. He argues that since Cyprus had no suitable wild ancestors, domesticates or domesticable species were transported direct from the Levant between c. 10 500 and c. 8300 BC. The faunal story is an interrupted one, with introduced pigs treated as semi-wild game, later followed by goat and cattle, and these gradually became domesticated. Domestic dogs introduced early did not thrive, whilst fully domestic sheep appeared only in the 8<sup>th</sup> millennium. Both sheep and cattle populations appeared to collapse by the end of the PPNB, and new hardier introductions replaced them. Given the quite scant evidence, the proposals await more data, but raise many interesting questions. The faunal question in the Aegean is examined by Katerina Trantalidou’s discussion of island contexts as “natural enclosures” which influenced animal size. Animal introductions on Kythnos, the northern Sporades and at Franchthi cave suggest husbandry was managed by a Mesolithic technology. Attempts to determine movement through strontium studies have been inconclusive, but this work does open up new directions. Cattle domestication and their diffusion form a theme for Amelie Scheu et al. who discuss a Europe-wide study of ancient cattle DNA studies. The outcomes identify different routes of dispersal, with low diversity and genetic drift along the central European LBK expansion route, with similar trends in southern Italy. In contrast, the great diversity of the cattle gene pool in western Europe is explained by the “drastic population expansion” to widely separated locations during the Neolithic.

The notion of micro-histories to describe the beginning of farming on Crete and Cyprus is the theme of Nikos Efstratiou’s discussion, and he identifies “dynamic marine arenas” during the early Holocene, which created diverse island archaeologies. This useful paper highlights the similar processes that introduced farming economies to island contexts across the Mediterranean. Island bridges linked western Asia with Europe, which, with the application of interdisciplinary scientific analyses, allow for realistic explanations and models that interpret the transformation of farming societies in the early Holocene. Dating evidence indicates the adoption was fast and slow – more nuanced than previous studies have shown. The Mesolithic sites of the Aegean are the focus of Adamantios Sampson’s paper and develop the theme of island-mainland settlement. The long Epi-Palaeolithic-Neolithic sequence of Franchthi cave is apparent in newly discovered sites such as Maroulas on Kythnos, Cyclops Cave in the northern Sporades and Sarakenos. These sites demonstrate regional distinctions through their camp sites, huts, burials, lithic industries and economies, and present a rich data source that may begin to explain the transmission of farming to the area

and the transformation of its populations. The classic site Sidari on Corfu in the Adriatic is re-evaluated in a paper by Jean-François Berger et al. A programme of re-dating shows the Neolithic dates correspond closely with the mid-late 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC site of Nea Nikomedia far to the east, and suggest the rapid transmission of farming across Greece. The research – the only example in the volume – has used geoarchaeology and sediment cores focused on the wider environment to show that the site was affected by major landscape and environmental changes that disrupt the sequence. The environmental implications and detailed dating indicate Sidari is the earliest such site in the area. The transition to agriculture in the Adriatic is explored further in Stašo Forenbaher and Preston Miracle's discussion of their 2005 two-stage Neolithisation adoption model. They suggested a rapid primary dispersal accompanied by pottery, followed by a slower agro-pastoral expansion in the area, but the increase in dated sites (caves and open settlements) allows for the model to be elaborated. More precisely dated pottery sites indicate these artefacts were introduced to mobile indigenous groups, who continued to exploit marine resources, alongside incoming farmer-forager groups established in settlements on the prime locations, such as Corfu and the Tavoliere. Based mainly on pottery sites the chronology allows re-interpretation. It demonstrates farming moved from the south-eastern Adriatic northwards, and it raises questions about less visible evidence for the transition to farming.

The data for the transition to farming in Italy is shown to be uneven, with some phases poorly represented and dating uneven (papers by Renata Grifoni Cremonesi and Giovanna Radi). The evidence for farming and settlement is frequently represented by impressed / painted pottery, ditched and walled sites such as Molfetta and Trasano. Stock keeping was evident in these enclosures alongside typical domesticates, but the chronology, especially of long and reliable sequences, is not easily compared across Sicily and peninsula Italy. The question of continuity between the Mesolithic and Neolithic is also problematic, with chronological overlap at sites like Uzzo in Sicily, suggesting regional patterns of coexistence of hunter-gatherers with farmers.

Section Three on the western Mediterranean explores the islands and Iberia in detail, with discussion of the transition to the Neolithic from the Mesolithic a dominant theme. Much of the evidence, as already described for the Adriatic and Italy, is often in the form of artefact types and dates, rather than wholesale settlements, sites or economic evidence. Thomas Perrin and Didier Binder focus their discussion on the retention of the Castelnavian Mesolithic lithic traditions. The trapeze assemblages (perhaps influenced from north Africa) frequently characterise western Mesolithic sites, but whilst assemblages in Italy are associated with pottery, in France and Iberia there seems to be far weaker association between indigenous Castelnavian Mesolithic groups and pottery. The role of north Africa is revisited in Simone Mulazzani's paper on the SHM-1 site at Hergla in Tunisia. The lack of comparable research across the entire length of the north African coast is a problem for understanding the nature of this apparent barrier to economic links, but the roughly contemporary SHM-1 site shows intriguing similarities to material on the European side of the water. The importance of west Mediterranean islands as stepping stones in the sea is presented by Joseph Cesari et al. who focus on the Corsican site of Campu Stefanu. This and other sites present a very early phase of Neolithisation around 6600–6450 BC, and evident earlier Mesolithic colonisation of the island, documented in rock shelters and cave sites. The re-examination of the Su Carropu cave assemblage on Sardinia by Carlo Lugliè likewise presents a punctuated occupation sequence, with a phase of Mesolithic levels (c. 9200–8600 BC), later re-occupied in the earliest Neolithic at c. 6440–6156 BC. These data enable reinterpretation of the first episode of Neolithisation in Sardinia and its economic base. The theme of Mesolithic-Neolithic transition in the Ebro Valley, discussed by Pilar Utrilla and Rafael Domingo, centres on lithic analysis of indigenous traditions. The pre-farming communities were influenced by the introduction of Cardial pottery and new lithic styles that came with them in the mid-6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. The theme

of continuity is applied to the Levantine Ares del Maestre site where symbolic wild goat horn offerings accompanied burials of indigenous hunting groups, and whose DNA is analysed by Carmen Olaria. Symbolism in the social context of Iberian rock art traditions (presented by Javier Fernández-López de Pablo) is shown to span the transition from Mesolithic to Neolithic. Dating such material remains problematic and phasing relies heavily on stylistic clues, but these do show changing concerns with an increasingly domesticated society. Refinement in chronology is the key aspects of successful study of this elusive period, and, as Claire Manen demonstrates, the refinement of our interpretation of the dynamics of Neolithisation is fundamental to the "bigger picture" of adoption over time and space. Her paper employs a series of map plots, dating the introduction of domesticated species in the western Mediterranean. Likewise, the movement of the first agro-pastoral groups in Iberia as identified by Joan Bernabeu Aubán et al. is plotted through the identification of Epi-Cardial / Cardial pottery diffusion along maritime and terrestrial routes from the mid-6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.

This is a handsome volume to record an important discussion, one that contains many stimulating ideas and wonderful material that was being extracted as much as a decade ago. Since then, new dates and Bayesian statistical modelling, work on plant, animal and human DNA as well as more explicit interdisciplinary environmental approaches are changing the picture rapidly. Doubtless more data and debate will follow this intriguing and important question: tracing the transition to farming and the impact of Neolithisation in the Mediterranean.

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**IVO VAN WIJK / LUC AMKREUTZ / PIETER VAN DE VELDE (Hrsg.), 'Vergeten' bandkeramiek. Een Odyssee naar de oudste neolithische bewoning in Nederland.** Sidestone Press, Leiden 2014. € 64,95 / 9,95 / 0,00 (gedruckte Ausgabe / E-Book / Online). ISBN 978-90-8890-224-6. 671 Seiten, 82 Seiten englischsprachige Zusammenfassungen, 245 Abbildungen, 159 Tabellen, 3 Beilagen.

**LOUISE GOMART, Traditions techniques et production céramique au Néolithique ancien. Étude de huit sites rubanés du nord est de la France et de Belgique.** Sidestone Press, Leiden 2014. € 49,95 / 9,95 / 0,00 (gedruckte Ausgabe / E-Book / Online). ISBN 978-90-8890-246-8. 342 Seiten, 110 Abbildungen, 87 Tabellen.

Mit den beiden Ende 2014 erschienenen Bänden liegen zwei Bücher zur nordwestlichen Peripherie der Bandkeramik vor, die kaum unterschiedlicher sein könnten: Eine akademische Arbeit und ein Band, der eine (in)direkte Folge der Umsetzung der Konvention von Malta darstellt. Gerade durch diese Komplementarität erscheint eine Doppelbesprechung der beiden Bände lohnenswert. Der sehr umfangreiche niederländische Malta-Band „Vergeten Bandkeramiek“ braucht einige Hintergrundinformationen, um für ein Publikum, das nicht zutiefst vertraut ist mit den Änderungen der niederländischen Denkmalschutzgesetze, verständlich zu sein. Ab den 1990er Jahren ist das Archäologiesystem in den Niederlanden infolge der Ratifikation der Konvention von Malta grundlegend erneuert worden mit Öffnung des Marktes für Grabungsfirmen und stringenter Qualitätssicherung. Ein sehr wichtiger Punkt ist jedoch die Veröffentlichungsverpflichtung, die anderswo häufig nicht konsequent in der Gesetzgebung durchgesetzt wird. Nach dieser weitreichenden und, auch im weiteren internationalen Vergleich, beispielhaften Umsetzung des europäischen Übereinkommens, stellte sich die Frage, wie zu verfahren war mit unausgewerteten Altgrabungen, die auch in den Niederlanden die Magazine überfüllen. Eine erste und sehr vorläufige Inventarisierung ergab,