

The relationship of the sacred to place is explored through the definition of sacred place, and its manipulation -- illustrated by the location of icons in the Italian streets to stop the inhabitants from defiling them. Different conceptions of the same sacred symbol, namely Christ, dependent upon two different spatial contexts within America, separated by social conditions and belief as well as distance, pursues the same relationship.

The role of language in the formulation of concepts of place also comes under scrutiny. Robinson carefully outlines the linguistics of place in Latin America in his chapter, emphasising the importance of an appreciation of indigenous categorisations. This is in presumably unintended opposition to the remark quoted in Duncan's chapter on Kandy, attributed to a British colonial administrator in Sri Lanka, that one only needs sufficient command of the local language to be able to swear at the natives.

The chapters are based on lectures delivered at Syracuse University, and the book is dedicated to the memory of David Sopher, whose interests in cultural variability and complexity in the real world as opposed to universal laws and simplistic conceptions of human social behaviour are echoed in much contemporary archaeological theory. As such, while they will not provide any solutions to the specific problems of identifying meaning in the material remains of places, the loci of archaeology, the contributions in this book do make a very readable excursus into the regions of the geographical imagination charted since archaeology's earlier dalliances with idealised spatial models, which were rather more divorced from meaning.

CLIVE BONSAALL (ED.) *The Mesolithic in Europe* UISPP Mesolithic Commission. John Donald Publishers, Edinburgh. 645pp., 35.00 (Hardback only) ISBN 0-85976-205X.

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At last the book of the Third International Symposium on the Mesolithic has appeared. It has been a long wait, four years in fact, but Clive Bonsall's *The Mesolithic In Europe* is a big book. It is large in volume, contents and scope, as you would perhaps expect from a book with no less than 62 separate papers within its covers. Papers deal with such diverse topics as the effectiveness of lithic technology in mesolithic industries in Denmark, and the importance of inegalitarian features among modern hunter-gatherers for an understanding of the take up of agriculture in the area of the Danube. They range in space from Scotland to eastern Europe, passing through Spain on the way. As the saying goes, there should be something for everyone within this volume, that is so long as you are interested in the Mesolithic. There is no doubt that *The Mesolithic in Europe* instantly appears to be a useful book, as indeed it is. Familiarity, however, dulls one's expectations for more. Put simply, this book is not exactly stimulating. There is nothing really new here, nothing to keep you awake at night; a problem that results both from its structure and the time which it has taken to come to fruition. There is much that is interesting, though, but getting it out will be hard work. *The Mesolithic in Europe* is just a large collection of bound papers; that is both its strength and ultimate weakness.

Turning to the book itself, the papers appear to have been organised along broad geographical lines with the few theoretical and methodological papers tucked in at the beginning. I say this because there is neither an introduction nor contents sub-headings to give any direction. The volume starts in Scandinavia, then passes to Britain, the Low Countries, Eastern Europe and, finally, the Mediterranean, principally the Western half.

Within the 'theoretical section' the paper by Price, 'The reconstruction of Mesolithic diets', is a useful review of some interesting work, as are articles by Deith on the interpretation of seasonality on the basis of shells. (where she argues that there is a need to put the interpretation of shellfish into a wider economic context) Also the article by Grigson, on the identification of different patterns of bird foraging in the Mesolithic of Denmark. Fischer's paper elaborates material that he has published elsewhere and neatly illustrates relationships that exist between stone point morphology and hunting performance. Grfn, on the basis of ethnographic evidence suggests that the spatial arrangements within small dwellings are influenced by the relationships between people. He attempts to draw out some basic principles (cross-cultural generalisations ?) that will be of widespread use in interpretation. "The place opposite the door has the greatest prestige value and as such is the most desirable".

Turning to the geographical part, the British Mesolithic is particularly well covered, perhaps not surprisingly as the conference took place in Edinburgh. Of the 16 papers that are concerned with this area, there are both regional reviews (of Scotland, Ireland and Northern England) and more artefactual reviews (of British antler mattocks and long blade technology in Southern Britain). There are also preliminary reports of a number of 'ongoing' projects: Wickham-Jones on the Isle of Rhum, Bonsall on the Eskmeals Project, Schadla-Hall on the Vale of Pickering survey, Legge and Rowley-Conwy on the fauna from Star Carr and, finally, Woodman on the Mesolithic of Munster.

A number of papers cover aspects of the Scandinavian record. These include short pieces on the sites of Vedbaek by Brunch-Petersen and Skatehøj by Larsson, by Engelstad on houses in Arctic Norway and a review of the evidence for forest clearance in Scandinavia by Welinder. This article is of relevance when considering the interpretation of the same sort of evidence in England.

Other areas are less extensively covered, mainly by small pieces, detailing particular aspects of work in a number of areas. Exceptions to this include comprehensive review articles on the early Holocene cultures of the Western Russian Plain by Kozłowski and on the Mesolithic of Serbia and Montenegro by Srejovic. There are also interesting papers by Lethwaite on the passage to a domesticated economy in the Western Mediterranean, and by Tringham and Voytek on hunting-gathering in the Danube basin, employs a model very akin to that of Bender (1978). More could be said about specific papers.

A feature which dulls the excitement of the volume is the fact that many of the papers present in the volume have appeared elsewhere (sometimes in more extended form) since the Symposium was held in 1985 [Rowley-Conwy et al (1987) and Zvelebil (1987)]. This adds a certain touch of 'déjà-vu'. The most obvious examples are the work of Gendel (1987), on the analysis of lithic styles in North-western Europe, Legge and Rowley-Conwy on Star Carr [complete and available in book form (1988)], Schadla-Hall (1987) and Lethwaite (1987). This is unfortunate and shows the problems that can arise when publication is delayed.

More serious is the general lack of direction/approach to the volume. Attention that has been paid to the text in recent times has alerted us to the way in which structures can and do bias our interpretations ('readings') of the archaeological past. *The Mesolithic of Europe* is interesting in this regard in that there is apparently no structure to the book at all. The use of geography provides a spine onto which the articles have been articulated. However, there is a general lack of a structure which might otherwise have enabled the reader to get more out of the volume. It would have been useful to provide a list of the order in which papers were presented at the conference to see how the papers were 'put in'. The geographic approach only really works for Britain, and this is a result of the number of papers and the abundance of

review pieces rather than any underlying theme. For other areas of Europe this approach has less coherence. It cannot really claim to be a statement on the Mesolithic of Europe; the lack of coverage of France, Germany and southern and central Spain see to that. It is something of a 'pot-pourri'; tit-bits selected from work on the continent, rather than a grand opus in the mould of *La Préhistoire Française* (de Lumley 1976).

The lack of direction and discussion has resulted in the fact that the papers follow the same path that Mesolithic research has always done. It sits uneasily between the Palaeolithic on the one hand and the Neolithic on the other, ready to be devoured from either side, as the sandwich to which Gamble (1987) has so accurately likened it. By constantly affirming itself as Mesolithic and, therefore, something different, it loses the opportunity to investigate problems that are more general in nature and more interesting/important. There have been a growing number of attempts to put the record of the Mesolithic, or perhaps more appropriately the Holocene, in a wider theoretical perspective, but this volume, through its structure, or lack thereof, consequently ignores them. The Mesolithic now stands particularly out of line with newer attempts at interpretation which 'begin' with the Neolithic.

In this light it would have been interesting to have had some discussion on the relationship between the Neolithic and Mesolithic. Such an approach could have brought the papers by Zvelebil and Tringham and Voytek more closely together and brought out the disagreements that arise as to whether the transition from hunting and gathering to farming is merely a technical, or a more fundamentally social phenomenon. The paper by Arts, looking at the course of social evolution of later band societies (albeit from a systems-theoretical perspective) could have put this debate into the context of developments within the Holocene itself. A more thematic basis would have entailed discussion on changing social relationships which is notably absent in the volume, and especially absent in any developed format. Such matters are not overlooked within work on Mesolithic evidence (Zvelebil and O'Shea 1985). The papers on Vedbaek and Skatehøj would have been more fitting here.

If there had been discussion on a geographical basis, someone would surely have pointed out that there is more of interest in the evidence presented from Poland than at first appears. Kobusiewicz suggests that Mesolithic groups on the Northern Plains foraged for flint that was available in locally erratic sources. Only rarely did they make use of exotic chocolate flint from the Holy Cross mountains. Yet in the very next paper, Domanska points out that at the site of Deby 29, within the same area of the Northern Plains, exotic Holy Cross flint is almost exclusively used. The site of Deby 29 is possibly Neolithic. Here, surely, is the possibility to investigate more complex relationships between space, technology, social relationships and different types of economic practice.

*The Mesolithic in Europe* is a quality book, well made and put together, using good materials and with excellent graphic reproduction. It is also worthy of mention that the quality of what must be in many cases translations is very good. In comparison with the latest offerings from other presses this book actually seems cheap, even at #35 ! For these features alone Bonsall should feel pleased. The criticisms mentioned above do not mean that the book is of no value. The many review articles and their attendant bibliographic references see to that. It makes an ideal place from which to start research; I am glad that it is now on my shelf. It is a great pity, though, that the book squanders much that would be interesting by not making attempts to penetrate wider issues than simply being 'Mesolithic'.

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WILLIAM N. MORGAN, *Prehistoric Architecture in Micronesia* Kegan Paul International, London. 1989 xvi, 166pp. \$65.00 Hard. ISBN 0 7103 0358 0

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The archaeology of Micronesia -- those isolated archipelagos in the western Pacific -- is less well known than that of Melanesia to the south and Polynesia to the east. But in the last decade much work has been done, particularly surveys to establish the variety and time-contexts of sites on both high islands and atolls. Where much is still unknown, the interpretation of surveying surface evidence can be risky, but detailed descriptions of such remains need not await more extensive archaeological investigations.

This book, written by an American architect who first became fascinated by the subject when on naval service in 1954, is an unabashed labour of love. The author has compiled a survey of secular and religious structures, including platforms, terraces, artificial islets and their attendant features, modern traditional buildings and megalithic remains on Palau, Yap, Pohnpei and Kosrae in the Carolines, and on Guam, Rota and Tinian in the Southern Marianas. He ignores, unfortunately, the architecture of Kiribati, Nauru and the Marshall Islands. The photographs and drawings, the latter including perspectives, plans, elevations, transverse sections and maps, are of a very high standard. Paradoxically, no actual people appear in the modern as distinct from the archival photographs, giving them an abstract, non-anthropological air.

Nonetheless, the impressive stone remains and chief's and communal wooden houses are attractively presented. The magnificent administrative and ceremonial centres at Nan Madol on Pohnpei and Leluh (Lele) on Kosrae have pride of place in the book. Nan Madol has 92 artificial islets, "many surrounded by retaining walls of immense basalt boulders and stacks of naturally formed prismatic basalt, (some of which) rise 6 to 30 feet above the surfaces (of the interior coral rubble fill) to form enclosures for mortuaries and residences" (p. 62), with attendant canals and lagoons. At the culmination of its development Leluh comprised over a hundred walled enclosures. Both settlements were material expressions of highly stratified and status disciplined societies somewhat similar to those documented in Polynesia.

Another feature of the book is the discussion of the Latte of the Marianas. These comprise parallel rows of stone columns surmounted by hemispherical capstones, which in the famous example called the House of Taga on Tinian, recorded during Commodore Anson's visit in 1742, have a height of 16 feet. These structures were the footings of wooden houses, though opinions differ concerning the type of house erected thereon.