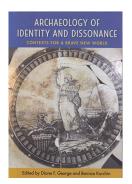


# **New Book Chronicle**

### Claire Nesbitt

Questions of identity have been a focus for many areas of archaeology in the last 20 years, with an emphasis on recognising its fluid and continually changing nature. Despite challenges to approaches to identity in some areas of archaeology (Meskell 2002) and its appropriation in debates around indigeneity and nationalism (Frieman & Hoffman 2019), identity continues to be a fruitful lens through which to study past societies, with concepts of intersectionality allowing for more complex approaches to the topic (Meskell 2002; Voss & Casella 2012). This NBC spotlights a range of volumes that investigate the articulation of social identity through both lived environments and material culture. The themes that emerge centre around the creation, negotiation or maintenance of identity in contested or discordant places and the ways in which identity is projected or ascribed often in response to conflict, oppression or significant social change. Our first three volumes focus on how individuals and groups express their identity in alien and dissonant environments, with case studies from the Americas, Europe, North Africa and the Caribbean.

DIANE F. GEORGE & BERNICE KURCHIN (ed.). 2019. Archaeology of identity and dissonance: contexts for a brave new world. Gainesville: University Press of Florida; 978-0-8130-5619-7 hardback \$85.



Archaeology of identity and dissonance: contexts for a brave new world comprises 13 chapters divided into four parts, dealing with 'People', 'Space', 'Place' and 'Time'. These sections are unified by archaeological investigations into the material expression of the challenges involved in facing the eponymous 'brave new world', which represents "human adaptation to environments that are in some way dissonant with the familiar world" (p. 2), and how this adaptation can be seen reflected in mutable identities. The aim of the volume is to provide an accessible account of the application of the concept of identity to archaeological contexts. The opening chapter by George,

Kurchin and Britt defines identity and considers how it is shaped by power and agency, before going on to discuss its significance and application in archaeological studies.

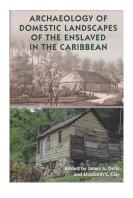
Part I, 'People', opens with a chapter by Jessica Striebel MacLean that considers the often overlooked 'White Creole'—in this case a third generation Montserratian of English descent known only by his family name of Piper—through an investigation of a single possession, a fob seal from a watch. The chapter examines the transformation of 'Englishness' in the plantation setting, in particular how the image of an English gentleman projected through the fob

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seal jarred with the Creole social practices of the eighteenth century. Other chapters in Part I include studies considering the ways in which nineteenth-century Irish immigrants to New York felt compelled to disguise their identity using cosmetics and fashion to protect themselves from prejudice (Meredith Linn), and the reaction of female Algerian sex workers to colonial legislation that recontextualised their bodies as diseased loci (Lisa Geiger).

Part II, 'Space', shifts the focus from the materiality of bodies to the architecture and built environments in which identity was expressed or transformed. Elizabeth Spott's chapter reveals how the expression of identity could be manipulated to navigate what she views as "the pluralistic society of the Great Lakes region in the nineteenth century" (p. 93). This study considers two houses owned by a man of both Native American and European descent—Chief Jean Baptiste Richardville of the Miami people. The contrast between these houses reveals how Richardville constructed multiple identities to allow him to move between the Native American and European cultures to negotiate treaties. Bernice Kerchin and Judith Bianciardi provide a useful exploration of the expression of identities of soldiers on Hadrian's Wall, although their discussion would have been enhanced by a reflection on how their arguments intersect more recent discussions on military and other identities on the wall such as James (2001) or Haynes (2016). One of the final chapters deals with national identity in America, focusing on a post-revolution site in New York. In this interesting chapter, Diane George considers the material manifestations of expressions of pride in a new nation that also contain layers of complex meaning that underlie American exceptionalism and patriotism. The Washington plate (shown on the book's cover) in particular embodies the means of expressing identity that was used by the elite to negotiate their position in post-Revolutionary America. George neatly sums up the emergent theme of this volume, that in times of dissonance, "identity becomes critical for working out one's place in the new world" (p. 258).

James A. Delle & Elizabeth C. Clay (ed). 2019. Archaeology of domestic landscapes of the enslaved in the Caribbean. Gainesville: University Press of Florida; 978-1-68340-091-2 hardback £106.



Continuing the scrutiny of the built environment as a site of self-determination are James Delle and Elizabeth Clay who, together with ten contributors, reflect on the built environments of slavery in the Caribbean in their edited volume: *Archaeology of domestic landscapes of the enslaved in the Caribbean*. Whereas previous studies of this nature have focused on the large-scale landscapes of slavery, the papers in this volume are concerned with individual domestic spaces and indeed any archaeologically recognisable areas that were constructed through the daily activities of the enslaved. A recurring theme throughout the volume is how the built environments reflected social control or autonomy and the relationship between these factors.

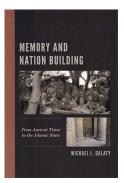
Todd Ahlman's chapter considers the evidence for slave housing on St Kitts, focusing on cotton and sugar plantations. Ahlman's findings suggest that post-in-ground structures were

the most common building type during the period of slavery on St Kitts, with no evidence for lime plaster to line the walls. Before the emancipation in 1834, the differences in the built environment that can be seen to reflect social status are limited to the organisation of yards—in terms of what was hidden and what was publicly displayed—and the material culture discovered in and around the dwellings. The beginning of a wage economy allowed some former slaves to accumulate income that was translated into making their wealth visible in their homes. Wood-frame chattel houses became more common in the late slavery period and afterwards. This type of housing was particularly appealing to those who did not own their land as they could be disassembled and moved to another location. Ahlman sees in this phenomenon of displaying wealth a reflection of the shifting social dynamics in the post-slavery plantation hierarchy.

Marco Menketti presents interesting evidence for how the unchanging architecture of plantation labourers on Nevis was reimagined as personal dwellings, shifting in local perceptions from 'plantation housing' to 'traditional housing'. Menketti views this continued use of archetypical labourer's housing as a way of anchoring the identity of the freed slaves in a cultural tradition that remains important today. In this way, these traditional homes are not seen as reminders of the brutal plantation history, but are instead viewed as monuments to resilience and cultural continuity.

The volume is concluded by Mark Hauser's chapter that reflects on the problem of treating the transhistorical institution of 'slavery' as a single phenomenon, and of considering slavery at the macro scale when its effects most significantly impacted individual lives. In considering how power was negotiated through buildings and landscape and by highlighting the diversity of cultures and architectural forms that represent complex identities, this volume reminds us that "the predicaments of slavery ranged so considerably that it is difficult to rely even on the term "slave life" as a concept that fits all situations" (p. 243).

MICHAEL L. GALATY. 2018. Memory and nation building: from ancient times to the Islamic State. Lanham (MD): Rowman & Littlefield; 978-0-759-12260-4 hardback \$75.



Michael Galaty asks us to broaden our view of identity from individual to state level in his volume *Memory and nation building: from ancient times to the Islamic State*, which considers the importance of shared memories in nation building and in particular the implications of manipulating collective memory.

The book uses three case studies based on Egypt, Greece and Albania to demonstrate similarities in the way that memory has been used and the importance of controlling the past. The volume is woven around five key ideas: that collective memory is essential to human cultural behaviour; that collective memory is a product of

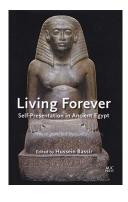
individual memory; that these memories originate in oral histories, veneration of the dead and response to mnemonic devices; that states must control collective memories in order to function; and that resistance to the state can be affected by producing counter memories.

Galaty draws a distinction between cultural behaviour and collective memory, noting that while cultural behaviour is usually unconsciously created and communicated, collective memory is often deliberately constructed and broadcast and is almost always symbolically charged. Chapter 1 sets out these arguments and explains the role of "agentive construction of cultural knowledge" (p. 19) in collective memory production and state formation, before the subsequent chapters apply this framework to the respective case studies. The dominant role of collective memory in Egypt is considered in Chapter 2, which traces shared memory from Pre- and Early Dynastic Egypt to the modern day and investigates how these memories broadly unified Egypt. The results reveal that it is when history is transcended and shared memories 'created' that nations and national identity are formed.

Chapter 3 charts the continuity in memory purpose in the formation of Greece from the Neolithic to the present. Despite the memory-formation processes being similar to those that shaped an Egyptian national identity, "Greek memory practices mitigated against nation building through unification, encouraging regionalization and competition between memory communities instead" (p. 89); rather than having a unifying effect, this resulted in diversification. In Chapter 4, Galaty explains Albanian memory systems, which, in contrast to those in Egypt and Greece did not co-evolve with political institutions. The conclusion reached after this extensive research into the memory processes of such vast stretches of time is that nations with particularly weak or exceptionally strong political mnemonics tend to be volatile and much shorter-lived than those with moderate political control and more open memory systems. Galaty closes his compelling volume with a defence of the importance of archaeology and its relevance to the modern political climate by reminding the reader that archaeology "is not a peripheral academic pursuit; rather, it is absolutely necessary if we are to make sense of world history, which is largely viewed, by most people, through the prism of memory" (p. 157).

Our final two volumes consider visual and textual representations of the human form and self that were used to project, represent or interpret selves or identities to other members of society.

HUSSEIN BASSIR (ed.). 2019. Living forever: self-presentation in ancient Egypt. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press; 978-977-416-901-4 hardback £49.95.



Hussein Bassir's volume investigates the way that ancient Egyptians represented themselves, through both art and text on tombs, monuments, stelae and statues and in literary works. Focusing on nonroyal elites of the Early Dynastic period to the Thirteenth Dynasty, papers are organised chronologically with the overall aim being to chart how and why these individuals represented themselves and their social positions, particularly in relation to the kings. Bassir opens the volume with an introduction that outlines the different approaches taken by the various contributors and highlights the changeable nature of self-presentation across the ancient Egyptian period. These portrayals, Bassir notes, can been seen as a good

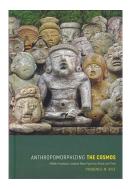
indicator of the relationship between the king and his officials. They also reveal something of the nature of the reign: a good king would be prominently represented by officials, a weak king would be mentioned only briefly or in a peripheral sense. In self-presentation, individuals reveal their concept of themselves, their deities and the king.

In Chapter 1, Christopher Eyre outlines the dynamics and strategies of Egyptian self-presentation, in which personality is very much secondary to social identity. Very little of the private or emotional life of the subject is shared, with displays of emotion associated with a lack of self-control and low social behaviour. Eyre views the ancient Egyptian tomb as "a place where the dead remain socialized with the living" (p. 10), in this way the tomb reinforces the concept of the afterlife, as the deceased continues after death, they maintain their social interaction with the living through self-presentation on the tomb. Eyre closes his chapter by cautioning against assuming that the representations are false and generic, calling for a move to break down the barriers created by modern preconceptions of a lack of individuality in the non-Western world and to recognise that these presentations may be incomplete but genuine.

Ronald Leprohon (Chapter 6) investigates the common themes of self-presentation in the Twelfth Dynasty. At this time, service to the king, efficiency at work and admirable personal qualities are among the most common. A shift to a new royal family in this period precipitated a notable number of references to service to the king and devotion to his service. Leprohon reads this as "an urgency to declare their allegiance to the new family" (p. 112), which would, no doubt, be prudent. The personal qualities that were desirable at this time were amiability, kindness, generosity and a collection of traits that could be grouped as wisdom including: calming fear, problem-solving, listening and being fair-minded. The main point of recording them appears to have been to be well thought of by both contemporaries and successors.

In Chapter 8, Hana Navratilova examines the presentation of women in the Eighteenth Dynasty as part of a broader study of the period. Despite being represented on tombs, stelae and statues, women are not thought to have had the advantage of self-presentation. Navratilova challenges this premise, arguing that while it may appear that women are only presented and never self-represented, there are in fact female names that appear in self-referencing epithets and laudatory statements. Although the material featuring women is not comparable to the records of men, Navratilova argues that there are clear examples of female identity and prominence. Mariam Ayad continues this theme in Chapter 13, which considers 'Women's self-presentation in Pharaonic Egypt'. Ayad finds that, at least from the Old Kingdom, women who were wealthy could afford burial and these burials provide evidence for some female financial independence. From the First Intermediate Period there is evidence for female appropriation of some of the most significant markers of male power—resources and morality. Ayad notes that while we can begin to see female agency and self-sufficiency from this period, women's ability or opportunity for self-aggrandisement appears closely linked to political stability. During periods of stability, desirable female traits are recorded as beauty, personality and being family-focused, while less stable political times appear to have provided an opportunity for women to record their own chosen abilities and agency openly.

PRUDENCE M. RICE. 2019. Anthropomorphizing the cosmos: Middle Preclassic lowland Maya figurines, ritual, and time. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-60732-888-9 hardback \$74.



Moving from epigraphy to anthropomorphic representation, Prudence Rice examines 377 figurines from Middle Preclassic lowland Maya contexts to unravel the multiple and complex layers of meaning held within them. The assemblage is gathered from two sites in northern Guatemala and includes 255 anthropomorphic figures dating to c. 800–400 BC. Beginning with an introductory chapter that provides an overview of the cultural uses of figurines across the pre-modern world encompassing the Neolithic Near East, Bronze Age Balkans and Jomon Japan, Rice goes on to ask why figurine manufacture appears to accompany profound social transformations. Rice sees figurines as a mnemonic device capable of

reducing incomprehensible cosmic forces into a manageable interpretation that situated people within the historical framework of their culture. This is demonstrated over the course of the following six chapters that form Part II of the volume, which deals with aspects of human figurines from manufacturing processes to ritual use; the various particular aspects of the figures including the head and its shape; cranial modifications and representations of facial features; and hairstyle and headgear. In Part III, Rice investigates the relationship between figurines, calendrical ritual and early writing and counting, arguing that some of this framework of the ancient calendar was materialised in the headdresses depicted on the early figurines. The non-anthropomorphic clay objects are considered in Part IV; these include musical instruments and zoomorphic forms. This section also includes a chapter detailing the geochemical analyses of the Nixtun-Ch'ich' and Ixlú figurines. This analysis allows an interesting exploration of the phenomena of fragmentation (deliberate breaking apart of objects) and enchainment (alliances based on identities of ownership) that are evident in the circulation of figurines.

The discussion and conclusions that make up Part V of the volume reveal that identity is central to interpretations of the figurines. The question of the identity of figurines is investigated; were they meant to represent 'real' individuals or to anthropomorphise celestial bodies, or to be more generic representations? Rice argues that these figurines could have had multiple identities. Cranial modification evident in the figurines could represent the real practice of head-shaping and may be "iconic coding of some of the multiple emerging identities" (p. 205). More generally, however, the figurines, that are not gender-specific, seem able to reflect a range of identities with their reading dependent on the contexts in which they were used. The figures were not widely circulated as commodities, but rather moved in small numbers among limited social and ritual networks, and can be considered as tokens or icons of identity.

Rice notes that as the complexity of society increased so too did the need to represent the increasingly complex identities that could be related to kinship, rank, wealth, place or language. Figurines communicated "the accumulated, consolidated wisdom of the ancestors

and the eternal verities of cosmic temporal order. They had active agency in structuring social life and participating in astro-calendrical and cosmological rituals underwriting domestic and community health, prosperity and identities" (p. 215). The possibility is mooted that the modelled figurines represent deliberate attempts to represent and distinguish the multiple identities that were beginning to emerge in communities and in so doing provided a manageable method of testing and negotiating strategies to interact with them.

Despite their diverse subjects, these volumes reveal that explorations of identity in archaeology still have much to offer. Each reinforces the theme that identity becomes most important during times of change or threat. During these periods, the projection of identity becomes crucial to situating one's self in the world. This may be in response to socio-political shifts that create power vacuums and require negotiation of social positions; the threat or reality of oppression that leads to reassertions of identity to maintain a sense of self; the necessity to create a memory of a shared identity in order to unify a society; or the need to immortalise one's self in the face of death.

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## Books received

This list includes all books received between 1 September 2020 and 31 October 2020. Those featuring in the New Book Chronicle have, however, not been duplicated in this list. The listing of a book in this chronicle does not preclude its subsequent review in *Antiquity*.

#### The Classical world

Lise Hannestad. *Nicator-Seleucus and his empire*. 2020. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press; 978-87-7219-173-7 hardback 249.95kr.

Nikolas Papadimitriou, James C. Wright, Sylvian Fachard, Naya Polychronakou-Sgouritsa & Eleni Andrikou (ed.). *Athens and*  Attica in prehistory: proceedings of the International Conference, Athens, 27–31 May 2015. 2020. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-78969-672-1 eBook £90.

GLENN R. STOREY. *The archaeology of ancient cities*. 2020. New York: Eliot Werner; 978-1-7333769-0-7 paperback £25.

#### The Roman world

- Federica Boschi, Enrico Giorgi & Frank Vermeulen (ed.). *Picenum and the Ager Gallicus at the dawn of the Roman conquest.* 2020. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-78969-699-8 paperback \$59.
- Leigh Dodd. Excavations at Chester: the northern and eastern Roman extramural settlements: excavations 1990–2019 and other investigations. 2020.
  Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-78969-627-1 paperback \$42.
- Rose Ferraby & Martin Millett. *Isurium Brigantum: an archaeological survey of Roman Aldborough.* 2020. London: Society of Antiquaries of London; 978-0-85431-301-3 hardback £35.
- JODI MAGNESS. *Masada: der Kampf der Juden gegen Rom.* 2020. Darmstadt: wbg Theiss; 978-3-8062-4077-1 hardback €36.

### Africa and Egypt

- ELENA GARCEA. *The prehistory of the Sudan.* 2020. Basel: Springer; 978-3-030-47185-9 eBook 642.79.
- EDWARD W. LANE (ed.). Description of Egypt: notes and views in Egypt and Nubia 1825–28. 2020. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press; 978-9-774-16934-2 paperback £17.
- François Larché. Chronologie des vestiges découverts sous le temple de Karnak. 2020. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-58388-4 paperback €75.
- CHRIS NAUNTON. Egyptologists' notebooks: the golden age of Nile exploration in words, pictures, plans, and letters. 2020. London: Thames & Hudson; 978-0-500-29529-8 hardback £32.

### **Americas**

MARGARET E. LESHIKAR-DENTON. Cayman's 1794 wreck of the Ten Sail: peace, war, and peril in the Caribbean. 2019. Tuscaloosa: University of

Alabama Press; 978-0-8173-2045-4 hardback \$64.95.

### Anatolia, Levant and the Middle East

- STEFANO ANASTASIO & PIERO GILENT. Building between the two rivers: an introduction to the building archaeology of ancient Mesopotamia. 2020. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-78969-604-2 eBook £16.00.
- MAKOTO ARIMURA. *The Neolithic lithic industry at Tell Ain El-Kerkh* (Excavation Reports of Tell el-Kerkh, north-western Syria 1). 2020. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-78969-457-4 eBook £60.
- CORINNE CASTEL, JAN-W. MEYER & PHILIPPE QUENET (ed.). Circular cities of Early Bronze Age Syria. 2020. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-55183-8 paperback €100.
- Fikri Kulakoğlu, Cécile Michel & Güzel Öztürk (ed.). *Integrative approaches to the archaeology and history of Kültepe-Kaneš: Kültepe,* 4–7 August 2017. 2020. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-58559-8 paperback €85.
- ACHIM LICHTENBERGER & RUBINA RAJA (ed.). Hellenistic and Roman Gerasa: the archaeology and history of a Decapolis city. 2020. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-58504-8 paperback €110.
- Andreas Schachner. Die chalkolithische Siedlung von Giricano am Oberen Tigris: die Ausgrabungen in Giricano II. 2020. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-57536-0 paperback €75.

#### **Britain and Ireland**

Steve Roskams & Cath Neal. Landscape and settlement in the Vale of York: archaeological investigations at Heslington East, York, 2003–13.

2020. London: Society of Antiquaries of London; 978-0-85431-302-0 hardback £35.

### Byzantine, early medieval and medieval

Fabio Guidetti & Katharina Meinecke (ed.). A globalised visual culture? Towards a geography of Late Antique art. 2020. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78925-446-4 hardback £50.

Juan A. Quirós Castillo (ed.). Social inequality in early medieval Europe: local societies and beyond. 2020. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-58565-9 paperback €80.

### European pre- and protohistory

JEAN GUILAINE. Le dolmen de Saint-Eugène: autopsie d'une sépulture collective Néolithique. 2019. Toulouse: Archives d'Écologie Préhistorique; 9-782358-420266 hardback €30.

CYRIL MONTOYA, JEAN-PIERRE FAGNART & JEAN-LUC LOCHT. Préhistoire de l'Europe du Nord-Ouest: mobilités, climats et identités culturelles (28e Congrès préhistorique de France Amiens, 30 mai-4 juin 2016) (3 volumes). 2019. Paris: Société Préhistorique Française; 978-2-913745-78-0 paperback €20.

Pedro R. Moya-maleno. *Paleoethnology of the Celtic Hispania: ethnoarchaeology, ethnohistory and folklore* (2 volumes) (British Archaeological

Reports International Series 2996). 2020. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports; 978-1-4073-1670-3 paperback £141.

MATT POPE, SIMON PARFITT & MARK ROBERTS. The horse butchery site: a high resolution record of lower Palaeolithic hominin behaviour at Boxgrove, UK. 2020. Woking: Spoilheap Publications; 978-1-912331-15-2 paperback £25.

EBERHARD SAUER. Dariali: the 'Caspian Gates' in the Caucasus from Antiquity to the age of the Huns and the Middle Ages: the Joint Georgian-British Dariali Gorge excavations and surveys 2013–2016 (2 volumes). 2020. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78925-192-0 hardback £75.

## Heritage, conservation and museums

Cressida Fforde, C. Timothy Mckeown & Honor Keeler. The Routledge companion to Indigenous repatriation: return,

reconcile, renew. 2020. Abingdon: Routledge; 978-1-138-30358-4 hardback £190.

## Historical archaeology

Ken McNamara. Dragons' teeth and thunderstones: the quest for the meaning of fossils. 2020. London: Reaktion; 978-1-78914-290-7 hardback £18. Peter W. Stahl, Fernando J. Astudillo, Ross W. Jamieson, Diego Quiroga & FLORENCIO DELGADO. Historical ecology and archaeology in the Galápagos Islands: a legacy of human occupation. 2020. Gainesville: University Press of Florida; 978-0-8130-6627-1 hardback \$90.

#### New Book Chronicle

### General

- EDELTRAUD ASPÖCK, ALISON KLEVNÄS & NILS MÜLLER-SCHEEßEL (ed.). *Grave disturbances: the archaeology of post-depositional interactions with the dead.* 2020. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78925-442-6 hardback £55.
- Dragos Gheorghiu (ed.). *Art in the archaeological imagination*. 2020. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78925-352-8 paperback £36.
- Julien d' Huy. Cosmogonies: la préhistoire des mythes. 2020. Paris: Éditions La Découverte; 978-2-348-05966-7 eBook €15.99.
- VIRGINIA POSTREL. The fabric of civilization: how textiles made the world. 2020. New York: Basic; 978-1-5416-1760-5 hardback \$30.