history. The price limits it to a reference volume, but the contents are sufficiently wide-ranging and up to date to ensure it a place on a variety of different subjects’ reading lists for students of the Palaeolithic.

References


Haliksa’l: UNM Contributions to Anthropology. Published by the University of New Mexico Anthropology Society. Annual Subscription 10 US Dollars.

Reviewed by Nicel Holman

It seems apparent that one of the most important factors in the rapid development of the field of anthropology during the last quarter of a century has been the increase in the number of opportunities for publication. Of course, we all have our pet hates – expensive publications which we feel have little or nothing to offer. It is clear, however, that a return to the situation where ‘down-the-line’ exchange of ideas and concepts was the restricting norm, and where ‘long-distance exchange’ was a rare and privileged occurrence granted only to the “Big Men” of anthropology in receipt of travel grants, would be to the great detriment of the discipline.

Similarly, the opportunity for young researchers to promulgate their ideas has tended to be limited. One means to overcome their deficiency is for a body of students to establish their own journal. The students of the Department of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, took such a decision in 1980 and since then they have published five annual volumes of Haliksa’l. The title is taken from the language of the Hopi and is a word used at the beginning of a narrative (something akin to “Listen, this is how it is…”).

Each volume comprises between ten and twelve papers, each of between 5,000 and 10,000 words in length. Recent volumes have also contained a short book reviews section. The text throughout is presented in a neat and easy to read two-column format. Most authors are drawn from the Department itself.

Contributions to Haliksa’l come from all the sub-disciplines of anthropology. There is a numerical bias towards archaeology, which seemingly reflects the strengths of the UNM Department, although there are papers of interest to all anthropologists in each volume. Papers often cross-cut commonly accepted sub-disciplinary boundaries, which can perhaps be taken as a reflection of the flexibility and breadth of the Department’s teaching programme.

Papers deal with anthropological data and problems from a variety of standpoints. Nevertheless, many take as their principal concern the development of rigorous methodologies. Archaeological papers try to take materialistic perspectives and are frequently concerned with the fields of Palaeolithic archaeology, lithics and middle range research in general. The influence of Lewis Binford is clearly in evidence, but by no means does it overwhelm other types of contribution.

In the other sub-fields of anthropology, topics covered range from accounts of aspects of the historical development of anthropology (including, in volume two, a look at contributions by women to early American anthropology) to studies of the prehistoric cultures of Denver, Colorado. Citing these papers is intended to suggest that it would be difficult for the journal to have a greater variety of contributions. This is undoubtedly the case.

Haliksa’l is a valuable contribution to anthropology. Although it is a student-run journal, and as such serves an important role for reasons outlined earlier, to recommend it as a student-run journal would run the risk of sounding patronizing or not entirely enthusiastic. Neither impression is intended. Haliksa’l is to be welcomed at face value as a useful and I hope long-lived, addition to existing anthropological journals.


Reviewed by Andy Brown

A textbook is seldom written with the aim of being a joy to read. Northern Counties is no exception. In places refreshing and novel, in others deterministic and dated, Higham’s work is indeed a comprehensive survey of the archaeological and historical literature of the northern counties (Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland and Westmorland), yet it fails by virtue of its very comprehensiveness. Cluttered with references, the text loses all its fluency: perhaps the numbered references system used, for example, in British Prehistory (Renfrew 1974), could have been adopted?

Nick Higham, Staff Tutor in History at Manchester’s Extra-Ordinary Department, is one contributor to what is admitted to be an ambitious series of volumes, overseen by Barry Cunliffe and Daniel Hoy, which attempts to chronicle systematically the regional history of England.

Always strong on palaeoenvironmental evidence, Higham opens by setting the ecological scene, a theme to which he constantly returns, sympathy-like, through to the Scandinavians’ impact on the landscape. The opening movement covers the period up to c. 1000 BC and each subsection carries an air of uncertainty. The Mesolithic is dealt with using a traditional framework of transformation. In marked contrast, the Neolithic transition is treated with imagination, as Higham...
provides opportunity and motive for the adoption of a food-producing economy by acculturation over a long period. This does rely, however, upon the veracity of the radiocarbon dates from the Irish Early Neolithic. From this flourishing the cohesion fades, there is a single malleable page on the Later Neolithic, in spite of suggestions that it is this period which sees the emergence of a long-lived social organisation (see, for example, Whittle 1981 or Bradley 1984).

'The Metal-Users' (Chapter 3) or what might be the second movement, continues to feel its way tenta-

tively through the phases and cadences of the archaeological record - settlement, economy, trade and ritual behaviour - which are brought together into a coherent image of a later prehis-
toric lifestyle on only one occasion (pp. 133-4) in a style of which more might have been made in summaries of the complex text.

Suddenly, the third movement takes over and the orchestra of different forms of evidence wakes up and begins to play more confidently. We are, after all, on the conductor's home ground now, the written word has arrived. No longer do the questions of an historian struggle to harmonise with the \textit{rationed} melody of the evidence, particularly in the realm of population dynamics (note, for example, the 'climatically-induced $85$'). Immediately we are thrown into the minuets of tribal boundaries (which may have been fluid anyway) and political history. Immediately too, the text becomes fluent and Higham allows himself more room to interpret. References are, ironically, too few in the section entitled 'The Roman Interlude' and all too often one is left to query frustratedly the dating evidence employed, the lack of reference to town development in the second and third centuries. The section on religion and burial in third and fourth century contexts, however, is brief and to the point.

The final movement deals with the Dark Ages under the title 'The Return to Tribalism' and with the invasions of the Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians up to AD 1000. The rise of the kingdoms which were to vie for power in northern England and southern Scotland over the 300 years after the decline of Roman influence are charted. Archaeology contributes little, apart from the case of Yeavering, and it is the familiar Gildas and Bede who provide much of the evidence. Place-names become increasingly important as a source of evidence, partnering land charters as the only instruments with which Higham has tried to call the tune.

A work of this kind can be judged both by its content and by its organisation. On the plus side, Higham has generally managed to escape from culture histories, but instead proposes genetic continuity throughout the early (prehistoric) period. Amongst the (at times) envious narrative and recurrent ecological theme are, however, a number of jarring chords. The use of radiocarbon dates is a major case in point. Standard deviations and laboratory numbers are very dated and contexts are simply ignored, resulting in an unacceptable use of the available dates. There are also one or two major gaffes, most noticeably for me in the explanation of miriroliths (pp. 19-20). In general it can be said that the author fails to distinguish sufficiently between date and indication, for example with reference to social organisation (p. 116).

On the organisational side, the use of frequent sub-headings breaks up the text usefully, but it is the quality of the illustrations and overall appearance of the book which let it down. Behind an attractive cover are a series of second-rate line drawings (for example, Figure 4.14, p. 195) which have a distinct 'felt-tip' feel to them, many of which are often less than useful (for example, Figure 6.3) and photographs whose relevance is dubious, but whose presence seems to be justified by lengthy annotations in lieu of references in the text.

There are too many mistakes in references and spellings to escape mention here (take, for example, the unfortunate sex-change of Mr. F. Buckley on p. 19, or the confusion in referring to Bonsall's work at Eskevel, p. 21-22). Higham has made a brave attempt to handle an enormous task, but even in the counties whose history is relatively poorly known, the challenge is too great. I await with interest the outcome of the levies' tasks of Cumilfo and Manby dealing with Wesssex and Yorkshire to AD 1000.

Overall, this book is more of a cacophony than a symphony and it misses badly the contribution of Professor G. Jobey (see note 1, p. 234). I cannot recommend Northern Counties use two those working specifically on the North, who will find the bibliography comprehensive and useful. Of course, reach for it from the library shelf to familiarise yourself with the major sites of the northern counties, but if you don't know the North, be sure to reach, with the other hand, for a good map.

References


Due to the intricacies of the post-glacial formation of this unique area, the prehistory of the Somerset Levels begins in the Early Neolithic period. The latest traces of human activity preserved there were originally demonstrated by the Iron Age excavations of Arthur Bulleid and N. St. George Grav almost a century ago. The authors briefly describe this early archaeological work, also the detailed environmental studies of Sir Harry Godwin, and acknowledge the importance of this and other previous work in the Levels.

John Coles had already gained ten years experience in the area, and Bryony three, when the Somerset Levels Project was set up in 1973. The major part of this book deals with the Project's discoveries in a