

Literatur

Aktuell

BROCKMANN 2012

Dirk Brockmann, *Spotlight on mobility*. [nature](#) **484** (2012), 40–41.

The complexity in patterns of human mobility, migration and communication has been difficult to unpack. Researchers have now come up with a simple theory that captures the intricacy of such phenomena.

This model is based on two simple and plausible assumptions: humans do not enjoy moving, and they take the nearest opportunity that improves their circumstances. In other words, individuals move to a new location only because it is the closest location that offers, say, a better job. Therefore, Simini et al. assume that a person's geographical spotlight, centred at their current location, increases until a better place is identified, but no farther. The crucial assumption in the radiation model is that individuals do not necessarily seek the best opportunity, but rather their priority is to pick the closest destination.

HAYDEN 2012

Brian Hayden, *Corporate Groups and Secret Societies in the Early Neolithic, A Comment on Hodder and Meskell*. [Current Anthropology](#) **53** (2012), 126–127.

A second, less recognized-even ignored-and very different social context for the display of symbolism involving “history” lies in the realm of secret societies or similar organizations. This is a context that is relevant to the interpretation of Göbekli and the “communal” buildings of Jerf el Ahmar. It is surprising that the authors make no mention of this. Secret societies are hierarchically organized voluntary organizations that claim control over supernatural powers (their “secret”), which they purportedly use to protect their community and provide prosperity. The cost for initiation and advancement in secret societies is typically high, and only individuals from wealthy families usually become members. Thus, secret society members normally constitute the most powerful people in their community. Heads of these organizations commandeer resources for their own purposes from lower-ranking members, members' families, and other community households. Storage areas for resources and ritual paraphernalia would have logically been required as exemplified at Jerf el Ahmar. Typically, and importantly, secret societies use powerful symbols to reinforce their projected image of supernatural power.

On the basis of work done by Owens and Hayden (1997) and Johansen (2004; see also Hayden 2003), it appears that secret societies may have first emerged among complex hunter/gatherers in the Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic as part of aggrandizer strategies to establish sociopolitical control across kinship groups. We postulated that one of the uses of Upper Paleolithic painted caves may have been for rituals of secret societies. Whitehouse (1992) made similar suggestions for Neolithic painted caves in Italy. Both Göbekli and Jerf el Ahmar display characteristics that make sense in terms of what is known about ethnographic secret society ritual contexts. Rituals were always held in specialized buildings or locations that excluded observation from nonmembers. These buildings were sometimes located within communities (in which case they were often subterranean or semisubterranean, as in the case of kivas and Jerf el Ahmar) and sometimes isolated from residences (as in the case of Göbekli and Upper Paleolithic deep caves). Secret society structures often display an unusual, even striking control over resources and

labor (as is the case of the men's secret society houses of Melanesia and the investments in art in the Upper Paleolithic caves). This is certainly also the case at Göbekli and Jerf el Ahmar. At Göbekli, it seems probable that only unusually wealthy groups could have controlled enough resources to be able to construct these elaborate sanctuaries. Moreover, because membership crosscuts descent groups in secret societies, there is little if any emphasis on ancestor worship or burials.

HODDER 2012

Ian Hodder & Lynn Meskell, *Symbolism, Feasting, and Power at Çatalhöyük, A Response to Sutliff and to Hayden*. [Current Anthropology 53 \(2012\), 128–129](#).

SIMINI 2012

Filippo Simini, Marta C. González, Amos Maritan & Albert-László Barabási, *A universal model for mobility and migration patterns*. [nature 484 \(2012\), 96–100](#).

n484-0096-Supplement.pdf

Introduced in its contemporary form in 1946 (ref. 1), but with roots that go back to the eighteenth century², the gravity law^{1,3,4} is the prevailing framework with which to predict population movement^{3,5,6}, cargo shipping volume⁷ and inter-city phone calls^{8,9}, as well as bilateral trade flows between nations¹⁰. Despite its widespread use, it relies on adjustable parameters that vary from region to region and suffers from known analytic inconsistencies. Here we introduce a stochastic process capturing local mobility decisions that helps us analytically derive commuting and mobility fluxes that require as input only information on the population distribution. The resulting radiation model predicts mobility patterns in good agreement with mobility and transport patterns observed in a wide range of phenomena, from long-term migration patterns to communication volume between different regions. Given its parameter-free nature, the model can be applied in areas where we lack previous mobility measurements, significantly improving the predictive accuracy of most of the phenomena affected by mobility and transport processes¹¹⁻²³.

SUTLIFF 2012

Donna Sutliff, *The Sky's the Topic, A Reply to Hodder and Meskell*. [Current Anthropology 53 \(2012\), 125](#).

An alternative to the “dangerousness” hypothesis is that at Göbekli, the depicted animals' behaviors were related to seasonal cycles and the weather and so were instructive of celestial (divine?) events. Indeed, Tepe Göbekli's magnificent T-shaped pillars, which stand in a circle on the top of the highest mountain for miles around (reviewed in Mann 2011), suggest that they served an astronomical function, such as fixed points by which to discern the movement of the sun, moon, and stars similar to the way the Incas used pillars to note the sun's movements.

Anthropologie

CARBONELL 2010

Eudald Carbonell et al., *Cultural Cannibalism as a Paleoeconomic System in the European Lower Pleistocene, The Case of Level TD6 of Gran Dolina (Sierra de Atapuerca, Burgos, Spain)*. [Current Anthropology 51 \(2010\), 539–549](#).

CurrAnth51-539-Comment.pdf, CurrAnth51-539-Reply.pdf

Eudald Carbonell, Isabel Cáceres, Marina Lozano, Palmira Saladié, Jordi Rosell, Carlos Lorenzo, Josep Vallverdú, Rosa Huguet, Antoni Canals and José María Bermúdez de Castro

Human cannibalism is currently recorded in abundant archaeological assemblages of different chronologies. The TD6 level of Gran Dolina (Sierra de Atapuerca, Burgos), at more than 800 ka, is the oldest case known at present. The analysis of cranial and postcranial remains of *Homo antecessor* has established the presence of various alterations of anthropic origin (cut marks and bone breakage) related with exploitation of carcasses. The human remains do not show a specific distribution, and they appeared mixed with lithic tools and bones of other taxa. Both nonhuman and human remains show similar evidence of butchering processes. The stratigraphic evidence and the new increment of the collection of remains of *Homo antecessor* have led us to identify a succession of cannibalism events in a dilated temporal sequence. These data suggest that hunting strategies and human meat consumption were frequent and habitual actions. The numerous evidences of cannibalism, the number of individuals, their age profile, and the archaeostratigraphic distribution suggest that cannibalism in TD6 was nutritional. This practice, accepted and included in their social system, is more ancient cultural cannibalism than has been known until now.

HENSHILWOOD 2012

Christopher Stuart Henshilwood & Benoît Dubreuil, *The Still Bay and Howiesons Poort, 77–59 ka, Symbolic Material Culture and the Evolution of the Mind during the African Middle Stone Age*. *Current Anthropology* **52** (2012), 361–400.

CurrAnth52-361-Comment.pdf, CurrAnth52-361-Reply.pdf

Variations in the material culture in Africa in the Late Pleistocene indicate that it was a period of rapid cultural change not previously observed in the Middle Stone Age. In southern Africa, two techno-traditions, the Still Bay and the Howiesons Poort, have raised interest because of their relatively early cultural complexity. What might have driven the development of the innovative practices and ideas between ca. 77,000 and 59,000 years ago? Explanations for the ascent and demise of these two entities must focus on analyses of recovered materials and in situ features such as hearths and spatial patterning. They must also consider whether these innovations are likely to have ensued from cognitive evolution in *Homo sapiens* and trace the changes in brain organization and cognitive functions that best explain them. This article presents an updated review of the Still Bay and Howiesons Poort industries and argues that innovations during the Late Pleistocene must be related to a previous expansion of the higher association areas of the temporal and parietal cortices underlying higher theory of mind, perspective taking, and attentional flexibility.

Datierung

KEAVENEY 2012

Evelyn M. Keaveney & Paula J. Reimer, *Understanding the variability in freshwater radiocarbon reservoir offsets: a cautionary tale*. *Journal of Archaeological Science* **39** (2012), 1306–1316.

Freshwater resources in past diets can lead to inaccuracies when attempts are made to ascertain their radiocarbon ages or those of the consumers. Radiocarbon reservoir effects may lead to significant age offsets when the bones or other tissues of these consumers are radiocarbon dated. A number of recent studies have investigated freshwater reservoir offsets. However no study thus far has satisfactorily obtained a ubiquitous freshwater

reservoir correction due to variability in the ecosystems analysed. This study tests the possibility of predicting freshwater reservoir effects from the carbonate alkalinity of the water with measurements on modern fish bone and water samples. A predictive capability would be especially valuable in the absence of well-preserved archaeological fish bone. We surveyed samples from lakes and rivers in varying geological settings in Britain and Ireland. Modern fish bone and water samples were analysed to investigate modern radiocarbon offsets from the atmosphere. Archaeological fish bone was also analysed to examine past reservoir offsets at selected sites. Stable carbon and nitrogen isotope values were measured to aid in interpretation of any variability in the offsets. Large freshwater reservoir offsets were measured in some modern and archaeological samples (maximum offset = 1638 ¹⁴C years). The freshwater reservoir offsets in the fish bone were highly correlated with alkalinity of water in modern lake sites analysed. However, a high amount of variation within and between fish species was also evident in the results, precluding the possibility of providing regional corrections for freshwater reservoir offsets from alkalinity although this still may provide a general guideline. The variability is thought to be due to differences in the diet of individual fish.

Keywords: Freshwater reservoir offset | Radiocarbon | Fish | Ecology

Grundlagen

BRAUNE 2011

Arnulf Braune, *Die Pfarrkirche St. Peter und Paul in Wormbach, Ein Grundriss mit megalithischen Massen*. [Archäologische Informationen 34 \(2011\), 123–124](#).

Selected construction stages of Stonehenge complex (United Kingdom) and Wormbach (Germany) will be compared. There are striking similarities. Subsequently, the measurements in megalithic yards and megalithic rods of the parish church of Wormbach will be presented.

Keywords – Stonehenge (GB), Wormbach (D), ground plan of a church, megalithic yard, megalithic rod

Es werden ausgewählte Bauabschnitte der Anlagen in Stonehenge (Grossbritannien) und Wormbach (Deutschland) verglichen. Dabei gibt es auffällige Gemeinsamkeiten. Anschließend werden die MY- (megalithische Elle) und MR- (megalithische Rute) Abmessungen an dem Grundriss der Wormbacher Pfarrkirche vorgestellt.

Schlüsselwörter – Stonehenge (GB), Wormbach (D), Kirchengrundriss, megalithische Elle, megalithische Rute

PARKINGTON 2012

John Parkington, *Mussels and mongongo nuts: logistical visits to the Cape west coast, South Africa*. [Journal of Archaeological Science 39 \(2012\), 1521–1530](#).

Very large late Holocene shell middens ('megamiddens', some over 10 000 m³ in extent) along a 20 km section of the west coast of South Africa provide a particular interpretative challenge in determining whether they result from residential visits or from logistical processing of shellfish for transport and consumption elsewhere. The latter interpretation is preferred here and is consistent with stable carbon isotopic readings on coastal human burials and site contents that illustrate that groups visited specific localities, collected and dried black mussels and then transported and consumed the dried product inland. The sizes and contents of these large middens contrasts sharply with those of unquestionably residential residues from earlier and later time periods. This approach is supported with reference to the ethnographically described processing and consumption of mongongo nuts by 20th century San of the Kalahari.

Keywords: Shell middens | Holocene | Stable carbon isotopes | South Africa | Logistical visits | Mussel drying

Isotope

UGAN 2012

Andrew Ugan & Joan Coltrain, *Stable isotopes, diet, and taphonomy: a look at using isotope-based dietary reconstructions to infer differential survivorship in zooarchaeological assemblages*. [Journal of Archaeological Science 39 \(2012\), 1401–1411](#).

JArchSci39-1401-Supplement.zip

Archaeology has always faced the problem of making informed inferences based on an incomplete record. Zooarchaeological studies of prehistoric hunting and diet offer a clear case in point, where a range of behavioral and taphonomic factors can produce a substantial disconnect between what people actually captured and ate and what archaeologists recover and interpret. We explore this disconnect by presenting stable C and N data for wild faunas, archaeological maize, and three human burials from Fremont-period sites in southeastern Utah, the United States. We use these data to estimate faunal contributions to prehistoric diets and compare the results with previous zooarchaeological analyses of faunas from the same sites. Results for the two approaches differ sharply, with isotopic estimates showing much higher contributions of small and lowland game. We discuss these results in terms of both local prehistory and wider issues of taphonomy and dietary analysis.

Keywords: Stable isotopes | Great Basin | Taphonomy | Dietary reconstruction | SISUS

VIKA 2012

Efrossini Vika & Tatiana Theodoropoulou, *Re-investigating fish consumption in Greek antiquity: results from $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ analysis from fish bone collagen*. [Journal of Archaeological Science 39 \(2012\), 1618–1627](#).

One of the frequently encountered issues in ancient Greek dietary reconstructions through isotope analyses has been the apparent unimportance of fish protein in human diets. The significance of this observation is amplified by the abundant ichthyofaunal remains, iconographic evidence and literary information on fish and fishing, pertaining to almost all sites and time periods of Greek antiquity. In this project, we measured for the first time isotopes from a large number of fish bones from Greek sites dating from the Mesolithic to the Classical times, aiming to investigate whether this absence is an artefact of the methodology or whether it reflects a reality of restricted fish consumption. Results show that regional trends are stronger than temporal ones in fish isotope values. The range of values overlaps with terrestrial resources, making it difficult or impossible to reject fish consumption based on isotope data alone. This variability proposes a reconsideration of the amount of fish in ancient Greek diets specifically for each site and amplifies the importance of interdisciplinary studies, especially for regions with variable ecological resources.

Keywords: Stable isotopes | Collagen | Fish | Diet | Ancient Greece | Aegean

Klima

DECONTO 2012

Robert M. DeConto et al., *Past extreme warming events linked to massive carbon release from thawing permafrost*. [nature 484 \(2012\), 87–91](#).

n484-0087-Supplement.pdf

Robert M. DeConto, Simone Galeotti, Mark Pagani, David Tracy, Kevin Schaefer, Tingjun Zhang, David Pollard & David J. Beerling

Between about 55.5 and 52 million years ago, Earth experienced a series of sudden and extreme globalwarming events (hyperthermals) superimposed on a long-term warming trend¹. The first and largest of these events, the Palaeocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM), is characterized by a massive input of carbon, ocean acidification² and an increase in global temperature of about 5–6°C within a few thousand years³. Although various explanations for the PETM have been proposed^{4–6}, a satisfactory model that accounts for the source, magnitude and timing of carbon release at the PETM and successive hyperthermals remains elusive. Here we use a new astronomically calibrated cyclostratigraphic record from central Italy⁷ to show that the Early Eocene hyperthermals occurred during orbits with a combination of high eccentricity and high obliquity. Corresponding climate-ecosystem-soil simulations accounting for rising concentrations of background greenhouse gases⁸ and orbital forcing show that the magnitude and timing of the PETM and subsequent hyperthermals can be explained by the orbitally triggered decomposition of soil organic carbon in circum-Arctic and Antarctic terrestrial permafrost. This massive carbon reservoir had the potential to repeatedly release thousands of petagrams (1E15 grams) of carbon to the atmosphere-ocean system, once a long-term warming threshold had been reached just before the PETM. Replenishment of permafrost soil carbon stocks following peak warming probably contributed to the rapid recovery from each event⁹, while providing a sensitive carbon reservoir for the next hyperthermal¹⁰. As background temperatures continued to rise following the PETM, the areal extent of permafrost steadily declined, resulting in an incrementally smaller available carbon pool and smaller hyperthermals at each successive orbital forcing maximum. A mechanism linking Earth's orbital properties with release of soil carbon from permafrost provides a unifying model accounting for the salient features of the hyperthermals.

SHAKUN 2012

Jeremy D. Shakun et al., *Global warming preceded by increasing carbon dioxide concentrations during the last deglaciation*. [nature 484 \(2012\), 49–54](#).

n484-0049-Supplement1.pdf, n484-0049-Supplement2.xls

Jeremy D. Shakun, Peter U. Clark, Feng He, Shaun A. Marcott, Alan C. Mix, Zhengyu Liu, Bette Otto-Bliesner, Andreas Schmittner & Edouard Bard

The covariation of carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentration and temperature in Antarctic ice-core records suggests a close link between CO₂ and climate during the Pleistocene ice ages. The role and relative importance of CO₂ in producing these climate changes remains unclear, however, in part because the ice-core deuterium record reflects local rather than global temperature. Here we construct a record of global surface temperature from 80 proxy records and show that temperature is correlated with and generally lags CO₂ during the last (that is, the most recent) deglaciation. Differences between the respective temperature changes of the Northern Hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere parallel variations in the strength of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation recorded in marine sediments. These observations, together with transient global climate model simulations, support the conclusion that an antiphased hemispheric temperature response to ocean circulation changes superimposed on globally in-phase warming driven by increasing CO₂ concentrations is an explanation for much of the temperature change at the end of the most recent ice age.

WOLFF 2012

Eric W. Wolff, *A tale of two hemispheres*. [nature 484 \(2012\), 41–42](#).

A reconstruction of temperature from proxy records shows that the rise in global mean temperature closely resembled, but slightly lagged, the rise in carbon dioxide concentration during the last period of deglaciation.

They propose that a reduction in the AMOC (induced in the model by introducing fresh water into the North Atlantic) led to Southern Hemisphere warming, and a net cooling in the Northern Hemisphere. Carbon dioxide concentration began to rise soon afterwards, probably owing to degassing from the deep Southern Ocean; although quite well documented, the exact combination of mechanisms for this rise remains a subject of debate. Both hemispheres then warmed together, largely in response to the rise in carbon dioxide, but with further oscillations in the hemispheric contrast as the strength of the AMOC varied. The model reproduces well both the magnitude and the pattern of global and hemispheric change, with carbon dioxide and changing AMOC as crucial components.

Metallzeiten

REDFERN 2012

Rebecca C. Redfern, Andrew R. Millard & Christine Hamlin, *A regional investigation of subadult dietary patterns and health in late Iron Age and Roman Dorset, England*. *Journal of Archaeological Science* **39** (2012), 1249–1259.

This is the first regional analysis of the impact of Romanisation on subadult dietary patterns and related health parameters in Britain. A sample of 200 subadults from late Iron Age (LIA) and Romano-British (RB) Dorset were examined for dental health and specific metabolic diseases, and a sub-sample of 29 individuals were selected for nitrogen and carbon isotope analysis. The results showed that dental health declined in the Romano-British period and the incidence of scurvy and rickets rose. Increased consumption of marine foods in the RB period is indicated by an increase in $\delta^{13}C$ between the LIA and RB subadults. After early childhood, there was no age-dependent variation in dietary protein in the RB and LIA populations from Dorset. We propose that these changes related to the introduction of urban living, Romanised diets and population migration.

Keywords: Diet | Subadult | Weaning | Late Iron Age | Romanisation | Roman Britain

Methoden

HJELLE 2012

K. L. Hjelle, T. Solem, L. S. Halvorsen & L. I. Åstveit, *Human impact and landscape utilization from the Mesolithic to medieval time traced by high spatial resolution pollen analysis and numerical methods*. *Journal of Archaeological Science* **39** (2012), 1368–1379.

JArchSci39-1368-Supplement.doc

Pollen analysis in relation to archaeological excavations has been carried out by the coast of central Norway to investigate for the first time long-term human impact on the vegetation in this region. A total of 297 samples from eleven archaeological sites and connected bogs/peat profiles reveal the vegetation development from the Mesolithic until today.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is used to identify and elucidate the development through time and space, and the results of pollen diagrams from bogs are compared to the results of on-site pollen data. Human impact has transformed the vegetation to a varying degree in different time periods. A dense population connected to the shoreline is slightly visible as opening-up of the forest in the Mesolithic, whereas re-use of Mesolithic settlement sites for cultivation and grazing in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (from c. 2300 cal BC) is clearly documented by palaeobotany but weakly recorded in the archaeological record. Areas for settlement and cultivation are found from the Late Bronze and Iron Ages and pollen analysis contributes to a detailed picture of utilization

of the landscape. The investigation shows the potential of combining archaeological and botanical data and analysing several small pollen sequences within an excavation area to reveal spatial patterns in vegetation development and human impact through time.

Keywords: Pollen analysis | Archaeology | Multiple palynological sites | On-site pollen | Principal Component Analysis | Agricultural development | Norway

SCOTT 2012

G. Richard Scott & Simon R. Poulson, *Stable carbon and nitrogen isotopes of human dental calculus: a potentially new non-destructive proxy for paleodietary analysis*. [Journal of Archaeological Science](#) **39** (2012), 1388–1393.

Fifty-eight dental calculus samples from medieval and post-medieval skeletons from Vitoria, Spain, and a single sample from an Alaskan Inuit were tested for stable carbon and nitrogen isotope compositions. There was sufficient carbon and nitrogen concentrations to obtain $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values, and the samples from Spain produced results that were replicable and comparable to European isotope values based on bone collagen collected from literature sources. The Alaskan Inuit calculus sample yielded a $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ value of +17.5‰, well beyond the range of the Spanish samples, but consistent with literature data for modern Greenlandic Inuit consuming a diet rich in marine food. There are several potential sources for carbon and nitrogen in calculus. The results of this study yield stable isotope values consistent with those obtained from other biomaterials used as isotope proxies for paleodietary research, including bone collagen, hair, and fingernails, although further work is necessary to verify the fidelity of calculus as an isotope proxy. Many studies in bioarchaeology are precluded by curatorial concerns regarding the destructive analysis of primary biomaterials. However, calculus is an “add-on”, or secondary biomaterial, that is not an integral part of the dental or skeletal system. Hence, its consumption during analysis is technically not destructive. Therefore, isotope analysis of dental calculus may provide a potential new avenue for paleodietary analysis where the use of other primary biomaterials is precluded.

Keywords: Dental calculus | Stable isotopes | Carbon | Nitrogen | Paleodiet

Religion

ELBURG 2011

Rengert Elburg, *Weihwasser oder Brauchwasser? Einige Gedanken zur Funktion bandkeramischer Brunnen*. [Archäologische Informationen](#) **34** (2011), 25–37.

Wells dating to the Linear Pottery Culture with the good organic preservation constitute an extraordinary category of finds. Recent discussion has mainly focussed on the question if these wells are ritual complexes or profane infrastructure. By giving an overview of the published finds and posing some ideas about their function, an attempt is made to get more insight about the role the wells play within the Early Neolithic settlements. A definite interpretation is not possible at the moment and there probably will never be just a single answer. In future investigations it will be more important to look at the details of construction, use and abandonment, which give insight into social organisation and the use of material culture during the Bandkeramik.

Keywords – Wells, water supply, Linear Pottery Culture, Early Neolithic, material culture

Bandkeramische Brunnen sind mit den teilweise hervorragenden Erhaltungsbedingungen für organische Funde eine herausragende Befundkategorie. Rezente Diskussionen fokussieren auf die Frage, ob die Brunnen Kultanlagen sind oder profane . Infrastruktur. Mit einem Überblick der bislang veröffentlichten Befunde und einigen Interpretationsansätze wird versucht Klarheit über die Bedeutung der Brunnen innerhalb der frühneolithischen

Siedlungslandschaft zu bekommen. Eine abschließende Antwort auf die Frage nach ‘sakral’ oder ‘profan’ ist nicht zu geben und wahrscheinlich auch nicht sinnvoll. Wichtiger sind in Zukunft Untersuchungen zu Bau, Gebrauch und Auffassung, die Einsicht geben in die soziale Organisation und den Umgang mit materieller Kultur während der Bandkeramik. Schlüsselwörter – Brunnen, Wasserversorgung, Linienbandkeramik, Frühneolithikum, materielle Kultur

Story or Book

KLIMSCHA 2012

Florian Klimscha, *Befestigte Siedlungen*. [Archäologische Informationen 34 \(2012\), 135–140](#).

Mariya Ivanova, *Befestigte Siedlungen auf dem Balkan, in der Ägäis und in Westanatolien, ca. 5000-2000 v.Chr.*. Tübinger Schriften zur Ur- und Frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie 8, hrsg. V. M.K.H. Eggert. Münster: Waxmann 2008.

Mariya Ivanovas Arbeit geht weit über die im Titel genannten “befestigten Siedlungen” hinaus und berücksichtigt eine Vielzahl an archäologischen und ethnographischen Daten um detaillierte Rückschlüsse auf prähistorische Konflikte während des 5. – 3. Jahrtausends zu ziehen. Dass dabei einige Unklarheiten entstehen, ist für die Interpretationen nicht ausschlaggebend. Diese bestätigen teilweise in der Forschung vorherrschende Meinungen, sind jedoch in manchen Fällen auch dazu geeignet, neue, kontroverse Diskussionen anzustoßen. Hier sieht Rez. die große Stärke der Arbeit. Zusammenfassende, überregionale Arbeiten können selten in allen Details den aktuellen Forschungsstand mit einbeziehen, haben jedoch die Chance, die Konsequenz verschiedener Teilergebnisse zu veranschaulichen und somit die Forschung durch neue Fragestellungen zu bereichern. Dies ist der Verfasserin gelungen und ihr sei für ihre anregende Studie gedankt.

ROBINSON 2012

Andrew Robinson, *From ploughs to pyramids*. [nature 484 \(2012\), 33–](#)

Andrew Robinson discovers gems in a grand overview of ancient Egypt and the life of a pioneer in Egyptology.

A History of Ancient Egypt: From the First Farmers to the Great Pyramid. John Romer. Allen Lane: 2012. 512 pp. £25

American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute. Jeffrey Abt. University of Chicago Press: 2012. 536 pp. £29, \$45

It is not easy to enliven prehistory while simultaneously respecting limited archaeological evidence and avoiding novelistic pitfalls. But Romer manages it: his first chapter is a sparkling evocation of how, under the influence of the River Nile, Egypt’s earliest inhabitants turned from hunter-gathering to farming around Lake Faiyum, in a depression in the Sahara. He shows how flint arrowheads found at Faiyum became less efficient, yet finer, over time, showing the growth of aesthetic feeling that would result in intricate weaving, elegant pots, beautiful paintings, expressive hieroglyphs and gigantic pyramids.