

# Resenha

**FEWSTER; K.J. & ZVELEBIL; M (eds.)**

*Ethnoarchaeology and Hunter-gatherers:  
Pictures at an Exhibition*

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This series presents fourteen articles divided by the editors in 3 main categories or archaeological sets:

- 1) Space;
- 2) Social Change and
- 3) Material Culture.

Most of these articles, meanwhile, are not properly ethnoarchaeological issues, but, in some extent, there are a connexion between them, based on classic categories current in Processual Archaeology such as environment, landscape, human ecology and ecosystem approach in archaeology.

## **First set:**

### **the Space, but what kind of space?**

In the first set, represented by four articles they approach a large spectrum from lithic technology and settlement patterns until ethnographic observation, warfare and territoriality. While the space is approached by lithic economy in “Hunter-gatherers in the landscape” by Chantal Corneller in the Vale of Pickering, England and Dimitrij Mlekuz analyses the dynamics of floods and fires in Liubjiana and their interferences in the settlement pattern in “Floods and Fires”, Jordan provides a strong ethnographic instance describing how elks’ and bears’ bones as well skulls are treated by

the Khanty, a Siberian people living in the western Siberia. This author explains from a spatial perspective how the Khanty community constitute their symbolic and material territory, providing strong elements to discuss a social appropriation of the natural landscape as Richard Bradley proposed in *Archaeology of Natural Places* (2000) in his classic study about the Saami and the sacred landscape in Sweden and Finland. Layton and Barton provide a comparison between the chimpanzee behavior with contemporaneous hunter-gatherers societies around the World, inferring similarities and differences to build a model of warfare. The heterogeneous contents of these articles provide several concepts of space, but only two of the articles can be classified as ethnoarchaeological issues: 1) Layton and Barton provide a comparison among human warfare and chimpanzee warfare concluding that the fight for resources, females and boundaries are the main points to explain warfare among humans and chimpanzees, otherwise human are different from chimpanzee in social relations, more flexible than among the last ones. It coincides with a wide range on warfare studies in the last 20 years, since Ferguson and Chagnon until Thomas Gregor differential peace approach. Furthermore, in accordance of Layton and Barton, the environment and the ecosystem in which live chimpanzees and humans implies in different warfare behaviors. In their own words, the “casual boundary-crossing is tolerated in tropical forest, but rights of inter-access are more highly formalized among semi-desert hunter-gatherers” (Layton & Barton 2001: 21), forming an interesting hypothesis for ethnoarchaeologists testing in field and in their own data set; 2) Jordan relates Khanty territorial and shamanic ritual landscape in western Siberia. The role of reincarnation and the belief that articulation between bones of bears and elks must be preserved are explaining by shamanic factors, interfering in the selection of places where these bones must be deposited: far from humans or canine action in order to give them an easier way to come back in a material form connecting community, household activities and hunting zones to symbolic and natural landscapes (lakes and forests) as well as to earth-houses where idols protect the community and the spirit of the game. From these relations, hierarchy in space and in to the community is established. The articles of Conneller and Mlekuz are clearly more archaeological than ethnoarchaeological. The data set are material and exhumed from archaeological sites. If technological data is provided and it is an important index of technological changes as well as ecosystem and geomorphological transformations of the landscape during the Mesolithic and Neolithic in Europe, at the same time there are no ethnographic models applied as reasonable analogies to give

a consistent interpretation to these data sets. The main question in Conneller is to understand a persistent place in one of the sites in the valley of Pickering (site Star Carr) and for Mlekuz his main question is build a model to understand the paleohydrography and history of settlements during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods in central Slovenia.

## **Second set:**

### **Social change, cemeteries, paleoecology and agency**

The second set of articles are distributed among a review of Mesolithic radiocarbon dates in Ukraine (“Mesolithic Cultures of Ukraine”, by Malcolm Lillie), two critical articles related to the processes of neolithization in Slovenia (“Critical analysis of data concerning the neolithisation of the Karst area of SW Slovenia, NE Italy” by Tomaz Fabec) and Greece (“Returning to the Ancestors?” by Julie Dilcock) and an ethnoarchaeological article using analogy of !Kung settlement pattern (in Botswana) in the Neolithic sites in Spain (“Petso’s field: Ethnoarchaeology and agency”, by Kathryn Fewster). Again, if one consider the definition of Ethnoarchaeology as defined in Dillehay (2007a) as “the study of living societies from an archaeological perspective. It is particularly concerned with patterned variability in material culture and its relation to human behavior and organization” (Dillehay, 2007 *Syllabus Anth 367* Ethnoarchaeology), we can include only Fewster’s article in the set of ethnoarchaeological articles approaching hunter-gatherer societies. Although important, Lillie review refers to paleopathology and dental pathologies as well as the cases of trepanation in Vasilyevka II, a Neolithic cemetery in one bank of the Dnieper River, Ukraine. The Fabec’s data review on the Neolithic in Slovenia and Italy in the Karst region near Friuli and Nova Gorica provides an early probable influence from populations who lived in the degraded Karst in the Friuli lowlands as shown by the early pottery dated from the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium. The distribution and spread of pottery as well as the agro-pastoral life is his main focus. Comparing Fabec and Mlekuz is possible to perceive the strongest ecological approach developed in the University of Ljubljana, where, as in the Centro-European universities, Archaeology is a subfield of the *Naturwissenschaft*. Dilcock’s article points the history of Fratechti Cave using palinological and archaeological record. The concepts of landscape are presented again exploring the concepts of antecedent landscape and landscape successor in Chapman 1993 and in Zveibil and Benes 1997. The agency and natural landscape delineated by Zveibil and Benes are near of those categories introduced by Bradley (2001). Concepts as historical reconstruction, taphonomic reconstruction and historical interactive

interaction (Dilcock 2001: 78) are nearer from landscape archaeology than Ethnoarchaeology, meanwhile these reconstructions might be observed by an accurate ethnoarchaeological definition of a social landscape, only defined in recent archaeological issues as in “Monuments, Empire and Resistance” (Dillehay 2007).

Fewster’s article is one of the best instance to think the role of analogy in ethnoarchaeology. In fact, the use of ethnographic analogy applied in archaeological context must be proposed with careful and systematic hermeneutic approach, if it has a scientific objective in consolidating a reasonable analogy for inductive models (Levi-Mendes, *forthcoming*). Fewster uses an ethnographic model based in the !Kung from Botswana in two levels: 1) Structure; and, 2) Agency. In the first level, structure, in this level of inference, Mesolithic archaeological hunter-gatherer sites in Spain are compared to the !Kung substitution-availability model based in the introduction of farming methods in hunter-gatherer societies. The inference was applied in archaeological Mesolithic-Neolithic transitional sites. The relation between !Kung and neighbors farmers helped them to introduce changes in the subsistence economy, mainly the livestock of the Barsawa. When compared to possibilities foreseen in the archaeological record in Spain, it is clear that these scenarios during this transition are: 1. displacing of hunter-gatherers by new farmers in Murcia; 2. hunter-gatherers developing indigenous agriculture; and, 3. presence of an influx of agro-pastoralists establishing different settlement pattern in the Murcia region. The opposition between Spanish coastal zones and its interior regions in terms of trades and relations can be detected in the archaeological record by not-clear indexes Fewster provides and it also perceived among !Kung and Barsawa. In the second level, if agency is defined as “actual, causal interventions of a corporeal being in the ongoing process of events-in-the-world” (Giddens 1976:75 *apud* Fewster 2001: 87), Petso analysis has its own sense, although no clear definition at this level. The Petso’s model is based in Petso, an inhabitant of Marulamantsi, who introduced the change to agriculture with the influence of Permaculture supported by the Botswana government and by other factors (neighborhood relations, trades, emergence of new techniques not available in the last years in the buffer-zone of the east !Kung territory). However, there is no solid exercise consolidating structure and agency and its definition of Petso’s effect is abnormal in a regular processual approach in ethnoarchaeology. It is a point that ethnoarchaeologists must think next years: how to bridge agency and structure from an ethnographic perspective to an archaeological interpretation with wide induction in prehistory as model of human behavior on settlement patterns.

**Third set:****Material Culture and lack of ethnoarchaeology**

Five articles compound this part. The first one describes stone deposition, explaining different patterns of stone tools frequencies in the archaeological record in Eastern Scotland (Warren), and no ethnographic information is added to interpret the archaeological assemblages. The second article analyses the political change of land discourse and territorial dispute between Australians and Aborigines (Strang). The third do a description of the European collection of artifacts recollected in Papua New Guinea during the XIX th and XXth centuries, giving them a historical value of neocolonial policy in a historical perspective (Gosden and Knowles) as well as one example of new interpretation of rock art are compared with ethnographic information (Paul Jordan). The last article describes a spatio-temporal model of gravel assemblages (Hosfield). Again, only few of them present characteristics of an ethnoarchaeological approach. Warrens' and Hosfield's articles delineate the concept of deposition in the Schifferian terms (however Schiffer is not in the bibliography) and landscape is a strong component in their discourses. Strangs explains the re-etnification of discourse and reuse of myths, archaeological sites and natural places to reaffirm and conquer a traditional sector of land in detriment of a new Euro-Australian colonization wage. Gosden and Knowles' article is a good instance reporting what European anthropologists were recollecting for museum collections: functional artifacts as well symbolic representation of postcolonial power, showing that archaeologists are not approaching important parcel of Papuan societies (see table 2, 2001: 117). Kiowa's ethnohistorical data are responsible to decode two motifs in rock art, opening new links between archaeological record, systemic system, ethno-history and communities in the recent past, corroborating the continuity of the Kiowa in the territory (Paul Jordan) during the last centuries.

Finally, an article of Zviebil and Fewster tries to synthesize the diversity of the articles explaining them as pictures in an exhibition, given us an access to each one of these pictures. A critical analysis follows each article and a bridge between hunter-gatherer in the past and in the ethnographical example is built through a inherited landscape. However, this bridge build through the landscape concept and by ethnographical and environmental analogies are relatively far from the new definitions given in the most recent ethnoarchaeological studies I used to analyze each article as a real piece in the ethnoarchaeological's frame. Meanwhile, it is a very useful reading to understand how ecosystem and landscape may contribute modeling Ethnoarchaeology as a new sub-discipline in

Archaeology. For ethnoarchaeologists, specially that ones who are doing fields in Papua New Giunea, South America or Africa, the most remarkable useful analogies is summarized by Jordan's article about the Khanty. A recent book by this same author was published in the last year (Material Culture and Sacred Landscape, 2003) and, if compared with the last most remarkable ethnoarchaeological research of 30 years among the Mapuche from Puren-Lumaco, south Chile, Dillehay's book (Monuments, Empire and Resistance), indicates a new holistic approach in ethnoarchaeology, using ethnographical data, ethnohistorical sources, linguistics and a sort of archaeological information strongly based in a new and re-vigorated Processual Archaeology remembering the old times of Willey in the Viru valley (Prehistoric settlement patterns in the Viru Valley, Peru, 1953), certainly a consistent answer to a fragmented post-processual critic.

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