

lighed for at overtyde sig selv om det rimelige i konklusionen.

En samlet vurdering af bindet er at artiklerne er velskrevne og velillustrerede med mange gode fotos og tegninger. Artiklerne kommer emnemæssigt vidt omkring, og man ender med at føle at der er gjort godt rede for de forskellige emner. Der er tale om publiceringer af ældre fund, og indlejningsforholdene diskuteres kun sjældent, hvor de nok ville stå mere centralt i nyere udgravninger. Man fornemmer, at artiklerne er udarbejdet hver for sig, og det er synd, da en større vekselvirkning mellem de enkelte bidrag ville være en styrke. Her kunne redaktøren have formidlet en større sammenhæng. Ambitionsniveauet kan virke ujævnt, et forhold der understreges at den umiddelbart mindst ambitiøse artikel, Barfods om træskulpturen, bringes lige efter den mest omfattende, Düwels om amuletter. Her kunne redaktøren have befordret en større homogenitet. Fælles for artiklerne er at materialefremstillingerne er omfattende, som det er vanligt i denne forskningstradition, men konklusionerne er iblandt ganske vidtgående og opfordrer til eftertanke og nytolkning. Alt i alt er der absolut grund til at glæde sig over dette bidrag i publikationsrækken af udgravninger i Slesvig og næste bind ventes også med glæde.

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It's about time: the concept of time in archaeology. Håkan Karlsson (ed.). Bricoleur Press. Göteborg 2001. 81 pp. ISBN 91-973713-1-9.

"The question of time is one of the deepest that the archaeological discipline is faced with" (Olivier, p. 69).

Archaeological conference sessions on time, and the books they produce, tend to involve three types of papers: (a) those on chronology or chronometry, (b) those on the concepts and construction of time in societies other than those

of Western archaeologists, and (c) those on how archaeologists should conceive of themselves in relation to time and the past that they investigate. There are few papers that cover more than one of these—perhaps because it requires the fuller treatment of a book. Of the four papers in this volume arising from a session of the 1998 meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, the first two, by Tore Artelius and Charlotte Damm, fall in my type (b), the third by Håkan Karlsson in type (c) and the fourth by Laurent Olivier primarily deals with category (c) but touches on (b).

Karlsson's paper "Time for an archaeological time out?" is philosophically the deepest and most sophisticated of the four. Taking an existential approach based on the works of Heidegger, he considers how we should consider past, present and future as "the character of having been", "the present" and "the future as approaching". These terms describe our existential temporality, emphasising its unity, in contrast to the usual concept used in archaeology of time composed of a series of nows. Karlsson argues that we archaeologists need to step back and reconsider our views of time, as an existential view will challenge our research focus (where we are more often concerned with the when than the how and why of past actions), and our arbitrary periodisation of the past. Quite where we will arrive at if we decide to leave behind our current position is not made clear. I agree with Karlsson that we need to review our fundamental assumptions in the light of well thought out philosophy, but I do not think that he has necessarily chosen the correct philosophical basis. Heidegger's view of our temporality is in part based on consideration of our response to our finitude and mortality, or "being-unto-death". It is a view of an individual's temporality and is not developed into a consideration of the group temporality which may be different, and of particular importance in considering the archaeological record where the actions of an individual are rarely detectable. Further, like all of Heidegger's philosophy, it is functionally atheist (i.e. it ignores the question "Is there a God?"). Clearly one expects to arrive at a different view of temporal-

ty if one believes in some form of immortality, either of humans or of a deity. As there are many archaeologists who are not atheist, Heidegger's philosophy is not universally applicable to our current practice of archaeology. Nor have I ever heard anyone suggest that the societies studied by archaeologists were even partly atheist—so Heidegger's philosophy is not immediately useful for understanding their actions, as these actions flowed from a worldview contradictory to Heidegger's. However, there is much in this chapter which is thought provoking and should cause any archaeologist to reconsider their own view of time.

Olivier also considers how we should conceive of time. His perspective on conventional views of time is that although the idea of a series of instants like a cinema film is sometimes useful for modelling, it is essentially misleading. For Olivier time is a duration, and archaeologists ought to be aware of this as we study matter around us that preserves memory of past durations. Hence the present is a multi-temporal palimpsest of past durations which are evident in multiple objects, and so archaeology studies not the past, but the truncated fossils of the past that constitute the present, and we should abandon the idea of writing "the story of the past when it was the present". Even when the past was the present it was a multi-temporal palimpsest of earlier pasts. Olivier's view of time is therefore grounded in matter, especially material culture, and unlike Karlsson's does not consider the future. It is archaeologically derived, arising from his study of past material culture and realisation of what it means for our concept of time. In one sense this complements the ideas of Karlsson based on individual experience, but in practice the two are incommensurate—neither touches on the interaction of individuals' temporality and material's temporality, nor do either of them consider whether groups of people have different experiences of time than individuals.

By contrast, the other papers focus on the expression of concepts of time by groups. Charlotte Damm in "Another time another history" briefly reviews a variety of time concepts used in contemporary societies, and how different

time concepts link to different modes of storytelling, including history. She then takes as a case study the oral history of the Bugakhwe (a Bushmen group in Botswana) whose traditional lifestyle has been changed over the last half-century by interaction with colonial and post-colonial powers, but although their storytelling is described, we do not learn about their concept of time. Seeing (hi)stories as fora for the negotiation of the social structure and morals of a society, Damm questions whether the creation of a scientific prehistory imposes foreign perspectives and destroys indigenous cultures. The chapter concludes that ultimately the Other (including prehistory) can only be better understood if we increase our knowledge of other time concepts. I cannot disagree with much that is said in this chapter. However if the contemporary Other is to inform my views of the past Other then this account of the Bugakhwe is not useful, as it has not added to my knowledge of other concepts of time nor their relationship to story-telling.

Tore Artelius considers time concepts in Viking Period society. He first reviews levels of identifying, dividing and describing time in sociology, religious studies and anthropology, from the conception of the idea through the structuring of time and the expression of the concept in ritual and social organisation. This reveals that archaeological interpretations of time concepts are often simplistic. Moving on from this general overview, Artelius then considers more specifically what sagas and burial practices reveal of concepts of time in Viking Period Scandinavia. An important point that emerges, but is not developed, is that multiple concepts of time coexisted in this society, which is in contrast to the rest of the book where a more unified time concept seems to be sought for a society. Artelius then discusses the only site covered in any detail in the book. The excavation of Sannagård revealed that Bronze Age monuments were reused in the Viking Age and that the location of Late Iron Age graves must have been known over several centuries. It is argued that the evidence indicates the use of time as a ritual tool in the maintenance of local identity, but this is not placed in the context of the clas-

sification of time concepts at the start of the chapter. This concrete example could very usefully have been used to explore the applications and limitations of the more philosophically oriented papers by Karlsson and Olivier. Olivier's ideas could have been deployed to investigate the palimpsest of past durations that clearly constitute part of the Viking concept of time. Similarly, the actions of cremation and inhumation are revealed by the sagas to be oriented towards the future of the individual in the afterlife, and this could be used to explore the application of Karlsson's ideas of a unity of human temporality directed towards past, present and future. Alas, it is left to the reader to do these interesting exercises for themselves.

These latter points illustrate the weakness of the volume, in common with many other conference volumes. There is no cross-referencing between the four pieces, and ideas which could have cross-fertilised and enriched "the concept of time in archaeology" do not do so. So has this slim volume added to our understanding of time? I think that it has. Each of the chapters here is a quality contribution to some aspect of our concepts of time. We need to move forward to a position where the common view of the concept of time as unproblematic is more widely challenged. Simultaneously we need to develop our concepts of time to include individuals, groups and the material world, to integrate our concepts of time with our ideas of how people in the past constructed time and to link all this with our chronologies. This book is a step towards that future understanding of the deep question of time.

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Christian F. Schuster, Alexandra Comsa & Traian Popa, *The archaeology of fire in the Bronze Age of Romania*. Bibliotheca Musei Giurgiuensis, Monograph Series II. Giurgiu 2001. 212 s., 42 fig. och 4 tab. ISBN 973-8155-04-5.

Elden har länge varit till stor nytta för människan. Det är oss alla välbekant att den kontrollerade elden ger värme och ljus samt renar det som är orent. Men det finns en motsägelsefullhet i detta element, då den okontrollerade elden också kan förgöra. Alla dessa egenskaper sammantagna har gjort att elden länge har spelat en stor roll i det religiösa livet. Därmed har elden tilldelats en central plats i de av människan upprättade världsbilderna. Det kan exempelvis påminnas om att elden är ett av de fyra element som i äldre naturfilosofi antogs bygga upp vår värld.

I den arkeologiska forskningen har vi under många år arbetat med brandgravar, bronsgjutning, kokgropar och skärvstenshögar. Men våra arkeologiska berättelser har sällan varit fokuserade på själva elden, utan mer på de resultat som människans bruk av den bringat i dagen. Därför tycker jag att det var ett mycket lovvärt initiativ då Dragos Gheorghiu från University of Arts i Bukarest anordnade seminariet »The archaeology of fire» inom ramen för det sjätte årliga mötet i European Association of Archaeologists, Lissabon 2000 (se kongressrapport i *Fornvännen* 2000:4). Hela 25 personer från omkring hälften så många länder hade anmält intresse av att hålla var sitt föredrag om någon aspekt på elden. De sten- och bronsåldersinriktade kollegerna dominerade i antal, men järnålder och historisk tid fanns också representerade. Det fanns även intresse för teori, metod och genusproblematik. Även året därpå fanns elden på dagordningen vid EAA-sammankomsten i Esslingen. Nu visade 17 kolleger från nio länder ett större intresse för framförallt järnåldern, men även andra perioder och teman fanns företrädade.

I skrivande stund (februari 2002) arbetar Gheorghiu för att bidragen skall utges i bokform. Under tiden har han dock inspirerat kolleger i Rumänien till att utge föreliggande bok om eldens roll under bronsåldern. Boken