REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

Edited by Susan Kent

Archaeological Theory: An Introduction. MATTHEW JOHNSON. 1999. Blackwell Publishers, Inc., Malden, MA. 224 pp. $54.95 (cloth), ISBN 0-631-20295-1; 256 pp. $24.95 (paper), ISBN 0-631-20296-X.

Reviewed by Susan D. Gillespie, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Designed for the "student" in the broad sense, this book lays out the contrast in Anglo-American archaeology between processual and postprocessual theories. Based on lectures Matthew Johnson presented to undergraduate students, it is written for use as a textbook, although archaeologists who feel out of touch with newer theories may want to peruse it. It can complement and update the Americanist processual perspective provided in *A History of American Archaeology* (Willey and Sabloff, 1994, Freeman), because it presents the views of a British postprocessualist. For example, the shift from culture history to culture process is represented by the writings of David Clarke against the legacy of V. G. Childe. The book includes discussions of topics that may not typically form part of American archaeology curricula, such as the different views of science, theoretical shifts in the discipline of history that parallel those in archaeology, and the impact of postmodernism. Nevertheless, the American literature is fairly well cited. Written in informal jargon-free language, the book explains some of the intellectual background of past and current theories prior to elaborating their key points. Ease of reading is further facilitated by relegating citations to an annotated bibliography for each chapter, and a glossary and regular bibliography are also provided. Several brief case studies are presented to clarify the discussion.

The organization is loosely chronological in that processual archaeology preceded postprocessual, and the chapter titles hint at an extended overview of both approaches. Following the preface and introduction, which lay out the author's objectives and the importance of theory, chapter 2 discusses the "new" archaeology, followed by three related chapters on archaeology as a science, middle-range theory, and systems theory. Chapter 6 on cognitive archaeology provides the prologue to postprocessual or interpretative approaches discussed in chapter 7. The next three chapters on gender, evolution, and history do not actually follow from that discussion, but examine topics of personal interest to Johnson, purporting to show how both processual and postprocessual archaeologies have dealt with these topics. The final two chapters cover the relationship of postmodernism to postprocessual archaeologies, concluding with a look at the state of theoretical debate by contrasting the attitudes of conflict versus consensus expressed by leading archaeologists on both sides of the Atlantic.

As an introduction to theory, the book is necessarily brief in its coverage, and Johnson admits (p. 116) that he overstated the contrast between the two approaches, highlighting extreme positions, without sufficient recognition that archaeologists may see them as complementary. In fact, many of these complex issues are oversimplified to the point of misrepresentation, and graduate students particularly would find his treatment inadequate. Furthermore, the surface appearance of even-handed coverage of both approaches and Johnson's professed desire to be "reasonably sympathetic to all parties" (p. xiii) are belied by his presentation. The chapters on processual methodologies focus on their flaws, not their merits, while the chapters following the introduction of postprocessual archaeology are used to further criticize processualist approaches. However, the well-known limitations of postprocessualism—including the slide toward relativism and the difficulty of applying contextual approaches to the vast majority of the human past (in the prehistoric era)—are simply brushed aside, in striking contrast with, for example, Johnson's meticulous delineation of the logical errors in Binford's use of middle-range theory.

The entire book is premised on an overstated, ongoing conflict between processual and postprocessual theories: its underlying theme is the debate itself. Johnson clearly takes one side, often quoting Shanks and Tilley favorably at length against unnamed opponents. To reinforce this theme, he introduces the pedagogical device of an unidentified skeptic who raises pointed questions throughout the book, making the argument form of presentation more explicit. Furthermore, Johnson criticizes those who have proposed reconciliation, insisting that there are major contradictions between these two schools of thought that render compromise impossible and debate inevitable. Many chapters include statements such as this: "And so the debate continues. There is no one answer to your question; you will have to make up your own mind" (p. 47). Given the stated purpose of this book, allow me to take the role of the skeptic and ask: Is one-sided argumentation the best way to introduce undergraduate students to the importance and contributions of theory in archaeology?

Architecture et Société Néolithique: L'unité et la Variance de la Maison Danubienne. ANICK COUDART. 1998. Documents d' Archéologie Française, No. 67. Édition de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris. 239 pp. 194 figures, tables, 2 appendices, footnotes, bibliography, abstract in French, English, and German. 265 FF (paper), ISBN 2-7351-0637-3.

Reviewed by Ksenija Borojevic, University of Alabama, Birmingham.

This book covers a typical European subject—the study of the Danubian houses. Anick Coudart adopts the term "Danubian" used by Childe to refer to the Neolithic groups of central and occidental Europe from 5500 B.C.E. to 4500 B.C.E. The study of houses comprises two chronological horizons: the earlier "Bandkeramik," or "rubanes," and the later "post- Banderamik" or "postrubane." The innovative front cover of the book reveals Coudart's approach: she combines German archaeological scrutiny for house-plans and measurements, hypothesis testing, and use of ethnographic analogies with theoretical interpretation of social anthropology.

The book is organized into five chapters and two appendices. In the first two chapters, the author defines her methods of the study and creates a typology of the long houses. In the succeeding three chapters, Coudart examines the data through three levels of hypothesis, starting with the techniques and materials used, followed by the more abstract levels that include reconstructing the efficiency of the houses and estimating the number of occupants. The third level of hypothesis includes determining the function of the houses, and normalization and variability of the architectural components. Two appendices provide the description of Bandkeramik and post-Bandkeramik house data.

In chapter 1, the author outlines the cultural history of the Danubian communities without a long chronological discussion that is so typical of central-European discourse. She defines her approach as a study of houses as social units. Houses are not built to dominate a physical milieu, but to put order to a social environment.

In chapter 2, Coudart presents statistical analysis of 400 houses from 55 sites. Although more than 2,000 long houses have been discovered, many are poorly preserved. Postholes, wall trenches, and pits are almost all that is left. Danubian houses are commonly known for their length (10–40 m); they have the entrance on the south and have inner tri-partite division. She establishes a separate typology for each of the spatial units of the house: front, central, and back. The typology reveals great homogeneity among the houses of the early Danubian houses, in contrast to the transformation and diversification of the later Danubian houses, which tend to be more trapezoid and boat-shaped.

Chapter 3 includes the construction techniques and materials used for building long houses. I applaud Coudart's use of analogies from her own ethnographic work in Papua New Guinea in 1982 and 1990. The author relies on the archaeobotanical results for her inferences: oak was the most commonly used wood in the construction of posts; cereal grains and pollen of crop weeds were used as the sole evidence for interpreting the unidentified vestiges of the upper levels of certain houses as granaries. The pits outside the central part of the house were used for refuse, determining the function of the central part as space for domestic activities. Many of the posts were not physically necessary and were erected for purposes other than support.

In Chapter 4, the author includes various computed indexes that measure variables for the houses, e.g., floor surface and its architectural efficiency, house resistance to winds, estimated number of inhabitants, and the intra-site variation of the architectural components. Trapezoid houses become more common in later periods when use of transversal beams becomes resolved and houses were built to obtain a monumental façade. The author mapped the main winds and orientation of the Danubian houses over Europe (Figure 102) and found no direct correlation between the dominant winds and orientation of the houses. The houses are oriented with the back facing the closest seacoast or the most accessible coast, and specific orientation could be related to the pluvial summer winds. On average, there were five contemporaneous houses in a Bandkeramik settlement. Adopting other authors' estimates of 6–10 persons/1 sq. m, Coudart conjectures that there were ca. 150–200 people in a Bandkeramik settlement.

In chapter 5, entitled only *Third level of hypothesis*, the author repeats the previous statements and offers social interpretation of the houses. The true public/private separation is between frontal and central part delineated by a corridor (two rows of posts). In the bipartite houses, the central part is in direct contact with the exterior sphere

American Antiquity, 66(2), 2001, pp. 376–383
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