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Rachel Crellin, Chris Fowler and Richard Tipping, eds. *Prehistory without Borders: The Prehistoric Archaeology of the Tyne-Forth Region* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2016, 244 pp., 124 b/w figs, 19 tables, hbk, ISBN 978-1-78-570199-3)

Borders, in the sense of modern geopolitical boundaries, have no bearing on prehistoric realities, yet they do affect archaeology as a discipline—particularly when one is committed to thinking, working, and writing on regions that transcend administrative limits, whether regional or national. While such issues are inherently most salient and visible in parts of the world with enduring geopolitical conflicts and contested borders (e.g. Chazan, 2014: 183), they apply equally to various parts of northwestern Europe (e.g. Webley, 2016: 10, 18, 27). The editors of *Prehistory without Borders* have published a rich and well-illustrated collection of sixteen papers (plus an introduction) that aim to showcase the necessity and merits of transregional approaches in archaeology, using cases from the Tyne-Forth region of northern England and southern Scotland as the main geographical border zone.

The first three chapters are devoted to highlighting the relevance, urgency, and problems faced by ‘cross-border archaeology’. In Chapter 1, the volume editors show the ways (e.g. research traditions, administrative

and heritage management organization, and research agendas) in which archaeology on either side of the Anglo-Scots border has developed differently. While one could extrapolate such ‘border differences’ to any given European administrative boundary, the Tyne-Forth region is notable for the initiatives undertaken to actively counter any negative effects of such administrative divisions. In 2009, the Tyne-Forth Prehistory Forum was founded to promote collaboration and to link archaeologists, heritage professionals, and other interested parties, across the administrative divide, through a series of symposia that ran between 2010 and 2012. I believe that the value of such transregional symposia is fundamental. Having ample experience with later prehistoric archaeology in the Low Countries, I have a personal awareness of the importance of integrating and disseminating research across national and language boundaries (facilitated in those regions by similar initiatives such as the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, *Lunula*, and *Metaaltijden* symposia). This is not just stating the obvious: in her analysis of

cross-border cooperation, Sophie Hüglin (Ch. 3) argues that ‘trust for, and sympathy for, certain personalities [in the ‘other’ region]’ (p. 27) is a vital prerequisite for successful cross-border cooperation, and that conferences and research trips are proven settings in which such ties develop (p. 40). The necessity of transregional synthesis and collaboration is also advocated by Colin Haselgrove, Marc Vander Linden, and Leo Webley in Chapter 2, as it is required to weld together European excavation data biased by varying heritage management frameworks, differences in type and intensity of landscape exploitation, and divergent field methodologies (p. 20). In their words: ‘Variations in heritage administration policies, field methods and post-excavation practices also influence the *kinds* of evidence recovered from different areas, potentially favouring some site types over others’ (p. 23, their emphasis). Later in the volume (Ch. 11), a reconstruction of Late Bronze Age funerary traditions in the Tyne-Forth region shows that such variability—in this case datasets of differing excavation date and quality (pp. 157, 162)—complicates but does not prohibit successful, targeted cross-regional synthesis.

Chapters 4 and 5 can be distinguished from the remainder of the case-studies in the volume in that, in these contributions, the historical development of the archaeological discipline and its toolkit takes precedence over the trans-regional perspective. Stratford Halliday (Ch. 4) discusses the traditions of surveying and draftsmanship in surveying for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, stressing the importance of standardization (p. 47) and the bias involved by the researchers’ personal experiences and knowledge (p. 53). The latter point is also argued by David C. Cowley in Chapter 5, in the context of his explanation of biases innate to a dataset of sites in East Lothian mapped through aerial photography (pp. 62, 65).

In the remainder of the book, a chronologically ordered series of studies is presented. These all pertain to the key geographical area of the volume, but in their interpretations they contextualize the findings at scales above those of the site and region. In this, however, there are different degrees of theoretical underpinning and scope: some chapters are of the type ‘where else have we also found phenomenon X?’, whereas other chapters are specifically aimed at trans-regional synthesis from the outset. The latter approach is the more successful in achieving the volume’s objectives of deconstructing the relevance of present-day borders for past cultural differences and of studying changes in the densities, scales, and foci of social networks within and beyond the Tyne-Forth region (p. 13).

In Chapter 7, Richard Tipping and others show that understanding the activities of the Late Upper Paleolithic site of Hawburn Farm requires a perception of community mobility at a European scale, envisioning small hunting groups whose long-distance journeys may have connected the pre-North Sea lowland Hamburgian/Havelte communities, the Tweed Valley (p. 74, 79), and areas beyond (cf. Weber & Grimm, 2009: 5, 15). The Neolithic/Early Bronze Age case studies comprise a top-down biographic approach to Neolithic Northumbrian pottery (Ben Edwards, Ch. 7), an analysis of inter- and intraregional connectivity (p. 103) through the study of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Tyne-Forth pottery (Dana Milson, Ch. 8), a synthesis of Early Bronze Age mortuary practices across the Anglo-Scots border (Chris Fowler & Neil Wilkin, Ch. 9), and a case study of a developer-led excavation on the Lothian plain featuring funerary and agricultural use-traces (Bob Will, Ch. 10). Both Ben Edwards and Dana Milson address the presence of pottery deposits in postholes and small pits at Thirlings and Ewart I (pp. 87, 100—traditions well-matched by

Neolithic pottery depositions on the continent, cf. Chapman, 2000: 15; Louwe Kooijmans, 2009: 48) and both apply a comparative scope at the scale of the United Kingdom (pp. 96, 103). Milson argues (p. 96) that the Tyne–Forth region lay in the middle of a fourth to third millennium information highway, accounting for the throughput of new objects, ideas, and possibly people. Later in the volume, Jennifer Proctor (pp. 200, 203) stresses the importance of rivers in this respect. Variable geographical positions of communities with regards to such information nexuses may—due to differences in frequency, mode, or intensity of interaction—explain more local variations, such as between upland and lowland pottery styles (p. 105). A similar stance is adopted by Chris Fowler and Neil Wilkin, who aim to argue ‘how similarities and differences were brought into being by the communities who variously maintained, transformed or juxtaposed existing practices with new ones’ (p. 113) in order to identify the social implications of such changes as acted out in the funerary domain. Their thorough approach requires them to contextualize at a European scale (e.g. via linkage to continental beaker styles; pp. 100, 117) and to address the active role that material culture—be it bronzes (p. 117), jet (p. 124), or pottery (p. 122)—plays in such negotiations. Their observation that certain vessels may exhibit stylistic properties that deliberately play on combining—in one vessel—concepts such as ‘the local’, ‘the old’, and ‘the distant’ (p. 122), is perhaps akin to bronze hoards in which the interplay of local versus supra-regional affinities appears to have explicitly mattered (e.g. Arnoldussen, 2015), and emphasizes the potency of such concepts in the past.

The later chapters in the volume deal with later Bronze Age to Roman era case studies, including a trans-regional synthesis of Late Bronze Age funerary customs in the Tyne–Forth region (Katharina Warden, Edwards

Caswell & Benjamin Roberts, Ch. 11); a UK-scale contextualization of Yetholm bronze shields from the eponymous site (Trevor Cowie, Brendan O’Connor & Marion Uckelmann, Ch. 12), and two papers on Tyne–Forth settlements and climatic conditions affecting (Colin Burgess’ interpretation of) their distribution (Clive Waddington & David Passmore, Ch. 13; Richard Tipping, Ch. 14). Jennifer Proctor (Ch. 15) discusses whether the Iron Age to Roman era site of Needles Eye was a locus of both salting and exchange; David Heslop (Ch. 16) discusses the sources, life-histories, and distributions of locally produced beehive querns; and the volume comes to a close with a thorough discussion of Bayesian statistics applied to later Iron Age settlement dates (Derek Hamilton, Ch. 17).

A trans-regional comparative perspective is present in all of this latter group of chapters, but object types (Chs 12, 16) and excavations (Chs 13, 15) are more frequently the starting points. In these chapters, funerary traditions (p. 152) and pottery styles (p. 211) suggest regional preferences (pp. 152, 164), while, simultaneously, exchanged goods such as Yorkshire flint (p. 153), Milstone Grit Querns (p. 220), and probably salt (p. 214) provide evidence of contacts at the 50–100 km scale. Yet other objects, such as the Yetholm lunate-opening spearhead and bronze shields, suggest stylistic conformity, and contacts, at a larger—insular—scale.

While it is clear that the volume offers ample food for thought when it comes to reconceptualizing the ways in which political and geographical boundaries have shaped—and usually not in a helpful way—regional archaeological narratives, the book could have ended more strongly had the editors addressed the progress made in the volume more explicitly and theoretically in a closing chapter. To my mind, this is certainly merited by the fuzzy nested scales on which local, regional, and supra-regional

identities are defined; the role that material culture plays in such processes; and the ways in which geographical vectors (rivers, watersheds, pathways) affect the scales and routings of exchanges of ideas and goods.

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Sandra Mariët Beckerman. *Corded Ware Coastal Communities: Using Ceramic Analysis to Reconstruct Third Millennium BC Societies in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015, 311 pp., 38 b/w and colour illustr., 30 tables, pbk, ISBN 978-90-8890-318-2)

Corded Ware (culture) is one of the pan-European archaeological phenomena that emerged at the end of the Neolithic and beginning of the Bronze Age. Due to its geographic extent, it has been studied in many European countries. Several prominent twentieth-century archaeologists, such as V. Gordon Childe, were fascinated by the large spatial extent of this supposedly uniform material culture and associated burial rite, and offered various explanations. In the context of Corded Ware research, hypotheses of large-scale migrations of warlike pastoralists, or diffusions of ideologies and technologies, were so influential

that they remain unchallenged even in the relatively recent literature. Only recently have these interpretations been re-evaluated by rigorous scientific evidence and new theoretical studies (e.g. Kristiansen et al., 2017; Sjögren et al., 2016; Furholt, 2014). In this published doctoral thesis on Corded Ware coastal communities in the Netherlands, Sandra M. Beckerman provides such a re-evaluation within the framework of evidence-based archaeology.

The first chapter ('How Can We Reconstruct Corded Ware Culture Chronology and Society') illustrates how the Marxist ideas of Childe are still