

**Recension de l'ouvrage : McCall, G.S. 2014. Before Modern Humans. New Perspectives on the African Stone Age. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press. 350 pp. ISBN 978-1-61132-222-4 (hardback).**

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research. However, they add a valuable and currently under-represented perspective relative to more technologically- or ecologically-driven approaches.

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**McCall, G.S. 2014. *Before Modern Humans. New Perspectives on the African Stone Age.* Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press. 350 pp. ISBN 978-1-61132-222-4 (hardback). Price: US\$99.00.**

The title of the book *Before Modern Humans* sounds just right. For the last two decades, archaeological research on the African continent has focused on Late Pleistocene populations, with the broad central aim of deciphering their uniqueness. This research avenue spawned a series of explanatory evolutionary scenarios that need to be interrogated more closely. By investigating the time-period before modern humans, the author, Grant S. McCall, shifts the focus towards earlier periods (the Early and the Middle Pleistocene) and plays with the ambiguity of the word 'modern'. Do not be misled: the author clearly refers to the concept of 'modernity' as understood by physical anthropologists. Throughout the book, McCall calls into question the concepts – deeply rooted in Late Pleistocene archaeology – of cultural sophistication and behavioural and cognitive modernity. It is right there where the book's originality lies: the author attempts to temporally contextualise current debates and invites everyone to shift perspectives. Furthermore, the author attempts an academic exercise that few of us have attempted, i.e. to build a synthesis at the scale of the African continent. *New Perspectives on the African Stone Age* thus generates expectations.

The book comprises nine chapters and is structured in a four-way rhythm (research questions and theoretical background, lithic data, faunal data, implications). These chapters are preceded by an introductory chapter that includes a preface which is worth reading since it contextualises the origin of the book and introduces the perspectives of the author. The author presents his book in a pivotal period for our discipline, a turning point that emerges from a discordance between an accumulation of data (resulting from new analytical techniques and interests from other specialist disciplines), and a relative stagnation in our interpretive frameworks. The author presents his perspective, namely, the need to formulate new questions within a behavioural ecological interpretative framework. This book seems to stem from a broad dissatisfaction with two controversies: namely, the 'scavenging-to-hunting debate'; and the 'modern human revolution scenario'. That said, the author aligns his discussion within the theoretical frameworks of a few 'founders', including Lewis R. Binford, Glynn L. Isaac and Sherwood L. Washburne.

The book is formulated in two analytical parts that focus firstly, on stone tools (Chapters 2–4), and secondly, on faunal remains (Chapters 5–7). For each part, the author clarifies his analytical background and compares the relevant Early Stone Age (ESA) and the Middle Stone Age (MSA) records.

In the introduction to lithic studies, the author presents a relatively coercive standpoint where we understand that a stone tool is less a technical object than a marker of activity, and

where the 'organisation of technology' is presented as 'an alternative approach'. For his study, the author prioritises artefact morphologies and typological frequencies, and uses Principal Components Analysis with data obtained from other analysts. For the ESA, the author relies on the typology of Ologesailie (Kenya) published by Glynn L. Isaac (1977), as well as the collection of the so-called 'Gemsbok' Acheulean (Namibia) published by Gudrun Corvinus (1983). For the MSA, he considers the Ethiopian collections of Gademotta and Kulkuletti as published by Wendorf and Schild (1974), as well as the collection of Omo Kibish published by Shea (2008), and Sisk and Shea (2008). The core interpretation is based on the comparison between the Acheulean handaxe, considered as a flexible tool adapted to a 'routed foraging' mobility strategy, and MSA flake production that, McCall suggests, was predominantly associated with a 'residential foraging' mobility strategy. The integration of faunal data helps the author to build on and develop this attractive hypothesis. McCall recognises a central change in subsistence systems that he places at the beginning of the Late Pleistocene. The wise comparison between these two sets of data – the lithic and the fauna – enables the author to propose an evolutionary model in which the central behavioural changes occurred at two key times. We cut the Gordian knot, where changes (cultural, technological) have their origins in the territorial and socio-economic reorganisation of hunter-gatherer societies; the consequences are the benefits, to paraphrase Sherwood L. Washburne.

Chapter 8 and the Conclusion take a new turn, and the author muses over evolutionary questions and considers within the same flow, the two 'seminal' controversies exposed in the introduction. McCall comments on the relationships between hominin body and brain size, integrating his sets of archaeological data to establish an all-encompassing explanatory scenario of change where foraging ecology is the central driver of variation. The author subsequently elaborates on some heuristic concepts (core and periphery, micro- and macro-evolution, complex systems) that provide a more nuanced perspective than is suggested in the book up to this point.

McCall's book is not as much a book about archaeology as one about palaeoanthropology, characterised by investigating human behavioural ecology and evolutionary processes. As such, the book will disappoint lithic technologists and faunal specialists interested in seeing their work from a 'new perspective'. The book has the quality and the defaults of a synthesis, where the presented data – albeit relatively outdated and sparse – contribute more towards supporting an argument than towards formally building and testing a new framework. Broadly, the presented conclusions and ideas will fuel controversies, which is a clear merit of the book. However, this book represents a scientific exercise where the impact of the narration is too important; the set of inferences would benefit from a logicist analysis, as advocated by Jean-Claude Gardin (1980, 2002). The bibliography of the book is rich, but would have gained from being more diversified and, importantly, from considering more recent data and ideas. And we, 'the palaeo-anthropologists', understand finally that the book speaks less of the African Stone Age than it fuels the ecological paradigm. In reading this ambitious book, I advise keeping a critical mind-set, as is also required in reading this cursory but frank review.

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**Dromgoole, S. 2013. *Underwater Cultural Heritage and International Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. xxxi + 436 pp. ISBN 978-0-52184-231-0 (hardback). Price: US\$120.00.**

The 2001 UNESCO *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* came into force on 2 January 2009, when the treaty received its 20th ratification. Despite early predictions that the Convention would not garner wide support, at the time of writing there are 51 signatories; the most recent being South Africa, whose ratification became official on 29 May 2015.

The 2001 Convention grew out of international concern at mounting threats to, and pressure on underwater cultural heritage – particularly advances in deep-water maritime technology – which means that even the deepest parts of the world's oceans can now be reached by humans. The Convention is, however, a treaty with a unique and, in some important areas, contentious legal and political history – the prime example being its relationship with the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. To fully appreciate how and why the Convention developed, its current status and operation, and how it may mature and develop in the future, the context needs to be understood, and this is Dromgoole's goal.

This book is thus not only a review and discussion of the content of the 2001 Convention. Excellent detailed analyses of the Convention already exist; see for example, Strati (1995) and O'Keefe (2002). Instead, Dromgoole uses the Convention as the loom on which to weave a detailed consideration and discussion of the fundamental legal and ethical issues at the heart of the international debate and practice around the protection of underwater cultural heritage.

This weighty book, which runs to nearly 400 pages, packs a punch. It is a fine-grained and closely argued academic analysis and commentary, and represents the current definitive word on underwater cultural heritage and international law. However, Dromgoole's stated intent in producing this volume is that it should also be of practical value and accessible to "archaeologists, heritage managers and other readers who may have no legal background" (p. xvi). Although I have already been exposed to the Convention and to the legal concepts and issues Dromgoole deals with, as an archaeologist and heritage manager with no formal legal background, I nevertheless found that she is as good as her word.

In her writing style and the clarity with which she explains what can be tortuous (and many would probably say mind-numbing) legal concepts and detail, Dromgoole has produced

a volume that is a rigorous academic text, yet it is also accessible to a non-specialist, lay reader.

What helps is the fact that the volume is not simply legal argument. Dromgoole has included plenty of fascinating case detail in the text and in the many footnotes. She also cites numerous examples of State Practice in the field, which develops from the actions of states, the statements made by authorised representatives of states in international fora, or through national laws and judicial decisions that deal with international relations. State Practice is consequently an important element of international law, including maritime law, acting as both as a key component of customary international law and as a crucial tool for interpreting treaties like the 2001 Convention. Together, these bring the legal concepts to life and make clear their practical application.

For example, the discovery and subsequent controversial recovery of material from the wreck of the *Titanic* is detailed in the chapter dealing with the law of salvage and finds. The issues around sovereign immunity and the status of sunken warships (Chapter 4) are illustrated by the cases of three historical Spanish wrecks, the *Juno*, *La Galga* and *Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes*, whose salvage by treasure hunters was successfully challenged by Spain, as the original owner of the vessels, creating new State Practice and international case law.

Dromgoole has approached her subject thematically, with the "principal focus ... on the issues that have posed the greatest challenges" to the development of a global legal framework for protecting underwater cultural heritage (p. xvi). A general introduction to underwater cultural heritage, the relevant branches of law and some explanation of international maritime law, is followed by chapters on the history of the evolution of international law related to underwater cultural heritage and on the development of legal definitions of this heritage resource.

Dromgoole then deals in detail with the main issues that proved contentious in the negotiation of the Convention. These include rights of ownership of historical wrecks when these sites are also archaeological sites and thus part of national or international cultural patrimony; the question of the applicability of sovereign immunity, a concept more generally applied to currently operational vessels, to sunken historical warships; the law of salvage and finds, its applicability to underwater cultural heritage and the linked issue of the commercial exploitation (i.e. commercial salvage or treasure hunting) of an archaeological resource; and the question of the jurisdictional competence of any coastal state to regulate activities beyond its territorial waters, an area many major Maritime States viewed as an assault on the finely balanced jurisdictional package set out in the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Dromgoole ends with three chapters dealing specifically with a) the jurisdictional scope of the 2001 Convention and its relationship in this respect with the Convention on the Law of the Sea; b) the practical measures in the Convention for its application to underwater cultural heritage, such as the role of national heritage bodies, the mechanisms for permitting or authorising activities directed at the resource, the related issue of sanctions and deterrents, and the question of access to underwater cultural heritage; and lastly, c) a chapter dealing with technical implementation of this international agreement, which includes discussion of the management of bi- or multi-lateral interests in sites, the resolution of disputes between states, and the formal mechanisms for implementing the Convention on a day-to-day basis.

For anyone with an interest in underwater cultural heritage, maritime law or international treaty law, this is an essen-