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Richard Bradley. *Maritime Archaeology on Dry Land: Special Sites along the Coasts of Britain and Ireland from the First Farmers to the Atlantic Bronze Age* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2022, 184pp., 50 b/w illustr., pbk, ISBN 9781789258196)

Just like Picasso was able to express many things with 'very little', Richard Bradley's new book is able to say many things by 'just' discussing a handful of sites. This is not a conscious decision, but a necessity as the book was written during the covid lockdown. In a nutshell, the book is a 170-page commentary on the archaeological record of a set of somewhat forgotten British and Irish coastal areas using a 'big picture' approach to produce a history of and a new range of questions concerning how people interacted with the coastline.

Like Richard Bradley's (1998) classic *The Passage of Arms*, this is not a book that offers categorical explanations, but suggests new ways of looking at things. The interval studied goes from the Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age, although there are several sections which focus on the Middle Ages and there are some commentaries regarding the Mesolithic, the Iron Age, and the Roman

period. Nevertheless, any epoch and region could benefit from applying the ideas and approach presented here. Bradley connects changes in coastal sites with how the landscape in the interior was organised as reflected by changing settlement patterns (hillforts, metal deposits, henges, etc.) and widely discussed archaeological phenomena unavoidably linked to sea travelling (the movement of Neolithic farmers, the distribution of Alpine jadeite axes, the Bell Beaker pottery, the arrival of steppe ancestry, the transport of copper from key places such as a the Great Orme, etc.). Thus, the book produces a social history of landing places bringing together the biographies of a rather heterogenous group of coastal sites by linking their similarities and differences to the grand transformations that characterize the prehistory of Europe.

The book has six chapters. The first two are a longue durée analysis of Atlantic Europe during prehistory, with a particular

emphasis on Britain and Ireland. The next three (Chs 3–5) analyse coastal sites, and the sixth chapter offers an integrated discussion of the previous five chapters. Four major influences for the book are clear to the reader. The most obvious is Barry Cunliffe to whom the book is dedicated. He thoroughly explored similar topics, albeit from a different perspective (as argued below), during the last couple of decades (e.g., Cunliffe, 2017). The second are previous studies by the author (Bradley et al., 2016; Bradley et al., 2017; Bradley, Watson & Scott, 2017) exploring some of the book's topics and sites. The third is in the substantial literature on prehistoric landing places. Oversimplifying, it seems that, until the Middle Ages, informal landing places with few or no structures were the norm in Atlantic Europe (McGrail, 1993: 207). With a few exceptions from the English Channel, it seems that no evidence has been found of prehistoric harbours (e.g., Cunliffe, 1990; Parfitt, 2004). This has led the authors to suggest that, during prehistory, landing places would have consisted of fragile wooden structures, like jetties and round poles in ideal locations, meaning that they would have looked more like improvised mooring places without permanent structures than modern harbours (McGrail, 1981: 141; Clark, 2005: 91). To this scarce evidence we must factor in sea-level rises, which means that any chance of studying the remains of landing places looks remote. Bradley's ingenuity consists of analysing a selection of coastal sites in areas of isostatic uplift that were never submerged and comparing this evidence with coastal areas partially or totally submerged. This produces a novel approach to the study of seafaring in general and of landing places in particular.

This novel approach is linked to the fourth and, in my opinion most important, source of influence for the book. This is a

paper by Robert Van De Noort (2006), commented on by Richard Bradley because it contains an interesting and influential perspective, which is that the way societies travel by sea is linked to their own transformations over time. Van De Noort (2006: 280) synthesizes this perspective:

'the crew of a seafaring sewn-plank boat in the Early Bronze Age would almost certainly have included the (aspiring) member of the elite group who set out to collect the exotic goods and esoteric knowledge'.

This picture contrasts with the fact that approximately two thousand years later, during the Roman period, travelling in Atlantic Europe was, to the lack of better words, a more mercantilist and professionalized affair (e.g., Carreras et al., 2012). Bradley explores the way in which social changes transformed sea travel using landing places as proxies, which is why the book is titled *Maritime Archaeology on Dry Land*.

My criticisms of the book are two. First, it leaves the reader yearning for more. Like Picasso's paintings, the book offers many questions and ideas, but it does not supply you with the answers. Nevertheless, it is true that Bradley presents the volume as an ideas book that proposes new lines of research instead of answers. My second issue with the book is that it starts *in media res* (in the midst of the plot) without presenting a general structure. The latter becomes clear little by little, but this might leave the impatient reader like me (who wants to have the basics very clear from the beginning) slightly disoriented. This is so much the case that I encourage my fellow readers to start with the last chapter rather than the first one.

In the forty pages of Chapters 1 and 2, Bradley deals with the key elements

related to prehistoric travel in Western Europe: copper mines, petroglyphs, boats, jadeite axes, etc. The flavour is very similar to that of Cunliffe's (e.g., 2017) celebrated *longue-durée* analyses, with a crucial difference that makes Bradley's narrative its perfect counterpoint. Both gather the evidence of travelling and organise it chronologically presenting a long-term history, but Bradley combines this macroregional analysis with multipage analyses of coastal sites to interpret them and propose new questions. For example, this view can explain why the Scottish coastal site of Littleferry Links, a popular Neolithic 'maritime haven', was seemingly abandoned by the Late Bronze Age. The need to transport copper and tin by sea from mining areas to consumption zones probably modified the routes and landing places employed in previous periods. Proximity to, for example, mines and stone sources offer changing variables that made bays, inlets, offshore islands, etc. more or less appealing over time. In the following chapters, these variables become the link between local contexts and the global picture. Chapters 1 and 2 are also a veritable 'who's who' of recent studies and research projects. A state of the field that has value on its own.

Chapters 3–5 are the heart of the book. Here, its main argument is presented as different groups of landing places are discussed. What makes this project interesting is the idea that a discussion of several coastal sites and their similarities and differences from a long-term perspective can produce useful information. Chapter 3 focuses on four coastal sites in Ireland and Scotland ('Luce Sands', 'Littleferry Links', 'The Dundrum Sand dunes' and 'The Culbin Sands'). Unlike the ones in Chapter 4 and 5, these sites have not been the subject of grand archaeological research programs and, in fact, some of them have been mostly forgotten since the

nineteenth century. Their importance resides in their location in areas of isostatic uplift that were not affected by sea-level changes. In contrast, the coastal areas in Chapters 4 and 5 have been partially or totally submerged making their study more complicated. Chapter 4 studies several sites contemporary to the ones discussed in the previous chapter that serve as a source of comparison. It focuses on places in Ireland (the offshore island of Dalkey), Wales (Merthyr Mawr Warren), Scotland (three sites in East Lothian and the headland of Hengistbury Head) and England (The East Anglian Fens, The Willingdon Levels, and the coastline of the Ardeer Peninsula). Chapter 5 repeats the same formula focusing on evidence from a larger set of coastal areas dated to the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.

A condensed version of the narrative developed in Chapters 3–5 looks like this. Before the Bronze Age, landing places seem to be preferentially located on coastal sand dunes and offshore islands that were equally difficult to access from land and sea. It seems that, for some reason, they were kept at a distance from inhabited places. Most of them present, on one side direct access to the ocean and, on the other, a sheltered bay or a similar protected body of water. These sites take the shape of concentrations of artefacts from different periods dispersed over large areas with virtually no structures. Nevertheless, their evidence (pottery, lithics, animal bones, etc.) indicates that people lived in them for intermittent periods, which is why Bradley labels them 'persistent places'. Based on a few examples, he argues that Neolithic monuments seem to mostly avoid these coastal sites, although they were connected to the coast through nearby rivers. In other words, during the Neolithic the evidence points to a separation between coastal activities in the littoral and a daily life in settled areas in the

hinterland. During the Early Bronze Age, this changed slightly as round barrows and cairns were erected close to the coast indicating a connection between shorelines and the treatment of the dead.

The big change, however, comes with the Middle and Late Bronze Ages when the sites studied in Chapters 3 and 4 do not appear to experience much activity. By contrast, a different set of coastal areas show evidence of being used as landing places. These are major estuaries like the Thames and curiously, bays exposed to bad weather. Two things might explain this: the appearance of new, better boats (see Chapter 2 of the book for a fantastic overview of the evidence of prehistoric boats in European prehistory), and the introduction of wheeled transport and horses. In different ways, each of these innovations probably modified which places could be used as landing places. This change is also linked to the likely transformation of metalworking and metal transport (including sailing) into full-time activities and changes in settlement patterns: field systems, large metal hoards, enclosures or 'ringworks', hillforts, hilltop settlements, amongst others. All of it seemingly indicates a functionalization and de-ritualization of sea travel in comparison to previous periods. Moreover, in my opinion, it might also indicate that landing places and coastal activities were no longer separated from daily life in settled areas in the interior (I missed the book not offering an opinion on this issue).

An overview of this narrative is presented in Chapter 6, alongside the author's reasons for writing the book and the necessity of including later periods (Iron Age to Middle Ages) into its narrative. It would have been good to include some of these ideas in Chapter 1. Bradley also emphasizes the importance to maritime archaeology of long-term contextual

studies of sites on dry land and the importance of legacy archaeological studies of old sites, as some of them were vital to analyse the forgotten or deteriorated sites in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

All the arguments in the book are open to criticism and changes (and probably they will receive these in time), but the true potential of the publication resides in opening the door to a new way of articulating the global (new boats, new settlement patterns, new technologies, etc.) and the local (landing places) to produce a social history of coastlines. The other important point of the book is the idea that to know how prehistoric landing places would have looked in the past, all we have to do is to study areas that have not been submerged after sea-level changes (genius in its simplicity).

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Andrew Shapland. *Human-Animal Relations in Bronze Age Crete: A History Through Objects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, 290pp., 59 illustr., hbk, ISBN 978-1-009-15154-2)

This book is a wonderful contribution to the field of Human-Animal Studies and human-animal relations in the past. For the Bronze Age Aegean, nonhuman animals and human-animal relations have received some attention (e.g. Halstead & Isaakidou, 2011; Harris & Hamilakis, 2014; Pappi & Isaakidou, 2015; Recht & Morris, 2021; papers in Laffineur & Palaima, 2021), but this is the first full-length monograph dedicated to the topic with this approach, and the first to focus specifically on Crete. Arguably, the book's importance lies just as much in its contribution to the study of Bronze Age Crete more broadly.

The book is organised into chapters addressing the theoretical approach, history

of research, and a range of specific practices related to nonhuman animals. Thus, Chapter 1 focuses on the history of research on Bronze Age Crete and how that history has shaped and continues to shape the discourse today. Importantly, this includes the by now well-known narratives of peace-loving Minoans and their association with early European 'civilization' as the base of modern Europe. Implied in these narratives is a (hierarchical) nature-culture dichotomy in which nonhuman animals are placed on the nature side and often reduced to symbols or passive objects that humans do things to. This divide is one that Shapland aims to challenge throughout the book because it prevents us from fully