

REVIEWS AND SHORT REVIEW NOTES

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(Review) Joanna Pyzel, *Kultury pamięci, kultury zapomnienia. Osady pierwszych rolników w percepcji młodszych ugrupowań naddunajskich. Studium wybranych przypadków (Cultures of remembrance, cultures of forgetting. Settlements of the first farmers in the perception of later Danubian groups. Selected case studies)*. Gdańsk 2018: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 284 pp.

Joanna Pyzel is well known among scholars involved in studies on the Early Neolithic of Central Europe, in particular on the Linear Band Pottery culture and later Danubian cultures, as well as among those interested in the Neolithic of Anatolia and Near East – owing to her participation in the Çatalhöyük research and analyses of materials from this benchmark site. By her previous studies she has proven herself to be an expert in studies on LBK settlement (Pyzel 2006; 2010), on archaeological source material, in particular the pottery of Danubian cultures from the Polish Lowlands (Czerniak *et al.* 2016; and a number of unpublished analyses of materials retrieved during research preceding road constructions), and on the pottery manufacture in Late Neolithic Çatalhöyük communities (e.g. Czerniak and Pyzel 2017). Among the issues raising her particular interest is also the broadly understood topic of a house in Danubian communities (e.g. Pyzel 2012; 2013; Czerniak and Pyzel 2016).

In the reviewed book J. Pyzel resolved to address the issue of cultural memory in Neolithic Danubian communities. Taking the perspective of non-portable archaeological features, she examined various ways in which communities described as later Danubian cultures referred to settlement relics left by LBK people. The author is driven by a conviction that collective memory can and should be a subject of archaeological investigation, and that the time has come to go beyond an approach in which prehistoric communities are perceived mainly from the perspective of their own time period, in other words, to give them back their historicity.

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This highly interesting albeit difficult subject of the “past in the past”, i.e. collective memory, social memory, and historicity, has rarely been raised in Polish or in Central European archaeology in general. It is only the second time that it has been so extensively addressed in the Polish archaeological milieu. The first forum to discuss these issues was the international conference *Miejsca pamięci. Pradzieje, średniowiecze i współczesność (Places of memory – Prehistory, Middle Ages and Present Day)* (Biskupin, 4–6 July 2012), organised on the initiative of the Archaeological Museum in Biskupin, the Archaeological Commission of the Wrocław branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The conference resulted in a collective, interdisciplinary study published in 2015 (Gediga *et al.* ed. 2015; Mamzer 2016). In the context of cultural change and understanding of archaeological culture, these issues have also been addressed in many works by Sławomir Kadrow (e.g. 2015; 2017).

The reviewed book numbers 264 pages and is comprised of the author’s foreword, an introduction, three chapters, a very extensive bibliography, and lists of tables (and a list of the used abbreviations of archaeological cultures and chronological periods, provided before the introduction). The text is illustrated with 53 figures with maps showing locations of the analysed sites and schematic site plans showing the archaeofacts which have been interpreted in terms of intentional references to the past. The book is not free of deficiencies, the most notable of which is the lack of a summary in a foreign language, considerably limiting the circle of the readers. I have also noticed some technical faults, but these are minor and not significant enough to deserve more focus here.

The monograph takes a very coherent and logical arrangement, with the contents distributed proportionally among the chapters. The above assessment is not contradicted by the most copious chapter two, since it contains the source material and analytical parts of the book. The introduction provides all the necessary information concerning the objectives and subject of the research, the justification for undertaking the subject, the applied methods, and the research questions and hypotheses. They are formulated in a very concise manner here, and are developed further in chapter one and in the introductory part of chapter two. The main research hypothesis posits that remnants of LBK longhouses remained long visible on the surface and – as the author has put it – “must have been a kind of a point of reference for subsequent groups inhabiting these places” (p.12). The objective of the research has been defined as a comprehensive analysis of references to the past among Linear and post-Linear communities in three research areas: Northern Rhineland, Central Germany, and Kuyavia, and an attempt to determine whether these references constituted a socio-cultural norm or were exceptions in particular cultures. Furthermore, the author makes a statement on her methodological approach to the research (synchronic and diachronic perspectives, macro- and micro-regional analyses). The introduction also contains a justification of the selection of research areas and a brief discussion of the book’s structure and the contents of particular chapters. All these issues are presented

clearly, with an awareness of various limitations concerning both the state of research and the interpretational possibilities.

In the first chapter, entitled *The past in the past*, Pyzel elaborates upon the theoretical assumptions signalled in the Introduction. Sub-chapter 1.1, *Collective memory in social sciences, humanities, and archaeology*, introduces the reader to research on memory. One can find there a critical review of definitions of memory used by different authors and methodological schools, references to classic studies from the fields of cultural anthropology, history, and sociology, and the precursors of research on historicity, memory, and processes of remembrance. Pyzel herself seems inclined to follow the definition of collective memory formulated by Barbara Szacka (2006), along with Szacka's approach to the functions that this memory serves.

In sub-chapter 1.2, *Studies on collective memory of hunter-gatherers and early farming communities*, the ethnographic (evidence for the very long duration of oral traditions among indigenous people of America and Australia) and archaeological (palimpsest sites with evidence of multiple re-visiting and overlapping occupation) data are used by the author to formulate a critical opinion on the perception of Palaeolithic communities as ahistorical people functioning in "timeless contemporaneity", attaching no importance to memory and tradition. Especially with respect to the Upper Palaeolithic, with its caves and spectacular cave art, which were surely revisited many times as sacred places having special social and ritual importance, the author has no doubt that the memory of such places must have lasted for generations. Further in this sub-chapter she discusses evidence for various 'memory practices' among early farming societies of the Near East, with particular emphasis on settlement continuity on tell sites, and a symbolic (or broader, social) role of domestic architecture and funerary rites. She points to a number of analogical behaviours observable among LBK communities, underlining the role of longhouses and graves in memory practices.

Sub-chapter 1.3, *Cognitive potential of studies on collective memory in Early Neolithic*, opens with a more extensive presentation of the main research hypothesis signalled in the Introduction, namely that remnants of LBK settlements, of longhouses in particular but also of other domestic features, remained for a very long period of time discernible on the ground surface. Related to this issue are various natural processes occurring after a settlement was left by inhabitants, with forest regeneration among the most important of them. Acknowledging objective difficulties involved in the reconstruction of these processes, the author believes that remnants of the first farmers' settlements must have been identifiable on the surface for a long (possibly very long) time, and were important elements of landscape for later communities. She presents a body of palynological data indicative of the regeneration of forests, including examples from the examined research areas, as well as archaeological examples where relics of LBK settlements were referred to not only by later Danubian groups, but also by Late Neolithic, or even Iron Age communities. The above examples are used by the author to argue for the validity of her research hypothesis.

Chapter 2, *Regional analysis of references to the past. Selected case studies*, is the longest part of the book, providing source material and analysis, divided into three substantive sub-chapters sharing the same structure and dealing with the three selected research areas: Northern Rhineland, Central Germany, and Kuyavia. The analysis of the sources is preceded by a brief introduction in which Joanna Pyzel declares her post-processual, holistic approach to space in archaeology and to the choice of places to settle. She believes that among Neolithic communities, settlement decisions were dictated by a number of factors and did not result from economically/adaptively rational reasons alone. Once again, she emphasises the special role of the house in prehistoric communities, for whom a house was not merely a place to dwell, but also played a range of social roles. One cannot but agree with this approach.

Next, Pyzel formulates the research questions which she plans to address through macro- and micro-regional analyses of non-portable sources, performed from diachronic and synchronic perspectives.

The main research questions concern the existence of practices of memory associated with settlement among later Danubian cultures, and the problem of their connection with analogical phenomena among Neolithic communities in Europe and the Near East; the continuity of settlement and continuity of ideas; the intentional nature of practices of memory; and the community (group/groups) who practiced various forms of references to the past connected with LBK. This last issue deals with the diversity of cultural behaviours, and the possible existence of different forms of collective memory in the same taxonomic unit.

The author's choice of the research areas deserves acclamation. In all three areas we are dealing with a sequence of Danubian cultures starting from the arrival of the first farmers. The state of archaeological investigation is similar in all three areas, in terms of both surface surveys (used in macro-regional analyses) and excavations, especially large-scale open-area rescue excavations preceding infrastructure projects (used in micro-regional analyses within test areas). Joanna Pyzel emphasises the particular importance of results obtained through rescue archaeology for her research, as the choice of sites to be explored by rescue excavations is not adjusted to solve any particular research problem, limiting a bias in the collection of sources.

As mentioned, each sub-chapter has the same, uniform structure. The author first presents the characteristics of the analysed region (here, the introductory remarks concerning particular areas should be deemed overly expanded and saturated with data having little relevance to the subject of the book, i.e. historical and political, concerning financial aspects of research, etc.), assesses the state of research and publication, and presents developmental sequences of Danubian cultures with a critical review of hypotheses concerning the first occupation by LBK communities and the development of particular cultural formations and cultural change between them (crises and settlement gaps, continuity), which is of great importance for her studies on references to the past. Next, the author presents published examples of such references within a culture and between cultures, followed by an

in-depth, multi-aspectual analysis of the gathered sources from macro- and micro-regional perspectives. Each chapter closes with the recapitulation of both these levels of analysis.

In Northern Rhineland the Danubian sequence opened with LBK settlers. Later, there was a chronological and cultural hiatus, after which Middle Neolithic communities of the Grossgartach culture appeared, followed by those representing the Rössen culture. At the macro-regional level the author observes a strong similarity in settlement preferences among all Danubian groups, although settlement traces of different cultures rarely co-occur on the same site; this picture, identified on the basis of survey data, finds confirmation in the results of excavations as well. The micro-regional analysis performed for a smaller test area also confirms that later settlers avoided places previously inhabited by the first farmers, with only occasional instances of intentional references to the past.

In Central Germany, where the earliest LBK occupation is followed by the Stroked Pottery culture and later the Rössen culture, Joanna Pyzel also observes quite similar settlement preferences, with much more frequent overlapping of different cultures within the same site. She identifies examples of intentional references to features linked with the first farmers both among Stroked Pottery and Rössen communities, as well as such where Rössen communities referred to the remnants left by Stroked Pottery people. As emphasised by the author, these references were diversified and not a common rule.

Pyzel devotes by far the most space to Kuyavia, a region which has been the primary target of her research since the beginning of her professional career. She notices a cultural crisis towards the end of the development of large LBK settlements (which she had already identified in her monograph published in 2010), after which follows dispersed occupation of the Stroked Pottery culture. The next period of stabilisation came with the network of large, long-lasting settlements created by the communities of the Brześć Kujawski culture. The macro-regional analysis has demonstrated frequent – but not common – settling of the same places by LBK and later Danubian communities. However, micro-regional analyses have shown that none of the large, long-lasting settlements founded by the first farmers came to be later intensively exploited by later communities, and the Brześć Kujawski communities even avoided such places entirely. Intentional references to the past are observable starting from the closing stages of the Late Band Pottery culture (LBPC) and become particularly intensive in the times of the Brześć Kujawski culture. This does not necessarily reflect a change in cultural behaviours, but may instead stem from the small size of the LBPC population and the unstable settlement pattern. The author observes various forms memory practices, which focused particularly around the house and domestic area, and identifies different types of relations: between house and house, grave and house, and among ritual deposits and pits into which they were dug (often claypits accompanying houses).

The chapter in question attests to Pyzel's research acumen and analytical discipline, which are confirmed by the arrangement and consequent realisation of this part of the study. She presents and discusses arguments for and against the intentional references to the past, emerging from the analysed situations. There are no grounds to suggest that

Pyzel aims to prove her research hypothesis by disregarding, or by failing to mention, shortages of source bases or negative examples.

In chapter 3, *References to the past in later Danubian cultures*, the author summarises her studies on practices of memory among Danubian communities in the three regions, gathering together the conclusions emerging from the partial analyses carried out in chapter 2. She compares the observed references, sets them against the situation in Central Europe in the times of LBK and the Neolithic of the Near East, and discusses the issue in the context of socio-cultural changes occurring in the Eneolithic period. She highlights the most convincing examples of positive and negative references to the past from the sites analysed in the second chapter. The general conclusion is quite obvious, and it comes down to stating a great diversity of behaviours legible in the archaeological record: from the avoidance of places inhabited by LBK populations, interpreted by Pyzel as an intentional settlement strategy (Northern Rhineland, Kuyavia during the development of the Brześć Kujawski culture with respect to large LBK settlements), to re-settling old settlements, and sometimes their transformation into places of ritual activity (Central Germany, Kuyavia starting from the times of the Stroked Pottery culture). She notices the intensification of practices of memory with time, both among Rössen and Brześć Kujawski communities, which were chronologically quite distant from the first farmers. The latter culture provided particularly abundant positive references to the past, with respect to their own features as well as to those linked with LBPC and the relics of the earliest Linear occupation. In this connection, Pyzel reflects on the nature of these references: to what extent could they represent a continuation of a real memory, and to what extent could it be what is known as “invented memory”. Single cases connected with the Brześć Kujawski culture she tends to interpret as a continuation of memory about LBK transmitted via LBPC communities. In consequence, she arrives at a conclusion that Brześć Kujawski communities may have adopted the past associated with LBK as their own, which would be manifested by the persistence of monumental domestic architecture, archaic by that time. In her opinion, a special role should be ascribed precisely to the idea of a longhouse, which in itself was a reference to the past. She interprets it in terms of a continuation of Neolithic traditions originating from the Near East and later transformed by Linear cultures in Europe. Pyzel presents interesting and convincing reflections on the role that memory (practiced in various manners) of the real or imagined past may have played among Brześć Kujawski communities functioning on the far margins of the Danubian world, on the importance of memory for building their sense of identity and rooting in a tradition, and for legitimisation of power among those hierarchised communities.

The reader receives a very interesting study, demonstrating the author’s vast knowledge in terms of both theory and source material, and written with immense discipline which, as I hope, will provoke a wider discussion on the potential and methods of archaeological investigation of the interesting and at the same time complex issues such as cultural memory, social memory, and historicity of prehistoric communities.

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