

V. Book reviews

A. MacGregor (ed.) 2008. *Sir John Evans 1823–1908. Antiquity, Commerce and Natural History in the Age of Darwin*. Ashmolean Museum: Oxford. 326 pages; ISBN 1854442376 (hbk).

Reviewed by **Tim Murray**

This splendid book celebrates the centenary of the death of that remarkable Victorian antiquary, Sir John Evans. It is the product of the Sir John Evans Centenary Project based in the Ashmolean Museum (where Evans' wonderful collection of antiquities and his private papers are held). The Ashmolean was indeed fortunate to secure the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, whose handsome photographic portrait adorns the volume. The book is beautifully produced and its contributions are greatly enhanced by the liberal use of the Evans archive.

Sir John Evans 1823–1908. Antiquity, Commerce and Natural History in the Age of Darwin (hereafter *Evans*) comprises 13 chapters, broken into 4 Parts. Part V contains three appendixes (one of which, Appendix 2, is a bibliography of his work). The organisation is generally clear and sensible. Two introductory chapters canvass Evans as polymath antiquary and collector and businessman. Part II (Scientist and Archaeologist) presents 5 chapters variously discussing Evans' scientific researches (particularly in geology and palaeontology) and his much better known antiquarian work in stone, bronze and iron. Part III in 3 chapters considers Evans the numismatist and focuses on British, Roman and English coinage. Thus far things have unfolded in a predictable (but quite satisfying) way. Part IV (Crossing borders, crossing disciplines) pulls back from the specifics of Evans and his antiquarian pursuits to a broader consideration of his role in 19th century science in general and archaeology in particular. His friendship with that other arch-antiquary John Lubbock is explored within the broader context of the rise of Darwinism, his role internationalising antiquarian studies is explored (particularly in terms of his links with Scandinavian scholars), and his part in the controversy concerning high human antiquity is given a fresh twist through an analysis of his sketches from the Somme and other key archaeological provinces. These last essays conclude *Evans* in a very satisfying way.

It is now frequently observed that there is something of a boom in research and publishing in the history of archaeology. This collection is a welcome addition, especially as it does much to restore the place of one of the true pioneers of prehistoric archaeology, while at the same time helping us to see him within his Victorian context. Perhaps best of all the contributions make it very clear what a treasure trove the Evans Archive is at the Ashmolean.

Acta Archaeologica Supplementa: Birth of a World Museum, Volume 78. T. B. Jakobsen (Contributing Editor); ISBN: 978-1-4051-8571-4; Hardcover; 340 pages; 2008, Wiley-Blackwell.

Reviewed by **Tim Murray**

It has long been understood that the Danish National Museum (founded 200 years ago) has played a major role in the history of archaeology. This book, the consequence of Jakobsen's PhD dissertation, is published by Acta Archaeologica as a celebration of that milestone. The Copenhagen Museum (and the truly awe-inspiring documentation of Danish archaeological sites that is housed in its archives) is an institution of the first importance, and Jakobsen and her collaborators have done it proud.