

## VI. Book reviews

**Brian Fagan 2006. *From Stonehenge to Samarkand: An Anthology of Archaeological Travel Writing*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. xxvi, 291p. ill.; maps. ISBN 0195160916.**

Reviewed by **Melody Herr**

Over the past three decades, Brian Fagan has published numerous books which have both profited from and further fueled popular interest in archaeology. Yet now, as a professor emeritus (University of California, Santa Barbara), he laments that commercial tourism has ‘broken the spell’ once hovering over the remains of vanished cultures. In this volume, he aims to recreate that enchantment, and the excitement of discovery, and the contemplative reflection on the transience of human achievement, by assembling some of the best archaeological writing by British, American, and European travelers.

As its title *From Stonehenge to Samarkand* promises, this far-ranging collection includes descriptions of Angkor Wat, Chaco Canyon, Dunhuang, Hadrian’s Wall, Machu Picchu, Petra, Rome, and the Valley of the Kings. The list of travelers is no less impressive: Herodotus, William Stukeley, Karsten Niebuhr, Léon de Laborde, Mark Twain, Sven Hedin, Paul Theroux. Fagan has organized the descriptions chronologically by the date of the travelers’ visits in order to illustrate the geographical expansion of archaeological discovery as well as the changing nature of archaeological travel from exploration, to education, to guided tour.

Too often such a collection becomes a mere scrapbook, but Fagan does an excellent job of integrating the selections with his own informative, lively prose. Indeed, he takes the role of a tour guide, leading the reader through the anthology. And, like a tour guide, he frequently lays aside the script to tell stories about his own archaeological travels. *From Stonehenge to Samarkand* invokes the imagination, celebrates a ‘sense of wonderment, of surprise and delight’ (xxv), and revives the thrill of visiting exotic places from a distant eras.

## VII. Forthcoming publications

**Peter Rowley-Conwy 2007. *From Genesis to Prehistory. The Archaeological Three Age System and its Contested Reception in Denmark, Britain, and Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Due out September 2007. ISBN 978-0-19-922774-7.**

We are now familiar with the Three Age System, the archaeological partitioning of the past into Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age. It is probably the most fundamental single ‘fact’ that archaeology has ever produced; it is to archaeology what Darwinian evolution is to the biological sciences: the organizing principle that enables the discipline to operate.

And yet, for a discipline concerned with the past, archaeology has been curiously remiss in investigating the early history of the Three Age System. It seems we regard it as so fundamentally true that we do not feel the need to explore its ancestry in any detail. Peter Rowley-Conwy’s new study is the first full treatment of its origins and reception, from its invention in Denmark in the 1830s. Rowley-Conwy traces the dramatically different ways in which the Three Age System was received in four