

from sea level oscillations. This idea is supported by the fact that the scavenging assemblages pre-date 55,000 BP, while the hunting assemblages post-date it. 55,000 BP is often, though not unanimously, associated with a climatic deterioration and a drop of sea levels. Kuhn emphasizes, though, that the patterns observed amount to shifts in the relative abundance of elements that persist throughout the Pontinian.

Despite the somewhat overambitious title of the book, Kuhn is very cautious when addressing the wider implications of his findings for either the Italian Mousterian or the current main issues of Middle Palaeolithic research. After all, this book is important because of its innovative approach to complementary lines of archaeological and environmental evidence. The lithic and faunal analyses that form the basis of this work were designed in parallel and are directly compatible. Kuhn worked in an area that is not traditionally at the heart of Palaeolithic research and used data with pronounced resolution limitations. But the outcome provides a very good and potentially influential example on how to explore early human behavioural variability at the regional level.

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*Snapshots of the Past*, by Brian Fagan. Alta Mira Press (Sage Publications), Walnut Creek, CA., 1995. 163 pp., 1 map, 4 plates, guide to further reading. \$14.95 (paper).

by

Todd W. Bostwick  
Pueblo Grande Museum  
Phoenix, Arizona U.S.A.

Brian Fagan is well known for his archaeology books written for a general public as well as his textbooks. This book is a collection of his articles originally published as bimonthly "Timelines" columns in *Archaeology Magazine*. As he states in the preface of the book, his articles were meant to entertain, inform and sometimes wax indignant on a wide variety of archaeological subjects. His intent was to make available to a wide audience short stories that "navigated through the maze of detailed and specialized literature, creating snapshots of archaeology, archaeologists, and our complex, multifaceted past." The collection of 27 articles he chose for the book were published between 1988 and 1995; in addition, Fagan wrote two new articles for the book (one on prehistoric art and the other on the lives of Egyptian townspeople), for a total 29 articles.

The book includes a preface and an introduction, with the 29 articles divided into four sections: Early Lifeways; Commoner, Camels and Great Lords; Issues in Contemporary Archaeology; and Archaeology and Society. Each of the four sections are preceded with a general introduction written for the book. The articles in the first section discuss early hunter-gatherers, hominids, and farmers. The second section consists of articles concerned with aspects of early civilization and recent historic societies. The third collection of articles explores major controversies in archaeology such as Eve, the first Americans, gender, cannibalism, dog-drawn sleds used by Plains Indians, and the problem of archaeological investigations that are not published. Articles in the fourth part discuss ways in which archaeology intersects with modern people's lives including looting at Slack Farm in Kentucky, unexpected archaeological discoveries, stewardship of archaeological sites, working with museum collections, and archaeology of the 1920s movie set for *The Ten Commandments* in southern California.

The articles in Fagan's book are well written and, for the most part, are stimulating and interesting. All of the articles are very short (3 to 5 pages), making this book easy to read in short stretches of time, much like a *Reader's Digest* of archaeology. Since the general public is often fascinated by the work archaeologist do, and the problems that archaeologist face in the course of their work, this book should be popular to a general

audience. The book also should be of interest to those archaeologists who wish to read short articles about subjects or areas that they are interested in, but do not wish to invest time in a lengthy technical article.

*The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (Prepared Under the Auspices of the American Schools of Oriental Research), edited by Eric M. Meyers, Oxford University Press, New York, 5 volumes, Cloth, preface, ix-xvi + \$595.00.

by

Douglas R. Givens  
Research Associate  
Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts U.S.A.

Like many of the endeavors by The Oxford University Press in the history of archaeology, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* is one of the most important compendiums of information comprising the history of Near Eastern Archaeology in recent time. Eric M. Meyers (Professor of Religion and Archaeology, Duke University), the Editor in Chief of the volume series, has done a masterful job of bringing together of wide variety of site information and biographical synopses of Near Eastern archaeologists into a series of five volumes which are not only "user friendly" but "worth their weight in gold" for scholars and interested readers of the history of Near Eastern Archaeology. The wealth of information at the fingertips of the prospective researcher or interested reader is enormous. Although vast in its scope, the user of the volumes will find it easily accessible and of true value as a research tool. Meyers has brought together the expertise of a vast number of contributors which were carefully nudged together to produce a volume series of superlative quality and unestimable value to those interested in the history of Near Eastern archaeology. Meyers wisely selected William G. Dever (Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Arizona, Carol L. Meyers (Professor of Biblical Studies and Archaeology, Duke University), James D. Muhly (Professor of Ancient History, University of Pennsylvania; and Director-elect, American School of Classical Studies, Athens), Dennis Pardee (Professor of Northwest Semitic Philology, University of Chicago), and James A. Sauer, Research Associate, Semitic Museum, Harvard University) as editors of the volume series. Together their editorial expertise and that of Eric Meyers has produced one of the most important sources of information on the history of Near Eastern archaeology published in recent memory. The contributions to each of the volumes in the series have been meticulously edited, appropriately illustrated, and provide the reader with a concise yet detailed history of Near Eastern archaeology which is useable to both scholar and general reader.

The volume series is most comprehensive. What is valuable to the reader is the attention paid by the editorial board of the volume series to all manner of sites throughout the Near Eastern area, not just the well-known or the well-documented. This alone makes the volume series of great importance to prospective readers and an excellent tool to begin a thorough study of the origins and development of Near Eastern archaeology. Finally in one volume series, one can find an excellent summation of the conduct of Near Eastern archaeology prosecuted over a great number of years.

Both discussions of sites and biographical sketches of the Near Eastern archaeological community involved with the discovery and documentation of the archaeology of the area so well presented that the reader will find very little to complain about with regard to the series value as a research tool or as a place to provide a good start for the general reader interested in the archaeology of the Near East.