

## BOOK REVIEW

*Bioarchaeology of Marginalized People*. Edited by Madeleine L. Mant and Alyson Jaagumägi Holland. Academic Press, an imprint of Elsevier. 2019. 300 pp., \$84.95 (paperback). ISBN: 9780128152249.

This edited volume is among the latest to demonstrate how current bioarchaeological research supports the integration of robust, data-driven case studies with broader anthropological scholarship focused on marginalization. The volume includes chapters that interact with race, class, gender normativity, and sexuality.

Contributions model a range of current best practices in bioarchaeology. This includes advancing North American research not centering the United States, along with multi-authored and international collaborations. Furthermore, studies present innovative models of public and community engagement that are as varied as the definitions of marginalization employed by contributors throughout the book. Mant and Holland organize the types of marginalization covered in the book into the following categories: peripheralization, a loss of individuality, positivity through difference and the absence of context and forgetting. These are somewhat limiting descriptions, given that contributions present a broad range of conditions of marginalization and how they are constructed, experienced, and change across space and time. The first case in the book sets the tone for the complex ways that marginalization is tied to socio-historical, political and economic processes - including the interplay of local and extra-local dynamics.

"Mummies, memories, and marginalization: The changing social roles of a mummy from ancient to modern times," looks at shifts in meaning attributed to the "Lady Hudson" Roman-era mummy as she moves from the hands of collectors, to museums and ultimately the University of Western Ontario. Encounters with different publics go hand in hand with this circulation that bears on how her identity is shaped, and how people's identities are shaped by their engagement with her. These dynamics are different with collectors and museum goers than they are with university students learning from studying her. Nelson discusses Lady Hudson's marginalization according to her personal, mortuary, curated

and bioarchaeological identities. The extent to which these identities can be fully realized is based on the availability of information about her as an individual, changes in ethical perspectives on the acquisition of human remains and the technologies available for scientific translation. Therefore, her marginalization in various spheres differs according to how she is being engaged and consumed by researchers and various publics across space and time.

The fourth chapter, "Looking into the eyes of the ancient chiefs of shísháhlh: The osteology and facial reconstructions of a 4000-year-old high-status family" addresses similar dynamics of marginalization according to how personal and curated identities are shaped. Clark et al. detail a case at the intersection of art, science, and community partnership that demonstrates how interpretations of past populations bear on the identities of descendants. Approaches to conducting research on past populations can contribute to the marginalization of their descendants. With that in mind, Clark et al. adopted a research model that involved bringing visibility to 4000 year-old high-status individuals unearthed at the Kwenten Makw'ali site that involved shísháhlh descendants in the excavation, facial reconstruction, and museum exhibition. The presence of archaeologists from the shísháhlh Nation emphasizes that the community-research binary implicit in community engagement discourses belies the reality that descendants are also researchers.

Several chapters present cases illustrating how bioarchaeological studies can contribute to anthropological studies of people's relationship to the state and state-society relations. The last chapter by Hackett and colleagues, "Innovation in population health intervention research: A historical perspective," addresses how the past itself can be marginalized in ways that obscure its role in current conditions of the state and disparities that people experience within it. The case centers on treating the past as a "laboratory" from which to collect health and health policy data to understand how continuities and changes in the distribution of resources at local and state levels over time impact health. Heather Battles speaks to marginalization arising from "forgotten historical moments" in her chapter, "In the shadow of war: The forgotten 1916 polio epidemic in New Zealand." One of the many unique contributions that this chapter makes to the volume is a discussion of the relationship that one's body has to the state. Battles demonstrates the context that bioarchaeology provides for understanding the long-term impact of historical events, including

how state formation and bodily formations are constitutive of one another.

Redfern and Hefner's "'Officially absent but actually present": Bioarchaeological evidence for population diversity in London during the Black Death, AD 1348-50" also takes up the issue of how the ability for people to be seen (or not) is impacted by how the state is conceptualized. For instance, Redfern and Hefner note how sexual taboos and normalized historical interpretations of the medieval period foster the "official" absence of African-descendant people." Their study demonstrates how bioarchaeological research can play a unique role in bringing visibility to "forgotten" groups of people through DNA and isotope analysis. Similarly, Shields Wilford and Gowland illustrate how changes in welfare ideologies and policies impacted the health of post-medieval workhouse inmates. Their analysis also highlights how the changes in Poor Laws lead to particularly gendered health disparities, given overseers' willingness to aid single mothers and widows. In "Health in equity and spatial divides: Infant mortality during Hamilton, Ontario's industrial transition, 1880-1912," Ludlow and Hackett also present a case on the gendered aspects of marginalization. Discourses around infant mortality in late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ontario targeted mothers as the cause. However, the authors provide a counter-illustration of how changes in the social and physical environment correlated with diarrheal and respiratory-related infant mortality.

Their findings emphasize the fallacy of ties between health disparities and inherent biological or behavioral differences. Lovell and Palichuk round out gender and health discussions in the volume with "Task activity and tooth wear in a woman of ancient Egypt." Their case focuses on a woman excavated from ancient Mendes (Egypt) with a unique dental wear pattern. Difference between her wear pattern and those found among women in more domesticated contexts suggest that the woman was using her teeth as a tool for a specialized craft. The interpretive possibilities demonstrate how bioarchaeological research fits within current anthropological research that lends to disrupting notions of gender normativity.

Carlina de la Cova's case study of the Terry collection focuses on the significance of the Great Migration to the presence of African Americans in the sample. "Marginalized bodies and the construction of the Robert J. Terry anatomical skeletal collection: A promised land lost," argues that migration reflects the oppression taking place in the South, but

also the embodiment of human agency that led Blacks to seek better social and economic conditions elsewhere. This is an important contribution to scholarship on a well-studied populations largely used to illustrate disparities. de la Cova's chapter also addresses the way that the identities of skeletal collections shape and are shaped by their architects and researchers. Doubeck and Grauer address this latter point in their chapter, "Exploring the effects of structural inequality in an individual from 19<sup>th</sup>-century Chicago." The authors offer a case study of an individual from the Field Museum's anatomical collection with a unique emphasis on researcher "appreciation." Specifically, the authors use appreciation as a frame for deconstructing the notion that a researcher's engagement with human remains is purely scientific. This complements the detailed social context they provide for the skeleton as part of an agenda to expand our analyses of marginalized populations to include immigrant communities. In "Marginalized by choice – Kayenta Pueblo communities in the Southwest (AD 800-1500)," Debra Martin offers a unique perspective on the agency of marginalized groups in a case focused on the Kayenta of Northeastern Arizona. Researchers interpret these groups to be marginal based on evidence of minimal interaction with surrounding political and ceremonial centers. However, Martin offers a health profile indicating the material benefits of their "inward focus" in terms of social stability, fertility, and flexible subsistence. The Kayenta strategy for navigating the challenges of their physical environment reminds us of the importance of complicating our understanding of marginalization as it relates to human agency.

The volume is at its strongest where studies are presented in ways that lend to theoretical engagement without engaging the theory itself. The use of intersectionality is particularly sloppy, and perhaps needless for framing the presence of Black ancestry in medieval Europe. The sloppiness is not a matter of lacking adherence to a particular definition of intersectionality, which is a matter of debate itself. Arguably, the concept is not necessary for Redfern and Hefner to critique assumptions about: 1) the absence of Black ancestry in medieval European populations and 2) a singular experience among people identified as having Black ancestry. More generally, while definitions of marginalization vary between chapters, its presentation as an exacting force is rather consistent throughout the book. Apart from the Martin and de la Cova chapters, discussions tend not to address how agency factors

into dynamics of marginalization. Readers seeking more direct theoretical engagement can look to other recent volumes such as *Theoretical Approaches in Bioarchaeology*, which includes chapters authored by several contributors to *The Bioarchaeology of Marginalized People*.

None of the book's shortcomings detract from the robust presentation of case studies, models of collaboration and appropriate marginalization of the US in a volume focused on North American bioarchaeology. This is an excellent book for undergraduates and graduates because of the accessible writing on the part of the contributors, and the excellent guidance that the editors provide in the introductory and concluding chapters.

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