Stella Souvatzi and Athena Hadji (eds.)

Space and Time in Mediterranean Prehistory (Routledge Studies in Archaeology). xvi+304 pages, 36 figures, 2 tables. 2014. London: Routledge; ISBN 978-0-415-83732-3 hardback

The collection of papers *Space and Time in Mediterranean Prehistory* is an outcome of the collaboration between Stella Souvatzi, who regularly writes on spatiality within social archaeological themes such as households, as in her recent book *A Social Archaeology of Households in Neolithic Greece*, and Athena Hadji, whose Berkeley PhD thesis was entitled on *The Construction of Time in Aegean Archaeology*. The editors invited researchers from a predominantly interpretative (post-processual) archaeological tradition who deal with Mediterranean prehistory and included a few selected revised contributions to the similarly named session at the 16th Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists in the Hague. The collection of papers contains 15 chapters by archaeologists, anthropologists and an architect.

This timely volume is an anticipated continuation of the critique of space and time as passive and homogenous backdrops to human life, and treats them as socially constructed, as well as inseparable from human lives and experience. It not only restates the urgency of a theoretical discussion of the conceptualisation of space and time in archaeology, but attempts, perhaps for the first time in archaeology, to treat them as inseparable and as essential to understanding past social relations at different scales. The volume is also innovative in its focus on the whole of the prehistoric Mediterranean, which is too often fragmented in narratives along national, linguistic, academic and other boundaries. The volume stems from “... *the ever-growing interest in space and spatiality across the social sciences; the comparative neglect of time and temporality; the lack in the existing literature of an explicit and balanced focus on both space and time; and the large amount of new information coming from the prehistoric Mediterranean*”, which serves “... *as an empirical archaeological background for the application and detailed analysis*” (Preface, p. xv).

The first chapter, written by the editors, serves as a theoretical introduction to the volume and reviews some focal points of research into Mediterranean prehistory, which is then further developed in the following chapter by Robert Chapman. Although not complete in its coverage of the theoretical discussions, the editors’ introduction separately presents

the conceptualisation of both space and time first in the social sciences in general and then within theoretical archaeology. The volume is an engaging and diverse collection of papers, and the reader can find plenty of useful information and thought-provoking ideas. The editors point to diverse and interesting topics and concepts applied to Mediterranean prehistory in this volume (p. 19–20): houses, households, settlements and communities (Stavrides, Harkness, Watkins, Düring, Marketou, Márquez-Romero & Jiménez-Jáimez and Athanasiou), urban space and planning (Athanasiou), architecture and the built environment (Harkness, Meegan and Márquez-Romero & Jiménez-Jáimez), the social production of space and the dialectical relationship between people and space (Stavrides), embodied space, movement (Harkness, Meegan and Skeates), cultural diversity and differences, social transitions, meaning, identity and memory (Skeates, Miller Bonney, Marketou, Murrieta-Flores and Yasur-Landau and Cline), the concepts of time in terms of social memory, identity and continuity, the transmission of social knowledge and reproduction of architecture (Meegan, Watkins, Düring, Miller Bonney Murrieta-Flores, Márquez-Romero & Jiménez-Jáimez and Yasur-Landau & Cline) as well as residential mobility, discontinuity, abandonment and destruction (Skeates and Marketou). Many contributors deal with similar topics and concepts, but approach them from different spatio-temporal scales. The editors (p. 19) recognise the importance of time perspectivism and of “... *a multiscale approach to both space and time that will explore linkages between a whole range of spatial and temporal relationships*”, critique the overuse of the large-scale, long-term approach and express the “... *lack of a sense of short-term and small-scale social action and the bewildering and contradictory complexity of everyday lived reality*”. However, many contributors retain the large-scale, long-term approach, even if enriched by perspectives offered by local contexts, by selecting case studies from across the Mediterranean region or the millennia-long periods of prehistory (Watkins, Düring, Bonney). Some articles are more descriptive (Marketou, Yasur-Landau & Cline) with the addition, of course, of a theoretical commentary.

A critical weakness of the volume is the lack of more contributions from archaeologists more affiliated

with what it is known as archaeological science, since space and time are central concepts for archaeology in general. The volume would certainly benefit from being more of a bridge between theory and practice in archaeology. When discussing time, the authors, informed of the development in anthropological theory, go further than most other theoreticians; for example, they present a critique of the established dichotomy of linear versus cyclical time, one identified with Western thought and the other with 'traditional' or 'primitive' societies, as well as the dichotomy of objective and subjective time (p. 6). But they do not problematise the related dichotomy of abstract and substantial time or measured time (chronology) and experienced time, which was established by proponents of interpretative archaeology Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley in their book *Social Theory and Archaeology* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press) and which continues to polarise the treatment of time and perpetuates "*The Two Cultures*" (cf. C. P. Snow's 1959 lecture) divide in archaeology. Substantial versus abstract time is of course a valid observation, but it tends to alienate proponents of social archaeology on the one and archaeological science on the other hand. The editors as well as the contributors (with a couple of exceptions: Skeates, Murrieta-Flores) do not attempt to bridge this gap. Most of the articles are written from a phenomenological perspective, which is not contradictory to, and would benefit from, 'scientific' approaches, such as a variety of spatial GIS analyses and temporal Bayesian modelling of calendar chronologies.

Nevertheless, this collection of papers is innovative in that it specifically tries to link the top-down with the bottom-up, the large-scale with the small-scale, the long-term with short-term, and most importantly, structure with agency. As expected, the contributors achieve this with varying success. The diversity of themes and views conveyed by individual papers preclude further summary in the context of this short review. We would, however, like to highlight the excellent paper by Patricia Murrieta-Flores (chapter 11). The author of the paper *Space and Temporality in Herding Societies* (p. 196-213) discusses prehistoric pastoralism and transhumance since the Chalcolithic in the Sierra Morena mountain range of the Iberian Peninsula and integrates space and time

through GIS analyses. Time is introduced into the spatial GIS analysis with the help of cost-time models and by accounting for the different types of pasture available during different seasons. The analyses show patterns of regular distances between settlements in travel time. Furthermore, by mapping megaliths, she is able to show that they are located along preferred herding routes. According to the author, "*For herders, to travel through the landscape is also to travel through time, as movement resonates with the seasonal changes of the landscape*". Furthermore, "*Through time, the monuments as works of the ancestors might have served as material reminders of the deep past, of a temporality that extended beyond the seasonal cycle, where every movement acquired time depth, becoming the reiteration of the actual movements of the ancestors*" (p. 209). The monuments along the herding routes thus connect the immediate here-and-now experience of the traveling herder with social memory, the deep past and the ancestors, who perhaps tracked the same routes. In a way, the herder travels both through space and time. We believe this paper is the closest to the ideal to which the volume aspires, namely the multiscalar integration of space-time with social archaeology, and goes a step further with the much needed bridging of the divide between social archaeology and archaeological science.

In the last chapter, which serves as a discussion (p. 262-291), Stephanie Koerner provides a useful commentary on the major themes and concepts in the volume and 'contextualises' the volume within the framework of a broader interdisciplinary discourse of space and time and how these relate to concepts such as structure and agency. The discussion is a challenging yet compelling philosophical text, which adds the finishing touches to the whole volume by stressing the relevance of issues explored in the volume not just for archaeology, but for the social sciences in general. *Space and Time in Mediterranean Prehistory* is an exciting and innovative collection of papers that should be read by students and researchers interested in the prehistoric Mediterranean, conceptualisations of space and time and those interested in social archaeology and anthropology in general.

Marko Sraka
University of Ljubljana