

BOOK REVIEW

The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Childhood. Edited by SALLY CRAWFORD, DAWN M. HADLEY, and GILLIAN SHEPHERD. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 784. Hardback, \$145.00. ISBN 978-0-19-967069-7.

Although children compose a sizeable segment of any given population, their distinct material footprints are mostly invisible in the archaeological record. This complicates the reconstruction of experiences of childhood, which is further problematized by the fact that “childhood” is a cultural construct as its associated parameters, mores and taboos vary widely across human societies. Indeed, in the same society, or even the same family, a considerable number of variables ensure that no two childhood experiences are alike.

This volume seeks to impart a sense of the range and depth of research concerning the archaeology of childhood by focusing on interlinking themes. Impressive in their collective temporal (prehistory to present) and geographical (every continent save for Antarctica) scope, the 37 chapters of the book are organized thematically into eight sections. The first section, Section I “Introductions: The History and Impact of the Archaeology of Childhood,” consists of the two chapters that provide the intellectual foundation for the rest of the volume. Chapter 1, written by the editors (Sally Crawford, Dawn M. Hadley, and Gillian Shepherd), focuses on the theoretical and methodological development of the subdiscipline of the archaeology of childhood, while Chapter 2, by Grete Lillehammer, discusses its historiography.¹ Lillehammer is uniquely suited to write about the history of the subdiscipline as she is widely regarded as its founder.

Section II “Defining Children and Childhood” explores the ways in which childhood can be defined, specifically in terms of social, chronological and biological age groups respectively. Chapter 3 (Jo Buckberry) presents an overview of the techniques used to estimate biological age and sex in human skeletal remains, while Chapter 4 (Simon Mays) expounds upon the ways in which growth can be

¹ Note that two of the editors previously published a volume on the subject of the archaeology of childhood: S. Crawford and G. Shepherd (eds). 2007. *Children, Childhood and Society*. British Archaeological Reports International Series 1696. Oxford: Archaeopress.

assessed from skeletal material and how growth is directly impacted by environmental, dietary and societal factors. Using data from nearly 1,000 societies, Chapter 5 (M. Annette Grove and David F. Lancy) considers the relationship between biological age and social identity and proposes a broadly applicable six-stage life cycle model. Chapter 6 (Rebecca Gowland), the final chapter in the section, is concerned with the connectivity between mothers and infants.

The next three sections consider childhood development on the family, individual and community levels. The chapters in Section III, “Children, Family, and Households,” seek to reconstruct facets of family experiences in prehistoric (Chapter 7, Brigitte Röder), Roman (Chapter 8, Maureen Carroll; Chapter 9, Penelope Allison), Harappan (Chapter 10, Supriya Varma) and 19th-century New York City (Chapter 11, Rebecca Yamin) contexts. Section IV, “Learning, Socialization, and Training,” explores modes of education in the Thule and Dorset cultures of Arctic Canada (Chapter 12, Robert W. Park) and Victorian England (Chapter 13, Craig Cessford), and the training of child laborers in 16th to 17th-century Sweden (Chapter 14, Anne Ingvarsson, Jan Mispelaere and Ylva Bäckström), the late 18th to early 19th-century British royal navy (Chapter 15, Ceridwen Boston) and in various 19th-century cities in England, Australia and North America (Chapter 16, Vicky Crewe). Section V, “Self, Identity, and Community,” contains essays that provide portraits of the relationship of Palaeolithic children with their community (Chapter 17, Jessica Cooney Williams), care and socialization of children in the European Bronze Age (Margarita Sánchez Romero), representations of children in Greek art (Chapter 19, Olympia Bobou), children’s graffiti in Roman Pompeii and Herculaneum (Chapter 20, Katherine V. Huntley), politics of play in New Mexico (Chapter 21, B. Sunday Eiselt) and diachronic instances of childhood migration (Chapter 22, Dawn M. Hadley).

The two sections that follow consider issues of subsistence, morbidity, migration, mortality and meaning. Section VI, “Health, Disease, and Environment,” reconstructs childhood activity patterns of Holocene foragers in Siberia and southern Africa (Chapter 23, Lesley Harrington and Benjamin Osipov), infant subsistence practices from the Iron Age to Early Medieval period in Britain (Chapter 24, Rebecca C. Redfern), disease and trauma in Romano-British children (Chapter 25, Mary E. Lewis), headshaping in Eurasia in the first millennium AD (Chapter 26, Susanne Hakenbeck) and an overview of the ways in which stable isotopic studies have contributed to our understanding of childhood migration (Chapter 27, Katie A. Hemer and Jane A. Evans). Section VII, “Death,

Memory, and Meaning,” contains chapters that explore the funerary footprint of children in the ancient Greek world (Chapter 28, Gillian Shepherd), children in Egyptian iconography (Chapter 29, Nicola Harrington), Roman children’s sarcophagi (Chapter 30, Janet Huskinson), child sacrifice in the ancient Andes (Chapter 31, Deborah E. Blom), children in Medieval iconography (Chapter 32, Sophie Oosterwijk) and children’s burial grounds in Ireland (Chapter 33, Colm J. Donnelly and Eileen M. Murphy).

The last section, Section VIII, “Seeing, Presenting, and Interpreting the Archaeology of Childhood,” presents modern perspectives on children. Chapter 34 (Sally Crawford and Katharina Ulmschneider) examines images of children in archaeological photographs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, while Chapter 35 (Claudia Lambrugo) considers archaeological studies of childhood in Italian in conjunction with the ways in which Italian museums are striving to be more didactic for a juvenile audience. Also concerned with museum studies issues, Chapter 36 (Mark A. Hall) compares the ways in which medieval children are depicted in contemporary art to their modern representations in movies and museums, and Chapter 37 (Sharon Brookshaw) discusses how children from the past are presented in museum exhibits.

In sum, this volume provides an overview of current, forward-thinking approaches to the archaeology of childhood. For scholars who specialize in the ancient Mediterranean, Chapters 1–6 and 34–37 will be of general theoretical interest, Chapters 19 and 28 concern Greek material, Chapters 8, 9, 20, 25 and 30 focus on Roman material and Chapter 29 is the sole chapter on an Egyptian subject. Overall, this volume substantially advances our understanding of conceptions of childhood in the past and will serve as a firm foundation for future research in this quickly burgeoning archaeological subfield.

CARRIE L. SULOSKY WEAVER

University of Pittsburgh, clweaver@pitt.edu