

as starch grains or natural fibers that may be found in nonsedimentary archaeological substrates, including tools, pottery, dental calculus, stone tools, or bone. Researchers and archaeologists interested in the search for clues about ancient diets, food processing, clothing, and arts and crafts will find these chapters to be a valuable resource.

The book is also an invaluable resource for microscopists. Microscopists often encounter unknown micro-particles outside their field of specialization and are driven to explore literatures from different disciplines in their search for clues. Although there is an extensive specialized literature on micro-particles such as pollen and diatoms, this book—by presenting a compilation of common micro-particles from archaeological contexts with the relevant literature from different fields, identification guidelines, and images—serves as a go-to source for microscopists encountering unknown micro-particles that might derive from diverse sources. It even covers lesser-known micro-particles such as insect remains, feathers, and others that may be encountered in archaeological contexts. The book also helps differentiate between similar micro-particles of different natures, avoiding confusion among researchers. Some examples include the distinction between pollen grains and parasite eggs, or between phytoliths and diatoms, sponge spicules, radiolaria, and volcanic ashes.

The book is well organized and written in a clear and accessible manner, making it an ideal resource for both researchers and students interested in the topic of micro-particles in archaeology. Although there is some overlap between chapters addressing similar micro-particles, the comprehensive index effectively aids readers in navigating the content, ensuring a nonredundant reading experience. With its concise writing style accompanied by detailed images and a strong emphasis on rigorous sampling protocols, this book serves as a catalyst for advancing the field of microarchaeology in its exploration of the microscopic scale of the archaeological and geoarchaeological record. In an era marked by the profound impacts of the biomolecular revolution in archaeological science, a finer distinction between scales emerges, where the microscopic—visible through optical and scanning electron microscopy—stands apart from the molecular, which remains invisible. Micro-particles, with their observable micromorphology, become the common denominator in microarchaeological research, setting it apart from biomolecular research.

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***Comics and Archaeology.* Zena Kamash, Katy Soar, and Leen Van Broeck, editors. 2022. Springer, Cham, Switzerland. xiii + 177 pp. \$49.99 (hardcover), ISBN 978-3-030-98918-7. \$39.99 (e-book), ISBN 978-3-030-98919-4.**

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This edited volume on comics and archaeology includes seven chapters by 10 authors from five different countries. Following an introductory chapter, three chapters deal with the ways in which archaeological information is conveyed, and three are reflections of archaeologists who produced comics. Overall, contributors focus on current concerns and how these are presented in social media and on the internet. Implicit in the chapters is that the impact of comics on developing young minds and archaeological novices should not be underestimated.

A central tenet of the volume is that both comics and archaeology are political. The narratives that both create cannot be separated from prevailing social relations. The coeditors—Zena Kamash, Katy Soar, and Leen Van Broeck—acknowledge that because different cultures view comics differently,

not everyone consumes comics or archaeological visuals in similar ways. Nonetheless, as alluded to by some contributors, the graphic and sequential presentations of comics help the public not only to better understand material culture of people in the past but also to reveal related aspects of human lives in settings that are often radically different from contemporary and mainstream society, including its wide range of contested notions regarding religion, law, wealth distribution, equity, gender, and reproductive rights.

David S. Anderson considers truth, fiction, and pseudoarchaeology in American comic books. Anderson argues that these comics are persuasive because they use visual stereotypes portraying pre-existing ideas and imagery. Graphic and textual information presented in these comics include components of pseudoarchaeological speculation, characterized by cherry-picking context-free “evidence” to satisfy and amplify readers’ propensity to be part of creating alternative narratives. Claims made in comics at times predate related claims in other media. For example, *Showcase Presents* (1960), which depicts encounters with Egyptian gods as alien beings from outer space, predates by six years the publication of Erich von Däniken’s *Chariots of the Gods?* The success of comic books to convey von Däniken’s speculations ostensibly caused him to launch his own eight-part comic book series, *The Gods from Outer Space* (1978).

Whereas Anderson shows how American comics merge aliens with the lost city of Atlantis, Guillaume Molle shows how Franco-Belgian *bande dessinée* (strip cartoons) claim that the lost alien “civilization” of Mu is responsible for the construction of monumental features on certain Pacific Islands—notably, the *moai* statues of Rapa Nui. Unlike their American counterparts, detailed Franco-Belgian *ligne claire* (clear line) comics are informed by geographical, historical, ethnographical, and archaeological contexts. Yet, inaccuracies and fictitious contexts that are subtly added will go undetected by nonspecialist readers, rendering the Franco-Belgian comics potentially more misleading and damaging than the American ones. For example, illustrators depict general elements of material culture with little to no attention to geographical differences. Indigenous people are portrayed as violent antagonists to European heroes. Illustrators’ preferences for monumental structures and writers’ assumptions of their presence being indicative of advancement resulted in comics focusing on Rapa Nui in the eastern Pacific while excluding the islands in the western Pacific.

On a positive note, Molle cites recent *bande dessinée* publications that attempt to represent Pacific cultures as accurately as possible. Additionally, involvement of Pasifika artists in the creation and production of strip comics have added an emic identity value to the medium. However, archaeologists should remain mindful not to impose a Eurocentric mode of representation on Indigenous ones.

Going beyond strip comics, Eva Miller (Chapter 3) looks at how a copper head of a purported Akkadian ruler excavated by British archaeologists in Iraq in the early twentieth century has been reimagined in fan art disseminated online among communities built around mutual antipathies toward “political correctness.” Miller argues that fusing the image of Sargon of Akkad with imagery from Classical Greece and Rome promotes the notion of white racial purity, Western supremacy, and gendered hierarchies. Miller calls for visual storytelling to push back against online fandoms of right-wing narratives and the inner workings of search engine algorithms by flooding the internet with informed but nuanced graphic and textual stories concerning Mesopotamian archaeology.

Zofia Geurtin (Chapter 4) considers how public outreach of archaeologists at Aeclanum—an archaeological site located in southern Italy dating from the fourth century BC through Late Antiquity—can be understood via comics as an ongoing relationship between research and action, through which a professional narrative of the past is used to engage children from the community. By involving the intended audience in the creation of a comic, archaeologists can obtain new unpublished information and useful skill sets.

In the next chapter, Kristin Donner and Laura Harrison similarly engage children by showing how the manufacturing and trade of mold-made pottery in Early Bronze Age western Anatolia can be explained in comic format. Their comic was incorporated into outreach activities, inspiring playful engagement with archaeology while also initiating deep learning and building competency in literacy, technology, and communication. As in the case of Zofia Guertin’s comic on Aeclanum, Donner and

Harrison rely on material cultural remains exposed through archaeological excavations to inform visual reconstruction of clothing, artifacts, architecture, and landscapes.

Being the author and illustrator of numerous archaeology comics, John G. Swogger shows with the aid of strip comic format that where local histories and associated archaeological research dovetail with community interest in the past, archaeologists should promote the community's feedback and hands-on participation. To prevent community history and preservation from being eclipsed by one-sided portrayals, localized communities should be involved in creating content for comics. A community may look upon its own heritage as unfamiliar because it is being narrated by archaeologists who do not necessarily speak *for* the community—only *about* it.

According to Swogger, the challenge for the creators of comics is to fully acknowledge pasts that might be different, unfamiliar, contested, confrontational, and difficult to reconcile. Additionally, to engage diverse audiences effectively, archaeology comics should aim to incorporate well-researched and contextualized information within compelling story lines that resonate with the public.

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