

Gonzalo Aranda Jiménez, Sandra Montón-Subías y Margarita Sánchez Romero (eds.). *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner. Feasting Rituals in the Pre-historic Societies of Europe and the Near East*. Oxbow Books. Oxford & Oakville, 2011, 245 pp. ISBN: 978-1-84217-985-7.

If you go on an excavation, or attend a conference, you will notice that archaeologists like food and drink. I have always thought that we are better at, or at least more conspicuous in, the sociability of our consumption of food and drink than colleagues from most other disciplines. This observation makes it all the more surprising that we have taken so long to move beyond the notion of the production of plant and animal foods and their consumption as just means of provisioning and maintaining the human body, although that remains their ultimate purpose. The sociability of consumption began to be talked about in relation to alcohol and drugs (and even for middle-class archaeologists, *cuisine!*) just over two decades ago, but publications and debates on the topic of feasting have only intensified since the late 1990s.

This edited volume is the outcome of a workshop organized in Granada in 2009 and focuses on three related topics: the nature of feasting rituals (especially their cultural contexts), their role(s) in social practices, and how they can be studied through the challenging data of the archaeological record. Case studies are taken from the Near East, Greece, Spain and Portugal, and Britain. After the editors' introductory chapter, Sánchez Romero presents the variety of methods used by archaeologists to study food consumption and then discusses how anthropological concepts (*e.g. habitus*, socialization, metaphor, identity) can be employed to study ways in which food consumption plays (and by inference, played) an active role in shaping social relations (*e.g. age, gender*) and individual identities, as well as constructing social memory.

Hayden's chapter is what he calls a "very preliminary, coarse grained, methodological attempt to investigate feasting and its role" in the Epipalaeolithic of the Near East. The focus is on the period of animal and plant domestication and the role that the author has previously attributed to feasting as "a prior condition to (and motivation for) domestication". He begins with a detailed attempt to present the range of material evidence for feasting (*e.g. unusually large hearths, speciality foods, large quantities of food remains, prestige food serving vessels, special food preparation vessels*) in the study area, followed by his reconstructions of feast sizes, their costs and purposes, as well as the range of social groups involved in giving and participating in feasts. His overall argument is that feasts were organized and used by self-interested, high ranking individuals to break down the egalitarian so-

cial relations that preceded agricultural life in the Near East. A shorter paper by Goring-Morris and Belfer-Cohen adds further examples of material evidence (bull motifs, bucrania and cattle remains) for feasting in funerary contexts during agricultural adoption in the Near East.

The chapter by Parker Pearson *et al.* is much smaller in scale, focusing on an area of less than 100 km² around Stonehenge, and presenting the stunning results of fieldwork undertaken on this and other local Late Neolithic sites during the last decade. It is within this context that the evidence for feasting at Durrington Walls is presented towards the end of the paper. This evidence includes midden deposits, large quantities of domesticated animal bones (mostly pig and cattle), the remains of a possible animal roasting hearth and lipid residues from pots. The authors propose the hypothesis that the feasting at Durrington Walls was aimed at mobilizing the large labour force that was needed for the erection of the stone circles of Stonehenge (three kilometres away) during its second phase.

Halstead and Isaakidou take a comparative approach to the evidence for, and nature of, feasting during the Neolithic/Early Bronze Age and the Later Bronze Age periods in the Aegean. They conclude that there was a relationship between the increasingly competitive nature of feasting and the development of social, economic and political inequalities, especially from the later Neolithic onwards.

The remaining chapters are all case studies on the inference and roles of feasting in the Iberian Peninsula from the third to the first millennia BC. Garrido-Pena *et al.* base their argument for feasting rituals on the Meseta during the second half of the third millennium BC on residues of beer, hallucinogens and solid foods in Beaker decorated pottery, as well as standardized nature of that pottery over the central plateau. Of particular interest is the proposal that the numbers of funeral participants could be inferred from the numbers of pots intended for "individual consumption". Their overall interpretation is one of competitive feasting by leaders in a context of political instability. The use of funerary feasting to pursue political aims is also inferred by Aranda and Montón for the Argaric group in southeast Spain. The principal empirical evidence for such feasting is twofold: the standardized pottery types and (the main focus for discussion in this paper) the faunal remains that are argued to represent cuts of meat offered to the dead. In a context in which relations of class are agreed to have been present, the authors opt for an interpretation of the feasting as a practice reinforcing both social cohesion and social distance.

The last four papers take us into the late second and first millennia BC. Armada interprets the presence of Late Bronze Age metal cauldrons, flesh-hooks, ro-

tary spits, bowls and stands, coupled with evidence for meat consumption, as evidence for “banquets” in Atlantic Iberia (with meats being boiled mainly in the north, as opposed to roasting taking place in the south). Once again, the interpretation is one of competitive social practices like feasting in a context of political instability. Delgado and Ferrer are more socially inclusive, examining the preparation and consumption of everyday foods and those rituals in which foods played a role, for the population as a whole across the Phoenician world from the Syro-Palestine area to southern Iberia. Buxó and Principal present detailed evidence for the preparation, storage and consumption of foods in Iberian households in northeastern Spain, inferring the existence of domestic feasting. Lastly Garcia and Pons infer the existence of the banquet from the Iberian site of Mas Castellar de Pontós (again in northeast Spain) from the evidence of faunal remains, seeds and mainly tableware pottery dumped during a comparatively short period of time in a 2 m deep pit. The function of the banquet is argued to have been one of inter-group alliance formation.

This volume has many strong points. The selection of several Iberian case studies gives the Spanish reader the opportunity to follow through the local evidence for, and interpretation of, feasting over two thousand five hundred years. A number of authors use multiple lines of evidence to support their inference of feasting practices, while Hayden’s paper is a substantial and detailed attempt to get to grips with the criteria for the identification of feasting in the archaeological record. The reader will also have to consider the scales of feasting and the extent to which the inference of feasting is, to quote Parker Pearson *et al.*, “always going to be difficult” unless the lines of evidence are wide-ranging. For example, the inference of feasting, as opposed to offerings, from funerary remains would be much strengthened by evidence from contemporary domestic contexts. Inferences about the costs of feasting need to be situated in the context of the other demands of social production. Conclusions about the relationship of feasting to the existence of political, economic or social instability should also take into account the independent evidence for, and historical nature of, that instability, otherwise we risk being left with a catchall interpretation. The pursuit of individuality and subjective identities through archaeological data, of a past peopled by individuals pursuing their own interests, may seem to elevate social agents over the structures in which they lived. This is part of an on-going debate in archaeology about how we view society and social change. There is no doubting the existence of social practices involving food and drink and it is important that we think about their significance. For this reason, the book is clearly ‘food for thought’!

Bob Chapman. Dept. of Archaeology. School of Human and Environmental Sciences, University of Reading. Whiteknights P.O.Box 227. Reading RG6 6AB. Reino Unido.

E-mail: r.w.chapman@reading.ac.uk

Victor M. Hurtado Pérez, Leonardo García Sanjuán y Mark A. Hunt Ortiz (eds.). *El asentamiento de El Trastejón (Huelva). Investigaciones en el marco de los procesos sociales y culturales de la Edad del Bronce en el Suroeste de la Península Ibérica.* Monografías Arqueología, Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura, Dirección General de Bienes Culturales. Sevilla, 2011, 375 pp. + disco compacto, ISBN: 978-84-9959-074-5.

Esta publicación se esperaba hace mucho, puesto que El Trastejón se había considerado (Hurtado y García Sanjuán 1994) un caso paradigmático del poblamiento del Suroeste de la Península Ibérica en el II milenio a.C. Casi 20 años después de estas primeras noticias, el yacimiento vuelve a marcar la dinámica del conocimiento en este contexto donde, a pesar de las profundas transformaciones que la investigación ha conocido en los últimos años, la evidencia funeraria sigue mejor documentada.

La monografía es resultado de un típico programa de investigación de los años 80, coordinado por los autores y desarrollado entre 1988 y 1994. Aunque en un principio más extenso, terminó centrándose en la Sierra de Huelva. La opción editorial asume un doble formato, en papel y CD, constituyendo el primero una síntesis de 7 capítulos del texto presentado en la versión digital. Consta de tapas duras, papel e impresión de calidad excelente, lo que desafortunadamente no ocurre con algunas fotografías de la versión digital. Personalmente, prefiero una buena edición impresa, a pesar de reconocer la mayor agilidad de utilización y divulgación de la versión digital. Aquí me centraré en la edición digital, que está completa.

El trabajo se estructura en 10 capítulos. El primero introduce el proyecto y sus condicionantes arqueológicos y geográficos de partida. Los tres siguientes presentan los resultados obtenidos en las intervenciones arqueológicas de los sitios de El Trastejón, Atalaya de Trastejón y La Papúa II. El capítulo 5, uno de los más importantes, es una notable síntesis de las secuencias radiocarbónicas obtenidas. El sexto documenta la producción metalúrgica del yacimiento, en el marco de la denominada economía metalúrgica de Sierra Morena Occidental, demostrando una producción de base familiar y local. Los capítulos 7, 8 y 9 exponen los resultados analíticos de las cerámicas,