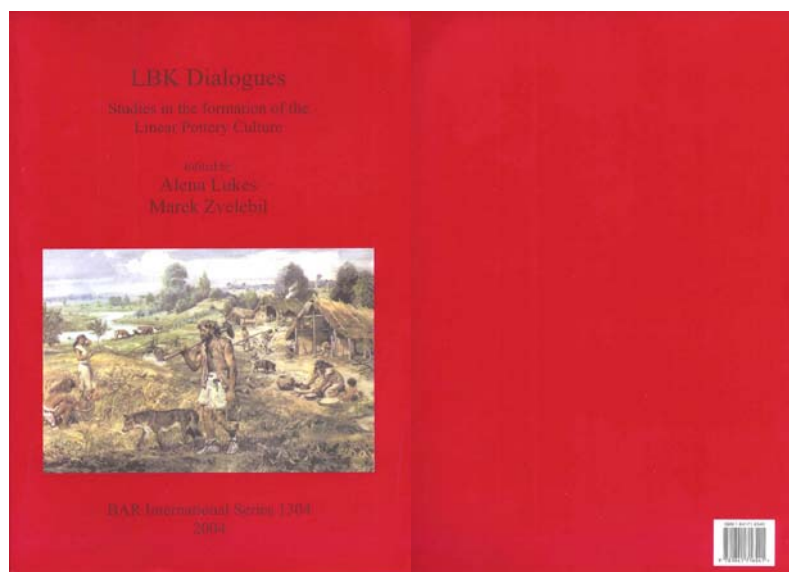


Lukes, A. & M. Zvelebil. Eds. 2004. LBK dialogues: Studies in the formation of the Linear Pottery Culture. – Oxford, Archaeopress (British Archaeological Reports International Series 1304)

Book review by I.M. van Wijk



The last few years, through new research and excavations of Early Bandceramic and Late Mesolithic sites, the Early Linear Pottery Culture (LBK) has been redefined. Because of this new definition the discussion arises again how the earliest Bandceramic Culture has been given shape and in which way this culture has been spread from his cradle in Transdanubia to as far west as the Parisian basin (the Migrationist, Indigenist and Integrationist models).

This volume is a collection of papers originally presented at the ‘Origins of the LBK’ symposium held at the 8th annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) in Thessaloniki, Greece in 2002. It focuses on anthropological and sociological approaches to the problem of archaeological culture, based on the development of the concepts of ‘culture’ as a system of inheritance, passed on through acquisition of knowledge by cross-generational or intercommunal transmission of culture and through innovation. The exogenous cultural and genetic origin of the LBK tradition, and the new revealing evidence published here runs through the papers like a thread.

The papers have been organised in three themes: ‘Theoretical constraints on the understanding of the LBK’, ‘The Earliest LBK and what came before: The emergence of traditions’ and finally ‘Perspectives on the Early LBK: Life and times’. These three themes are well-chosen and are in line with each other. The first theme provides different theoretical backgrounds of and approaches to the emergence of the LBK culture. The second theme deals with the questions raised in the first theme and with diverse problems about for example the area of initial distribution and the cultural contribution made by ancestral cultural groups. The third theme comprises different approaches to the study of Early LBK through different disciplines such as zooarchaeology, palaeoecology and architecture. Zvelebil gives a summary and presents his conclusive arguments in his conclusion of this volume.

The ‘Studies in the formation of the Linear Pottery Culture’ are not just about the social and material aspects of the transition to the Earliest Linear Pottery Culture, the book also provides insight in the ongoing processes in the understanding of the origin(s) of the LPC but also in the revived discussion about these origins. The latter is made clear in the opening essay of Neustupný (‘Remarks on the origin of the Linear Pottery Culture’) in which he accuses scholars of “[...] seeking local Mesolithic ancestry in the Neolithic [...]”. While Zvelebil (‘Conclusion: The many origins of the LBK’) states in his conclusive argument that Neustupný’s challenge “[...] has been fully met by the strength of forthcoming evidence from several regions, and evaluated by a number of contributors [...]”.

The main conclusion derived from this volume is that the first farmers of Europe originated genetically and culturally from interbreeding of intrusive Near Eastern and indigenous populations, with the continuation of hunter-gatherer genetic inheritance and cultural traditions increasingly predominant in regions further away from the eastern Mediterranean and southeast Europe.

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