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*Children and Childhood in Bioarchaeology*. Edited by Patrick Beauchense and Sabrina C. Agarwal. Gainesville, FL. University Press of Florida. 2018. 392pp., \$110 (hardback). ISBN 978-0-8130-5680-7.

*Children and Childhood in Bioarchaeology* is an edited volume of ten papers collated into two parts: The Biocultural Study of Childhood in the Past and Approaches to Life History and the Life Course in Teeth and Bone. In their curation of contributions for this volume, the editors have created an original and accessible collection of high-quality papers which offer the reader a window into the insightful theories and innovative methods that characterise the modern study of childhood in the past from human remains.

Throughout this volume the reader is provided with a series of thoughtful reflections on current theoretical and methodological paradigms: Inglis and Halcrow on theoretical approaches to the bioarchaeology of childhood; Moffat and Prowse on approaches to infant and young child feeding practices; Gosman et al. on the study of growth and skeletal development; and Miller et al. on stable isotope approaches to food consumption practices. While the balance in these papers between restatement of the status quo and substantially novel ways of thinking or working is variable, all offer the reader something new in an accessible and well-informed manner.

There is also a group of papers offering broad-ranging explorations of regional or period-specific data sets: Klaus on the north coast of Peru over the past c. 2000 years; Toyne on Peruvian mass death assemblages; Temple on childhood stress among the late/final Jomon-period foragers of Japan; Gowland and Newman on childhood health inequalities in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England; and Wheeler *et al.* on childhood in the Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt. These thematic papers, especially those in the second part of the book, are particularly significant. Indeed, the focus of part two of this volume on the specific subject of life course studies is a truly exciting element. The concepts underpinning this theme – handily summarised in the first paper of the volume by Inglis and Halcrow under two headings ‘life course approaches’ and ‘life-history theory’ – are beginning to be discussed more widely, and are of universal significance for childhood studies in bioarchaeology, so it is important to see here the concentration of papers which offer practical application of these theoretical concepts to familiar bioarchaeological data and common questions concerning past culture and society. The two papers which concern

traditional markers of biological stress are a case in point. Gosman et al. examine dental enamel hypoplasia (defects of the teeth corresponding to periods of childhood physiological stress), and Gowland and Newman's data concern a suite of stress markers including tibial length, cribra orbitalia, dental enamel hypoplasia and rickets. While both these papers might at first seem to follow a well-trodden path, both offer originality obtained through their appreciation of inter-generational and epigenetic factors.

Although this book contains several papers that present no new raw data, or at least are not the first time a particular data set has appeared in print, this volume's value and significance lies elsewhere, in part by demonstrating that quality research does not have to rely on this one sort of novelty alone. I was particularly impressed by the ambition of Pearson's big-data approach to stable isotope evidence for infant feeding that spanned the last 10,000 years and reassures us that the data gathered from destructive sampling can have an enduring and worthwhile legacy. I also found Toyne's consideration of children as agents of violence, not just as passive victims, illuminating. The creative combination of strands of data that might otherwise be the domain of different specialists is another success of this volume – historical, clinical, ethnographic and statistical approaches are interwoven effortlessly with the bioarchaeological data.

It is the confidence with which such a breadth of innovative ways of *thinking* about extant and traditional bioarchaeological data are presented that makes this book worth reading – not just skimming the odd paper which fits one's own research interests – but in its entirety. There is a clear sense of strong editorial direction here in the selection and ordering of the contributions, and they work together as a whole on multiple levels. This publication marks a step change in the maturation of the field of the bioarchaeology of childhood and instils excitement about what we might collectively achieve in the future.

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