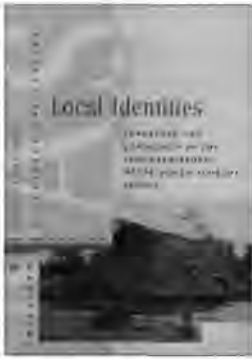


*Local Identities: Landscape and Community in the Late Prehistoric Meuse-Demer-Scheldt Region*

By Fokke Gerritsen. Amsterdam Archaeological Studies 9, Amsterdam University Press, 2003; x+6 pp., figures, tables, index; cloth \$52.00.



Research for Fokke Gerritsen's publication *Local Identities: Landscape and Community in the Late Prehistoric Meuse-Demer-Scheldt Region* began in 1996 and was completed in 2001 as a successfully defended doctoral

dissertation. The work was sponsored by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, known by its Dutch abbreviation, NWO. The organization's statutory mission is to enhance the quality of research, stimulate new research, ensure strong Dutch scientific programs, facilitate the public's use of research results, and allocate funds to accomplish NWO's goals. Gerritsen's *Local Identities* is true to this mission, integrating his research findings with contemporary issues of cultural heritage management. The book is an outstanding example of the process from research to publication and applied management efforts.

In his work, Gerritsen draws on a range of archaeological materials to present a dynamic interpretation of the Late Bronze Age and early Roman-period communities that thrived in the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region of northwestern Europe which today covers portions of the southern Netherlands, southwestern Germany, and northeastern France. Gerritsen's main objective is to explain the primary social and cultural transformations that occurred from approximately 1100 B.C. to A.D. 100.

Gerritsen claims that at the core of his history are dynamic relationships among households, communities, and villages, and the landscape within which they lived and interacted.

Gerritsen targets information that can help readers understand the household unit, both socially and symbolically. Although not specifically addressing the influence of the individual in his approach, the influences of small social groups and customs practiced and reinforced by direct contact with one another are at the heart of Gerritsen's narrative.

Gerritsen's research is perhaps unique. His approach differs from other researchers in that he uses data on small-scale social dimensions as it occurs over time across the landscape. This depth of time releases the reader from the common snapshot approach to site and landscape interpretation and provides a refreshing historical component to analysis of social transformations through time. Gerritsen asserts that the combination of a diachronic approach and a focus on local contexts holds the most promise for interpreting and understanding fundamental social transformations evident in the archeological record that may otherwise be subtle and challenging to decipher.

To convey the thoroughness of his research and the breadth of evidence observed, Gerritsen provides a comprehensive review of the social environment of the Late Bronze Age family. This includes sociological and physical ordering of a typical house and associated domestic architecture, construction types, and siting considerations. Spaces adjacent to the house, including the farmyard, the farmstead, and outbuildings, are meticulously reviewed. Next, the construction of the community is mapped. Data on ritual and religious space, burial practices, and cemeteries are presented with discussion of their importance to the community. Finally, fields, arable land, and agricultural systems are reviewed. Evidence of ditch construction and the effects of land division among communities indicate a transition to a new agricultural regime in the Late Iron Age.

Considerations of community location and structure, territoriality, land tenure, and ownership provide meta-narrative for how a community is incor-

porated into the local landscape and society. Regional patterns of settlement, population clusters, and land use are discussed in context of environmental constraints and subsequent ramifications to demographic trends. Finally, Gerritsen discusses how the constructed space feeds a sense of social identity and community, social dynamics, and communal reciprocity in the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region during the Late Bronze Age and early Roman period.

Gerritsen comprehensively accounts for data collected during his research and competently interprets the data in light of specific research questions crafted to maximize the information that results from his work. With *Local Identities*, Gerritsen disseminates what is learned about these early settlers of northwest Europe. How this information will be used by the cultural heritage management community is not fully addressed. One can hope that, in time, new knowledge will facilitate better preservation through improved understanding of resource use and settlement patterns during the study period. Scholars in the field will look forward to future updates by Gerritsen.

Delivered in an easy-to-follow format, Gerritsen's book methodically provides both the layperson and the professional a case study of careful archeological investigations and thoughtful analysis and conclusions. Well illustrated with maps, plans, and figures, the book is a fine example of public archeology that is intended to engage and enlighten regardless of the reader's previous knowledge of the topic. The work is extremely insightful and highly recommended for readers interested in archeology, landscape studies, and cultural heritage interpretation.

Wm. Brian Yates

*Florida Division of Historical Resources*

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*Guardians of the Trail: Archeological & Historical Investigations at Fort Craig*

By Peggy A. Gerow. New Mexico Bureau of Land Management Cultural Resources Series, No. 15, 2004; 452 pp., maps, tables, illustrations, notes, references, appendices; paper, no charge.

Fort Craig, 25 miles south of Socorro, New Mexico, is one of a series of fortifications built to protect settlers, control Indians, and guard travel routes across the New Mexico Territory. Established in 1854, the fort consisted of rock and adobe buildings. The fort closed in 1884. Since 1981, Fort Craig has been under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior.

*Guardians of the Trail* describes archeological excavations between 1990 and 1994 by the Archaeological and Historical Research Institute. It includes the results of an extensive search of historical records by Marion Cox Grinstead.

The report is arranged in six sections and four appendices. The core of the report is covered in sections II to IV, which describe data recovered from five excavations of various buildings and structures, historical investigations, and artifact analysis.

Research issues and excavation strategies are established in the first section of the report. The issues and strategies for investigations at Fort Craig are similar to those for investigations at two other southwestern frontier forts, Fort Fillmore and Fort Cummings. Research is directed towards developing a better understanding of daily life at Fort Craig and focuses on the economic status of the personnel, the status of black soldiers, reliance on the local economy, effectiveness of the army's shipping of goods, the role that the railroad played in the latter years of the fort, and environmental adaptation. Gerow also addresses the impact of vandalism.

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