

within the Black community, from friendships and disputes to intimate partnerships. In Chapter 7, Wilkie returns to the prologue incident and provides a new—and shocking—accounting of what really happened, based on the rich context she has previously built. It is a tour de force.

Some flaws mar the powerful impact this book makes, apparently due to faulty copyediting, which failed to catch several distracting errors (grammar, punctuation, etc.). None are serious enough, however, to detract from the overall read or the quality of the scholarship. Altogether, *Unburied Lives* makes several important contributions. It not only illuminates the lives of the Buffalo Soldiers but also provides an intriguing approach to historical archaeology, broadly applicable to other underrepresented groups. It has certainly reshaped my thinking on how to report these rich, untold stories.

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***Beer: A Global Journey through the Past and Present.* John W. Arthur. 2022. Oxford University Press, Oxford. v + 294 pp. \$24.95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-19757-980-0.**

Chris M. Monroe

Department of Near Eastern Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA

I was excited to receive an electronic copy of this book, one that promises to update the growing field of commensal studies with a synthetic, cross-cultural work that would, in John W. Arthur's words, "reveal the variety of ways beer is integrated in people's lives through their technology, health, social status, rituals, and economics" (p. 3). Chapter 1 does not disappoint, given that there is much introduced regarding the ubiquitous roles of women and nonelite actors in nonindustrial brewing. The tone wavers between conversational and academic, but it is clearly meant to be widely accessible. No single overdetermining or celebrational theory drives the narrative, and instead there is a balanced recognition of beer's historical role in both joining and dividing people.

My critical comments below are focused on sections concerning ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, and to a lesser degree, the Levant—areas with which I have relative familiarity. In those sections, one finds a troubling lack of precision in both expression and research that may speak more to the state of academic publishing than the author's clearly positive intentions. My impression is that the book's key contribution is ethnoarchaeological, but I will leave others to judge if the recipes in the final chapter are worth replicating, or to divine what ritual is implied by the "catching" of Gamo elites (p. 8).

From an anthropological or archaeological perspective, a primary issue is that the author fails to define the subject clearly. Likewise, there is neither review of the field nor any clearly stated methodology. Again, the style appears conversational, though at times it feels insular, and casual readers may resent having to search footnotes to source quotations that appear in chapter and section headings. Arthur appears to limit the topic to fermented cereal drinks (i.e., beers) yet includes Medieval aqua vitae (which were distilled spirits), "banana beer," and the famous Neolithic mixture of beer and wine from Jiahu (China) as if they were all the same thing.

Arthur refers to "the Mesopotamian state society" (p. 12) as if there were not many empires and states in that region's long history. Beers were "produced along the Nile as part of the most iconic state societies" (p. 12), making an awkward colloquialism at best. If the author or Oxford University Press wants archaeologists to take this seriously while simultaneously finding broad readership, this is hardly the way. Basic descriptions of places and names are clumsily rendered—for example, a "ceramic jar at Godin Tepe site" (p. 19); Egyptian sites spelled as if they were in Israel (with "Tel"); or an ancient Egyptian woman, Meresankh, identified as a site (p. 27). Again, something is called "iconic" that is

anything but: the Sumerian “Hymn of Ninkasi,” which is correctly dated to 1800 BC but wrongly set in the Late Uruk period, more than 1,000 years prior (p. 20). Levantine archaeologists will be surprised to hear that jugs had no strainers until 1000 BC, given their fairly common presence in second millennium strata, or that strainer jugs were necessarily made for drinking beer and not wine (p. 21). A confusing typographical error has named Roman brewers on British soil already by 900 BC (p. 34), when it should be clear that this is closer to AD 90, when the Vindolanda fort was built.

Later sections on antiquity are unnecessarily repetitive and unfortunately add more factual and grammatical lapses. “Beer was a social drink for Mesopotamians based on seal impressions” (p. 65) expresses the latter too well. Ur III is described as a peak period for the city of Uruk (p. 67), when in fact it was a ruined backwater by then. Mesopotamian economy is labeled an *Oikos* system, as if that were a native (not Greek) term. Even the (truly) iconic Code of Hammurabi has its meanings badly twisted (p. 68), and assigning the construction of the Giza Pyramids to Dynasty 5 rather than correctly to Dynasty 4 (p. 86) is too much for any Egyptophile reader. There are also outdated interpretations, such as denying the existence of currency in Egypt until Dynasty 26 (p. 84), that cast doubt on any socioeconomic analysis being attempted here.

It could be argued, were it not for the Oxford imprimatur, that such a book can sustain errors in details about Bronze Age and Iron Age sites and finds, but page 22 features a bizarrely untrue statement that casts the whole project in doubt: “No Indigenous societies today in the Near East or Middle East drink beer because of the widespread prohibition of alcohol in Muslim societies.” This comment ignores well-known and well-documented alcoholism in several Southwest Asian countries, not to mention the famous Taybeh brewery in Palestine and multiple breweries in Israel and Turkey. There is no justification for such a statement, which sadly characterizes the cavalier approach to other topics in this disappointing volume.

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