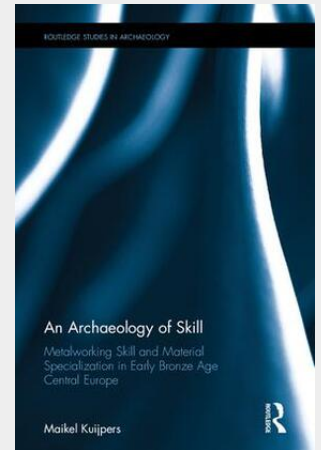


Kuijpers

An Archaeology of Skill

Metalworking Skill and Material Specialization in Early Bronze Age Central Europe

Material is the mother of innovation and it is through skill that innovations are brought about. This core thesis that is developed in this book identifies skill as the linchpin of – and missing link between – studies on craft, creativity, innovation, and material culture. Through a detailed study of early bronze age axes the question is tackled of what it involves to be skilled, providing an evidence based argument about levels of skill. The unique contribution of this work is that it lays out a theoretical framework and methodology through which an empirical analysis of skill is achievable. A specific chaîne opératoire for metal axes is used that compares not only what techniques were used, but also how they were applied. A large corpus of axes is compared in terms of what skills and attention were given at the different stages of their production. The ideas developed in this book are of interest to the emerging trend of 'material thinking' in the human and social sciences. At the same time, it looks towards and augments the development in craft-studies, recognising the many different aspects of craft in contemporary and past societies, and the particular relationship that craftspeople have with their material. Drawing together these two distinct fields of research will stimulate (re)thinking of how to integrate production with discussions of other aspects of object biographies, and how we link arguments about value to social models.



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