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REVIEWS

Teresita Majewski and David Gaimster (eds) 2009. *International Handbook of Historical Archaeology*. Springer, New York. ISBN 978-0-387-72068-5. xx + 698 pp. Figs., tabs., bib. index. €160.45 (~\$NZ295.00).

Matthew Campbell

This is a big book, 35 papers covering nearly every aspect of historical archaeology and it would be impossible to do justice to it on a paper-by-paper basis. Importantly, it is what its title says, a ‘handbook’, a how-to and an overview rather than a series of scholarly papers and case studies. It is split into two sections, “a game of two halves.” The first is a how-to concerned with the interpretation of the historical archaeological record, putting a variety of theoretical and methodological viewpoints in their historical context and guiding the reader in their application. The editors and, on occasion, some of the authors make frequent apology for the heavy North American focus and some, even a great many, of these viewpoints may not seem relevant to the New Zealand context, though there are no papers that offer absolutely nothing. The second half is a series of regional overviews from around the globe examining the varied practice of historical archaeology. Perhaps the major failing is that the volume was first conceived in the mid 1990s and took nearly 15 years to come to fruition – some of the papers may have been written then too, and certainly many of the themes reflect that period though, importantly, bibliographies are generally up to date.

To examine, then, a little more closely some of the papers and theoretical/methodological viewpoints that I found of interest – others among you may have chosen other papers -- there is certainly something here for everyone. The first paper is by Jamie Brandon on race and class. Along with gender these two ‘analytical registers’ are often seen as key components of identity. Given that Ian Smith has recently called for historical archaeology in New Zealand to be an archaeology of identity this seems like a good place to start. This is a very North American overview of the subject but within that limitation it provides a good introduction. The main problem is a relentless focus on a particular North American brand of race relations and plantation archaeology which has limited relevance elsewhere.

The third major register of identity studies is gender, which is the subject of Andrea Vermeer's paper. It is good to be reminded that gender is not sex, nor is it sexuality, but "the cultural constructions of 'man,' woman,' or other related categories..." it is too easy, for instance, to assign men to public and political, and women to private and domestic. Gender studies have come a long way from attempting to identify gender in a particular artefact or space. The construction of gender cannot be separated from the construction of race and class (or other registers of identity – life stage, religion, marital status, employment...) – each is reflected in and structures the other. Vermeer's paper moves beyond Brandon's examination of race and class and brings these studies of identity archaeology up to date.

Another topic in historical archaeology that is of particular relevance to New Zealand, and to other settler societies, comes under the heading of 'post-colonial' studies. Mark Leone's *Making Historical Archaeology Postcolonial* is a grand and passionate argument for ... I'm not quite sure what, to be honest. One of his primary motivations seems to be 'to give voice to the voiceless.' His overview gazes across African Americans, Australian Aborigines, Maya and the English, but tellingly there is no mention of Native Americans who seem, then, to be truly voiceless in North American historical archaeology. Thankfully in New Zealand there is an increasing interest in the archaeological study of interaction between Maori and Pakeha.

But enough of this high level stuff. Several papers are much more practical in their focus. David Landon looks at historical archaeozoology, what it shares with archaeozoology in general and what it can uniquely contribute. An important point he makes is that in historical archaeology interpretation is much less reliant on environmental factors; market factors might be more important for instance, and historical research into the price of meat cuts can throw light onto the social standing of the occupants of a site. Conversely, urban markets might constrain available cuts so that different classes had largely similar diets. I was also struck by the need for integration of data from bones with data from pots, how were the meat cuts observable in the assemblage being cooked and served? Related to this the need for inter-site comparisons and the need for archaeozoological analyses to be incorporated into reports rather than tacked on to the end as an appendix and afterthought. Sounds familiar.

Of the 35 papers, the final 15 are regional overviews, taking the book out of North America to Central and South America, the Caribbean, the Spanish Pacific, Europe and Africa. I finish with a brief look at a couple of these papers; the first by Susan Lawrence and Peter Davies is an examination of historical archaeology in Australia and New Zealand. They cover various

topics: from Australia early contact sites, convicts, Old Government House, The Rocks; and from New Zealand the New Zealand Wars and Chinese miners. As someone who has participated in quite a few historic digs, mostly commercial contract jobs, I was struck by the narrow, obvious range of topics, most of which arise from academic research. The lack of integration of contract archaeology into academic output is a common complaint in all periods and places, and one that the authors themselves note. I am well aware of some very good work in contract archaeology, but it seems not to have reached the attention of the guardians of high archaeology.

Finally, Uzi Baram looks at historic archaeology in the Middle East/East Mediterranean. The archaeological period that in Europe is referred to as 'Post-Medieval' is also the period of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman archaeology is a relatively new study, but how different from historical archaeology in New Zealand. Ottoman archaeology has to confront the 'nationalist narratives of its successor states' – even in Turkey the Ottoman period is seen as a period of alien rule. Ottoman archaeology is thus a post-colonial archaeology in a quite different sense; the indigenous peoples are undertaking an archaeology of the former colonists. Within this contrasting political context contrasting and innovative approaches have developed that illuminate our own concerns.

This review has been somewhat idiosyncratic, jumping around, taking different points from different papers. This reflects the nature of the book, a handbook covering just about every aspect of historic archaeology, written from a variety of views over some 15 years. This makes it a valuable resource, but whether that value is accurately reflected in the cover price I am less sure. Books like this are meant to be bought by libraries rather than individuals and I suggest that you make sure your local institutional library has a copy, and if it does, make good use of it.