Reconstructions

Tracing Archaeology's Past. The Historiography of Archaeology. ANDREW L. CHRISTENSON, Ed. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1989. xii, 252 pp., illus. $29.95. Publications in Archaeology. Based on a conference, Carbondale, IL, May 1987.

In the past decade archeologists have become increasingly concerned with the history of their own discipline—with the origin and evolution of archeological concepts, with records of past archeological research programs, and with the sociopolitical contexts in which specific ideas either flourished or were negated. This volume is regarded by its editor as a "sampler" of the problems and issues that researchers both from within the discipline of archeology and from other disciplines (history, philosophy) deem of importance to the historiography of archeology. In 17 essays, 15 of which are written by American scholars, the book successfully conveys the complexity of the relevant issues.

Archeologists have a clear bias in favor of dealing with the recently published and the newly excavated. Archeologists dig in the ground, they rarely dig into any archives and too seldom study the documents of earlier excavations. Jonathan E. Reyman informs us that the published record of Chaco Canyon in fact places limits on our understanding of the area. His study of the unpublished materials not only casts a wholly new light on the area but reveals findings at times contradictory to the published record. Marvin D. Jeter detailing the archeology of Arkansas and Michael Tarabulski reviewing a 50-year-old film on an archeological project in Algeria reiterate the same theme. Christenson observes that perhaps 90% of all archeologists who have ever lived are alive today. How does one write a contemporary history of the field without being offensive to the living? Lester Embree, a philosopher, suggests in his essay that he has an answer. Using what he refers to as social science and historiographic methods, that is, questionnaires and interviews, he attempts to understand how theoretical archeology went, according to his accounting, from 8 to 150 practitioners in the past 30 years. His essay focuses narrowly upon the positivist approach referred to as the "New Archeology" that dominated the field 20 years ago. The failure to consider other scientific traditions that have enriched the discipline distorts what is happening today within the broad field of archeology. This is made all the more obvious in the essay by Stephen L. Dyson, who addresses the growth and present state of theory in classical archeology, one of many "schools" not considered by Embree. Embree's is not, however, the only essay that addresses a particularistic "ideology" within contemporary archeology rather than the broad base that characterizes the discipline.

Four essays look to 19th-century archeology in search of the discipline's context and meaning. Donald McVicker in a splendid essay observes that it is "ironic that anthropologists, who are the first to teach that cultures must be judged in their own terms, are often the first to condemn the careers of their predecessors out of historical context." In tracing the careers of Frederick Starr and Marshall H. Saville he documents their involvement in building personal collections of antiquities and manipulating the laws of foreign governments to fill their sponsoring museums with archeological materials. Such behavior today would be roundly condemned although in the 19th century it was far from atypical. Daniel Schávelzon, in a perceptive essay, expounds how "the history of archeology varies depending upon which side of the road the historian stands." Thus, the work of Sylvanus Morley, representing the Carnegie Institution in his excavations at Chichén Itza, meant something "obviously different" to Carillo Puerto, the communist leader for a separatist government of the Yucatan, from what it meant to the Carnegie Institution or to the Mexican government.

The essays by C. M. Hinsley and Alice B. Kehoe on 19th-century archeology differ from those mentioned above in both tone and appreciation of historical context. To both these authors 19th-century archeology was explicitly and almost exclusively colonialist, imperialist, sexist, and in the service of capitalist interests. There is little nuance or appreciation of paradox or contradiction in these accounts. Hinsley states that the history of archeology is the "story of the storytellers" and appears to reduce the effort of understanding the past into so much mythmaking. Whether writing of 19th-century individuals (such as Jeffries Wyman) or institutions (the Antiquaries Society), Hinsley tells good fables. He depicts the evils of the past and draws a moral lesson from them of what is to be avoided today: imperialism, colonialism, racism, sexism, and a tarnished capitalism. Thus, when John Lloyd Stephens writes of Copan in 1841 and alludes to the Acropolis at Athens, Hinsley tells us that Stephens was writing of the "moral effect" of the monuments and that he "clearly meant that they were matters worthy of the artistic and imaginative capacities of civilized men, beyond the feeble powers of the poor degraded peasant." How Hinsley divines what Stephens "clearly meant" remains baffling. The interpretation merely suits his interpretation of an elitist discipline in action. The bias toward creating context rather than establishing it is evident throughout his essay. One example will suffice. Interpreting the picture "Shipping the Great Bull from Nimroud, 1850," Hinsley "reads" it: "While the local flagpole stands flagless, the Union Jack frames the right side of the picture—a quiet statement of relative political power." The "local flagpole" is, however, not a flagpole at all but a typical windsock of the type one can still see today along the embankments of the Euphrates. Such a misreading is easily derived when 19th-century archeology is contoured as an unnuanced manifestation of colonialism and imperialism. Kehoe in her essay, mistitled "Contextualizing archeology," increases the heat of the polemic along the same lines, but casts even less light. That archeology, indeed all of 19th-century Western science, was embedded in a cultural context that involved nationalism, expansionism, racism, sexism, and capitalism is well enough established. Historians of archeology can, however, provide the richer texture of the discipline that includes contradiction, an appreciation of paradox and dialectical reasoning, of the type so well presented in the essays by Chippindale, Schávelzon, McVicker, Chapman, and Desmond in this volume.

David J. Meltzer correctly notes in his essay that "archeology is one of the more ahistorical of the historical disciplines." Archeologists in this country have only recently turned their attention to the history of their discipline. This is quite in contrast to Latin America, where, as Schávelzon, a Mexican archeologist, points out, the history of the discipline has long held a central place, as has also been the case in Europe. Conveying the importance of archival materials for detailing the history of the discipline is a paramount contribution of this book. Whether fragments of ceramics or correspondence between scholars, such ma-

terial provides the basis for the discipline's history. Both must be preserved. Jeremy Sabloff puts it right in his essay: "Historical analyses of the arguments are important; they provide a context for the arguments and indicate what arguments have had positive, negative or neutral effects in the past." The "contexts for the arguments" in historical analyses are typically multiple and fluid; they are best rendered apart from an a priori bias about what constituted that context.

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Scandinavian Contributions

Science in Sweden. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, 1739–1989. TÖRE FRANGSMYR, Ed. Science History Publications (Watson), Canton, MA, 1989. viii, 291 pp., illus. $45.

Two persons stand out in the chronicles of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the naturalist Carl Linnaeus and the chemist Jöns Jacob Berzelius. As the first president Linnaeus dominated the Academy during its great early period in the middle of the 18th century. Berzelius became permanent secretary in 1818 and reorganized the then slumbering organization into a new great period in which he played the central role. These two men had a pervasive and lasting influence on the development of Swedish science and were its foremost contributors internationally. I believe this much can be said without offending anyone in the long line of illustrious Swedish natural scientists.

First place no doubt goes to Linnaeus. Reading this collection marking the 250th anniversary of the Academy I am struck by the central role that natural history has played in the Swedish scientific tradition, first in the form of classification and description by Linnaeus and his numerous pupils, later through studies of geology, geophysics, oceanography, and ecology. This latter tradition in Sweden and other Scandinavian countries reached a high point in the late 19th and and early 20th century and is just beginning to attract the attention of historians of science. It has been broadly described in Gunnar Eriksson's 1978 book *Kartleggarna* (the title refers to makers of maps and inventories) and is portrayed in several papers in this volume.

In his paper on the Swedish Museum of Natural History Gunnar Broberg emphasizes the continuity from Linnaeus. As he notes, "the eighteenth-century focus on taxonomy and the world inventory became, if anything stronger in the following century" (p. 150). The first natural history exhibition opened to the general public in 1794 and the activity expanded through the 19th century, culminating in the opening of the great new palace of the Swedish Museum of Natural History in 1916. By then research had taken prominence over public exhibitions.

The leading role played by the Academy, and not least the staff of the Museum, in the conservationist movement is described in Bosse Sundin's paper, "Environmental protection and national parks." Modern Swedish ecological science has played a pioneering international role in drawing attention to environmental problems, for instance acid rain. The basis for the Academy's activity in this field was laid by the protection-of-nature law passed in 1909. A new breakthrough came in the 1960s with the establishment of a number of agencies for the protection of the environment (p. 221).

Another important strand in the broad concern with the natural world is taken up by Tore Frängsmyr in his account of Swedish polar exploration. The theory of the ice age (or ages) was a central theme in 19th-century Swedish geology. At first the idea that Scandinavia should have been covered by an immense ice shield appeared too fantastic to be true, but by the second half of the century there was sufficient evidence to make it a well-established theory. Obtaining material to test and develop this theory was one motive for Swedes to travel into the Arctic. But there were also other motives, as when A. E. Nordenskiöld made the first northeastern passage to the Orient on the ship *Vega*. This Swedish tradition of polar exploration was later continued by Norwegians like Fridtjof Nansen, Roald Amundsen, and H. U. Sverdrup.

As indicated above, Scandinavian scientists made a considerable international contribution to the study of the natural world in the last part of the 19th and the early part of the 20th century. And Stockholm was the main center for this research. Besides the Museum of Natural History there was also the new University of Stockholm (Stockholms Högskola). Here worked, for instance, the oceanographer Otto Petterson and the physical chemist Svante Arrhenius, and for some years the geologist W. C. Brögger (Norwegian), the ecologist Eugenius Warming (Danish), and the meteorologist Vilhelm Bjerknes (Norwegian).

Practical economic interests were important for the Academy from its start. The investigations of Linnaeus and his pupils, for instance, had an agricultural aspect. The first Swedish professor of economics, Anders Berch, attached highest priority to knowledge relevant to manufacturing. Linnaeus, by contrast, insisted on knowledge useful to agriculture. And it was the latter that in fact occupied most of the early publications of the Academy. When Linnaeus succeeded in funding a second chair in "practical" economics in 1759 it was occupied by one of his own pupils. As the utilitarian spirit faded in the late 18th century, Berch's chair was taken over by jurists and the chairs in practical economics increasingly became positions in pure botany. But this does not mean that the practical link of natural history disappeared. It was rather a reflection of specialization, as witnessed by the establishment of a Royal Academy of Agriculture in 1812. The links between natural history and practical economy were to some extent reasserted in the late 19th century as science was applied to new endeavors, such as plant and animal breeding, geological surveying, and fisheries research.

Attention to such connections in Swedish science may also help bring out more clearly the difference between the broad utilitarian perspective of the 18th and 19th centuries and the narrow modern rationality of aims and means. The book that Frängsmyr and his coauthors have produced not only contains a set of readable sketches presenting central aspects of Swedish natural science during the last 250 years, it suggests interesting perspectives to the general reader and worthwhile research problems to the historical scholar.

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Association Life

Renewing a Scientific Society. The American Association for the Advancement of Science from World War II to 1970. DAEL WOLFLE. American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, DC, 1989. x, 337 pp. Paper, $24.95; to AAAS members, $19.95.

In the *New York Herald Tribune* of 29 December 1952 the American Association for the Advancement of Science was reported to be reorganizing in the face of "intellectual bankruptcy." The report resulted from a joint interview with Edward U. Condon (a physicist), who was about to succeed to the presidency, and Warren Weaver (a mathematician), who had just become president-elect. The conclusions of this distinguished pair were that the annual meetings were "outmoded," that AAAS programs had grown "thinner," and that it was time to "revitalize the association." AAAS was obviously at a low point in its history.