

conclusions, embryologists of different persuasions could profit from reading this book.

Wall has given us a book that is quite different from, but no less significant than, for example, Jonathan Slack's *From Egg to Embryo* or Eric Davidson's *Gene Activity in Early Development*. Indeed, it complements these volumes and will be an important addition to the developmental biologist's bookshelves. A next milestone in embryology will be the integration of the vast molecular data currently being generated into a comprehensive theory of spatial determination in animals. This book should have a unifying influence on such an endeavor.

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Archeology in Context

A History of Archaeological Thought. BRUCE G. TRIGGER. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990. xvi, 500 pp., illus. \$59.50; paper, \$17.95.

Over more than two decades Bruce Trigger has produced a series of thoughtful, sometimes provocative, and always valuable articles and books on the history of archeology. The present book, something of a distillation of these earlier works, constitutes a reasoned comment on the nature of anthropological archeology. It not only describes the main currents of the discipline's development but reviews critically its current state, in which rapidly developing excavation strategies and theoretical orientations often vie with one another.

After amorphous beginnings in association with the Renaissance discovery of history, archeology gradually developed its own focus and methodology. Trigger's early chapters describe the gradual shift from an antiquarian interest in the classical era and the mysteries of its medieval successors into the 19th century, when, with the discovery and acknowledgment of a long *prehistory*, archeology was forced to develop a methodology in which the excavated object supplanted the written record as the only datum from which that more distant history could be known. For all intents and purposes it is here that a scientific archeology begins, in great part because of its kinship with geology, whose proven methods it adopted. It is here, too, that classical archeology, with its "elitist" emphasis upon great works of creative importance more allied to the history of art and literature than of society, diverges

from a "populist" prehistoric archeology whose data are the fossilized fragments of the daily behavior of peoples who have left no other record. Such a shift from history to prehistory and the demonstration of a human antiquity reaching into the geological record and farther than anyone had realized raised important questions about the nature of human history and its underlying processes. Heirs to the universal historians of the Enlightenment and reacting to the ethnic and political separatism engendered by Romanticism, the New Historians, armed with the documentation provided by the new archeology, reasserted a faith in a universal progressive history and the unity of the species that it implied. The emphasis upon stratification that prehistoric archeology drew from geology, as well as the increasing data of ethnography, led easily to a notion of history as a series of superimposed stages leading from a "primitive" base to civilization's summit. In his discussion of what he terms the "imperial synthesis" Trigger condemns these ethnocentric pseudohistories in what is now the commonplace castigation of the classism, colonialism, and racism of our intellectual ancestors. In this I think he distorts the record by imposing something of a presentistic judgment without raising the appropriate question whether there can be or could have been a culturally value-free archeology or history. For all of their culturally derived bias, these later Victorians upheld the idea of a common humanity, recognized the value of the archeological record in documenting a history that had been purely speculative, and recognized in the commonality of the human experience the possibilities of the use of ethnographic analogies for creating from the raw products of the archeologist's pick and spade an understandable grammar of some long-lost sociocultural system. That they were naive in much that they did and culture-bound in much that they thought is insufficient grounds for condemning them to purgatory.

In a subsequent chapter in which he discusses the emergence of regional and national archeologies as a reaction to the excesses of the universal historians at both ends of the century, Trigger quite properly and usefully emphasizes the role of romantically inspired nationalisms in supporting the use of the archeological enterprise for national and ethnically chauvinistic purposes. This is an interesting and important movement that has led to fraud, distortion, and exaggeration of the archeological record. But, as before, Trigger short-changes an American archeology and nascent anthropology whose concern with the remnants of the native past was inspired in part by the new nation's

search for a past, purer than and distinct from that from which it had separated itself. More particularly and more consciously, in the development of both the archeology and the ethnography of Native Americans, the practitioners were engaged in a sometimes frantic effort to discharge their responsibilities to science, as Joseph Henry urged, by preserving for future generations the data below ground and above that were rapidly being destroyed. Today one may regard this effort as exploitation and destruction; but if it had not been made, what would we now know of the past? This is the price of history.

Throughout this section, despite its sometimes presentistic approach, Trigger writes on two levels. The first and most didactic is that of narrative history. This history is detailed and instructive, populated with significant figures such as Thomsen and Montelius who are lost in most historical accounts, and worldwide in scope, providing a sketch of what was going on outside the Euro-American sphere. Trigger's greater interest, however, is the context within which the discipline is embedded. In this sense, the discipline is itself a cultural artifact. As he passes archeology through history's screen, Trigger subjects it to an examination against the changing contexts from which it derives and to which it contributes its parcel of meaning. He concludes this historical review with a chapter on Soviet archeology that is of value not only as an account of an archeology about which we in the West know little but as a case study of the effect of a forceful and politically imposed ideology on the development and the practice of the discipline.

The final chapters describe the archeology of the most recent half-century, during which, in the fusion of anthropological and evolutionary (in the Darwinian sense) concepts with its own methodological refinements, the discipline has reached its maturity. Understandably and appropriately, Trigger gives particular attention to V. Gordon Childe (whose biography he has written) and to Graham Clarke, both major figures in the reorientation of contemporary archeology. These chapters provide a useful guide for those, students and others, who wish to understand the directions in which archeological practice and thought are moving.

Finally, Trigger's discussion in his introductory chapter of the nature and uses of the history of archeology, the appended bibliographical essay, and the extensive bibliography are themselves very useful tools for anyone interested in the discipline—or any other discipline—and the various social milieus in which it has found itself.

In such a comprehensive and thoughtful

account one can, of course, find particulars and points of view that are arguable. That is the nature of good history; and in raising such questions and providing the material for their consideration, Trigger has performed a service for us all.

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