Reviews


Historical archaeology has often fostered a somewhat reflective inclination in its practitioners, from concerns over the ethical impact of research on descendant communities to its disciplinary relationship to history. The two volumes under review demonstrate, in different ways, the opportunities for creative and challenging research when using the field’s disciplinary entanglements to their full advantage.

The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology provides an admirable showcase of the discipline’s thematic breadth and the various spatial and temporal scales with which it must contend. Hicks and Beaudry have edited a volume premised on the view that historical archaeology is concerned with the post-AD 1500 world, and must contend with the variety and quantity of material that survives and the possibilities for research they offer.

Part I, concerned with archaeology and writing, opens with Laurie Wilkie’s artful alignment of artefacts, texts, and memory, in which different social scales (individual, family, community) and temporal resolutions are brought together to weave powerful narratives about the negotiation of class, race, and gender positions in 19th- and 20th-century USA. Gavin Lucas deconstructs the use of linear time in archaeology by linking it to the ‘revolutionary’ changes in consumption and bodily habits of the late 18th/early 19th century. Rosemary Joyce takes head on the textual production of historical archaeologists and their creative infusions of multiple voicings from the past and present in order to complicate their own narrative accounts.

Part II constitutes a catch-all of ‘key themes’. By examining a colonial settlement in Tasmania and an episode of ‘rescue archaeology’ in Cape Town, Susan Lawrence and Nick Shepherd show how the historical archaeology of colonialism produces knowledge of the colonial past while simultaneously negotiating issues of responsibility, sensitivity, and memory for contemporary descendant groups. Tadhg O’Keefe and Rebecca Yamin unravel the material interplay of ‘public’ and ‘private’ in the construction of identity for urban dwellers, as well as the performative nature of urban archaeology and its role in public remembrance. John Schofield and William Johnson recount some of the challenges faced by historical archaeologists when managing transformations of recent and contemporary landscapes in England and USA. Randall McGuire’s contribution on Marxism and capitalism exemplifies the political engagement of historical archaeology through a study of worker struggles and union formation in 20th-century USA. In the chapter on industrialization, James Symonds and Eleanor Casella move beyond technological change and class development to explore linked changes in production and consumption in British labourers’ homes and workspaces. Joe Flatman and Mark Staniforth discuss maritime archaeology, from its roots in classical studies to its centrality in historical archaeology’s focus on the modern world economy.

In Part III, regarding material culture, Matthew Cochran and Beaudry explore the intersecting biographies of persons and things and the importance of materiality to the experience of the past. David Barker and Teresita Majewski look at the central role of European ceramic traditions in discussions of production, distribution, consumption, and even literature. Part IV concerns landscape. In it, Cornelius Holtorf and Howard Williams treat the memorialization of real and imagined landscapes with a thought-provoking examination of the sacrificial landscapes of battlefields, military cemeteries, and war memorials. Lu Ann De Cunzo and Julie Ernst recount both the development of critical approaches to landscape as well as the more recent attempts to go beyond understandings of landscape formation as restrictive and obscurantist. In Part V, on buildings, Hicks and Audrey Horning lay out the important role of
architectural studies in the development of historical archaeology and how, most recently, the agency of buildings works outside the intentionailities invested in their creation. Julia King summarizes the development of household studies in historical archaeology and discusses a 17th-century Chesapeake plantation in which architectural elaboration and burial groupings appeared to have been more constitutive of social identity than were artefacts or racial characteristics.

The volume demonstrates quite nicely the range of evidentiary lines in historical archaeology and the directions in which this can lead research. One lacuna, however, seems to be geography, as is recognized by Barry Cunliffe in the Afterword. Improved geographic representation and increased communication with the non-Anglophone academy is surely the most important next step in the development of the field. In this light, the volume lays out both current strengths and future prospects.

*Between Dirt and Discussion* is a volume of a different kind. Rather than demonstrate scope, it argues for a particular approach to the archaeological process. Whereas theoretical discussions have long held sway in debates in historical archaeology, Steven Archer and Kevin Bartoy edited a volume concerned with a return to discussion of methodology and the ethics of archaeological destruction. The potentialities of the material record, not grand theories, should determine what questions are asked.

Alan Vince and Allan Peacey let the diversity of makers’ marks and pipe mouldings dictate that subsequent investigation into pipe production in 17th-century Britain would involve compositional analyses. Scott Madry convincingly integrates historical maps into GIS databases in order to, for example, study pre-Revolutionary French landscapes and pinpoint areas of interest for future surveys. After DNA analysis indicated that a clay pipe stem from an African-American saloon in 19th-century Nevada was used by a woman, Kelly Dixon is led on a fascinating ‘humanistic’ investigation of cross-cultural drinking patterns, as far back as Ancient Mesopotamia. By foregrounding phytolith and microstratigraphic analyses, Steven Archer, Kevin Bartoy, and Charlotte Pearson weave a tightly controlled narrative of colonial household occupation and abandonment in the Chesapeake through the lens of a root cellar. Anna Agbe-Davies avoids the arbitrary privileging of certain variables in traditional classification of clay pipes in 17th-century Virginia and instead searches for non-random attribute groupings that yield otherwise unattainable research directions. Edward Harris links the revolution of the stratigraphic method in the 1970s to recent developments in GIS in order to reconstruct past site surfaces. Archaeologist Bonnie Clark and architectural historian Kathleen Corbett recount their collaborative investigation of how ethnic groups in early 20th-century Colorado negotiated identity through the built environment. Marley Brown III and Andrew Edwards examine the case of multiple excavations of the same site at Colonial Williamsburg, each with differing approaches, to argue against the application of the same standardized field techniques to all kinds of site. Mark Kostro details how the chance discovery of artefact-poor outbuildings on two Chesapeake plantations led to vastly revised interpretations of site occupation along with more sensitive predictive models for future projects. Kevin Bartoy, John Holson, and Hannah Ballard contribute a discussion of ‘nested’ and flexible field methods that were used to reconstruct consumption patterns on 19th-century seasonal settlements in Yosemite National Park.

This volume represents a convincing argument for the value of resurrecting discussions of methodology in historical archaeology. The calls for the sharing of missteps and dead-ends between investigators and retrospective examinations of the unforeseen courses taken by projects crop up throughout the book and provide a refreshing perspective on the dynamism of the archaeological process. Taken together, these two volumes nicely represent not only the variety of evidentiary lines and research opportunities available to historical archaeologists, but also some of the rather creative thinking that goes into generating and marshalling such evidence in productive and ethical ways.

*Chicago*

JASON D. RAMSEY


Arising out of the 2005 Society for Landscape Studies conference, this collection of papers encompasses a wide range of landscapes, ranging from subterranean to metaphysical as well as spanning a number of time periods and regions. However, therein lies the volume’s weakness. Its breadth limits the in-depth, critical analyses made possible by focusing on specific temporal or theoretical trends. First, one has to question the organization of the volume. Split into three sections, ‘Rural Landscapes’, ‘Urban Landscapes’, and ‘Landscapes Perceived’, such a division would make sense if an equal number of chapters were dedicated
to each topic. Only three chapters are devoted to the study of ‘Urban Landscapes’, while ‘Rural Landscapes’ and ‘Landscapes Perceived’ feature seven and five chapters respectively. Matthew Johnson (2007) has recently voiced similar concern over about this lopsided commitment to the English countryside, which he sees as a reflection of W.G. Hoskins’ continued influence in landscape studies.

Nonetheless, evenly distributing the chapters is likewise problematic. Rural landscapes, such as the lead-mining fields in the Yorkshire Dales as discussed by Martin Roe in chapter 2, had a discursive relationship with urban spaces; they often fed and supplemented the metropolis with capital, as was the case in Roe’s piece. The mobility and movement that took place between the two supposedly separate spaces no doubt informed the construction of their meanings: for the ‘city’ makes little sense without being conceived in opposition to the countryside. The same argument can be made of the colonies outside Britain, which supplied funds for the development of the countryside and cities in England.

Jonathan Finch, the author of one of the most theoretically savvy chapters (ch. 4, ‘The estate: recognizing people and place in the modern landscape’), is one of the only authors to make this connection explicit. As he points out, ‘despite the importance of the expanding world market and colonialism in defining the historical dimensions of the modern age, the landed interests of the élite are rarely conceptualized as extending beyond the British Isles’ (p. 49). Ironically, the editors make a similar error in judgement by conceptualizing and analysing the rural and urban landscapes in separate sections.

These structural issues aside, there are a number of fascinating case studies that make this volume a worthy read. Robert Silvester’s ‘Landscapes of the poor: encroachment in Wales in the post-medieval centuries’, for example, considers how the rural poor established their own spaces on landscapes despite parliamentary enclosure in Wales. They did so by citing the ‘traditional concept of ty unnos, the overnight house’ (p. 57), which held that a family rightfully owned the landscape they settled upon if they were capable of building a dwelling with a smoking hearth overnight. Della Hooke, in contrast, tackles the larger ideological forces at work influencing the development of, and individual engagement with, the British landscape in chapter 11, ‘Wilderness and waste — “the weird and wonderful”: views of the Midland region’. Hooke convincingly presents a historiography of the changing conceptions of ‘wilderness’ used to describe the Midland Region. At one point the Midland Region’s ‘wilderness’ is seen as foreboding and dangerous through the eyes of local mythology and Biblical tales, while later on it is regarded as a recreational refuge from the ‘everyday world’ (p. 147) in contemporary society.

Another interesting chapter is Kate Tiller’s ‘Ways of seeing: Hoskins and the Oxfordshire landscape revisited’, which juxtaposes W.G. Hoskins’ portrait of his hometown of Oxfordshire with that of the actual political, economic, and social transformations that took place while he was inhabiting the place. When presented together, Hoskins’ Oxfordshire appears suspiciously absent of road construction, population shifts, and USAF base’s jet planes: activities that all took place while he was composing his picturesque account of Oxfordshire. This raises an important point of which all landscape scholars should take note: the proper analysis of landscapes require a consideration of multiple layers of data along with the biases of those describing and interpreting a landscape. The diverse and divergent chapters coherently illustrate that a landscape is never a landscape: it is contested and interpreted in unexpected and multilayered ways, hence the plural title of this volume, Post-Medieval Landscapes.

Moscow, Idaho

STACEY CAMP

BIBLIOGRAPHY


In 1620 Francis Bacon opined that three discoveries had ‘changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world’. Those discoveries were printing, the magnet, and Pulveris Tormentarii, or gunpowder. Of interest to post-medieval archaeologists are these two publications which build upon Bacon’s assertion but highlight very different approaches to understanding the technology associated with early modern conflict.
Buchanan’s edited volume brings together 23 specialists (drawn from the engineering, military, and academic sectors) who share a fascination for the technological processes of gunpowder manufacture and the transformation of weaponry from the medieval period to the present. In Buchanan’s estimation the significance of gunpowder has been ‘neglected in most historiographical studies’ for two reasons: scholarly discomfort with military matters, and the (incorrect) assumption that gunpowder production is simple and straightforward. The volume aims to redress this neglect and to enhance the ‘respectability’ of the subject.

In Part One, ‘modern perceptions and ancient knowledge’, contributors debate the origins of gunpowder (India or China?), the perfect formula for its manufacture, and the transformation of saltpetre into a global commodity. Part Two traces the technological development of saltpetre and gunpowder production in the Venetian Republic, Portugal and Sweden, while Part Three traces the expansion of production to India, Brazil, Egypt, and the American South. Part Four focuses upon weapons manufacturing, while Part Five concentrates upon the uses of gunpowder and its derivatives in the 20th century. Readers seeking a compendium of gunpowder-related technology need look no further. However, those more interested in the socio-political and cultural impacts of gunpowder technology — the fact that Pulveris Tormentarii was employed to kill — will be better served by the lavishly-illustrated volume by Scott et al., which never shies from acknowledging that the ultimate purpose of the cannonry they describe in detail was death.

There can be no doubt that the manufacture and use of gunpowder both knit together and literally blew apart societies around the world in the early modern era. Contributors to Gunpowder, Explosives, and the State highlight the western reliance upon Indian saltpetre, even while they disagree as to its origins (‘natural’ or artificial). Saltpetre became yet another commodity underpinning European colonial expansion. Saltpetre was required to produce the gunpowder that fed the guns that enforced colonial regimes; regimes that, in India, were in part necessitated by the need for saltpetre. Here was a commodity that could be used against its very producers to reify colonial power structures. While Buchanan presents a well-contextualized discussion of saltpetre as a principal element in British expansion (what she terms the British gunpowder empire), other contributors do not always critically engage with contexts of colonialism or imperialism. For example, Patrice Bret examines the early 19th-century establishment of a French gunpowder manufactory outside Cairo, matter-of-factly describing how the company saved money by employing an Egyptian workforce without acknowledging the unequal colonial relations that ensured those low wages — not even when noting that a local revolt was led by Egyptian workers who put their newfound knowledge of gunpowder production to work for their own purposes! While the volume may not attain its goal of critically addressing gunpowder’s role in global history (beyond the fact that case studies are drawn from around the world), it is a valuable contribution to the history of technology that begins an important conversation about the linkages between weapons, the power of the state, and global trade.

Historical context, by contrast, is not lacking in the The Great Guns like Thunder. Perhaps surprisingly, this ‘coffee-table’ style volume, clearly designed for a broad audience, is at least as academically rigorous in its discussions as Buchanan’s edited volume, with the added bonus of being exceptionally well illustrated. Scott et al. take the conservation and restoration of 27 cannon historically associated with the City of Derry as the starting point of their work, but range widely in their discussion to consider the archaeology of conflict in Ireland; the manufacture, provision, and use of weaponry; the development of the City of Derry and its relationship with the Irish Society and London livery companies; the character of primary source evidence; and the contemporary reception of the restored guns: a reception that included theft and graffiti as well as civic pride and celebration. Sources tapped by the authors include a wide range of official documents, military treatises, personal accounts, cartographic representations, archaeological excavation, and the scientific examination of the guns themselves.

The cannons range from two 16th-century weapons that predate the establishment of the city of Londonderry as part of the Ulster Plantation in 1613, to a number of guns provided by the London livery companies during the 17th century (employed during the Irish Rebellion and subsequent Cromwellian conflicts in the middle of the century and in the famous Siege of Derry in 1689), as well as several dating to the 18th and 19th centuries. The symbolic value of the cannon in terms of the history of Derry as the ‘Maiden City’ (so-called because the walls were never breached), and the role of heritage tourism as a mechanism of underpinning the contemporary peace process cannot be understated. While some readers may be bemused by the casual acceptance of linkages between past and present inherent to this volume, for me it seems entirely appropriate that the guns of Derry be discussed as ‘living’ as much as ‘heritage’ objects. Little of value would come from any effort to obscure the divisive character of their history, and indeed of the history of Londonderry/Derry.
Those who are not familiar with the intricacies of Irish history in the 16th and 17th centuries may, however, find themselves rather lost at times. The decision to structure the chapters around specific themes related to the guns themselves led to discussions that unintentionally elide the 16th- and 17th-century conflicts through the lack of a clear chronological framework. Others may find themselves confused by the writing itself, occasionally characterized by convoluted sentences employing numerous dependent clauses. Such complaints are minor, however, and should not detract from the value of this publication, which manages to present the history and conservation of the Derry guns in an engaging yet substantive fashion. Accompanying the text are beautiful reproductions of historic maps and illustrations, a range of colour photographs, and an invaluable series of tables presenting data on the cannon, their provision, and their manufacturers. Priced at only £30 (owing to government subvention), this is an exceptional bargain. By contrast, Gunpowder, Explosives and the State is priced within the more 'normal' academic book range of £55. While price comparisons are perhaps unfair, it is noteworthy that the latter volume received financial support from the ammunitions manufacturer Eurenco. Whatever the condition of your wallet (or your politics!), both volumes are recommended for anyone interested in Pulveris Tormentarii and its transformation of the modern world.

Leicester

AUDREY HORNING


Archaeology as Political Action provides a compelling overview of what archaeological commitment to political praxis means in terms of contemporary fieldwork. McGuire states 'If people do not question the ethics, politics, epistemology and reality behind their knowledge, then their actions in the world will be unsound and may result in unanticipated consequences that can be counterproductive and even harmful' (p. 38). McGuire powerfully relates how, without attention to the politics of our real-world engagements, our theoretical concerns and even our most cogent critiques, might ultimately fail us. This book is an essential read for anyone whose archaeological work straddles fraught community histories and would provide an exceptional introduction to these politics for archaeology students in the classroom.

McGuire is reflexively committed to the Marxist vision of an archaeological praxis, a collective pursuit of ‘less alienation and more emancipation’ (p. 4). This Marxism is less concerned with post-structuralist varieties of the Marxist tradition so popular in the humanities, but rather a Marxism which, while open to historical contingency, remains firmly committed to the prioritization of emancipatory class politics. This particular vein of Marxism has had a long tradition in the work of North American historical archaeology and nowhere do such political commitments demonstrate their value more effectively than in McGuire’s examination of the politics of our very own discipline. In a gripping chapter co-authored with Mark Walker, McGuire examines how the net effect of university corporatization and the casualization of labour under the (neo-liberal) New Economy has come to vastly reduce the possibilities for tenured employment, creating an archaeological underclass of ‘gypsy scholars’ and Cultural Resource Management fieldworkers whose lowly status is reified in the minds of our disciplinary elite.

McGuire’s vision is ultimately a global one. He is concerned that archaeologists squarely address the challenges of contemporary global ‘fast capitalism’ by responsively reframing out terms of critique. Specifically, he argues that our praxis must find a point of articulation between epistemological reflexivity and the most urgent changes affecting our craft globally, namely, the enduring biases of national heritage discourse, the emerging culture-industry complex surrounding popular archaeological sites, and the growing disciplinary divides within archaeology itself.

McGuire examines the particular challenges and contexts for this praxis through his own work in the Americas, examining the politics that he encountered at his Trincheras Tradition Project in northern Mexico as well as his work on the site of the Ludlow Coalfields Massacre in Colorado. Particularly instructive is McGuire’s insightful analysis of some of the failed moments in his collaborations, such as grappling with failed repatriation and the inability to rectify always our archaeological findings with the popularized narratives of our collaborators. McGuire’s narrative choices in these chapters illustrate the complex and imperfect course we all chart between disciplinary obligations, legislative restrictions, financial realities and our political solidarities.
McGuire states in his conclusion that he has ‘written this book primarily for those archaeologist who wish to fully enter into the dialectic that will build archaeologies of political action’ (p. 224). Arguably, *Archaeology as Political Action* is an even more critical resource for those archaeologists who are, as yet, unaware of the inevitability of this obligation.

*Historical Archaeology: Why the Past Matters* is something of a fellow traveller to *Archaeology as Political Action*. It stakes out a similar vision of how history, particularly historical archaeology, has a unique ability to provide a sort of emancipatory politics. Little’s work emphasizes more the power of popular history to sensitize and mobilize communities than explicitly grappling with the problematic of archaeological collaboration, as McGuire does.

Little’s political vision echoes anthropologist Laura Nader’s call for renewed civic action — in a chapter titled ‘Civic Renewal and Restorative Justice’, Little identifies this project as being about ‘community building, the creation of social capital, and active citizen engagement in community and civic life’ (p. 159). She begins and ends this book by invoking the Ghanian concept of *Sankofa*, which, briefly, means ‘reclaiming the past and understanding how the present came to be so that we can move forward’ (p. 15). Little contextualizes her overarching theme as having emerged from the material record itself, as the symbol for *Sankofa* was discovered on a coffin lid that was excavated as part of the African Burial Ground project in lower Manhattan.

Little persuasively illustrates how historical archaeology has served to shore up ‘our common humanity and our common struggles’ in the face of cynicism and despair (p. 16) — it is a timely theme of hope. She lays out a ‘windshield survey’ of sites that span across North America and beyond, in the process illustrating how global all historical archaeology necessarily is — discussing the archaeological evidence for choices made by enslaved Africans in North America, fugitive Africans in South America, British colonial convicts in Australia, Russian refugees in Canada, and so on.

There is a clear pedagogic value to the digest form (31 chapters within 191 pages) with which Little has chosen to organize thematically *Historical Archaeology* and to present the site studies. These short chapters (essays, really) enable Little to effectively tack back and forth between the archaeology and the theory while maintaining the reader’s focus on the meaningful questions they collectively raise for our disciplinary practice. This would provide an excellent reading for launching a discussion on the key themes and social value of research being done in historical archaeology today. Most strikingly, Little thoughtfully conveys the persistent ambiguity so much of the material and archival record presents, in order to underscore how, ultimately, it is our civic vision that gives meaning to our work. After all, she asks, ‘Is it possible to tell the whole story?’ (p. 85).

In framing our democratic society, as Melanie Walker does, as being a learning society’ (p. 165), Little’s attention to the discipline’s persistent revelation of historical indeterminacy as well as her sensitive treatment of the complexity of human motivations allows a vision wherein historical archaeology’s ‘pedagogy of discomfort’ and our confrontation of our most ‘difficult histories’ can truly be a device for moving forward while reclaiming an ever-widening span of our past.

Characteristically, Little ends her book with words that were written in the space of a museum, after she had viewed an exhibit at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. The exhibit had asked its viewers to respond to the question: ‘What will you do?’ Little writes (to us) in response,

> History is not just the story you read. It is the one you write. It is the one you remember or denounce or relate to others. It is not predetermined. Every action, every decision, however small, is relevant to its course. History is replete with horror, and replete with hope, you shape the balance. (p. 172)

LINDSAY WEISS


The archaeology of Manchester receives a thorough treatment in these two very different but equally satisfying publications. Through both, the significance of Manchester as one of the world’s first industrial cities comes to the fore. *Manchester: The Hidden History*, is the broader and more public-oriented of the
two, providing a chronological overview of the city of Manchester from its origins as a Roman fort, through the industrial revolution, and up to the present. Nevell starts with a consideration of three hundred years of Roman occupation, from the establishment of a fort in the AD 70s, and through the growth and decline of the associated town. This is followed by a consideration of the medieval through Stuart periods, when the town centre moved north, and shifted from the fort to a church. While the primary focus is archaeology, local residents and visitors to Manchester will appreciate Nevell’s efforts to weave a consideration of standing structures and relic landscapes into his narrative, which he does for all time periods.

To my view the book gains steam as Nevell moves into the 17th and 18th centuries. Here he adds a strong dose of economic and social history to the story, charting the emergence of Manchester as a regional centre for textile production, first in woollen goods and then linen and cotton. Much of the textile work is organized in a putting-out system with urban merchants utilizing skilled weavers and spinners in the surrounding countryside. The town in this period is dominated by a succession of major merchant families, and we start to see the focus of urban development shift to merchant houses and warehouses. By the mid-18th century the population has increased and canal building has expanded trade in the city. The success of the textile industry encouraged experimentation with mechanized means of speeded production, with an early Arkwright water-powered mill in the 1780s followed by a textile-mill building boom. By the end of the 18th century these developments launch the city on a period of rapid and intensive urbanization and industrialization that make it a pre-eminent industrial icon of the 19th century.

Nevell is particularly well positioned to discuss the archaeology of industry in Manchester, and does so in a comprehensive yet engaging manner. He betrays an industrial archaeologist’s love of structures with his descriptions of internal configurations, chronology, and technology of canal, rail, and commercial warehouses. Textiles were central to the industrialization of Manchester, and the archaeology of the city’s textile industry is well chronicled, as is the continued development of transportation infrastructure with new canals and railroads. Other industries, such as iron working and glass making, are not as well known archaeologically and only briefly described.

The deteriorating conditions for Manchester’s urban working class presented a strong contrast with the city’s image as a centre of industrial progress. Nevell explores the changing conditions of urban life through the archaeological record of its housing, and documents the slum dwellings that accompanied rapid industrialization. Late 18th-century workers’ housing in the city appears to be multi-story urban workshops, where skilled textile workers engaged in craft production in attic and basement workshops. As the demand for factory labour increased, the population of the city swelled, and living conditions deteriorated. Poorly built, small back-to-back and cellar dwellings become the norm, with inadequate sanitation or ventilation. These conditions improved only gradually during the second half of the 19th century through new building regulations and development of additional housing outside the city centre.

Nevell sees the potential for public archaeology programs to help build an appreciation of Manchester’s unique heritage, and his book should be an important part of that process. Interestingly, Miller and Wild’s edited volume on the A. & G. Murray textile company also hits this theme, as it arises from a major archaeological and historical study of textile mills slated for preservation in advance of adaptive reuse. While Miller and Wild’s study would also have some appeal for a general audience, it focuses much more specifically on the textile industry, especially the firm of A. & G. Murray, and will have its greatest appeal to industrial archaeologists and historians of technology. For researchers interested in the textile industry it will be of special importance.

Miller and Wild’s volume starts with a general consideration of the historical development of Manchester’s textile industry, echoing many of the same topics as Nevell, but with a more technological perspective. Much of this will be broadly familiar to students of the industrial revolution, but some of the specific details of Manchester’s development are quite interesting, including the widespread urban canal network, early application of steam power to mechanized textile production, and the ‘room and power’ system of subletting floors of factories to other firms. The Ancoats district that is the focus of their study has its own history, and developed a unique urban-industrial townscape, with incredibly dense factory complexes clustered around canal arms, brick chimneys belching forth smoke, and slum housing built by speculative investors filling the spaces around factories. This is a strikingly different development path than more rural factory villages where waterpower limitations typically kept factory density lower.

Following the history of the district the emphasis shifts to the archaeology, presenting the results of a series of excavations at early factories and workers’ housing in the Ancoats district, all undertaken as part of regional redevelopment. This section is strongest in its focus on the changes through time in the district’s textile factory power systems, examining the use of waterpower, the application of pumping engines to
power waterwheels, and the ultimate development of purpose-built, steam-powered textile spinning operations. The internal engineering to transmit power and support machinery is also considered. While their specific focus is on textile factories, this section has much to offer about steam-engine development and use. They conclude the Ancoats district archaeology with a short section on workers’ housing that provides good floorplans, but which is otherwise underdeveloped. In this case Nevell’s consideration of life in the industrial city is much more satisfying.

The study’s focus narrows at this point to the textile firm of A. & G. Murray, presenting in detail first the history of the company and then the archaeology of their factory complex. A. & G. Murray was one of Manchester’s largest and most successful textile firms, starting construction of their first purpose-built, steam-powered spinning factory in 1798, and continuing in business through about 1950. Like many other successful textile entrepreneurs, the Murray brothers entered the industry as machinery makers, and built their success around steam-powered spinning mules for high-quality yarns. The developmental history of the company is considered in a series of phases of building, remodelling, and modernizing their operations. While the primary emphasis is the technological organization of production, work conditions in the factory are also explored. The archaeological description of the Murray mill complex follows the same phase chronology, presenting multiple details about mill construction, power production and transmission, heating and light supply, and similar topics. This is the most technical section of the volume, a ‘building archaeology’ that is primarily for the specialist reader.

A short section follows on the repair project at the Murray factories, describing the cleaning, stabilizing, and rebuilding process to preserve the complex and prepare it for private development. This is a useful addition because, although preservationists often encourage adaptive reuse of industrial structures, the steps in saving such buildings are rarely explained in archaeological research reports. Finally, the volume concludes with a synthetic overview that places the A. & G. Murray company in the broader industrialization of Manchester, describes the important aspects of its surviving mill complex, and considers the social revolution wrought by the rapid mechanization of the textile industry.

Both these books are extremely well illustrated, including colour plates. Miller and Wild’s volume is particularly noteworthy in this regard, with excellent color graphics throughout the book, including wonderful interpretive maps of the site and features overlaid on historic maps, detailed cutaways of factory buildings showing the power trains, and isometric reconstructions of the Murray mill complex at different times. Both books deserve a wide readership; together they will do much to advance the appreciation of Manchester’s industrial heritage among both the public and the professional archaeology community.

Boston

DAVID B. LONDON


The publication of two new monographs on the subject of the ‘rebuilding’ of early modern England, by established scholars in the fields of (respectively) cultural and architectural history, provides an opportunity to assess current and developing approaches to these important ongoing debates.

Locating Privacy in Tudor London, begins with the re-identification of a 16th-century portrait previously known as ‘Lady Ingram and her two boys’ as Alice Barnham, wife of Francis Barnham, citizen and alderman of London and master of the Drapers’ Company. Orlin’s work is dedicated in part to the detailed ‘biography’ of this prosperous urban couple and their role in the changing society of Tudor London, as understood in particular through their involvement in the varied ‘re-buildings’ and ‘re-formations’ of 16th-century urban space. Alternate chapters explore the Barnhams’ social position, their role in the Drapers’ Company and the wider civic realm, and Alice Barnham’s possible occupation as one of the last independent silk-women of London, presenting a vibrant model of the reconstruction of individual lives from isolated references in humdrum administrative records. The Barnhams’ story in turn is located within a much wider assessment of the relationship between public and private spheres of activity in the early modern world, which are explored through a series of architectural and documentary analyses that range widely across different contexts.
Orlin successfully argues that privacy, far from being a new and widely-shared cultural imperative in the early modern period (leading to the rebuilding of more private, segregated and comfortable homes across the middling and upper levels of society), has a complex and contested history. This of course chimes well with recent perspectives within both archaeology and architectural history, and Orlin usefully focuses the debate on the relatively neglected urban context. There is much of value here for those interested in early modern urban buildings, not least considerable evidence for the complex interaction of domestic, commercial and civic spaces and activities in the early modern city. Orlin uses the Treswell surveys to explore the crowded conditions of the rapidly expanding city, and fruitfully mines legal depositions for extensive references to ‘peepholes’ and ‘chinks’ through which neighbours monitored each other’s behaviour. Far from being ‘legal fictions’, as some historians have maintained, Orlin forcefully argues that such legal tropes reflect real complexity and anxiety over boundaries in a context where household spaces were fragmented and porous, divided by flimsy partitions of wood or cloth. Communal resistance to ‘privacy’, whether for domestic behaviour or economic transactions, was common across urban society.

Despite the strengths of an engaging and insightful analysis, however, there are also places where Orlin’s argument would have benefited from a closer engagement with the physical evidence. The author locates her discussion within the wider framework of the ‘great rebuilding’ debate, but retains its focus, alternately, on rural vernacular houses or elite residences. For instance, in her assessment of the decline of the open hall she does not consider recent archaeological and architectural studies of urban houses by scholars such as Jane Grenville, Sarah Pearson and Anthony Quinney, which have demonstrated that urban buildings were far from being adaptations of rural open-hall houses, and thus must have been subject to a more complex process of rebuilding. Likewise, whilst she presents an interesting discussion of privacy in ‘new’ architectural spaces in aristocratic houses, notably galleries and closets, their relevance for lower-status urban housing remains questionable. It is at times frustrating that, because of the author’s focus on ‘public’ records, we never really get inside the houses of Tudor London, always remaining on the outside ‘looking in through chinks’. There remains considerable potential for more complete interdisciplinary studies using both documentary and archaeological sources to explore the changing nature of domestic material culture and associated social practices in early modern London households.

The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England is an important new monograph by a leading architectural historian whose work, particularly on the Dissolution and its impact on elite residential architecture, will already be familiar to many readers of this journal. The volume extends Howard’s insights across a much wider spectrum of building activity in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, giving detailed consideration to ‘public’ building types (civic buildings, parish churches, almshouses and schools) and thus providing a welcome broader perspective beyond elite and vernacular houses. It is particularly important in its consideration of the buildings of urban corporations and elites alongside the aristocracy; in fact, as Howard demonstrates, the two groups were as intimately connected in their building activities as in other spheres: both groups invested in buildings as symbols of status, honour and authority, and aristocratic patrons were always significant players in the development of the urban built environment. It should be noted that Howard’s aim is not to present a detailed architectural description of these different building types, but to discuss architectural developments — such as the spread of classicism — within a broader analysis of building as a social and cultural activity. He pays close attention to the varied motivations for building patronage and the complexities of financing large-scale building projects, using a series of case-studies of prominent Elizabethan and Jacobean builders (including Richard Rich, William Cecil and Robert Dudley). He also provides an important discussion of the changing ways in which buildings were represented, in both written descriptions (such as topographical writing and the country-house poem) and pictorial images of different kinds (including the shift from orthogonal to perspective views of buildings). The changing written and visual languages of architecture were in themselves a means by which new cultural ideals and meanings of built forms were expressed and negotiated.

A consideration of these two volumes together reveals the full richness and complexity of current approaches to the great rebuilding after more than a half-century of research and critique. It is by now clear that, far from being primarily an economic phenomenon, changes in both public and domestic architecture must be understood in social and cultural terms, the products of changing socio-economic relationships across varied spheres. Both works demonstrate the importance of understanding building activity in its broadest possible context, central to issues of social status and gender, and embedded in wider cultural discourses of community, hospitality, patronage and display. They also highlight the victims of the great
rebuilding; far from being a progressive development, it was bound up with increasing conflict and anxiety over privacy, property and status, and there were as many losers as there were winners.

Finally, both volumes demonstrate the value of a deeper interdisciplinary approach to documentary and physical evidence if the complexities of the subject are to be fully appreciated. They successfully use a range of written and visual sources to probe attitudes to space and buildings in early modern culture that were only partially articulated at best. In Howard’s synthetic overview a case-study treatment of the architectural evidence has its benefits; Orlin’s arguably ‘anecdotal’ approach to the physical remains is more problematic as the relationship between different building types requires more critical consideration. It is equally clear however that there remains an important role for a distinctively archaeological approach to the built environment (both standing and excavated) of early modern England; one which pays close attention both to the complex structural analysis of individual buildings and to intensive surveys which would provide much-needed evidence for the chronology and processes of architectural change in particular regions and communities, as a necessary foundation for further synthetic and interpretive approaches.

CHRISTOPHER KING


The General Carleton was a three-masted ship, built at Whitby, Yorkshire, in 1777 and wrecked in the Baltic in late September 1785. Her wreck, designated W-32, was located at Debki on the shores of the Baltic near Gdansk in 1995 and was excavated by the Polish Maritime Museum over several seasons. The cargo and artefacts were removed and the remains of the hull were surveyed, but shifting and deep sandbanks curtailed the programme of excavation and the hull was left in situ.

It was evident that the ship had lain head to waves to ride out a storm but that either the anchor had dragged or the cable had broken, allowing her to be driven backwards onto the shore where her back was broken, leading to total loss. Despite the position of the wreck relatively close to the shore, which had allowed material from it to be salvaged soon afterwards, more than 770 artefacts were recovered in the excavations.

The book is divided into five sections; an introduction, the discovery and excavation, historical background, analysis of artefacts and non-artefacts, and finally a catalogue of all finds. The text is in two parallel columns, English and Polish, and this and the fact that a number of the artefacts appear in both the specialist analysis and in the catalogue means that the book is rather more substantial than a single-language book would be. However, given its cheapness and the obvious and understandable desire to make its contents available beyond Poland, it works!

The text is by a sixteen scholars. Obviously some sections contain more material and more dramatic material than others, but the (mainly) Polish authors did not always have access to the most detailed sources for what was essentially an English archaeological site, transported to Polish waters. For instance, sections on clay tobacco pipes and on the ship’s bell (which identified the wreck) are rather lacking in their references, and more information could yet be extracted.

The real core of the book is provided by the report by Ossowski of the excavation of the General Carleton, the ship’s background in Whitby by Stephen Baines, and on the seamen’s clothing by Lawrence Babits and Matthew Brenckle. Undoubtedly the most important artefacts discovered were the latter. Costume historians will be aware that in general women’s clothing survives vastly better than men’s, and that of men’s clothing working clothes survive the least well. Here is a very large addition to the known corpus, and not only that but it comes from a context of known date and origin, and even the names of its owners can be guessed at. The group consists of hats, caps, breeches, waistcoats, shirts, jackets and stockings which probably derived from the sea-chests of the seven apprentices or ‘servants’ carried on the ship, gaining experience under the eyes of master and mate. They came from an area towards the stern, and not from the fo’c’sle, where the ordinary seamen lived. Much of the clothing was preserved by tar impregnation. The story of the conservation is also an interesting one. Using Lloyds Lists and the Muster Rolls Baines has established very clear information on the ship and its crew at various times in its short life. It is of particular interest to me that my four times great-grandfather Thomas Thompson seems to have sailed on the ship in 1778 as an ordinary seaman!
The book has high production values with colour illustrations, good paper and hardback binding, unusual in marine archaeology. The Polish Maritime Museum in Gdansk is to be congratulated on it, and I commend it to English readers.

Lancaster

ANDREW WHITE


This volume signals an important move by archaeology into modern, especially 20th-century, battlefields, and contains thirteen essays that cover conflict sites in eight different national and cultural locations (Africa, Denmark, England, France, Northern and Republican Ireland, Scotland). The major critique of this volume stems from the perspective of disciplinary differences — between history, archaeology, sociology and anthropology. Although historical data is commendably engaged with, the discourse rarely draws on the current discipline of history, either military (concerned with strategies, tactics, technologies, policies) or cultural history of war (concerned with the impact of conflict on people and culture, its representation, commemoration, legacies and ‘memory’). The ‘facts’ are presented as unmediated, uncontested data, as though archaeology does not need to confront the debates and unanswered questions (just as historians seem to ignore material culture as evidence).

There were ample opportunities to engage with sociological and anthropological research that would have equipped the various excavators with a greater capacity to ask more critical questions and delve deeper into the residues of cultures at war and people caught up in conflict. Is this a problem with interdisciplinarity — the partial and uninformed way in which we could draw on other disciplines to support our own research or case studies? Perhaps. There are also limits to what we can do. Yet the problem here is that the historical research cited is, at times, out of date or reflects much older empirical styles of research method that simply describe without rupture, without the haphazard contentions of history (and historical agents, especially those at war and engaged in battles and retreats) rather than contest, debate and analyse. Of course, it may be unwise to suggest that an investigation of the conduct, meaning and consequences of conflict should turn to social and cultural history, sociology or anthropology. Yet what could these disciplines offer to enrich the intriguing and potentially contentious findings that archaeologists uncover in their meticulous excavations?

To be sure, archaeologists have a lot to contend with, especially in funding their research. Pollard and Banks’s introduction explores some of the complexities encountered when the discipline and its practices are funded by mainstream television productions. Following a challenging excavation on the Western front, they suggest the need for an agenda of priorities to be drawn up. The volume proceeds, beginning with Banks’ work on battlefields in sub-Saharan Africa during the Italian conquest of Libya (1911–36; especially sites at Kallya and Bu Njea). The battle involved Italian and Muslim (Senussi) fighters; two different forces that present difficulties with the historical records relying on oral testimony and folklore, rather than archival documentation. Nevertheless, the archaeological record provides evidence for the range of weaponry deployed, the scale and scope of the action, and an intriguing absence of human remains. While the historical aspect of this essay is somewhat dry at times, it certainly proves the case for the role of different forms of evidence. Potentially, a cultural approach to asking questions about conflict, burial and memory could also have made this research more engaging.

James Bonsall’s work on small finds from the site of the Civil War battle of Cheriton (1644, Winchester) makes a solid case for the way archaeology complements the historical record. The useful question here is how family land becomes a battlefield and how small artefacts (musket and canon balls, pistol shots, and armour, horse shoes and buckles, boot irons) reveal the ‘stand off between two armies’ (p. 51) and can weigh in on historical debates. Aiden O’Sullivan’s paper on a pilot study of the battle of the Boyne site (1690, Co. Meath, Ireland) demonstrates the significance of archaeological sites for defining Ulster Protestantantism (UP) and Orange Order culture. The site is also of major political importance, and was part of the Good Friday agreement (2000), and has subsequently been redefined within a politicized notion of ‘shared heritage’ (p. 54). The observations made here are of great significance to scholars of conflict, peace studies and the legacies of war; hence some of the important scholarship from other disciplines should have made the arguments more resonant. The project involved a multiple approach with archives, museums and aerial probes, complementing a range of excavation techniques including marine equipment at the River Boyne crossings. The study yielded important new finds, suggesting that further
work must be undertaken to fully realize the significance of the site. Indeed, the site is not just meaningful for those who currently identify with it (UP), but for those live in the surrounding region. Archaeology can do much more to bring a greater understanding as to the ‘invention of tradition’ (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1992) and the interpretation of landscapes as ‘sites of memory and mourning’, as the leading cultural historian of war, Jay Winter, would argue.

Natasha Ferguson’s essay on battlefield heritage and reconciliation in the Irish Republic is an important follow-on from O’Sullivan’s report. Ferguson develops the central point about the historical and cultural meaning of battlefield landscapes. She points out that while borders are redrawn during conflict, identities are strengthened to the extent that the site becomes ‘potentially volatile’ especially during peace-time (p. 79). Ferguson explores the appropriation of these landscapes in forming cultural, religious and political identities, and draws out the difference between those who are extremely disconnected from the symbolism of the landscape — but occupy it — and those for which it is a key aspect of identity. She argues for a deeper understanding of ‘detached heritage’, rather than ‘orphan heritage’ (p. 87), that is those who are disconnected from national and cultural identities. Thus, she exhorts, scholars should explore the battlefield beyond its historical significance, and refocus attention on the cultural and religious identity enhanced through reconciliation and peace processes.

The sites range from Iron Age to the inter-war period, and one fascinating essay explores the current material culture of protest in the UK (Fisher). However, the themes and temporalities explored in the volume are not sufficiently connected and the rationale is lost. Cohesion suffers when the essays are ordered alphabetically; thematic organization would have enhanced the volume’s integrity and generated appeal with other disciplines interested in similar periods or themes regarding war, conflict and material culture.

Manchester

ANA CARDEN-COYNE

BIBLIOGRAPHY


These books recount the diachronic narrative of two present-day marginal communities. On the one hand, the Native Californian Indian population, subjected and displaced by the incoming Spanish colonizers, and secondly, these same Spanish colonizers — now self-termed _Californianos_ — and their subsequent marginalization at the hands of encroaching United States annexation. Indeed both communities were to suffer tremendously after the 1840s on the incorporation of California into the United States.

As such, then, the two books relate opposite sides of a similar coin: Voss concentrates on the Spanish Alta Californian colony of the Presidio of San Francisco (1776–1821), whilst Lightfoot focuses on Native Americans and how they have negotiated colonialism, shifting frontiers and tribal identity from the late 18th century through to modern times. By necessity Voss’s approach is more centred on the actual Presidio of San Francisco and its environs. Meanwhile Lightfoot’s account is more wide-ranging, considering a larger remit of influences on the erosion, negotiation and re-emergence of Native American identity in California. Nevertheless, these books complement each other in a remarkable manner.

It can be said that both draw upon Lightfoot’s tradition of historical anthropology in which a variety of sources are utilized (ethnohistorical, archaeological, oral, material, etc.) in the creation of a rich narrative which nevertheless declines from being over-deterministic or judgemental. Indeed Voss’s clairon call to gender stated in her introduction ends up being more a reflection of stateside divisions between the biological and social anthropologists (as exemplified by Berkeley’s Department of Anthropology) than a specific and all encompassing subjective agenda. Voss’s analysis is invariably gender informed but this is handled with a pleasingly deft touch throughout. This is exemplified through her detailed biopic on Juana Briones — an early 19th-century Californian first-generation daughter of a military family, later turned _curandera_ (local healer) and land owner. The complex historical scenario amply shows the gender divisions and attempts at circumventing them through a lifetime of graft and female panache.
Both books are incredibly well written, and the historical detail and verve is impressive. This is especially so with Voss, who has created an academic rarity — a page-turner. Indeed, Voss has hit on a formula that could well serve as a litmus test for future archaeological publications. Rather than relegate material analysis to obscure appendixes, she grabbs her central thesis of incipient Californiano ethnogenesis by the cuff and subsequently argues the case point by point against material evidence. This discussion is succinctly presented throughout the second part of her volume, analysing ethnogenesis against the backdrop of landscape, architecture, ceramics, foodways and clothing based primarily around the site of the Presidio of San Francisco.

Nor is she content merely to describe Spanish colonial Presidio society. Her narrative, especially in the first, more historical segment of her book expands the remits to account for the Spanish religious missions, the colonial and post-colonial expansion of Californiano society and its concomitant ranching economy whilst at the same time presenting the multivariate aspects of this community’s ethnogenesis and identity. Lightfoot, on the other hand, presents a more sweeping perspective on Native American experiences of empire and frontiers. The marked differences between the Spanish imperial adventure centred around the presidios, and especially (in as far as it concerned the Native Americans) religious missions, is perfectly juxtaposed against the Indian mercantile experience of the Russian Colony Ross.

Throughout, Lightfoot analyses the Native response not so much as a people oppressed than as a people with agency. The book reflects on the remarkable degree of endurance and adaptability that these varied coastal communities constantly demonstrated in the face of demographic and economic collapse. Initially, straddling two colonial powers (Spanish and Russian) Native Americans proved tough and resilient, creating in the words of Lightfoot ‘new Indian identities, social relations, and tribal forms’ (p.238). Although this re-identification and creation of new social forms was especially strong amongst the neophyte communities subjected to the evangelizing effects of the Franciscan missions, it was not all together absent from the mercantile encounters between Native Americans and the Russian-American trade networks.

Throughout, Lightfoot’s task is to set aside the ‘tribelet-in-the-box’ classifications that Alfred Kroeber and his progenies helped classically create in the early 20th century. Lightfoot demonstrates how modern identification of a native past in California is very much coloured by what these scholars perceived, and divided as ‘pristine’ and ‘diluted’ Indian cultures. He suggests that a more considerate approach be made of Native Americans responses to cultural dislocation at the hands of the Spanish, Russians and eventually the United States. Lightfoot claims that a significant reason behind the present disenfranchisement of many northern California Native communities is down to the rejection of mission Indian groups as viable tribal entities. His study serves to highlight the errors of this view.

Beyond the obvious merits of what these two volumes bring to Californian anthropology, their importance transcends the merely local and serves to emphasize the similarities and differences between varied colonial experiences, more specifically the Spanish one. Indeed, considering the cultural, social and economic centrality that San Francisco now holds, it is perhaps hard to imagine that for the Spanish and later Russian empires this region was an imperial backwater. It compares well with other former Spanish colonies, such as north-western Argentina and the area disputed between the local Diaguita tribes and Spanish Jesuits. This area, too, emerged into the limelight in the later Spanish Empire, in this case as a conduit for the mineral wealth from Alto Peru (present-day Bolivia) down river to the new burgeoning centre of Buenos Aires, on the River Plate.

Another crucial similarity is with the Vice-Royalty of Nueva Granada (present-day Panama, Colombia and Venezuela). Here Spanish territory and power was disputed with the encroaching French, Dutch and English interests along the Caribbean coast whilst the interior was coming under threat from an expansive Portuguese Brazil. Especially in the Colombian interior the system of castas was thrown aside (as in Alta California) in favour of a family-centred rancher oligarchy without overt reference to colour or creed that has survived until the present day. As with Alta California these examples present an obvious contrast to the highly regulated legal, social and economic worlds that were the colonies of Mexico and Peru. Or do they?

Imperial Spain exported a form of empire that was felt throughout the Americas. Indeed, by the time of the Anza expedition and the initial colonization of Alta California in 1776, the colonizers could rely on almost three hundred years of New World colonial experience. An imperial endeavour that set rules of governance and obligations, rules that for all their strictures was less regulated and definitely less racially differentiated than was claimed, radically different to the subsequent Anglo-American experience.

If indeed central Mexico and coastal Peru were held firmly within the imperial vice, the interior presented a veritable rippling-down effect of imperial authority. As emphasized by Lightfoot in Alta
California, and experienced by the separate Indian groups in other parts under the Spanish imperial yoke, tribes negotiated with varying degrees of success their identity and existence. Meanwhile the local-born Spanish authorities throughout the Americas emphasized their supposed purity in an increasingly mestizo and creole society. It is perhaps this cumulative racial merging between Spanish, Black and Indian that structured these Hispanic societies in their frantic endeavours towards separateness from the neighbouring other. This is a point well handled by Voss, where she charts the supposed limits of integration between the colonizers and colonized in Alta California. Nevertheless, what is striking is that the incoming Anglo-Americans saw little to differentiate between the supposedly degenerate Catholic Californianos and the ‘savage’ Native Americans. Both had to curtail their ambitions of being to the dictates of Anglo-American ‘manifest destiny’.

In conclusion these well researched volumes resonate with the complexities of emergent identities across the flotsam of empire, frontiers, decline and re-emergence. This task is most handsomely accomplished.

Gibraltar

KEVIN LANE


It is not often that scholarly books are described thus, but ‘sumptuous’ is an entirely appropriate term for the two books under review here. Rich in ideas and illustration, Shadow Sites and Glassworlds challenge orthodox narratives of 20th-century modernism. Although Hauser’s book is primarily concerned with an archaeological sensibility and Armstrong’s background is in poetry, both works are properly inter-disciplinary, operating at the matrix of material culture, language and imagination.

Focusing on a period when modernity was increasingly embedded in suburban development and new trunk roads, Hauser examines how a post-Great War Neo-Romantic sensibility, encapsulated in artefacts such as the Shell Guides to Britain, ran counter to the collective amnesia of brand new ‘bungalow’d Britain by remembering or re-imagining a localized past lurking just beneath the shoddy veneer of the new. In contrast to most European modernist movements, Neo-romanticism also privileged the rural over the metropolitan or urban. Comparing them to the great detectives of fiction, Hauser demonstrates how Neo-Romantics — such as the artist Paul Nash, photographer Bill Brandt and the editor of the journal Antiquity, field archaeologist O.G.S. Crawford — scanned the British landscape for clues and residues of the past: they ‘saw’, or archaeologically imagined, the British landscape as ‘the site of history’ and as an index of deep time (p. 55). The Neo-Romantic sensibility should not be dismissed as one of curmudgeonly antagonism. Rather, it represented discomfiture with a modernity that sought to cover all traces of the old with the new and, on demonstrating that the past could easily be discovered within the new (for instance, through aerial photography or antiquarian inquiry), held a redemptive quality after the devastating events of World War One. Hauser is at pains to clarify that an archaeological imagination is distinct from the historical. Where the history-centred approach (whether in art or text) reconstructs the past as if to tell a true story or present a faithful image of the past, the archaeological reads the present for signs of the past. In seeking to map an archaeology of seeing, the Neo-Romantics not only ‘discovered’ a past that co-existed with the present, they also made deliberate imaginative interventions to ensure that the past became evident, whether through a caption added to a photograph or by drawing implicit comparisons between an ancient landscape and the modern traveller’s mode of traversing of it.

Armstrong’s narrative draws on a theoretical modernist canon to locate the association between modernism and glass in the nineteenth rather than the early 20th century as Walter Benjamin would have had us believe. In so doing, Armstrong also challenges what might be considered the modernism of glass. Like the Crystal Palace, the most famous glass artefact of the Victorian period, the object/subject of glass in this book is an exhibition space for diverse ideas and interpretations divided into no less than seven key theses. These form the structure of the book: making and breaking glass, perspectives of glass (windows, mirrors and walls) and lens-made images. The scope of glass readings is vast but united by the suggestion that glass embedded the tensions and contradictions of everyday life. For instance, glass was used to construct monuments to modernity yet depended for most of the 19th century upon primitive methods of manufacture (so, panes of glass in the Crystal Palace contained bubbles of glassmakers’ breath); a
potentially expensive end product, glass was manufactured from seemingly valueless sand; glass enabled spectators to see through surfaces from an external vantage point whilst enabling them to claim something from within; voyeurs could gaze without being seen but, in turn, might be watched themselves; reflections multiplied the self but removed ownership of those images outside the self; glass distorted reality and rendered light spaces indeterminate; and, finally, while facilitating democratic pleasures (such as magic lantern shows), smashing glass also became a modish form of violent protest. Examining the language ‘of’ as distinct from a language ‘for’, Glassworlds demonstrates that glass in the 19th century was a medium for capturing, perpetuating and reflecting the tension between modernity and primitivism, whether in the career of a pioneering glass manufacturer who built a glass empire that collapsed when he failed to modernize or in the disturbing transitive experience of the self through glass.

Innovative and engaging, Shadow Sites and Glassworlds are important books in their own right. Yet their significance goes beyond subject-specific interest. Both texts make significant contributions to understanding the instability of modernity. Thus, Neo-Romantics invoked the archaeological landscape as a political tool for protesting about the rapidity and soullessness of the present and potential future; the apparent technological achievements of modernity proclaimed by plate glass windows were inextricable from their vulnerability to the wrath of those who felt disenfranchised in a rapidly shifting world. Although both texts acknowledge the tendency to perceive the Great War as a cultural watershed, they also critique that division: Hauser by illustrating how the pre-war past was incorporated into a post-war present, partly to offer comfort from the repercussions of war, and Armstrong by locating features of a post-war championing of glass culture’s modernism within Victorian glass culture. In Armstrong’s vision, glass culture is fractured and amorphous offering a myriad of individual, collective, politicized and classed encounters; for Hauser, the Neo-Romantic sensibility is that of an intellectual elite who sought to sell the living past to a wider self-consciously modern audience through motoring maps, popular journals or imagined literary guides to England’s past.

Both authors demonstrate inter-disciplinary research at its very best, drawing on a range of materials and engaging with different cognitive approaches to the past. For Hauser, this in many ways is the project of her book: how an archaeological imagination can encompass the visual, textual and the remembered past within an active ideology that situates memory, nation and history at the heart of the contemporary. The archaeological imagination in this context has broader resonance, suggesting fruitful pathways for researchers to engage with the imaginary rather than tackling it as a problem. Indeed, burgeoning scholarly interest in, for instance, the spiritual or slum imaginary indicates that imagination is increasingly a tool for, and the subject of, cross-disciplinary research. For both authors, to see, touch and encounter the material is to imagine it. Armstrong’s approach emphasizes that glass as object or material is a spiritual, ideological or poetic expression while both the intrinsic (structure, materials and function) and extrinsic (cultural universe in which the artefact exists) character of glass narratives provide a trope for negotiating the discontents and ambitions of modernity. Her analysis is littered with glass objects (some truly glorious) and Armstrong occasionally presents quotations on glass in a kind of collage (for instance on window poetics) that might almost mimic modernism’s stream-of-consciousness writing to reflect the poetics of glass in form and writers’ imaginations. Whilst the cultural imagination lies at the kernel of analysis in both these extraordinary books, it is the vivacity of the authors’ intellectual imagination in engaging historically situated imagination that makes these books so memorable.

Manchester

JULIE-MARIE STRANGE