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Historical Archaeologies of Cognition: explorations into faith, hope and charity. Edited by James Symonds, Anna Badcock, Jeff Oliver. 260mm. Pp x + 198, b&w ills, maps, plans. Equinox Publishing Ltd, Sheffield, 2013. isbn 9781845533434. £60 (hbk).

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REVIEW

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Historical Archaeologies of Cognition: explorations into faith, hope and charity. Edited by JAMES SYMONDS, ANNA BADCOCK and JEFF OLIVER. 260mm. Pp x + 198, b&w ills, maps, plans. Equinox Publishing Ltd, Sheffield, 2013. ISBN 9781845533434. £60 (hbk).

Historical Archaeologies of Cognition arose from the 2007 meeting of the Contemporary and Historical Archaeology in Theory group in Sheffield, taking as its subject a variety of perspectives on the central theme of that conference, ‘faith, hope and charity’. That conference was a very memorable one for a number of reasons. Henry Glassie’s keynote speech on the life of James Deetz and Harold Mytum’s alarming warning about the likelihood of mass deaths from avian influenza across the UK (the beginning of the conference’s second paper!) stand out among a great many strong papers and illuminating, enthusiastic discussions.

Although representing only a selection of the papers presented at the conference, *Historical Archaeologies of Cognition* covers an extremely wide range of geographical locations and time periods. The subject matter too is diverse, featuring Catholic identity in seventeenth-century Jamestown (Parno and Fortenberry) alongside resistance in Channel Island internment camps (Carr), twentieth-century internment at Long Kesh / Maze (McAtackney) next to Methodism in nineteenth-century Australia (Pragnell and Quirk). These papers are tied together by the book’s titular theme, expanded in an introductory essay by the editors that seeks to place the volume within the wider contexts of social archaeology and theoretical discussion on the limits of inference. Occasionally, the editors and their authors try to separate out faith, hope and charity in their analysis, although in my reading it was more striking how interchangeable these themes are within the volume. Faith, of course, has multiple meanings, ranging from defined religious belief through to a vague optimism, with hope and charity of similar character. It is a real strength of the volume that it does not dwell on separating the three; rather, it creates an engaging ebb and flow of discussion that moves between them all, leaving the focus firmly on the varied material being discussed.

Highlighting individual papers within such a range cannot be done without a bit of bias towards personal interests, but I found David Gadsby’s paper on twenty-first-century Baltimore the most strikingly different from the rest of the volume in a way that brought a different contemporary perspective to my reading of the whole book. Bringing one end of the breadth of both reference and subject matter as close to the present day as possible allows for all the papers to be more easily considered in terms of their contemporary relevance; easy perhaps with work on Long Kesh / Maze or the Channel Islands under occupation, but less accessible with papers on earlier material. I did not find this a problem with the volume under review, the modern material and issues enhancing my reading of the volume as a whole. Other readers may experience the inverse, with appreciation of the relevance of contemporary archaeology aided by the juxtaposition with more traditionally archaeological subjects and periods.

The volume stands alone well, but readers will find that it can take a useful place alongside other existing volumes on adjacent and overlapping topics. For instance, in relation to the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology monograph *The Archaeology of Post-Medieval Religion* (King and Sayer 2011), *Historical Archaeologies of Cognition* usefully expands the central theme of religious belief to encompass secular expressions of similar cognitive functions of the human mind and their material manifestations. It also fits very well with the other publications arising from the CHAT conference series (McAtackney *et al* 2007; Fortenberry and McAtackney 2012; May *et al* 2012), building on their now decade-long ongoing discussion of the different ways in which later post-medieval and contemporary archaeologies relate to each other and to scholarship on earlier periods, while retaining the distinct character of the 2007 conference. In general, care has been taken to update the references of the original conference presentations to the publication year so the bibliographies, usefully one for each paper, are up to date and, given the variety of material presented, provide a rich source for further investigation.

Overall, *Historical Archaeologies of Cognition* will, I hope, prove a popular volume. Its tone and

content may be faintly familiar due to its collection of prolific archaeological authors, but each paper makes new and valuable contributions both to contemporary and historical archaeology and to the wider field. In my opinion, the book is a definite ‘cover to cover’ read, a very pleasing rarity among today’s proliferation of edited volumes and published conference proceedings.

Fortenberry, B and McAtackney, L 2012. *Studies in Contemporary and Historical Archaeology. 8: Modern Materials: The Proceedings of CHAT, Oxford, 2009*, BAR S2363, Archaeopress, Oxford

King, C and Sayer, D (eds) 2011. *The Archaeology of Post-Medieval Religion*, Boydell Press, Woodbridge

McAtackney, L, Palus, M and Piccini, A 2007. *Studies in Contemporary and Historical Archaeology. 4: Contemporary and Historical Archaeology in Theory Papers from the 2003 and 2004 CHAT Conferences*, BAR S1677, Archaeopress, Oxford

May, S, Orange, H and Penrose, S 2012. *Studies in Contemporary and Historical Archaeology. 7: The Good, the Bad and the Unbuilt: handling the heritage of the recent past*, BAR S2362, Archaeopress, Oxford

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