

On the Periphery of the Periphery: Household Archaeology at Hacienda San Juan Bautista Tabi, Yucatán, Mexico. By Sam R. Sweitz. xviii, 266 pages, colour illustrated. New York: Springer, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4614-1495-7. £80.00 (hbk).

The Same Under a Different Sky?: a Country Estate in Nineteenth-Century New South Wales. BAR International Series 1625. By Graham Connah. ix, 269 pages, illustrated. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2007. ISBN 978-1-4073-0059-7. £45.00 (pbk).

These impressive volumes present two contrasting household archaeology case studies, not merely in geographical location — one focused on Mexico, the other Australia — but in theoretical approaches to the subject and opinions on what household archaeology, or indeed historical archaeology itself, are for. Book-length studies of single estates, combining excavation, historical research and in-depth, theoretically informed discussion are one of the best things household archaeology has to offer and these books do not disappoint. Although most readers will find a lot to debate in each volume, the pair point to a diverse and dynamic field where perhaps a relatively niche interest might previously have been identified.

Sam Sweitz's *On the Periphery of the Periphery* looks in great detail at the Hacienda San Juan Bautista Tabi in Mexico, taking a particular, and very strong, theoretical perspective on the analysis of the historical archaeology that will be somewhat familiar to readers, but that is worth expanding on in this review. The author sets out to create a structural Marxist interpretation of the site, seeking to understand the interaction of Yucatan Maya, imported colonial structures and world-wide capitalist systems within an Annales School-inspired use of long-, medium- and short-term cultural and natural influences on the site. Only 60 or so pages of the book deal directly with the archaeological investigation of the site, with Chapters 1 through 4 outlining the theoretical and methodological context of the work and 7 to 10 providing interpretation with varying chronological nuances as fits the approach used. The final chapter, entitled 'Total History: the meaning of Hacienda Tabi', brings all of this together in an attempt to describe how the Hacienda (in general) fit into a global capitalist economy. This both works and does not. The book absolutely does what it sets out to do, and the theoretical discussion of the site takes place to a degree of depth that will be of great interest and practical use to the theoretically inclined. However, despite the tendency of a Marxist approach like this to include a huge variety of influences on the site and its history, it does feel somewhat as if the work would have benefited from taking note of other multi-scalar interpretive approaches that are perhaps a little less rigid, by which I mean they allow a little more freedom of will and movement to their protagonists than may be found here.

There is a separate bibliography for each chapter — very useful — although reading over these brings attention to a major issue. The book is the publication of a 2005 PhD thesis and this has resulted in references to 21st-century publications being few and far between. Thus, despite being a 2012 publication, this work sits as an example of an approach more common in the 1990s. That said, the remainder of the bibliography, especially references directly concerning the local contexts of the work and site, is excellent and very probably exhaustive. It is also well written and author's deep interest in the subject comes across very clearly. In short, a fascinating book which will be of interest to those with little knowledge of the 16th- to 19th-century Yucatan and to those readers looking for examples of highly theoretical approaches to household archaeology.

The Same Under a Different Sky? takes a more traditional archaeological approach to an estate in New South Wales, Australia, both in the structure of the publication and the theoretical contexts within which the archaeology is discussed. As befits a BAR, the book takes the structure of a formal archaeological report, with a brief background chapter prefacing 160 pages of archaeological investigation followed by specialist reports. It is extremely well illustrated with photographs, archaeological drawings and maps highlighting almost all of the key points of the text. The specialist chapters (covering ceramics and glass, metal, miscellaneous small finds, faunal remains and the environment) are very accessible, presenting data with a combination of text, graphs and illustration that seems comprehensive. Those chapters focused on the excavation of the site itself are extremely thorough and detail work at a great range of individual sites on the estate.

Where *The Same Under a Different Sky?* falls down is in its relative lack of discussion. With the interesting historical background presented in the book's introduction, the 'Interpretation' at the end of each section and the description of the sites themselves, it is possible to glimpse a dynamic social structure in operation. We can see the differences between the Innes family in the main estate house and estate workers, and we can see differences between the domestic, small-scale industrial and other working spheres of life. I do not feel this is brought out well enough in discussion, with the Conclusion chapter being altogether

too short (although perfectly interesting!). The author acknowledges that the site has potential to investigate whether differences on socioeconomic status can be seen in the archaeological record, and I would have liked to see this assertion discussed in more detail. One passage of the Conclusion discusses how, on a site like this one, the archaeology can be used to 'test' historical sources or vice versa. This, I feel, is part of the issue. When approaching historical archaeology with the mindset of playing the history and the archaeology off against each other, it is easy to forget that perhaps the better essay will work specifically to skilfully bring them together to tell a story more than the sum of those two parts.

This book is very close and, practically speaking, contains enough data for readers to extrapolate further conclusions for themselves. I also ought to make special mention of the Art History chapter, which discusses a painting mentioned as being in the estate house in the diary of a visitor and the social connotations of this family owning that painting at that time. It is a fascinating chapter showing a kind of discussion of art in 'the colonial system' that I have not seen since *Citizens of the World* (Hancock 1997).

These are very interesting books and I greatly enjoyed reading both of them. They both have flaws, but together they represent wholly different approaches to household archaeology that are interesting in their own right and in comparison. Both are likely to tell UK readers about contexts they are not as aware of as others. Sadly, both volumes will be beyond the price range of most individuals and these books are unlikely to be read beyond university libraries.

Reference

Hancock, D. 1997, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735–1785*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

London

JAMES R. DIXON

The Archaeology of Colonialism: Intimate Encounters and Sexual Effects. Edited by Barbara L. Voss and Eleanor Conlin Casella. xviii, 350 pages, illustrated. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-1-1074-0126-6. £21.99 (pbk).

Historical and Archaeological Perspectives on Gender Transformations: from Private to Public. Edited by Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood. xiv, 430 pages, colour illustrated. New York: Springer, 2013. ISBN 978-1-4614-4862-4. £153.00 (hbk).

The appearance of two edited volumes on themes connected to archaeologies of what can be broadly defined as 'gender' and 'sexuality' is welcome in re-securing and redefining these issues as central concerns in understanding what it is 'to be' and 'become' in both colonial and historical archaeologies. However, whilst the volumes appear to have similar issues at their heart, exploring their titles alone reveals the varying divergences and nuances of how these issues are interpreted by the editors. The Voss and Casella volume (2012) concentrates on exploring the very private realm of 'intimate encounters and sexual effects', which pushes definitions of what we can attempt to locate and extrapolate archaeologically from colonial contexts. Their foregrounding of a variety of interpretations of sexuality and intimacy with larger processes of colonialism is central to their well-articulated and strongly focused aim of revealing how such relations 'powerfully shaped both the internal dynamics and the enduring legacies of the imperial project' (p. 4).

In contrast, Spencer-Wood's edited volume (2013) focuses much more stringently on the issues of how gender, and in particular gender transformations, are materially expressed through the tensions of what occurs in, and is defined as, 'private' and 'public'. Whilst there are notable engagements with the intersections of gender transformations with colonialism, the primary focus of this volume is to examine these changes through a gendered, and especially, feminist theoretical framework. With both these edited collections being essentially concerned with exploring historical contexts — although they both include a small number of chapters examining time periods that would not usually be defined as 'historical archaeology' in the sense of being concerned with the circumstances unique to the early modern world onwards — they also contain a range of contributions that complement but do not replicate each other.

These books contain a substantial number of papers, and there is evidence of strong (and welcome) editorial control of the process of selecting and defining the intricacies of their subject areas. Both the Spencer-Wood and Voss and Casella introductions note that their edited volumes resulted from a World Archaeological Congress (WAC) Dublin session (2008), with Casella and Voss also having refined their