

domestic remains very much into the second class of antiquities.

Although Judith Rodden's History of British Archaeology has been promised almost since pre-historic times, nothing like this yet exists for Britain. Will someone please write - soon - a good, short, analytical history of archaeology in the British Isles?

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IAN HODDER (ED.), Symbolic and Structural Archaeology. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982. 188 pp. £\$19.50 (Hard) ISBN 0-521-24406-4

Reviewed by Valerie Pinsky

Despite the diversity of issues they raise, the fifteen contributions to this edited volume constitute a unified, and unqualified, departure from traditional new archaeology. If a major premise of processual archaeology was that the past is knowable given appropriate theoretical and methodological tools, the overriding assumption of Hodder's proposed "contextual" archaeology is that it is knowable primarily in culturally meaningful, symbolic and ideological terms. An important implication of this view is, moreover, that particular methodological approaches have inhibited rather than enhanced our ability to produce such knowledge; the new archaeology's emphasis on ecological functionalism, and on deriving and testing law-like propositions within a hypothetico-deductive framework are seen to stem from an apotheosised and impoverished conception of science, and therefore to preclude precisely the sort of particular, historical and contextual understanding which any concern with these matters requires. Consequently, it is in a symbolic and "structural" (generative) approach that a viable alternative is sought.

The core of the book is devoted to an exploration of a wide range of notions of symbolism and 'structure', and their implications for an emerging archaeological theory of material culture. The four papers in Part 1 develop the theoretical basis of a structural and symbolic perspective, considering its departure from both functionalist and 'high' structuralist theories, as well as its epistemological premises. The introductory paper by Hodder is a sweeping review of the limitations of existing approaches in archaeology; both functionalism and structuralism proper are held to share many of the same crucial weaknesses, specifically, a failure to develop an adequate theory of social action which acknowledges the central role of individual actors in the process of social change, a consideration of historical context, and a static view of material culture patterning which fails to consider the rules and codes by which such patterning is generated (p. 8). For Hodder, adaptive "systems" are opposed to meaningful "structures"; the former are simply externally observable patterns of association, while the latter are the internal rules and codes which generate those patterns. Material culture patterning is thus held to be "a structured set of differences" (p. 7) having non-arbitrary, symbolic meaning which is relative to specific historical and cultural contexts, and which plays an "active" part in the ideological legitimization of social relations (p. 10). The remaining papers in this section consider in fuller detail various bodies of social philosophy relevant to these issues: Miller reviews an extensive body of psychological and linguistic literature pertaining to processes of human categorisation and suggests its value for archaeological studies of material culture, arguing that these processes "mediate and organise the social construction of reality, and may be

our best means for understanding and interpreting the remains of material production" (p. 23), and Tilley sketches a theory of social change based on a dialectical model which stresses the reflexive inter-relationships among individuals and social structures through the Marxist conception of praxis; in this context, material culture is seen both to embody and generate social action. The final paper by Wylie explores the epistemological implications of an overarching structuralist perspective, and rejects the sceptical assumption that the study of unobservables necessarily entails the rejection of scientific method. Arguing from a realist position, she focuses on the crucial role of causal explanation through analogical model construction. Much of the discussion in these papers is helpful in articulating points of dissatisfaction with established archaeology and goes far towards outlining exciting alternatives. However, a good deal of it is also repetitive, polemical, and in places, irrelevant; this is true of the extensive literature reviews which might have been more successfully incorporated into case studies, and especially of the unfortunate inclusion of the frontispiece cartoon mocking Binford and middle range theory (there are only two references to Binford in the entire volume!).

The following two sections are devoted to empirical analyses which demonstrate the potential of symbolic and structural principles for understanding specific bodies of material culture. Part 2, consisting of six case studies based on an investigation of ethno-historic data and on ethno-archaeological field work, results largely in a set of models which illustrate specific propositions concerning the ideological significance of material objects. These studies are relatively homogeneous; with the exception of one contribution by Parker Pearson which

analyses contemporary and Victorian mortuary practice in Britain, all of the examples are drawn from non-western, and mainly African, societies. The papers by Kus, Donley and Moore look at spatial organisation in material from Madagascar and Kenya, Braithwaite considers decoration and gender relations in the Sudan, and Miller builds on his earlier discussion of categorisation in an analysis of emulation of material objects and its role in creating and maintaining status among social classes in an Indian context. This paper also considers briefly the implications of the study for understanding the Indian Iron Age. Finally, the four papers in Part 3 take up specific archaeological analyses of European material, mainly elaborating on the problem of ideological legitimation of social relations and its implications for interpreting material culture patterning. Contributions by Shanks and Tilley, Shennan, and Hodder, build on a particular notion of ideology developed by Giddens which emphasises its function in establishing and preserving the "sectional interests of hegemonic groups" (p. 135; 155), and Conkey considers the ways in which material culture patterning may create and maintain social boundaries through an analysis of French and Spanish Upper Palaeolithic art style and form.

The specific strengths and weaknesses of individual case studies can be judged best by specialists in the areas concerned, although many of the papers clearly represent novel and expandable approaches to the material under consideration. Taken as a whole, however, the volume is most appealing for the theoretical perspectives it develops and the questions it raises, particularly those concerning archaeology's status among contemporary disciplines. Whether or not these contributions are properly the legacy of Childe, as Leone maintains in his final

commentary paper (p. 180), they are situated squarely within current developments in social and political theory, and have real implications for any understanding of archaeology as a human science.

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G. S. MAXWELL (ED.) The Impact of Aerial Reconnaissance on Archaeology. CBA Research Report 49. London, 1983. 150pp. £17.50 (Soft) ISBN 0 906780 24 1

Reviewed by Robert H. Bewley

This volume of collected papers (20 in all) is dedicated to Professor J.K.S St. Joseph, who has "advanced the technique of taking and interpreting air photographs towards its rightful status as a serious academic discipline." (Webster p.viii). The volume is the result of a conference held in Nottingham in December 1980; the delay in publication, "due to production and financial constraints" is a cause for regret, as current work in aerial photography is moving along rapidly. Unlike many conference volumes this one is a pleasure to read as the papers are short, concise, (usually) stimulating and well-written, for which the editor and the individual authors should take credit.

The purpose of the conference (and therefore these proceedings), was threefold; i) to discuss the achievements and failures of current aerial survey and their effect on archaeology ii) to examine techniques for plotting and interpretation, and iii) to discuss means of publication of archaeological evidence derived from air photography. The editor himself states that "many papers concentrated on the limitations and disadvantages of aerial survey" (p.ix) but I would argue that the papers do achieve (to varying degrees) the aims of the conference. However, the questions of

publication and plotting still remain to be solved and fully discussed.

There seem to be two main trends of thought regarding aerial photography and archaeology. One is to say that it is overlaid and not the great answer it is 'cracked up to be', and the other is to say that it is a complementary technique in the 'whole' of archaeology. This latter view can include specialist interpretations and studies such as Rog Palmer's Analysis of settlement features in the landscape of prehistoric Wessex (pp.41-53), where only aerial photographic evidence is presented. It is done so in such a way that it can be incorporated into a 'Total Archaeology' scheme as espoused by C.C. Taylor (pp. 54-59 Towards Total Archaeology? Aerial Photography in Northamptonshire.) The former sobering view of air photo-archaeology (to use the Brongers/Palmer term) reveals more about its exponents than it does about archaeology. Why should any particular technique have greater or dominant force? Archaeology as a process obviously needs to use all available techniques. Practitioners of air photo-archaeology happen to specialise in this technique (as well as being able to do others) and should be allowed to continue to do so. As Margaret Jones concludes and James Pickering states the aerial photographs ought to be 'interpreted' by those most experienced at it.

The ambivalent title of the volume means that it is for the reader to decide what the 'impact' of aerial reconnaissance on archaeology has been. The papers show that the impact has been great, but like most explosions caused by impact the effect is not uniform or universally welcomed. Many of the papers hint at a re-thinking of archaeological policy and strategy. Pickering's characteristically forthright paper argues that a new