

Part 2, the eight contributions to Part 3 (the precedents) tackle the conceptual basis of archaeological interpretation. There is considerable overlap in the problems raised and in the choice of alternative perspectives, and all are highly critical of the undirected importation of concepts and models from other disciplines. Papers by Keene, Jochim and Blanton review and evaluate various ecological models and the relevance of their assumptions of optimisation and maximisation for human actors and social systems. Particular attention is drawn to problems such as the choice of appropriate units of analysis, scale, and the formulation of alternative models and working hypotheses. Similarly, a focus on society as an information processing and exchanging mechanism unites the contributions by Moore and Root, while focus on improving the range and character of settlement studies is also common to those by Root and Paynter. The last two chapters by Kus and Saitta are more philosophical in their outlook. Kus examines the sociocultural and symbolic meaning of space, particularly in urban centres where such space is constructed on highly complex organisational levels. Much of the discussion draws on bodies of Marxist social theory and semiotics, and this discussion is anchored to her own research on the Merina Kingdom of Madagascar in the 18th century. Saitta's paper is highly critical of the empiricism of contemporary archaeology because of its preoccupation with methodological issues, and its parallel failure to accommodate values in both archaeology and society.

The book's separation of the products and precedents of the archaeological record somewhat indirectly fosters the dreaded separation of method and theory, despite critical discussions of the limitations of method, and consideration of methodological implica-

tions of theory. Fortunately this does not radically undermine the central message of the book, however it does prove to be an annoyance worth mentioning. Perhaps the main objection to be made is that, in the process of 'hammering out' the implications and assumptions of various theories and models, the reader is left, yet again, with a seemingly open-ended choice of alternatives which require the same critical scrutiny as the original source models and concepts, and ultimately with another set of cautionary tales. Since conceptual and methodological criticism are held to be more than ends in themselves, it is hard to see precisely how method and theory are synthesised.

The primary focus on theories of social reproduction and change does stand out as the major asset of this volume. Coupled with the effort to tease out the implications of existing concepts and their methodological counterparts, it goes a long way towards reinstating one of archaeology's central, though recently neglected, objectives. The book will certainly stimulate discussion and foster an internal search for archaeologically and socially meaningful approaches to the past, and in this will go a long way towards combatting the tyranny of method in contemporary archaeology.

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MERRILEE SALMON, Philosophy and Archaeology. Academic Press, New York, 1982. 203 pp. \$21.00 (Hard). ISBN 0-12-615650-6

Reviewed by Polly J. Fahnestock.

Merilee Salmon's Philosophy and Archaeology has proved to be an unexpectedly difficult book to review, partly because the project it embodies is itself difficult and ambitious, and partly because different aspects and different por-

tions of the text have produced conflicting reactions. The first point poses a threat to brevity in the interests of fairness to both the author (who should not be misrepresented) and the reader (who should not be misled). The second suggests that judgement may have been shaped more by the philosophical interests of the reviewer than by balanced criticism, given that the basic conflict is between a sense of disappointment, frustration and even boredom through much of the first five chapters of the book, followed by greater interest and involvement in its later sections. Keeping both points in mind, it seems best to make a few fairly general remarks, rather than to engage in more specific philosophical or archaeological criticism. Generally speaking, then, the book appears to be a laudable attempt to deal with an enormous, complicated and fascinating subject. Although it unquestionably falls short of its target, its failings may prove instructive for those who hopefully will come after.

Salmon opens her presentation with a preface which clearly sets out the original impetus behind the work -- the philosophical interests and attendant debates in the "New Archaeology" of the 1970's -- as well as her goals in undertaking it. On the premise that many of the important issues then raised remain unresolved, and given the inadequacies of the archaeological literature (tactfully noted) in providing archaeologists with a constructive acquaintance with these issues, she proposes to offer extended discussion of the relevant topics with special reference to archaeology, as an antidote to confusion and misunderstanding. In addition, she hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of archaeology in relation both to other disciplines and to general philosophical concerns arising in the process of trying to understand

the world. The overall aim of the book is to help "build a bridge between archaeology and philosophy, and strengthen the bonds between philosophy and the other behavioural sciences" (p. x).

Following a brief introduction giving a superficial overview of the background and general shape of the New Archaeology's collision with the philosophy of science, and providing a sketch of the chapters to follow, Salmon proceeds to discuss six topics in which she feels that essential archaeological and philosophical concerns intersect. Each of these topics is assigned a separate chapter -- "Laws in Archaeology", "Confirmation in Archaeology", "Analogy and Functional Ascription", "Functional Explanation", "Structure and Scientific Explanation" and "Theory Building in Archaeology" -- and each chapter is further subdivided into a series of specific sub-topics. This format suggests a considerable breadth of coverage broken into concise areas of argument, which should be an aid both to reference and to progress through the philosophical and archaeological jungles. As the text proceeds, the intention clearly seems to be to establish the philosophical issues involved in the different subjects raised, to discuss the associated archaeological literature (as opposed to simply rehashing the various familiar disputes), and to consider the points of contact between the two and the implications of each for the other. Thus, in intention the work seems difficult to fault.

Unfortunately, the result fails to fulfill this initial promise in terms of either coverage or clarity, and one is left with a sense that neither philosophy nor archaeology has been adequately treated. This seems to be due, in part, to the structure of the approach, or rather to its surprising lack of structure. The discussion

ranges from descriptions of philosophical positions and models, to essays in philosophical analysis, to criticisms of specific philosophical accounts, to general statements about archaeology. It seems as though the volume moves from point to point as each occurs to the author, rather than being subjected to the guidance and discipline necessary for the construction of clear and effective argument. The writing and reasoning themselves are neither muddy nor muddled (which is fairly unusual in archaeological philosophizing), but the results are disappointing. Occasional good points surface, but then effectively evaporate as the stream passes by.

The archaeological representation also is unsatisfying, although it is good to see substantive archaeological hypotheses treated to examination and criticism simply as reasonable explanatory efforts, without undue reverence or scepticism. One feels that there is too little consideration of archaeology in general as a complex area of inquiry which produces both intellectual rewards and frustrations, while topics such as the debate over whether archaeology is properly a science, which might be expected to provoke philosophical comment, are essentially glossed over (but see p. 180). It also seems evident from both specific examples and general observations that Salmon's "archaeology" is primarily that with which she has been personally acquainted at the University of Arizona and during a sabbatical year in Australia. While this is understandable, clear indications of more extensive exposure, examination and consideration would have added to both the weight and the value of the book.

The greatest disappointment, however, particularly in view of the book's stated aims (and the fact that the author is a philoso-

pher), is caused by this volume's philosophical component. In the first place, while Salmon has intentionally focused her discussion on a number of open, even volatile philosophical questions, her presentation of the different issues involved gives little indication of the depth and range of philosophical argument which has produced the positions she criticizes and adopts, as well as others which remain unmentioned. This is not to say that Philosophy and Archaeology should provide a textbook account of the philosophy of science, since that is explicitly not its aim, and such accounts are available elsewhere. At the same time, however, given that one of the aims of the exercise is to help reduce archaeological confusion and misunderstanding with respect to philosophy and its products, it surely would be beneficial to provide the reader with bibliographical pointers to the mass of relevant philosophical literature. The long expanses of discussion of philosophical topics from which such bibliographical background is lacking filled this reader, at least, with a sense of disquiet, particularly since the coverage must be, of necessity, both compressed and selective. It is notable that the philosophical problem of analogy, for example, plays no role in the chapter concerned with analogy and functional ascription. This suggests that the philosophical side of the book may have serious lacunae.

The second disappointing aspect of Salmon's philosophical presentation is perhaps as much a point of frustration as a criticism, in that many of the issues of current interest to philosophers of science, and to philosophically inclined archaeologists, are implicit in the discussion but remain firmly bottled up. That this should be the case may be understandable, given Salmon's clear and direct association with the Anglo-American tradi-

tion of analytical philosophy, but it is difficult to accept her failure to note the philosophical upheavals which have seriously undermined that tradition in recent decades and led to the new areas of concentration which occasionally peep through and produce an underlying tension in her account. Thus, for example, the discussion of laws in archaeology introduces hints of irreducible cultural specificity and relativism as well as approaches to understanding not based on covering laws (p. 21-22), while the whole issue of prior probabilities in confirmation and explanation clearly raises the difficult problem of the degree to which perception is shaped by expectation and prior knowledge. Salmon somewhat briskly sweeps aside the former problem in enforcing the (somewhat liberalized) rule of law, while the latter is sanitized almost beyond recognition through its analytical presentation. That the process of theory building is then represented as an untidy business best understood through historical study seems ironic, since this account helped to redirect the attention of philosophers towards precisely the kinds of knotty problems Salmon has either held at bay or left untouched.

In spite of these negative aspects, however, the volume has a definite positive side which must be acknowledged. Salmon clearly is concerned with establishing a constructive dialogue between archaeologists and philosophers. Her efforts should be beneficial at least to the former, if only by helping to demystify particular aspects of philosophy, not to mention the relationship as a whole. Towards this end, she firmly differentiates between substantive and philosophical concerns, and emphasizes that philosophical analysis does not provide a recipe for solving substantive archaeological problems. On the other

hand, she also emphasizes that philosophy must come to grips with the kinds of reasoning archaeologists actually do, the kinds of questions which engage them, and the kinds of explanations they produce. It would be salutary for archaeologists to be told that what they do is legitimate and sound in principle, although archaeological use of philosophy has been hampered by misrepresentation and by attachment to inappropriate philosophical accounts. Whether archaeologists will believe it is another matter.

A number of more specific points also deserve mention, such as the shift of emphasis from the logical form to questions of relevance and causality in matters of explanation and confirmation. This should help to invigorate an area of discussion which has seemed largely arid and archaeologically fruitless. Another positive point is the treatment of formalism and mathematicization, which clearly establishes that the former has no theoretical value in and of itself, while the latter does not, of itself, produce explanation. Indeed, the chapters devoted to theory building and (to a lesser extent) explanation seem to be the high points of the book, and come closest to Salmon's combined goals of clarity and edification. The discussion of theories also deserves positive mention of Salmon's treatment of Binford, not so much in terms of the specific points made but because she provides a reasonable, reasoned, dispassionate critique. One unfortunate aspect of archaeology's recent theoretical self-consciousness has been a tendency to enthroned archaeological gurus, whose confrontations are particularly unedifying, since they consist of meetings of rhetoric rather than of minds, and whose work may be much criticized in private but seldom in reasoned, published prose untainted by acrimony. It is through such critique as that offered by Salmon

that theoretical work will be advanced.

The last point concerns Salmon's definite distinction between philosophical and substantive aspects of inquiry, and her singularly weak effort at establishing the ultimate relevance of philosophy to archaeology (p. 181-182). It is indeed essential to distinguish between the rational reconstructions of analytical philosophy and the actual processes of substantive inquiry which they represent, and this is unquestionably a trap into which archaeologists have fallen. After reading Salmon's chapter on theory building, however, it is difficult to accept her view that philosophical solutions do not affect the "dirt" archaeologist (p. ix), although philosophy may perhaps help archaeologists in developing analytical skills and critical abilities (p.181). If nothing else, surely her own discussion has offered a clear philosophical mandate for the untidy, sometimes intuitive, sometimes methodical and systematic, backward-and-forward physical and mental process which beings about the development of archaeological knowledge.

In conclusion, two final points seem to demand attention. The first is a word in protest at the liberal peppering of typographical and grammatical errors which have been allowed to remain in the text, and at the use of a single type of brackets for all parenthetical purposes. The errors are, in general, only irritating, but the failure to differentiate between a simple parenthetical statement and an interpolation by the author in a quoted passage, for example, is at best inconvenient and may be misleading.

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H.R. HARVEY and H.J. PREM, Explorations in Ethnohistory: Indians of Central Mexico in the Sixteenth Century. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1984. 312pp. \$35.00 (Hard). ISBN 0-8263-0712-4.

Reviewed by Elizabeth Baquedano

The aim of this well edited collection of papers is to summarise current trends in Mesoamerican ethnohistorical research.

The introduction to the book by Harvey and Prem is an excellent review of what has been labelled 'Ethnohistory', as well as a general summary of research carried out for the past four and a half centuries.

Most papers concentrate on analysis and interpretation of documentary evidence, including mainly the slim corpus of early written records and the understanding of the etymology of native texts. Of the eleven essays, three are concerned with land tenure. These are 'Aspects of Land Tenure in Ancient Mexico', Land Tenure and Land Inheritance in Late Sixteenth Century Culhuacan' and 'Household Organization on the Texcocan Heartland', respectively by Harvey, Cline and Offner. The other papers are as follows: 'Some problems of Sources', by Woodrow Borah, 'Royal Marriages in Ancient Mexico', by Pedro Carrasco, 'Mexican Pictorial Cadastral Registers' by Barbara J. Williams, 'Rotational Labor and Urban Development in Prehispanic Tetzecoco' by Frederic Hicks, 'Agricultural Implements in Mesoamerica' by Teresa Rojas Rabiela, 'Mexican Toponyms as a Source in Regional Ethnohistory' by Ursula Dyckerhoff, 'The Impact of Spanish Conquest on the Development of the Cultural Landscape in Tlaxcala, Mexico' by Wolfgang Trautmann, and 'Early Spanish Colonization and Indians in the Valley of Atlixco, Puebla' by Hans J. Prem.