Schiffer (1988) would have us believe. The "middle-range" approach is in fact an overarching scheme that aims to explain and make explicit all aspects of the formation and interpretation of the archaeological record. While the term "middle" may lend it a spurious modesty, it is nothing less than an archaeological version of the unified field theory that has so far eluded students of physics: it seeks to explain and subsume all other theories within itself and thereby make them redundant.

Binford's own tactics in defence of "middle-range" approaches against all comers will not endear him to some. Like his all-embracing "middle-range" theory, he does not come across as a particularly modest man and some of his more bitter comments are rather cheap (see, for example, the footnote concerning Kuhn, Hodder and the concept of culture on the final page of text [p.490]). This is nevertheless an important book and a significant addition to the Binford canon. It should be read, critically but in no sense negatively; but most of all it deserves to be read by all serious students of archaeology.

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JOHN A. AGNEW AND JAMES S. DUNCAN (EDS.) *The Power of Place* Unwin Hyman. London. 1989. 231pp, illus. No price quoted. No ISBN.

Reviewed by Simon Kaner
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In the tradition of inquiry that asks the question what makes a house a home, this book attempts to define what makes a space a place. To this end, a selection of erudite geographers of various hue -- cultural, political and urban --, along with social historians and an anthropologist, set out in search of the intellectual importance of geographical place in the practice of social science and history. The quest results in what is touted as a celebration of the marriage between the sociological and geographical imaginations. The fruits of the search, the offspring of this union, are the twelve chapters of the Power of Place.

What may make this volume of interest to archaeologists are a number of themes their own discipline is coming to have in common with historical geographers and sociologists. The exegesis of the contextual meanings of specific locations, and the examination of shifting symbolic associations in relation to the spatial representation of power, may provide a methodology for archaeologists trying to advance their ideas on the meaning of site structure and location as well as interpretations of occupational histories.

The two major themes around which the chapters are woven, according to the editors, are the intellectual history of the concept of place and the interpolation of power and place. The approaches adopted for the elucidation of these themes are grouped into three main categories. The first is to examine the ways in which the social sciences in particular socio-political contexts have treated not only concepts of place, but also actual empirical cases. The second is to investigate the disciplinary history of place while focusing on one or two empirical case studies, while the third present detailed case studies of the relationships between power and place.

These case studies range from the transformation of spatial snobbery in pre- and post independence New England, to the repeatedly reformulated symbolic representations of Beijing, formerly as the celestial capital of Imperial China and latterly as the administrative centre of the People's Republic. Continuity and change in meanings associated with place are documented from Kandy in Sri Lanka, as Buddhist city and colonial base, and the towns and villas of Renaissance Italy. The associations and legitimating role of place are explored as experienced by Florentine townsmen and Andean villagers. The geographical range of examples brought together in this volume exemplify a fine balance between diversity and an underlying unified theme.

The relationship of the sacred to place is explored through the definition of sacred place, and its manipulation -- illustrated by the location of icons in the Italian streets to stop the inhabitants from defiling them. Different conceptions of the same sacred symbol, namely Christ, dependent upon two different spatial contexts within America, separated by social conditions and belief as well as distance, pursues the same relationship.

The role of language in the formulation of concepts of place also comes under scrutiny. Robinson carefully outlines the linguistics of place in Latin America in his chapter, emphasising the importance of an appreciation of indigenous categorisations. This is in presumably unintended opposition to the remark quoted in Duncan's chapter on Kandy, attributed to a British colonial administrator in Sri Lanka, that one only needs sufficient command of the local language to be able to swear at the natives.

The chapters are based on lectures delivered at Syracuse University, and the book is dedicated to the memory of David Sopher, whose interests in cultural variability and complexity in the real world as opposed to universal laws and simplistic conceptions of human social behaviour are echoed in much contemporary archaeological theory. As such, while they will not provide any solutions to the specific problems of identifying meaning in the material remains of places, the loci of archaeology, the contributions in this book do make a very readable excursus into the regions of the geographical imagination charted since archaeology's earlier dalliances with idealised spatial models, which were rather more divorced from meaning.

CLIVE BONSALL (ED.) *The Mesolithic in Europe* UISPP Mesolithic Commission. John Donald Publishers, Edinburgh. 645pp., 35.00 (Hardback only) ISBN 0-85976-205X.

Reviewed by Anthony Sinclair
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At last the book of the Third International Symposium on the Mesolithic has appeared. It has been a long wait, four years in fact, but Clive Bonsall's *The Mesolithic In Europe* is a big book. It is large in volume, contents and scope, as you would perhaps expect from a book with no less than 62 separate papers within its covers. Papers deal with such diverse topics as the effectiveness of lithic technology in mesolithic industries in Denmark, and the importance of inegalitarian features among modern hunter-gatherers for an understanding of the take up of agriculture in the area of the Danube. They range in space from Scotland to eastern Europe, passing through Spain on the way. As the saying goes, there should be something for everyone within this volume, that is so long as you are interested in the Mesolithic. There is no doubt that *The Mesolithic in Europe* instantly appears to be a useful book, as indeed it is. Familiarity, however, dulls one's expectations for more. Put simply, this book is not exactly stimulating. There is nothing really new here, nothing to keep you awake at night; a problem that results both from its structure and the time which it has taken to come to fruition. There is much that is interesting, though, but getting it out will be hard work. *The Mesolithic in Europe* is just a large collection of bound papers; that is both its strength and ultimate weakness.

Turning to the book itself, the papers appear to have been organised along broad geographical lines with the few theoretical and methodological papers tucked in at the beginning. I say this because there is neither an introduction nor contents sub-headings to give any direction. The volume starts in Scandinavia, then passes to Britain, the Low Countries, Eastern Europe and, finally, the Mediterranean, principally the Western half.

Within the 'theoretical section' the paper by Price, 'The reconstruction of Mesolithic diets', is a useful review of some interesting work, as are articles by Deith on the interpretation of seasonality on the basis of shells. (where she argues that there is a need to put the interpretation of shellfish into a wider economic context) Also the article by Grigson, on the identification of different patterns of bird foraging in the Mesolithic of Denmark. Fischer's paper elaborates material that he has published elsewhere and neatly illustrates relationships that exist between stone point morphology and hunting performance. Grń, on the basis of ethnographic evidence suggests that the spatial arrangements within small dwellings are influenced by the relationships between people. He attempts to draw out some basic principles (cross-cultural generalisations ?) that will be of widespread use in interpretation. "The place opposite the door has the greatest prestige value and as such is the most desirable".