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The Archaeology of American Cities by Nan A. Rothschild and Dana diverge Wall (review)

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The Archaeology of American Cities. By Nan A. Rothschild and Diana diZerega Wall (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2014) 265 pp. \$69.95

Although scholars from many disciplines use the terms *archaeology* and *artifact* metaphorically in their considerations of the dynamic and multi-layered processes at play in urban spaces, Rothschild and diZerega Wall use the terms literally in *The Archaeology of American Cities* to introduce readers to “possibly one of the most important inventions in history” (xi), the city. Drawing our attention to the deep understanding that an archaeology of the city provides, they synthesize past and current urban archaeological research on modern American cities to show how a privy, a well, a household, a landscape can reveal everyday experiences and social relations at local and global levels. This volume considers American urban spaces with both macro (the city) and micro (city residents and their consumption patterns in terms of race, class, ethnicity, and gender) scales of analysis, while looking at the complex interrelation of materiality and the documentary record that historical archaeology offers. The discussion within this volume allows these projects “to create a richly nuanced picture of urban lives and places” (1).

In seven chapters, Rothschild and Wall present research themes found in projects that span from early colonial to pre-industrial and industrialized cities. They provide an overview of how urban archaeological research developed in the United States during the 1970s, as environmental-compliance legislation mandated excavation at urban sites that may have previously been dismissed as too disturbed to be of any value to research. In Chapter 3, they turn to issues of landscape, planning, and infrastructure; in Chapter 4, trade, manufacturing, and services; in Chapter 5, race and ethnicity; in Chapter 6, class and gender; and in Chapter 7, cemeteries and commemoration via the analytical lens of the city.

Given the volume’s orientation toward the richness of urban life and spaces, the potential topics are truly encyclopedic. Rothschild and Wall explain their thematic arrangement, acknowledging the multiple emphases that urban sites can sustain. For example, the charred remains of peppercorns in cloth bags and coffee beans in barrels from an 1835 era New York grocery store, discussed in a chapter about burgeoning service industries (80), connect with issues of global capitalism, class, consumption, and even fire-code changes for municipal buildings. The comprehensive enumeration of these complex projects—from published academic articles and books, as well as from the “gray literature” of Cultural Resource Management (CRM)—is one of the main contributions of the volume.

Rothschild and Wall’s own excavations in New York City laid the groundwork for many of the urban archaeological projects featured within the book. In their conclusion, they write about important comparative work that can be accomplished in the future, as digital repositories

for archaeological and documentary data make more of it feasible. Most importantly, the cases that they cover call attention to how cities that “value their history” (27)—supporting historic-site tourism, employing city archaeologists, and protecting their nonrenewable resources—challenge other city governments and urban dwellers to make the same commitments.

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A History of Family Planning in Twentieth-Century Peru. By Raúl Necochea López (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2014) 248 pp. \$32.95 paper \$29.99 e-book

This excellent study presents the complexity of the subject of family planning, intimately linked to ideas of progress, modernization, international relations, and the changing roles of men and women of different backgrounds in Peruvian society. Necochea consults an impressive range of archival sources and oral histories to show that families were, indeed, not the key decision makers in family-planning strategies. Instead, physicians, politicians, social reformers, and priests became the movers and shakers who promoted family stability. Family planning, including the state-led or reform-driven initiatives to strengthen families, has a history that is sometimes, but not always, linked to birth control and to concerns about family size. Necochea’s analysis of officials’ changing interpretations of Peru’s demographic needs reveals that Peru did not easily fit the dominant models proposed by population planners in the United States, who often equated large families with poverty and lack of economic development and who promoted population control, especially after World War II. Peruvians, meanwhile, linked family size to family planning and to the future of their nation in complex and changing ways.

In the early twentieth century, Peruvian officials sought to increase population size, initially following the path of countries in the Latin American Southern Cone, attracting European immigrants to improve the quantity and alleged quality of national populations. When, disappointingly, few immigrants chose to settle in Peru, local reformers paid more attention to children, mothers, and families. Health officials also tested scientific concepts that originated in Europe, such as puericulture (the care of unborn children and infants) and eugenics, lured by their alleged potential to prevent national decline and degeneration. New scientific models not only focused on improving the well-being of infants and mothers but also involved female reformers who either helped to fulfill the modernizing missions of political leaders or advocated family-planning strategies of their own design.

Necochea dedicates a noteworthy chapter to the personal history and political influence of Irene Silva de Santolalla, a female reformer