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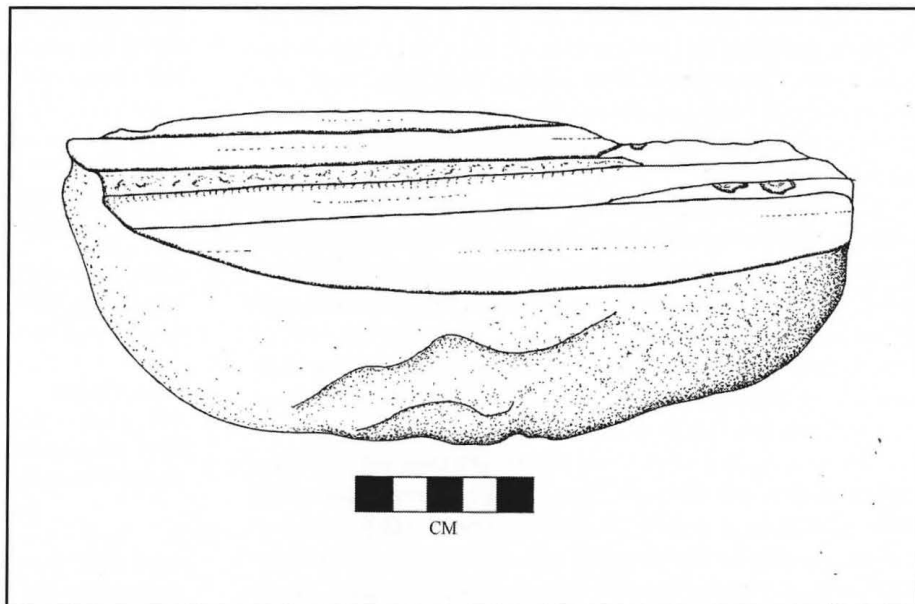


Figure 4. Example of a sawn cobble core from which celts were produced from Lytton held at SFU.

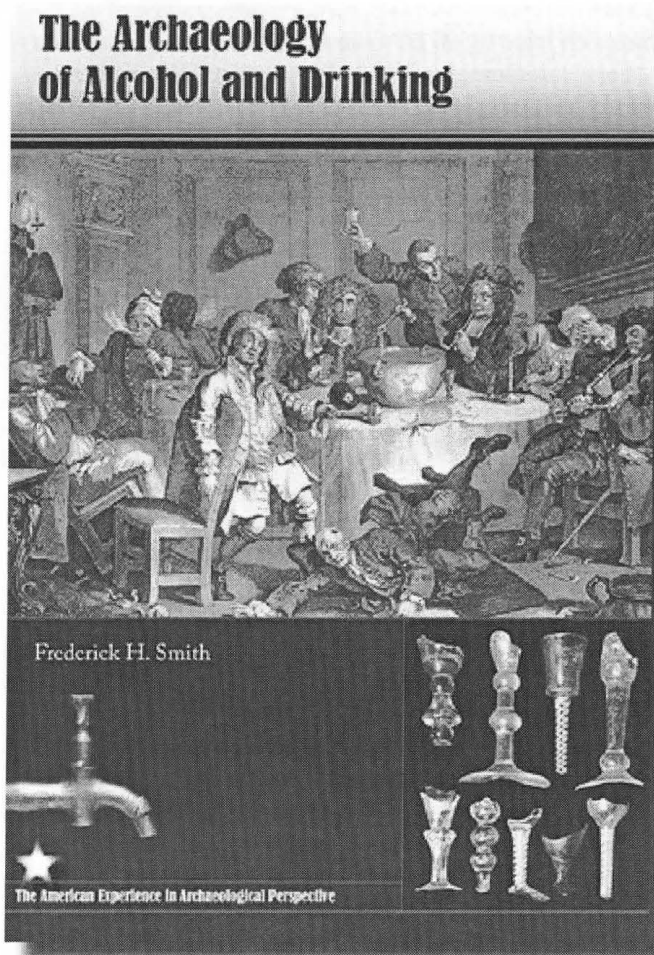
BOOK REVIEW:

The Archaeology of Alcohol and Drinking

Frederick H. Smith. University Press of Florida, Gainesville. xvii+195 pp., 30 illus., ISBN: 978-0-8130-3290-0 (paper). \$24.95. 2008.

With the publication of Frederick Smith's *The Archaeology of Alcohol and Drinking*, archaeologists finally have the opportunity (and pretext) for uniting their two great passions: digging and drinking. For those who lack the patience to read book reviews through to the end, I offer my verdict up front. A few quibbles aside, this book is a thoroughly researched, well-written and wide-ranging primer on its titular subject, and I urge anyone pursuing alcohol studies in archaeology (or faced with an assemblage of broken bottles to interpret) to save themselves considerable time by placing it at the top of their reading list.

Fred Smith is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, specializing in historical archaeology, ethnohistory, and the role of alcohol in Caribbean societies. His previous work includes the book *Caribbean Rum: A Social and Economic History*, and *TAAD* is an extension of that earlier research. It is part of a recent series published by UPF entitled "The American Experience in Archaeological Perspective," edited by Michael Nassaney, including volumes on topics such as institutional confinement, race and racialization, and North American farmsteads. The objective of this series is to provide comprehensive overviews of the archaeological literature on subjects and themes relevant to the origins and development of contemporary America. In this sense, the book should be more accurately called *The "Historical" Archaeology of Alcohol and Drinking* because, aside from a few minor references to the ancient past, the subject matter is limited to the last five hundred years.



TAAD comprises seven chapters: a brief introduction and conclusion plus five substantive chapters arranged thematically, including an original case study based on the author's work in Barbados serving as a model for integrating alcohol-related themes into archaeological research. The explicit model for this work and Smith's earlier research on rum is anthropologist Sidney Mintz's 1985 book *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. Just as Mintz did with sugar, Smith uses alcohol as a prism for exploring broader social, economic, and political processes associated with European colonialism and capitalist expansion. One of Smith's main objectives is to highlight the potential contributions of archaeology to understanding these processes through focused and in-depth commodity-based studies.

In his introduction (Chapter 1), Smith laments that most archaeological research on alcohol is an incidental by-product of studies emphasizing other subjects, and he notes a conspicuous absence of published archaeological overviews of alcohol studies. He endeavours to fill this gap by presenting, as a "new disciplinary tool," a systematic exploration of the ways historical archaeologists have approached the study of alcohol in a range of regional and temporal contexts. Furthermore, he seeks to expand and provide coherency to future studies by identifying themes most germane to archaeological investigation and linking them in an interdisciplinary way to theoretical models in anthropology and social history.

In Chapter 2 he focuses on alcohol-related material culture. It is not a how-to guide, but rather an overview of archaeological contributions to our understanding of this material culture, particularly relating to identification, dating, and determining site function. Object categories include Iberian storage jars, German and English stoneware, glass bottles, ceramic and glass drinking vessels, and wooden casks and barrels. Related topics covered in this chapter focus on important analytical techniques, issues, and limitations involved in identification and interpretation of these objects, including residue analysis, bottle reuse and recycling, time-lag, and use of containers in non-alcohol-related contexts (e.g., ritualistic use as witch bottles). As with all subsequent chapters, Smith concludes with valuable recommendations for further research.

In Chapters 3 and 4, he deals with archaeological literature on alcohol production and on trade/transport respectively, and follows a similar format as the previous chapter. In Chapter 3, he addresses sites and material culture associated with production of beer, wine, and distilled spirits, along with the use of botanical remains to identify sites and activity areas, the role of women in brewing, cottage industries versus industrial brewing, employee resistance and everyday life, industrial landscapes, cultural creolization, and moonshine. In Chapter 4 emphasis is on use of alcohol-related material culture to identify exchange patterns ranging from long-distance commercial networks to regional and local ones, as well as alcohol's central role in the fur trade, mercantile activity on colonial frontiers, and alliance building with indigenous communities. Smith also highlights the ambivalent role of alcohol among aboriginal peoples as a catalyst for social and cultural change. On one hand it was often incorporated into traditional social and spiritual activities and reflects active participation in the emerging global economy, but

it could also disrupt established social and economic structures.

Two central points emerge in these chapters regarding why historical archaeology is well positioned to contribute to alcohol studies. First, although alcohol technology was well developed long before the period of European colonialism, it is during the global era that we see industrialization and commercialized production of alcohol as a worldwide commodity. Second, alcohol production and consumption were ubiquitous in the colonial world from its inception, and the volatile and valuable nature of alcohol resulted in an extensive material culture for storage and transport that survives extremely well in the archaeological record. Related to this point, because such items appear early and are common on aboriginal sites, scholars specializing in the late-precontact/early-contact period will find a knowledge of alcohol-related material culture (and thus this book) of considerable value.

By far the longest section of this book is Chapter 5 on alcohol consumption, reflecting the primary interest of most researchers. The literature is subdivided into six broad interpretive themes: foodways, sociality and sociability, social relations, survival of old world traditions, health, and anxiety. Crosscutting these themes, as Smith notes, is a common effort among anthropologists to emphasize "normative, constructive and culturally mediated" aspects of consumption as opposed to pathological dimensions emphasized in other disciplines; this includes attempts to reconcile alcohol's simultaneously escapist and integrative functions. Among the subjects covered are debates surrounding Deetz's Georgianization model of colonial lifeways; the role of special purpose drinking establishments like taverns and saloons in public socializing, control/surveillance and display of masculine ideals; alcohol as a marker of personal and community identities, statuses and social boundaries; alcohol as a tool of domination and resistance in workplace settings; traditional folk medicines; and anthropologist Donald Horton's model of anxiety reduction.

Smith's case study comprises Chapter 6 and is drawn from his archival and archaeological work at Mapps Cave, a cavern and sinkhole complex in southeastern Barbados used by enslaved peoples between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Material culture recovered from the cave indicates that alcohol consumption (and possibly production) was the primary activity conducted at the site, where plantation workers at nearby sugar estates sought temporary refuge from harsh labour conditions. Evidence also suggests that alcohol consumption in the cave, linked to African traditions, may have contributed to a major 1816 slave uprising. In this context, Smith presents strong archival and comparative archaeological support for the use of caves and local production of alcohol by slaves. He concludes the book in Chapter 7 by summarizing the contributions of historical archaeology to alcohol studies, warning scholars against problematic trends in existing literature, and calling for an increase in commodity-based models in the discipline.

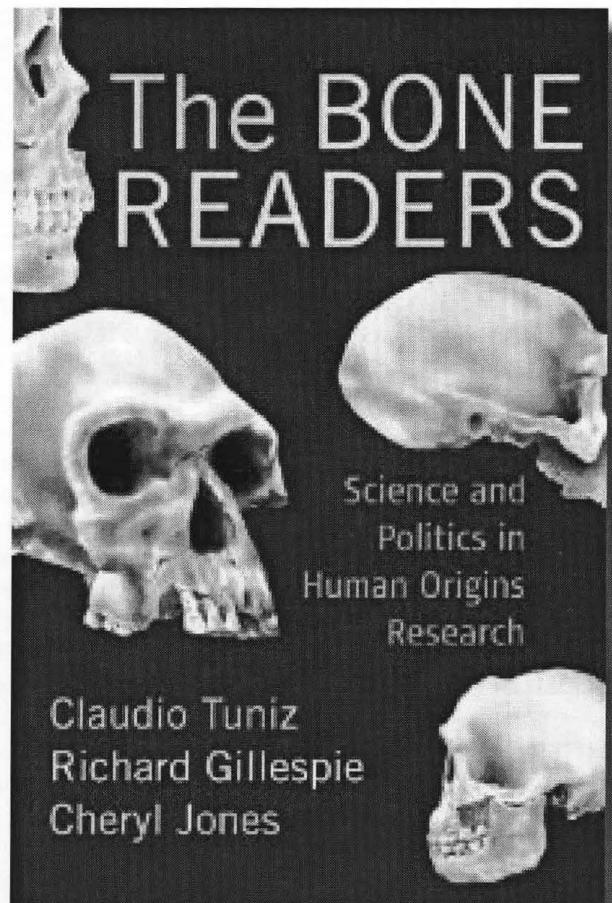
Overall, *TAAD* is primarily an annotated guide to the archaeological literature on alcohol, rather than a theoretical/methodological manifesto or an object-based narrative of the role of alcohol in American society, reflecting the principal objectives of the series of which it is a part. In this sense the book succeeds admirably. Smith does an excellent job of summarizing the archaeological literature, covering a broad geographic, temporal, and cultural range of colonial and historic contexts throughout the Americas.

While the focus is on historical archaeology, he occasionally cites interesting examples from antiquity for comparative purposes. Smith also makes a concerted effort to highlight key studies and guide readers towards fruitful avenues of research and away from less productive approaches; he also makes an important (if brief) argument in favour of commodity-based models in archaeology. However, while he makes sure to draw attention to scholarly debates, he rarely offers critical commentary of his own (exceptions pp. 80, 102), leaving it to the reader to sort out the barley from the chaff. Much of the content focuses on the eastern United States, but this is a product of where the bulk of research has been done rather than any bias on the author's part. Likewise, the case study and most of the figures drawn from research in the Caribbean and Virginia reflect where Smith lives and works.

Although I like this book very much, there are in my mind a handful of shortcomings. For example, Smith's discussion of late nineteenth and twentieth century glass beverage containers in Chapter 2 is extremely brief in comparison with earlier periods, despite the considerable volume of archaeological literature devoted to this topic. Such limited coverage belies the enormous functional and dating potential of these later vessels, which also have a much wider geographic distribution (and thus relevance to a broader archaeological readership). In Chapter 5, Smith outlines various individual and collective identities and social boundaries that can be explored through studies of alcohol, and hints at the central problem of disentangling the role of race, class and ethnicity in influencing consumption patterns. However, he does not offer any substantive discussion of this issue or how to address it with respect to alcohol-related material culture. Finally, in Chapter 6 on Mapps Cave, Smith provides a map of Barbados (Figure 6-1) that is valuable in visualizing the island's geography, but on which none of the original text is legible and nothing referred to in the text is marked (a detail or arrows would help). Among the other figures, the plan and profile of the cave (6-2) is initially disorienting and would benefit from the addition of one or more photos plus a profile drawing of the site's stratigraphy to clarify the description in the text (it is an important interpretive point). Furthermore, a summary table of artifact values would help strengthen his argument for the predominance of alcohol-related artifacts at the site, and would make his data of greater comparative value than the generalized percentages (and the frequently used term "many") he cites currently permit.

Despite these drawbacks, this is still a top-notch volume and I refer your back to my opening paragraph. Now go pick up a copy of this book, grab a drink, and happy reading.

Doug Ross recently earned his Ph.D. in archaeology from Simon Fraser University and is currently teaching as a sessional instructor at SFU and UBC. His research interests focus on everyday consumer habits and negotiation of transnational ethnic identities among Chinese and Japanese immigrants in Western North America. He is currently co-directing a project, with Dr. Stacey Camp of the University of Idaho, at the site of a World War II Japanese internment camp in the northern part of that state.



BOOK REVIEW:

The Bone Readers: Science and Politics in Human Origins Research

Claudio Tuniz, Richard Gillespie, and Cheryl Jones. Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, California. viii+256 pages, numerous b&w & colour illustrations, ISBN: 978-1-59874-475-0 (paper). \$24.95. 2009.

The Bone Readers addresses a number of controversial issues in current archaeological research with a strong focus on Australasian prehistory and Australian researchers. In particular, the authors discuss the debates over: the dating of the earliest human presence in Australia; the cause of the Pleistocene large mammal extinctions in Australia and the Americas; the role of genetic research in the emergence of modern humans; South East Asia's *Homo floresiensis*; and the use of indigenous peoples' genetic data in prehistoric research.

The book is 220 pages long and includes 20 chapters, which are divided up into three main sections. Section I, "Landfall", includes the first four chapters and deals with the history of research into the earliest peopling of Australia. This has long been a controversial topic of research and the main focus of this section is a discussion of the politics behind Pleistocene archaeology in Australia. The authors attempt to present the underlying conflicts within the community of researchers (especially between differ-