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the clarity of the book's theoretical goal, taking the sting out of the more pointed critiques and uniting the chapters into a more cohesive and sustained treatise. The book succeeds at providing the reader a historical perspective on evolutionary thought in anthropology as expressed through the theoretical significance of hunter-gatherers and provides a strong advocate for the explanatory potential of neo-Darwinian theory demonstrated through hunter-gatherer anthropology and archaeology.

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The Archaeology of American Cities. Nan A. Rothschild and Diana diZerega Wall. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014, 250 pp.
\$69.95, cloth. ISBN 978-0-8130-4972-4.

I was standing in a conference book room in Baltimore perusing the latest titles from the University Press of Florida when an American colleague breezed by, saying, "American Experience, huh? I can shoot you and rob you, if you like. . . ." But placing this dark New Jersey humor to one side, *American Experience in Archaeological Perspective* is shaping up to be a fine series, and to his credit the series editor, Michael S. Nassaney, has attracted contributions from some of the very best American academic archaeologists.

In *The Archaeology of American Cities*, Nan A. Rothschild and Diana diZerega Wall survey more than three decades of American urban archaeology and provide a comprehensive and engaging synthesis of the field. Moving out from their early experience of digging at the Stadt Huys Block in the Wall Street district of Manhattan in the late 1970s, they show how the passing of federal and state environmental and historic sites legislation and the subsequent growth of cultural resource management (CRM) and contract archaeology have enabled urban archaeology to emerge as a vibrant subfield of North American archaeology.

Rothschild and Wall have no doubt about the importance of studying cities, suggesting that the city is "arguably the most significant of human inventions" (p. 1). In their view, archaeology has a special ability to study cities at both macro and micro scales of analysis. Hence, at one level it is possible to view the plan and layout of a city as if from the top of a skyscraper, with the macro perspective of Michel de Certeau, or alternatively, human interactions may be glimpsed in passing at street level with the micro perspective of Walter Benjamin's *flâneur* (p. 9). In their endeavors to find links between the spatial and the social aspects of city life, Rothschild and Wall draw on the theories of Marxist social scientists, such as Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey, but ultimately this book is a celebration of how the techniques employed by

historical archaeologists can create “a richly nuanced picture of urban lives and places” (p. 1).

North American cities are comparatively recent phenomena, but it is possible to look beyond the ubiquitous grid plans to see a wealth of historical influences which have shaped their character and form. Obvious differences relate to the date of their establishment, and how and why different European powers were motivated to create cities, and very real differences are apparent between early Spanish, French, Dutch, and English foundations. In the seventeenth century, European Enlightenment ideologies led to the creation of *baroque cities*, such as St. Mary’s City, Annapolis, and Washington, and in these places mercantile capitalists moved away from the rigid formality of grids so that avenues converged on the centers of religious and political power (p. 48). Other types of city discussed include those with a *utopian landscape*, such as Bethabara, Bethania, and Salem, settled by eighteenth-century Moravian immigrants in North Carolina, and *western urban landscapes*, such as Tucson, which originated as a Spanish mission based on agriculture and ranching, and Phoenix, which only emerged in the 1860s as a mining supply town. Finally, there are the *ideal cities* of the nineteenth century such as Chicago, and San Francisco, where “a new consciousness of topographical, aesthetic, and public health issues” led to improved public amenities such as paved streets, sewers, parks, and transport systems (p. 52).

Rothschild and Wall are renowned anthropological archaeologists, and moving beyond their consideration of the “city as artifact” they make full use of the wealth of artifactual material, and also human remains, that have been unearthed in American cities to extend their investigations into issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. It is here, in my view that the book makes its strongest contribution, probing into the otherwise largely undocumented lives of African slaves, Chinese laundry workers, and the successive waves of European immigrants who hoped for a better life as they filed through Ellis Island.

In conclusion, I can say that this is an enjoyable and highly informative book. The seven chapters and conclusion are packed with information and succeed in synthesizing and making sense of a staggering amount of data. The style of writing is plain, but authoritative, and avoids the use of jargon. I can certainly recommend this volume as an ideal undergraduate textbook for archaeologists and indeed other social scientists with an interest in city life.

JAMES SYMONDS, *University of Amsterdam*