

Ola Wolfhechel Jensen (ed.) 2012 *Histories of Archaeological Practices. Reflections on Methods, Strategies and Social Organisation in Past Fieldwork*. The National Historical Museum, Stockholm. Studies 20. ISBN 978-91-89176-47-8.

Reviewed by Tim Murray

It has often been stated that one of the great virtues of the history of science, especially that which focuses on what was originally called the 'sociology of science', is that we get closer to an understanding of how sciences 'socialise' their practitioners. Many studies have been undertaken of how scientists work in laboratories and in research institutes, there has been close examination of the influence that public gatherings, such as morning or afternoon coffee, have on the research process, and there have been occasional forays into understanding how field disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology and geology train budding archaeologists, anthropologists and geologists. It has also long been understood that in such situations students get trained in more than how to work a theodolite or to record artefacts and contexts. The 'practical' side of archaeology is the place where students and teachers

spend the most time in intensive study of both the practical and the theoretical elements of the discipline. Here students get to really understand how archaeology works – what questions to ask, what tests to apply to knowledge claims, what strategies to apply in the field and in the lab to move research projects forward.

This interesting book comprises ten case studies of this field research in action drawn from the UK, Germany and Sweden, and Swedish archaeology practiced in India. The over-arching themes of the collection are discussed at some length in an effective introduction by the editor Ola Wolfhechel Jensen. The balance of the contributions are drawn from the history of archaeology, particularly from the 19th century, but there is a focus too on the recent past.

Histories of Archaeological Practices. Reflections on Methods, Strategies and Social Organisation in Past Fieldwork stands as a valuable addition to the history of archaeological practices and the exploration of their social contexts. The volume is produced to a high standard and the text reads well. Readers with interests in these areas will find this a useful addition to their library.