

audience. The book also should be of interest to those archaeologists who wish to read short articles about subjects or areas that they are interested in, but do not wish to invest time in a lengthy technical article.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/bha.07106>

The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East (Prepared Under the Auspices of the American Schools of Oriental Research), edited by Eric M. Meyers, Oxford University Press, New York, 5 volumes, Cloth, preface, ix-xvi + \$595.00.

by

Douglas R. Givens
Research Associate
Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts U.S.A.

Like many of the endeavors by The Oxford University Press in the history of archaeology, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* is one of the most important compendiums of information comprising the history of Near Eastern Archaeology in recent time. Eric M. Meyers (Professor of Religion and Archaeology, Duke University), the Editor in Chief of the volume series, has done a masterful job of bringing together of wide variety of site information and biographical synopses of Near Eastern archaeologists into a series of five volumes which are not only “user friendly” but “worth their weight in gold” for scholars and interested readers of the history of Near Eastern Archaeology. The wealth of information at the fingertips of the prospective researcher or interested reader is enormous. Although vast in its scope, the user of the volumes will find it easily accessible and of true value as a research tool. Meyers has brought together the expertise of a vast number of contributors which were carefully nudged together to produce a volume series of superlative quality and unestimable value to those interested in the history of Near Eastern archaeology. Meyers wisely selected William G. Dever (Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Arizona, Carol L. Meyers (Professor of Biblical Studies and Archaeology, Duke University), James D. Muhly (Professor of Ancient History, University of Pennsylvania; and Director-elect, American School of Classical Studies, Athens), Dennis Pardee (Professor of Northwest Semitic Philology, University of Chicago), and James A. Sauer, Research Associate, Semitic Museum, Harvard University) as editors of the volume series. Together their editorial expertise and that of Eric Meyers has produced one of the most important sources of information on the history of Near Eastern archaeology published in recent memory. The contributions to each of the volumes in the series have been meticulously edited, appropriately illustrated, and provide the reader with a concise yet detailed history of Near Eastern archaeology which is useable to both scholar and general reader.

The volume series is most comprehensive. What is valuable to the reader is the attention paid by the editorial board of the volume series to all manner of sites throughout the Near Eastern area, not just the well-known or the well-documented. This alone makes the volume series of great importance to prospective readers and an excellent tool to begin a thorough study of the origins and development of Near Eastern archaeology. Finally in one volume series, one can find an excellent summation of the conduct of Near Eastern archaeology prosecuted over a great number of years.

Both discussions of sites and biographical sketches of the Near Eastern archaeological community involved with the discovery and documentation of the archaeology of the area so well presented that the reader will find very little to complain about with regard to the series value as a research tool or as a place to provide a good start for the general reader interested in the archaeology of the Near East.

Each volume is concise yet highly detailed as to each contribution. The editors of the series did an excellent job in their solicitation of contributions. Some of the pieces presented in the series actually provide a discussion of the intellectual climate in which discoveries and contributions were made, thusly enhancing the usability of the volume series for the reader.

Departments of Anthropology at both universities and colleges should acquire this source as a reference tool for their students. Reference departments in libraries in both colleges and universities should acquire this volume series for the benefit of their patrons. It is indispensable! Finally, those scholars to are intimately involved with writing the history of Near Eastern archaeology add this source to their own personal library. What a valued and “searchable” source it will be found to be.

Eric Meyers, his editorial board, and the contributors to the volume should be congratulated on a job well done. This series should be considered a mandatory addition to any historian of archaeology’s library. It will remain one of the most important tools of the historical development of Near Eastern archaeology for many years to come.

Toward a Social History of Archaeology in the United States, by Thomas C. Patterson. Harcourt Brace College Publishers, Fort Worth, 1995. x + 181 pp. \$18.50 paper.

By

Charles C. Kolb
Independent Scholar (Affiliation:
National Endowment for the Humanities)
Washington D.C. U.S.A.

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This volume, one of the initial publications in the Harcourt Brace “Case Studies in Archaeology” series edited by Jeffrey Quilter, is designed, the editor writes, for broad appeal as an inexpensive textbook for students enrolled in beginning and intermediate courses in anthropology, archaeology, history, and related disciplines. The books in this series focus upon selected areas of archaeology, including method and theory. Quilter states the truism that “archaeologists have not done a very good job in discussing the history of their own discipline” (p. vi). The series, therefore, is also designed to address this issue.

In this carefully crafted volume, Tom Patterson reviews the historical development of archaeological method and practice in the United States and points out that “this book is a sketch map, a guide that points out major features of a complex terrain. The landscape is still poorly known, and what seem to be major features still appear hazy on the horizon” (p. vii). However, his work goes beyond a historicization of the development of archaeology and is both an invocation and a cry for archaeologists to consider from a holistic perspective the position and effect that our discipline has on American culture. In his conclusion, Patterson states (p. 144) that

this book is a call for archaeologists to situate their work and to understand its implications for the cultural debates of the late twentieth century. It is also a call to participate honestly and with integrity in the construction of a genuine politics that challenges a social order that has entrenched racism,