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V. Book/Journal Article Reviews

White and Breitborde's *French Paleolithic Collections of the Logan Museum of Anthropology*.
1992. Logan Museum Bulletin (new series) I:2. 367 pages. No Price Available.

by

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At some point in their training, most Paleolithic archaeologists succumb to the almost spiritual pull of the French Perigord and undertake the pilgrimage. While today's prehistorians visit numerous French museums and are able to purchase a spectrum of teaching aids from artifact replicas to CD-ROM images of rockshelter excavations, the situation facing Alonzo Pond and George Collie in the early 1920's was quite different. During the seminal years of Beloit College's Department of Anthropology, Pond and Collie acquired over 20,000 Paleolithic artifacts from both a network of professional and amateur archaeologists in France, and limited excavation projects. This collection, consisting of stone artifacts, bone tools, worked shell, antler, and ivory, and even engraved plaquettes and Azillian pebbles, is the subject of French Paleolithic Collections of the Logan Museum of Anthropology.

Despite the specialized focus of the collections, the volume accomplishes far more than typical monographs eulogizing old collections of interest to a select few. All scholars interested in the history of American archaeology, in addition to anyone attempting excavation abroad, will benefit by reading White's introductory chapter. White chronicles the complex history of acquisitions, and attempts to understand how Pond and Collie chose their sources. Today's generation of archaeologists will doubtlessly identify with the political nature of French and American collaboration during the 1920's.

"Causes and Consequences of the Acquisitions" (pp.30-31) should be required reading in many History of Archaeology courses, as White sets the dispersal of French archaeological collections in historical context. "How could this have happened?" is answered in light of American and French economies, the

professionalization of archaeology on both sides of the Atlantic, and even underlying conceptual frameworks of post-WWI Paleolithic archaeology. The remaining eleven chapters reintroduce the Logan collections to “three generations of Paleolithic archaeologists.”

Chapter Two describes the 1927 excavations at the Aurignacian site of Abri Cellier, presenting the first published record of the Beloit team’s stratigraphy. Equally important is White and Knecht’s analysis of 8 beads and pendants, 9 decorated (notched or incised) bone/antler/ivory objects, and over 100 bone and antler tools (including poinçons, ciseaux, split based points, and faceted/beveled objects). Considering current interest in Middle/Upper Paleolithic adaptive strategies and bone tool technology, this chapter presents a needed database comparable with recently excavated collections.

From 1910-1911, Louis Didon excavated the exceptionally rich Aurignacian site of Abri Blanchard; From 1912 to the mid-1920’s, he sold elements of the assemblages to American museums, including Beloit, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Field Museum. White analyzes 42 of the bone, antler, and ivory artifacts and 137 stone and ivory beads (including the celebrated “Aurignacian necklace”) from the Abri Blanchard in Chapter Three. Line drawings of the objects are valuable as a necessary addendum to Delluc and Delluc (1981), the only French attempt to track the site assemblage.

Laurie Matthews (Chapter Four) and Kathleen Ehrhardt (Chapter Six) detail collections and excavation records for the sites of Jouclas/Rivière de Tulle/Combe-Cullier and Rocher de la Peine respectively. These reports emphasize the bone and antler assemblages, which were in some cases preferentially collected by the Logan Museum. Chapter Eight provides the acquisition history of an engraved bear from Grotte des Eyzies. Clear photographs and drawing of the object are presented, juxtaposed with a previously published rendering of the plaquette by Breuil (pg. 293). While Breuil worked only from a photograph, White and Roussot again demonstrate the sensibility of coupling systematic surface examination with prudence of interpretation. Similar methodology proves useful to Tosello when analyzing the Magdalenian engravings from Limeuil in Chapter Ten.

Chapter Nine (White) details macro and microscopic surface examination of an antler “faon et oiseau” spearthrower fragment. Perhaps better than any other chapter, this report underscores the usefulness of microscopy for understanding antler-working *technology* and production sequence, while demonstrating how much new information collections such as the Logan’s may offer Paleolithic archaeologists.

Less relevant to the non-specialist but nonetheless needed collection research are Chapters Five (deBeaune/Pigment processing slab:Combe Cullier?), Seven (Ehrhardt, Roussot, White/Engraved cervid:Rocher de la Peine), and Eleven (White, Roussot/Upper Paleolithic representations :unknown). Chapter Twelve is methodologically informative as Dobres and White’s microscopic study of 15 Mas d’Azil pebbles identified three forgeries.

Production quality of the volume is nothing short of excellent, and historians of archaeology should learn from White and Breitborde’s presentation format. Often a reproduction of the entire original letter is included, along with the usual excerpts from correspondence in the text. Artifact photography is excellent, especially given the difficulty of lighting engraved stone, and Pond’s photos are reproduced with equal professionalism. Line drawings are carefully minimalist, as fits the volume’s interpretations.

One drawback of the work was the lack of attention (although intentional) afforded stone tools from the collections. Ehrhardt does describe some indices of the Rocher de la Peine assemblages, but overall more details concerning the quality of the Logan’s collections would be helpful.

Overall, French Paleolithic Collections of the Logan Museum of Anthropology effectively remedies White’s introductory statement that “...American Paleolithic archaeologists have been remiss in not undertaking serious analysis or publication of US collections since they were acquired (pp. 97-98).” Furthermore, the history of the collections is yet another example of how influential European Paleolithic research was during the professionalization of American archaeology.

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The Buried Past: An Archaeological History of Philadelphia, by John L. Cotter, Daniel G. Roberts, and Michael Parrington, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1992. xxv+524pp. ISBN 0-8122-3142-2. \$39.95 (cloth).

by

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Having been involved in both contract and academic archaeology in recent years, I have heard (and sympathized with) a pervasive lament. It seems increasingly common that even the best contract archaeology is rarely published, but compiled into reports that disappear into state repositories and contract firm offices, never again to be thought of except (maybe) when it comes time to write the next report. There is an increasing body of both gray literature and gray excavation: work that is done in compliance with state and federal laws but which never reaches an audience of more than a dozen or so readers. Given this discouraging trend, the compendious *The Buried Past* is a welcomed synthesis of several generations of academic and CRM investigations into the historical archaeology of the Greater Philadelphia region.

Given the breadth of its coverage, the title of this volume might have been "An Encyclopedia of Philadelphia Historical Archaeology." The first of its four "Parts" consists of two introductory chapters, respectively providing overviews of the prehistory and history of the Philadelphia region. The real substance of the book, however, concentrates on the historical archaeology of Philadelphia and the surrounding region. Part II focuses on districts within the Philadelphia metropolis and its immediate environs while Part III considers the surrounding counties. The fourth and final part consists of two chapters which provide, respectively, a brief synthetic interpretation of the material covered in the book and a prospective view into future research.

Part II, "Archaeological Sites in Downtown Philadelphia and Philadelphia County", and Part III, "Archaeological Sites in the Surrounding Counties", comprise the principle body of the volume. Each of the chapters in this section of the book provides succinct discussions of the history and results of archaeological investigations of sites located within the various districts in and around Philadelphia. Chapter 3, the first chapter of Part II, focuses on Independence National Historical Park, the site of the first large scale excavations in Philadelphia. Reflecting the quality of the entire book, the discussions on the specific sites within the park are both concise and informative. For example, the authors summarize the investigations into "Benjamin Franklin's Lost House." One of the priorities in the development of Independence National Historical Park, according to the authors, was the identification of the spot where Benjamin Franklin had built his house. The authors provide an informative summary of the architectural and historical research that was compiled during the investigation, which suggested both the form and plan of the long disappeared house. Based on various Franklin family correspondence, the authors discuss the range of material culture known to have been in the family's possession. These discussions serve as an introduction to the synopsis of the archaeological investigations. The authors provide a succinct discussion of the results of various excavations which took place over the course of several years. They include a description of the types of features uncovered, as well as an analysis of the material found within them.