

REVIEW

Archaeologies of Violence and Privilege. CHRISTOPHER N. MATTHEWS and BRADLEY D. PHILLIPPI, editors. 2020. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque. ix + 306 pp. \$85.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-8263-6184-4 . \$85.00 (e-book), ISBN 978-0-8263-6185-1.

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For anyone wondering about the potential social relevance of archaeology, Christopher N. Matthews and Bradley D. Phillippi's *Archaeologies of Violence and Privilege* provides an excellent testament. Studies of violence in archaeology are not new, but what qualifies as violence—and materially traceable violence—remains a point of tension within the discipline. The 13 contributors to this volume stretch the limits of how violence is defined, inviting readers to consider what happens to our archaeological analyses when we approach familiar forms of inequality, power, and privilege as modes of violence. They aim to bridge studies of expressive violence or violent conflict and what social theorists have variously called structural, systemic, or symbolic violence. Attending to privilege in particular, the editors contend, is one way of illuminating violence under its most obscured conditions. Moreover, they remind readers that any consideration of violence in the past requires sitting with violence in the present. Such a stance necessitates turning a reflexive gaze back on ourselves as archaeologists to consider who we are as witnesses—and perpetrators—of violence. As Kathryn E. Sampeck poignantly asserts, doing so is not just a fad-driven exercise; “justice is in fact the point” (p. 217).

Very much situated within the realm of historical archaeologies, the volume includes a topical introduction by the editors, followed by a rich rumination on violence by Reinhard Bernbeck (if you read nothing else in this volume, read this), seven theoretically grounded empirical case studies, a commentary by LouAnn Wurst providing an analysis (and critique) of six common themes covered throughout the

collection, and—perhaps the most effective part of the book's organization—a forum responding to Wurst's provocations. For this reason, a reader can approach this volume as a resource for studying specific cases of violence; for examining the violence of discourse, archive, and assemblage in archaeology; or for exploring different valences of violence (racial, colonial, spatial, carceral, etc.).

Guido Pezzarossi (Chapter 3), Sampeck (Chapter 4), and Douglas K. Smit and Terren K. Proctor (Chapter 5) each offer reflections on violence grounded in histories of Spanish colonialism. Pezzarossi interrogates the tandem violence of colonialism in Highland Guatemala and archaeological discourses that produce “the” *authentic* Maya as people entirely disassociated from today's Maya communities. Sampeck argues that Spanish colonialism was rooted in spatial violence, positing that the spatial regimes of what are today western El Salvador and the southeastern United States eventually allowed for the reorganization of the landscape to such an extent that Native peoples—if not entirely removed—could be unseen. Finally, Smit and Proctor explore the direct and structural violences of mercury mining in colonial Peru, making a compelling case for bioarchaeology's utility in tracing what they call “toxic legacies.”

Shifting focus to the United States during the 1800s and 1900s, the remaining chapters build on the themes developed in the first half of the book. By assessing one event of expressive violence—the Lattimer Massacre—Michael P. Roller (Chapter 6) attends to the structural violences historically underpinning class struggle in the coal mining regions of Pennsylvania. Koji Lau-Ozawa's (Chapter 7) study of gardens at World War II camps built on dispossessed Indigenous lands to incarcerate Japanese Americans shows what can come of attempts to achieve the normalcy of everyday life in the midst of punctuated violence. By charting access to waterways in Indianapolis, Paul E. Mullins, Kyle Huskins, and Susan B. Hyatt (Chapter 8) take to task the everyday acts of environmental racism and social injustice that constitute violence against Black

Americans. Finally, Matthews (Chapter 9) examines New Jersey's racist infrastructures, or "carceral landscapes." He argues that the American suburbs and the interstates that created them are artifacts of race relations marred by unjust policing tactics and the aspirations of white Americans to unsee the Black and immigrant landscapes that abutted their own.

Violence is so much a part of the human experience that it is impossible to capture its myriad forms in a short collection like this one. Consequently, as Wurst points out, there are some imbalances in subject matter and temporal emphasis. Moreover, several of the chapters stray quite far from what might be considered conventionally archaeological (though we might

see this as among its strengths). Nonetheless, Matthews and Phillippi craft a volume that pushes the boundaries of former violence studies in archaeology by insisting on the co-construction of expressive violence and structural violence—or what we might consider the routine violences of daily life. As Matthews aptly notes, this collection aims at charting how violence is "itself a structuring social force" (p. 229). For this reason, although the volume is very clearly geared at an audience attuned to historical archaeologies, it should be of interest to anyone contending with the materialities of violence and the asymmetrically distributed privileges that sustain it—whether in the recent or deep past.