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Kenneth G. Kelly and Meredith D. Hardy, eds., *French Colonial Archaeology in the Southeast and Caribbean*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. 256 pp. \$60.14 U.S. (cl). ISBN 0813036801.

Review by Robert Mazrim, Illinois State Archaeological Survey.

Under a section called “Why This Volume?,” the editors of *French Colonial Archaeology in the Southeast and Caribbean* answer their question by stating that the numerous contributors to the book explore, through historical archaeology, the ways in which French colonists created distinctive ways of life in a variety of settings. Indeed, the volume’s twelve chapters cover territory from Maryland to French Guyana, and do so using a range of approaches, data sets, and theoretical perspectives. This is an eclectic collection of essays, which stems primarily from a day-long session held at the 2004 Society for Historical Archaeology conference. The volume provides some interesting and instructive examples of new research from a spectrum of French colonial contexts, but it is often light on actual archaeological information.

Ellen Shlasko’s chapter on French Protestants in South Carolina begins with a cultural dissection of the inscription on a monument at the site of the late seventeenth-century plantation owned by a French Protestant immigrant to South Carolina. She then briefly discusses the excavation of a post-in-earth structure at the Waterhorn Plantation. Considering the ramifications of this French vernacular construction style in South Carolina (which has previously been attributed to African American builders in the region), the author successfully argues that such building construction must reflect, at least in part, what was a common French building practice. She goes further to suggest that in South Carolina such structures reflect a hybrid of French and African traditions. This interpretation seems to be inferred from the historical record, rather than archaeological evidence that might separate post-in-earth features found in South Carolina from similar structures found in Louisiana, the Illinois Country, or Canada.

Sara Rivers-Cofield discusses the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century plantation of L’Hermitage in Maryland. This chapter provides an important reminder of Maryland’s role in the resettlement of refugees of the French Revolution and the Haitian slave uprising, and the direct connection created between the Caribbean and the United States by ports such as Baltimore during the late eighteenth century. This regional study (of what technically is a post-colonial example) is an interesting addition to French colonial studies. The chapter consists primarily of a historical overview of transposed slavery and plantation practices from Haiti to Maryland and the reaction of the Maryland community to these practices. Detailed archival information concerning the plantation is presented. However, little archaeological data has thus far been brought to bear on the basic research questions concerning the visibility of practices that the family may have carried with them from France and the Caribbean to Maryland. This is a preliminary study of what promises to be an important archaeological resource, but thus far provides no insights from the archaeological record.

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Barbara Hester's essay on the commoditization of "persons, places, and things" at the fledgling early eighteenth-century Biloxi settlement comes out swinging with a number of catchphrases and rhetorical statements regarding the regime's preoccupation with order, power, influence, and economic gain. Indeed, these were central motivations behind *most* colonial endeavors of the period. However, the author tends to overstate the nature of governmental control and grand design in the daily reality of such colonial social landscapes.

More importantly, Hester's use of isolated examples from the archeological record is troubling. For example, her evidence of "an indication of modification as a result of cultural contact and expedient design" is found in a single fragment of broken olive green glass (p. 54), which appears to have been reworked to create a cutting tool. Such evidence of "expedient design" (p. 55) can be found in any archaeological assemblage from any era, and hardly reflects Hester's "new world realities that were engineered from below" (p. 53). If she has better evidence of these phenomena from the archaeological record, she fails to produce it. Further, the author misinterprets the presence of British and Spanish products in French colonial archaeological assemblages as "illicit trade activities" (p. 58), ignoring the realities of the international exchange of fashionable goods, even within the supplies sent to remote colonial outposts. The purchase of fashionable English products by a French merchant was hardly a subversive act and in fact demonstrates the very power of commodification across Western Europe and its colonial holdings by the early eighteenth century.

This chapter falls deeply into the trap once described by Ivor Noel-Hume as "archaeology as handmaiden to history," although in this case the stray artifact is used to illustrate misguided theoretical standpoints, and not history. Hester's interest in expressions of resistance to commoditization and colonial power is a profoundly relevant one to historical archaeology, but demands a much deeper understanding of archaeological data in aggregate and how that data may shape pictures of personal practice in such communities.

Marie Danforth's chapter on excavations at the Moran site refreshingly presents a discussion of actual archaeological information. Presented here is a summary of the results of excavations at a circa 1720s French cemetery at New Biloxi. This is one of the first chapters in the book that presents more than a passing reference to archaeological information, but it is also the third chapter to employ preliminary results. The excavations are compared to the roughly contemporary St. Peter's Cemetery in New Orleans. The two cemeteries produced rather different patterns, which reflect the differing character of the two French settlements with which they were associated. The Moran site consisted primarily of young males who were generally in poor health and who were buried in a less-structured plot organization than is traditionally seen in French Catholic cemeteries.

Ann Early's article on the Second Chickasaw War, once again, returns to the discussion of the potential of archaeology--meaning a few archaeological issues (and no archaeological information) grafted to another overview of a historical event. A chapter in a volume dedicated to a "vanguard" of archaeological research should not be summarized with the sentence "If found, sites associated with the second Chickasaw campaign hold the potential for exploring several issues" (p. 92) Indeed.

Halfway through this volume, it becomes clear that too much of its content employs archaeological information (at its most basic) only as a stepping-off point for brief historical overviews or theoretical promises. Meaningful historical archaeology employs a *body* of archaeological data contextualized by (or contrasted to) the archival record. In a volume such as

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this, it is insufficient to cite a few novel artifacts or features (or the “potential” for such things) to frame basic historical summaries.

Elizabeth Scott and Shannon Dawdy’s chapter on animal remains and diet in New Orleans thankfully brings the discussion back to historical archaeology. This summary examines eighteenth-century faunal samples from two sites in New Orleans (Madame John’s Legacy and St. Augustine), in a study of the distinctions between colonial and Creole diets. Both samples produced surprisingly high quantities of wild game, from within what were somewhat urban contexts during the late eighteenth century. The visibility of differing dietary practices between French and Spanish occupations was found to be low. The study of faunal remains still represents one of the best windows into this important topic, and there is some exciting new research currently being conducted in New Orleans. The authors’ conclusions in this chapter are supported by archaeological data, which includes tabular information.

David Morgan and Kevin Macdonald examine the problematic pottery type known as “colonoware” in Louisiana. This term was coined in the 1960s to refer to shell-tempered wares found in British colonial contexts, which were believed to be of Native American manufacture and designed to mimic British vessel forms. Later, it was suggested that a large proportion of the too-broad category of colonoware may have been made by African slaves living in British colonial communities on the eastern seaboard. Morgan and McDonald provide a helpful overview of the attribution arguments involving this perplexing folk pottery. They then proceed to consider the possibility of both Native American and African authorship of such pottery in Louisiana, using an attribute-based comparative analysis of samples from plantation sites along the Red River.

Their argument is well contextualized with historical and archaeological information, as well as a discussion (and tabular presentation) of the attributes of the artifacts themselves. While the authors stated at the outset that it was their belief that such products in the Red River area of Louisiana represented ties to both Native American and African traditions, the results of their study ultimately suggested a strong correspondence primarily between local colonowares and indigenous Native American traditions. This chapter provides well-supported analysis, reported in a transparent and useful manner. It was a pleasure to read.

Meredith Hardy’s chapter on foodways and Creole culture begins with two succinct pages of what might be called “Creole Archaeology 101,” which will be helpful to readers from outside the discipline. This is followed by a detail-rich summary of the “new cuisines” of seventeenth and eighteenth-century France, the development of cookbooks, and the art history of regional French ceramics. These are well-articulated historical summaries, but they tend to float above what are only nominal observations from the colonial archaeological record. While the chapter spends eighteen pages discussing French foodways and the vessels associated with food preparation and service, only seven pages are devoted to actual archaeological information. Most of that information is composed of a general summary of the very basic nature of colonial assemblages in the region, but lacks any support for how it may articulate with (or contrast to) what was happening in France at the time, or how it may reflect localized Creole phenomena. It is not sufficient to state that “a wide variety of vessel forms...is evidence of the presence of the new cuisine in the gulf coast colonies” (p. 176). In fact, that evidence is best found in the presence of brown faience vessels, which followed the development of the new cuisine of the early eighteenth century. Even these, however, usually represent a minority within a given colonial faience vessel assemblage, prior to 1770. Most colonial faience samples are overwhelmingly dominated by plates and platters, which could have served *any* form of local,

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traditional, or hybridized cuisine. Minimum vessel counts would go a long way in addressing this argument.

As Hardy's faunal evidence inadvertently reveals, our archaeological view of what was on those plates is still limited to what *kinds* of animals were consumed (and the basic aspects of how they were butchered), but not how they were *prepared*. We can't see the recipes, only the basic skeletons (so to speak) of old or new foodways practices. Instead we find ourselves making statements such as "the cut marks found on the ribs were perpendicular to the length of the bone...[which] could indicate the use of a small instrument for cutting individual portions, or bites, of meat off the bone during a particular dining episode" (p. 175). We really don't need archaeology to tell us the French residents of the Gulf Coast used knives to take bites of meat during their "dining episodes." The trick in historical archaeology is to look for places where the data can speak most strongly to the questions at hand.

The final two chapters in the book represent the Caribbean portion of this volume. Kenneth Kelly's chapter is an engaging summary of the French presence at Guadeloupe and the archaeological visibility of practices surrounding plantation-based slavery. History and archaeology are well blended in this descriptive overview. I found myself less frustrated by a lack of archaeological specifics when the approach was aimed at a more holistic consideration of the subject. Kelly concludes with an interesting observation: that changes visible within archaeological remains do not reflect processual changes affiliated with increasing industrial production, but instead more localized changes in behavior that reflect "adjustments to the institution of slavery" (p. 202). I'm anxious to read more about this.

Chapter eleven provides a brief summary of the archaeological research at Habitation Loyola, in French Guyana. The authors synthesize the historical and archaeological record of this Jesuit-run plantation (established in 1668), where excavations have described a number of buildings, a slave cemetery, a blacksmith shop and an earthenware pottery. The long-term, research-based project at Loyola is clearly producing the definitive reference for the nature of French colonial archaeology in Guyana. The volume concludes with a summary commentary written by John De Bry.

In spite of what is suggested by the title, this is not a general reference volume. It is a selection of topics and essays within the broad category of French colonial archaeology in the southeast and Caribbean. Only two of the twelve chapters in the book describe archaeological information from the Caribbean in any detail, however. Further, the number of chapters in this book that include preliminary results or unfinished studies is troubling. The volume assembles papers presented at an archaeological conference, where such preliminary studies are common. It is less appropriate to present unfinished work in a synthetic volume such as this. Having said that, several chapters present real data argued in a convincingly transparent manner. These will give the volume shelf life on the bookshelves of students of French Colonial North America. There is no replacement for quantifiable information, however, particularly in the realm of archaeology. This volume will leave the reader wanting more of that information, and fewer promises of results to come.

#### LIST OF ESSAYS

Kenneth G. Kelly and Meredith D. Hardy, "Introduction"

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Ellen Shlasko, "French Protestants in South Carolina: The Archaeology of a European Ethnic Minority"

Sara Rivers-Cofield, "French Refugees and Slave Abuse in Frederick County, Maryland: Jean Payen de Boisneuf and the Vincendière family at l'Hermitage Plantation"

Barbara Thedy Hester, "Commoditization of Persons, Places, and Things during Biloxi's Second Tenure as Capital of French Colonial Louisiana"

Marie Elaine Danforth, "The Moran Site (22HR511): An Early-Eighteenth-Century French Colonial Cemetery in Nouveau Biloxi, Mississippi"

Ann M. Early, "The Greatest Gathering: The Second French-Chickasaw War in the Mississippi Valley and the Potential for Archaeology"

Elizabeth M. Scott and Shannon Lee Dawdy, "Colonial and Creole Diets in Eighteenth-Century New Orleans"

David W. Morgan and Kevin C. MacDonald, "Colonoware in Western Colonial Louisiana: Makers and Meaning"

Meredith D. Hardy, "Living on the Edge: Foodways and Early Expressions of Creole Culture on the French Colonial Gulf Coast Frontier"

Kenneth G. Kelly, "*La vie quotidienne*: Historical Archaeological Approaches to the Plantation Era in Guadeloupe, French West Indies"

Allison Bain, Réginald Auger, and Yannick Le Roux, "Archaeological Research at Habitation Loyola, French Guiana"

John de Bry, "Commentary"

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