

# Review

## Among the New Books

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✉ It is 'fruitful and stimulating' write Profs. FEINMAN & PRICE (p. 3), 'for scholars . . . to take stock periodically'. To that end, they discuss 'The tempo of theoretical change', the scientific status of archaeology and the increasingly vexed issue of how the discipline relates to anthropology. They have gathered a most distinguished roster of fellow US (and one Mexican) scholars to appraise the state of the art in: 'settlement pattern research', 'Paleo-anthropology' and 'Fully modern humans', 'Holocene hunter-gatherers', 'The transition to food production', 'dynamics of social inequality', 'craft production', 'Warfare and evolution', state formation in the Old World and the New, 'Classical archaeology and anthropological archaeology in North America' and research on empires. Especially from a North American perspective, it is a practical, effective, creative, thorough, and very useful review, although notable for ignoring ethics. The photographs are of uneven quality. Mulling it all over at the end, the editors remark on 'urgency in our quest' (p. 493) as 'development' churns ever more effectively over the ground that we study. They could not not have closed more aptly.

GARY M. FEINMAN & T. DOUGLAS PRICE (ed.). *Archaeology at the millennium: a sourcebook*. xix+508 pages, 91 figures, 9 tables. 2001. New York (NY): Kluwer Academic/Plenum; 0-306-46452-7 hardback \$85.

### Compare for the broad view

Although there is little sign of it in the previous title, embarrassment about biased generalization helped to divert research, in Western universities, on later periods of world prehistory. Arising, in part, from methodological misunderstanding, the retreat was not altogether necessary. For, constructed carefully, comparison is a legitimate and compelling procedure. Indirectly and directly, our first pair of titles demonstrate it well.

JONATHAN HAAS (ed.). *From leaders to rulers*. xiii+286 pages, 36 figures, 8 tables. 2001. New York (NY): Kluwer Academic/Plenum; 0-306-46421-7 hardback \$80.

SVEND NIELSEN. *The domestic mode of production — and beyond: an archaeological inquiry into urban trends in Denmark, Iceland and Predynastic Egypt* (Nordiske Fortidsminder ser. B 18). 392 pages, 54 b&w and colour figures. 1999. Copenhagen:

Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab; 87-87483-45-9 hardback Kr400(+VAT, p&p).

Dr HAAS introduces and reviews nine discussions, comparative essays or case studies in 'middle range' or 'transegalitarian' societies and 'early states'. Opening the proceedings, he and C. Crumley review typological and functional theories of organizational complexity. W. Creamer and A. Gilman follow with studies of emergent ranking among the Pueblos of the Rio Grande and the Copper and Bronze Age of Spain, respectively. Then the rise of rulers in Bronze Age Scandinavia and among the ancient Maya is treated by K. Kristiansen and P. McAnany, respectively, alongside T. Earle's short thoughts on the historical potentials of personal networks and socio-political corporations in the prehistory of Denmark (with space too for reference to Bronze Age Britain), the Late Intermediate period in the Central Andes (similar, he suggests, to the Iron Age landscape of hill forts in southern England), and pre-European Hawaii all together. G. Feinman too considers networks and corporations but confines himself to Classic period Mesoamerica, while B. Billman considers the 'tempo of evolution' in the Central Andes and G. Stein assesses the social history of early states in Mesopotamia. Reviewing it all, Dr HAAS remarks on how, by "'decoupling" political organization from other aspects of evolving cultural systems' (p. 242), a less mechanistic view of social evolution can be developed. The variety in this book is very stimulating.

✉ Dr NIELSEN's book is this quarter's most daring. First, 'archaeological theories and methods . . . do not exist' (p. 17); he argues that sound practice can be understood through positivism (*cf.* 'Ideas and social context', below). Next, he invites the study of diffusion back, with particular reference to 'romanization' (*cf.* 'Integration and independence', below). Having opened his study window to let all our ideas blow about, he declares that his one assumption is 'a correlation between population density and societal complexity' (p. 27). The following chapters provide — as they must for comparison — his working principles on the archaeological interpretation of settlements, on urbanism, and on crafts, trade & transport. The book comes with a substantial summary in Danish.