

sporadic and confusing. Their original homeland included Westchester County, southwestern Connecticut, and Manhattan Island. Becker traces Wiechquaeskeck history through periods of pelt trade and colonial warfare and diplomacy, tracking the shifting identities of the Wiechquaeskeck as they periodically merged with other Algonquian speakers.

In Chapter 7, Kevin A. McBride sheds light on interactions among Pequot, Dutch, and English between 1611 and 1637. The material culture presentation here is particularly strong, with five well-dated domestic Pequot sites providing significant amounts of Dutch and English trade items. The description of these five sites, and their context within Dutch and English trading spheres, is relatively new to the literature, and the chapter identifies the largest concentration of “early seventeenth-century sites associated with a single Native group yet identified in southern New England” (p. 211).

In Chapter 8, John Pfeiffer discusses his excavation of the early seventeenth-century Dutch settlement of Roduins along the Connecticut shoreline in Branford. Pfeiffer contrasts traditional views of the Dutch in Connecticut, derived from writings by English settlers from English viewpoints, with maps and historical accounts of early Dutch commerce. The fort at Roduins gave the Dutch a location for trade and storage of wampum and furs in proximity to an Indigenous village.

In Chapter 9, Richard Manack describes the history of the state of Connecticut’s first well-documented European settlement, The House of Good Hope (Huys de Goede Hoop), founded in 1633 by the Dutch West India Company. Located in present-day Hartford, this fortified trading post and surrounding *bouwerie* was occupied by Dutch settlers and traders until approximately 1653. Manack outlines an early (ca. 1623) triangular trade in eastern New Netherland, in which furs, wampum, and European manufactured goods circulated.

An underlying theme of this volume is the Dutch West India Company’s (WIC) focus on maintaining the fur trade rather than developing long-term control of key geographic areas, which would have necessitated increasing the number of Dutch settlers in New Netherland. Another focus is that New Netherland during the early seventeenth century extended from Cape Cod to Delaware Bay, an often overlooked fact due to a paucity of archaeological data on small fur-trading sites combined with the English narrative that the Dutch were never in New England to begin with. Several chapters in this book provide new archaeological data that enrich our understanding of these small trading forts and the Indigenous groups that supplied them with furs. Dutch–Indigenous politics, warfare, and trade encompassed most of the Indigenous groups residing in New York, northern New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. They are the Delaware, Eastern Niantic, Esopus, Hackensack, Haudenosaunee (Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga), Horikan, Kichtawank, Lenape, Lenopi, Mohican, Minnisinck, Mohegan, Munsee, Narragansett, Navasink, Niantic, Pequot, Pompton, Quiripey (Quinnipiac), Raretangh (Raritan), Rechgawawanck, Sequin, Shinnecock, Sinsink, Susquehannock, Tappan, Wangunk, Wapenocks (Wampanoag), Waping (Wappinger), Western Niantic, and Wiechquaeskeck.

doi:10.1017/aaq.2022.86

The Imperialisation of Assyria: An Archaeological Approach.
Bleda S. Düring. 2020. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
xvi + 185 pp. \$110.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-108-47874-8.

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This book aims to appoint the Assyrian empire to a prominent and early position in the broader history of “the rise of sustainable forms of empire and imperialism” (p. 1), arguing that imperial

repertoires of conquest and control that have shaped the modern world can be traced back to West Asia in the second and first millennia BC. Assyria has indeed been neglected in histories of world empires and saddled with stereotypes of barbaric brutality and avarice (e.g., recently in press surrounding the British Museum exhibition “I Am Ashurbanipal”) that supposedly precluded it from crossing the “Augustan threshold” to more subtle and durable means of control. Browsers of the book’s title and blurb may be surprised to find that the majority of this book does not concern the best-known phase of Assyrian history, the Neo-Assyrian period (ca. 911–612 BC), in which the empire’s conquests stretched from western Iran to Egypt, but rather the preceding Middle Assyrian period (ca. 1363–1050 BC), when the capital city of Assur on the Tigris River controlled the much more limited region of Upper Mesopotamia.

Düring’s focus on this period stems from his work at the Middle Assyrian provincial site of Tell Sabi Abyad, Syria, and the core of the slim volume (Chapters 3–5) consists of a cogent and useful summary and new analysis of the archaeology of the Middle Assyrian empire. After a review of Assur’s early development as a city-state and base for an extensive trading network in the early second millennium BC (the Old Assyrian period) in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 summarizes the rise of Assyria to regional supremacy in the fourteenth to twelfth centuries and the archaeology of Assur in this period (here, the surname of the site’s original excavator, Walter Andrae, is unaccountably and repeatedly misspelled as “Andrea”). The chapter highlights interesting evidence for population increase, agricultural intensification, and investment in monumental architecture in the preceding fifteenth century, which set the stage for Assyria to later overthrow Mitannian suzerainty and go on the offensive; Düring attributes this trend to increased rainfall, for which there is as yet no direct evidence, however.

Chapter 4 reviews survey and excavation data from the empire’s subject territories, pointing out the “patchwork” of Assyrian intervention and infrastructure that resists classification into imperial typologies. Düring persuasively argues against prevalent “cost-benefit” theories that the outer provinces were conquered and annexed to provide agricultural produce for the Assyrian core or control long-distance trade routes. His explanation is rather that, having annexed these areas only “reluctantly” when they proved uncontrollable through indirect means, the Assyrians invested in agriculturally marginal “parallel districts” adjacent to already populous and urbanized regions as clean-slate footholds for the control of the latter and further used the provinces as outlets for troublesome Assyrian nobles and surplus commoners. Economic development was oriented first toward the maintenance of political order and not primarily for its own sake.

Chapter 5 explores the potential motivations and experiences of imperial and nonimperial agents in the provinces, drawing especially on textual and archaeological evidence from Tell Sabi Abyad. Düring describes an Assyrian “culture-of-empire,” but his analysis reveals that Assyrian and non-Assyrian traditions mingled in complex and inconsistent ways, and some parts of the imperial culture were adapted from preexisting local elite traditions. He argues that the empire’s durability depended on non-Assyrians “opting in” to the imperial project and seeing compliance as personally beneficial, but perhaps he goes too far in proposing that dependent serfs and deportees may have found their status “satisfactory” (p. 99; see also p. 140).

The framing chapters of the book lay out broader historical theses: (1) the Middle Assyrian empire laid the groundwork for the Neo-Assyrian empire, which means that the division between the two periods (marked by the loss of almost all of Assyria’s territory for ca. 200 years) should be replaced with recognition of a 700-year period of continuous development; and (2) Assyria’s distinctive traditions enabled it—alone among contemporary regional powers—to build enduring ideologies and strategies of control that survived the turbulent Bronze Age to Iron Age transition to be reactivated at greater scale. The first thesis of continuity in Assyrian dynasty, culture, and repertoires of imperialism is well supported here, although this argument is not controversial, and Düring acknowledges that the Neo-Assyrian empire produced further innovations and transformations.

His second thesis of Assyrian exceptionalism veers close to an old essentializing and teleological trope of seeking the root cause of Assyrian success in enduring Assyrian traits or habits of commercialism or cultural chauvinism instead of a broader set of cultural (yes) but also environmental,

geopolitical, and historical conditions that implicate Assyria's neighbors as much as Assyrians themselves. He shows convincingly that virtually all elements of Middle Assyrian imperialism have precedents or parallels in other parts of Bronze Age West Asia and Egypt, and that Assyria's fourteenth-century rise resulted from an unpredictable confluence of historical factors. Assyrian political survival into the Iron Age was clearly likewise a historical accident. Düring's complex argument is that the tradition of power sharing and entrepreneurship among the great houses of Assur during the Old Assyrian period resulted later in Assyrian nobles showing personal initiative in investing in the development of Middle Assyrian provinces, so after those territories had been lost, certain people retained cultural affiliations with Assyria that made it easier for Neo-Assyrian kings to reestablish control there. Each piece of this argument is a hypothesis resting on very thin evidence, however. The weakness of Old Assyrian kingship is indeed distinctive (unlike the use of vaulted tombs under house floors—incorrectly declared a “distinctly Assyrian tradition” [p. 38]), but this was perforce completely transformed by the dramatically self-aggrandizing rulers of the Middle Assyrian period, and we have virtually no evidence for the intervening 350 years. The idea that the resources to found the fortified provincial estates were supplied privately is not well supported (the text regarding seed grain for newly arrived deportees cited on p. 103, n. 51, explicitly says the grain was “belonging to the palace” and given to the governor by a “representative of the king”). Rule of outer territories through cadet dynasties was also practiced by the contemporary Hittites, allowing Hittite imperial culture and traditions likewise to survive in north Syria in the Iron Age after the fall of the central capital. Despite less intensive Hittite landscape interventions there, a sufficient number of people had bought into the Hittite imperial project and identity that these traditions were taken up and adapted by emergent “Neo-Hittite” rulers—some of Hittite descent, some not—in new Iron Age states. In spite of this cultural success, certainly on par with that of Assyria (evidence for retention of Assyrian identity by a significant number of people in the western and northern provinces is, again, thin), the surviving Hittite regional capital, Karkemish, was unable to reestablish the empire. The cultural imprint of New Kingdom Egypt in the southern Levant and Nubia, too, demonstrates that this was not unique to Assyria and cannot be regarded as a sufficient explanation for its Iron Age revival.

Notwithstanding its tenuous argument for Assyrian exceptionalism, this book makes a valuable contribution to the archaeology of empire by demonstrating the Bronze Age origins of many imperial strategic and cultural tactics of enduring importance.

doi:10.1017/aaq.2022.77

***Imperial Matter: Ancient Persia and the Archaeology of Empires.* Lori Khatchadourian. 2016. University of California Press, Oakland. xxxviii + 288 pp. \$35.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-520-29052-5. Open access (e-book), ISBN 978-0-520-96495-2, <https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.13>.**

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Scholarship on the Achaemenid Empire has consistently skirted the attention of archaeological theory. Ending this drought is Lori Khatchadourian's compelling and well-written book, which draws on multiple themes in contemporary archaeological research—posthumanism, entanglement theory, empire, among others—to examine one of the world's oldest and often misunderstood empires, which held sway over the ancient Middle East from 550 to 330 BC. Despite more than a century of research,