UNDERSTANDING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

This book explores the diverse understandings of the archaeological record from historical and contemporary perspectives while also serving as a guide to reassessing current views. Gavin Lucas argues that archaeological theory has become too fragmented and disconnected from the particular nature of archaeological evidence. The book examines three ways of understanding the archaeological record – as historical sources, through formation theory, and as material culture – then reveals ways to connect these three domains through a reconsideration of archaeological entities and archaeological practice. Ultimately, Lucas calls for a rethinking of the nature of the archaeological record and the kind of history and narratives written from it.

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UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND
For Elín, Marteinn, and Benjamín
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This is one of those books that had a long gestation. It began primarily as an attempt to develop some of the themes explored in the last chapter of my book *Critical Approaches to Fieldwork* (Lucas 2001a; see also Lucas 2001b), in which I looked at the idea of archaeology as a materializing practice. These ideas were most immediately developed in the context of seminars I gave, first at the Department of Archaeology at Manchester University in 2002 and then at the Center for Archaeology at Stanford University in 2004. Much of this work has been used extensively in Chapter 6. I first started to write a book on this theme during a sabbatical break in Portugal in 2005, but it simply did not work. In the same year, however, I published a book called *The Archaeology of Time* (Lucas 2005), and the chapter I wrote on the archaeological record was instrumental in taking me in a new direction. Discussions on the subject with Tim Murray during this period were particularly influential (see e.g. Lucas 2007b), and these ultimately led me to develop the concept of a book on the archaeological record, but connecting it to my earlier interest in materiality. My sabbatical in the fall of 2008 took me back to Stanford, where I began work on the new manuscript in earnest. Over the next few years of writing the book, interrupted inevitably by other tasks, I also wrote and published a number of shorter articles in which I explored and rehearsed many of the themes addressed in this book, especially the rather complex ideas presented in Chapter 5 (e.g. Lucas 2007a, 2008, 2010b, 2010c).

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