In her book *A Shadow of War: Archaeological Approaches to Uncovering the Darker Sides of Conflict from the 20th Century*, archaeologist Claudia Theune focuses on contemporary archaeology of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As the title implies, Theune specifically focuses on the archaeological evidence collected and interpreted from sites resulting from National Socialist terror (especially German and Polish concentration and extermination camps), both world wars, protests and liberation movements, revolutions, terrorist attacks, local wars, and sites of oppression, imprisonment, and murder. Theune's objective in this book is to demonstrate how archaeological material remains testify to death, armed violence, armament, imprisonment, repression, and rebellion, and the fight for survival against these adverse forces. She seeks to demonstrate how archaeological investigation of such sites helps scholars to interpret and understand recent modern history. Theune argues that archaeological examination of these dark historical events assists societies in rediscovering, remembering, and commemorating aspects of the recent human past that should not be ignored or forgotten.

The book is organized thematically. Theune uses a global perspective, drawing on artifacts and site examples from around the world. Her own research is primarily on National Socialist terror camps, prisons, battlefields, and mass graves. She draws more frequently on such data to interpret the living conditions, survival strategies, and victims' deaths at these places. Chapters 1 through 3 serve as an introduction to the methodology, ethics, and research philosophy relevant to the field of archaeology in relation to recent historical sites. Chapter 1 discusses the development of archaeological inquiry into the wide variety of twentieth-and twenty-first-century war and atrocity sites. Chapter 2 covers ethics, arguing for coordinating the inclusion of all stakeholders, especially bereaved families. Chapter 3 examines the range of potential sources available to researchers, including artifacts, structural remnants, writing, witness accounts, oral histories, photographs, and drawings. Archaeological sites frequently contain remains that provide insight into forgotten and suppressed history. Archaeological investigations play a role in civic education, remembrance, and memorial about modern dark heritage and thus aid in the prevention of atrocities in the future.

Chapters 4 through 13 cover diverse types of sites and the variety of research questions and challenges raised in their investigation. Chapter 4 covers sites and monuments of the two world wars. Theune discusses the extensive remains of
the Western Wall, Atlantic Wall, battlefields, trenches, posts, bunkers, tank traps, flak towers, barracks, armament industries, wrecked vessels, plane crashes, tunnels, rail lines, civilian impact sites, middens and dumps, memorial sites, mass graves, cemeteries, and material remains ranging in size from tanks to buttons. Chapter 5 discusses small-scale wars, such as proxy wars and resistance against totalitarian dictators and colonialism, resulting in mass graves across the world. Theune highlights that the archaeological studies of such conflict sites are useful in reconstructing tactics, strategy, and equipage regarding such conflicts. Examples used include the 1918 Battle of Kallaya (Libya), the 1916 Easter Rising (Ireland), and the 1936 Siege of Oveido (Spanish Civil War).

Chapter 6 is an extensive and intensive examination of the archaeology of National Socialist concentration, internment, and extermination camps, among other types of forcible detention centers. Of the thousands of camps, there are only a few with surviving material remains. Theune describes excavations at about a dozen distinct types of camps. Investigations have led to the relocation of barracks, killing areas, roll call squares, fences, refuse pits, and mass graves. These investigations have also contributed to the creation of accurate educational, commemoration, and memorial facilities. In chapter 7, Theune covers the archaeology of civil disobedience. Examples explored include the 1914 Ludlow Massacre (migrant workers in Colorado); 1950s-70s protests against nuclear testing in Mercury City, Nevada (the Peace Camp at the main gate); 1980s-2000s protest camps of females against cruise missiles at Greenham Common (Great Britain); and a 1995 protest camp against nuclear waste storage at the salt dome in Gorleben (Germany).

In chapter 8, Theune examines the actions and negotiations at boundaries along border areas. Evidence includes the recovery of ceramic insulators as well as fragments and segments of barbed wire around the perimeters of camps and trenches. Theune cites the 1969 Peace Wall in Belfast, the 1961-89 Berlin Wall in Germany, and the remains of the Cold War Iron Curtain between numerous countries as border sites that have been archaeologically investigated. Chapter 9 discusses human remains. The industrialization of modern warfare and its asymmetrical conduct resulted in massive casualties. Archaeologists are frequently involved in the relocation, identification, and reburial of battlefield casualties as well as the victims of mass killing resulting from both warfare and genocides.

In chapter 10, Theune explores the array of artifacts recovered at modern conflict sites, and the ability of artifacts to inform researchers about the conditions related to living and surviving. She discusses artifacts by functional categories, for example, militaria, household use, and facilities construction. Artifacts from detention camps can sometimes be distinguishable between victims and perpetrators and interpreted as part of self-assertive survival strategies. In chapter 11 the global scale of warfare, battlefields, mass incarceration, prison camps, dissent, and protest are examined. Chapter 12 highlights modern archaeology beyond the phenomena of warfare and conflict. This includes everyday life, work, and leisure, and is evident at sites like deserted or abandoned settlements and villages, factories, shopping malls, train stations, and parks. Archaeological studies have even been conducted on modern landfills.

In chapter 13, Theune examines the process of commemoration about modern conflict and atrocity sites. Commemoration is often an underlying motivational force behind the investigation of sites involving the difficult aspects of modern history. Theune argues that commemoration involves the perpetuation of collective memory and must consider not only the interpretation of preserved site remnants (such as the Berlin Wall and the World Trade Center Towers) but also the remembrance of intentionally destroyed sites by such groups as the Khmer Rouge, Taliban, and Islamic
State. Accurate commemoration is also challenged by the tendency to simplify narratives and through the omission of details.

Theune's overarching argument is that the archaeological investigation of twentieth- and twenty-first-century sites of conflict is to prevent such events from happening again. Theune states this succinctly: “The voices of the opposition, of the lost and of the disappeared cannot be allowed to become diffused and forgotten by denial, discrimination, injustice and terror. To stand against these atrocities and to use these as lessons to ensure that such things must not be repeated is critically important” (p. 166). Theune does commanding work in supporting her argument. The scope of the book is broad and incorporates diverse incidents and places from across the world. This work is especially strong on coverage of central Europe during the world wars, elucidated most thoroughly in the chapters about concentration and internment camps (chapter 6) and artifacts (chapter 10). At times her use of examples gets a bit repetitive, such as in the discussion of globalization (chapter 11). The book is lavishly illustrated with color photos, maps, and figures that effectively demonstrate the utility of archaeological studies in studying contemporary dark history. A Shadow of War would be especially useful to historians of modern warfare and conflict who are seeking how to integrate archaeological research into their research perspectives. Historians of material culture will also find this book helpful in expanding their perspective regarding the modern era. The book would also be highly effective for teachers at the high school and college levels who are looking for innovative ways to inform students about modern history beyond typical textual approaches. Theune’s study would also be a practical introduction for archaeologists who have not worked on these types of sites in the modern era.

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