

African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter

Volume 11
Issue 4 December 2008

Article 14

12-1-2008

The Archaeology of Alcohol and Drinking

Frederick H. Smith
College of William & Mary, fhsmi@wm.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan>

Recommended Citation

Smith, Frederick H. (2008) "The Archaeology of Alcohol and Drinking," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 4 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan/vol11/iss4/14>

This New Books is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

New Book

The Archaeology of Alcohol and Drinking

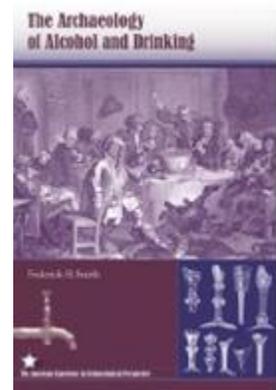
By Frederick H. Smith.

University Press of Florida, Paperback, 176 pp., ISBN-13: 978-0813032900, November, 2008.

Description from the Publisher:

"Smith interrogates sherds and other leavings of bibulous entertainments, drunken binges, and everyday drinking in a demonstration of historical archaeology's meaningful contributions to the study of alcohol and its use and abuse in the early modern and modern world." -- Mary C. Beaudry, Boston University.

"Provides an exhaustive though concise synthesis of the literature on the historical archaeology of alcohol production, distribution, and consumption. Student and professional alike will benefit from Smith's expansive knowledge of the historical archaeology of drinking." -- James A. Delle, Kutztown University.



Through its complex history, alcohol has served many cultural functions, often constructive ones. For centuries it has been used as a valuable economic commodity, a medicinal tool, a focus of social gatherings, and a mechanism for psychological escape.

Frederick Smith identifies key themes associated with alcohol production, distribution, and consumption. He discusses industrial and home production of alcoholic beverages and both public and clandestine drinking. He defines the contexts in which drinking takes place and the motivations -- social and antisocial -- for alcohol consumption.

As a case study, Smith examines archaeological evidence of alcohol use from a cave site in Barbados, proposing that major historical events can be influenced by the social and spiritual use of alcohol. At the same time, Smith argues, alcohol can also provide people with a temporary respite from the challenges of daily life.