

*L'îlot des Palais: Chantier-école de
l'Université Laval, saison 2007*

ISABELLE BÊTY AND NICOLAS
FORTIER

CELAT, Quebec, QC, 2013. 191 pp.,
90 figs. C\$40.00 paper.

*L'îlot des Palais: Chantier-école de
l'Université Laval, saison 2008*

TOMMY SIMON PELLETIER,
CAROLINE PARENT, AND MATHIEU
BEAUDRY

CELAT, Quebec, QC, 2013. 261 pp.,
144 figs. C\$40.00 paper.

These two volumes arise from the 2007 and 2008 field seasons of the long-running Laval University (Quebec) archaeology field school, the most established francophone field school in North America, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2012. As the introductions to both volumes describe, Laval students learn field methods at the undergraduate degree level, and are then offered the opportunity to direct fieldwork (under the overall supervision of Laval staff) at the Master's degree level (or *2e cycle*). The Master's students apply for the relevant permit, undertake the logistical planning, direct the fieldwork, supervise the assemblage analysis, and then write a report. This is deliberately designed as a professional apprenticeship drawing on method, theory and practice, and—as the introduction to the 2008 volume notes—is the foundation of the “complete experience” that is the foundation of the Laval field school's excellent reputation.

Crucially—as evidenced by these volumes—the students are given the opportunity to (are

indeed expected to) publish a formal final report. Here the volumes have been published as part of the *Cahiers d'archéologie du CELAT* series via CELAT (an arts and letters research center drawing on the expertise of three Francophone Quebec universities) and with the support of both the City of Quebec and the provincial Ministry of Culture and Communications. On one level, these are Master's student reports on graduate student-directed fieldwork, but on another level these are formal publications produced via a university program that gives students a holistic experience of the archaeological process through publication of their fieldwork in a professional university and government-sponsored monograph series. The pros and cons of these reports should be understood on the basis of these factors.

Both volumes describe work undertaken at the Îlot des Palais site in Quebec City, located just outside the city walls at their northwest corner. Following the initial French settlement of Quebec, the site supported a brewery (1668–1675), the first (1685–1713) and second (1716–1775) palaces of the intendant of Quebec, and a mid-19th- to mid-20th-century brewery (1852–1968). Detailed English-language descriptions of the site, its history, and its archaeology can be found in various contributions in *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 43(1). Each of the present volumes contains reports on two separate areas of the Îlot site. In the 2007 volume, Isabelle Bêty's fieldwork sought to locate and study the gardens of the first intendant's palace, potentially identify the animal yard of the second palace, and document the subsequent smelting works and brewery at the site. Nicolas Fortier's contribution had similar goals. In the 2008 volume, Tommy Simon Pelletier was examining

an area immediately south of the second intendant's palace in order to better document the palace exterior in this area, locate and identify a building shown on two French colonial period maps, and study evidence relating to an early shipyard potentially predating the first palace. The joint contribution from Caroline Parent and Mathieu Beaudry sought to look at an early latrine feature and a possible irrigation canal related to the second palace, and to identify the function of a building associated with the maltings of the later brewery. Both volumes are accompanied by a CD-ROM containing the full text of the reports and Excel spreadsheets containing the full artifact catalogs.

That these are ultimately student reports—albeit student reports generated as part of one of North America's premier historical archaeology programs, and by highly capable students working under the supervision of highly experienced and highly regarded colleagues—does perhaps inevitably show. The presentation of data varies between the different reports (most obviously between the two reports in the 2007 field season volume), and there are sometimes minor inconsistencies in artifact descriptions and dates (though nothing necessarily misleading or inaccurate). It is also possible to wonder if English 18th- and 19th-century stoneware types could perhaps be given slightly pithier names in their French translations. To focus on

these relatively minor issues would, however, be churlish, and would detract from the main value of the volumes.

Both volumes offer useful snapshots of the archaeology of an important city-center site in one of North America's most historically important sites. The artifact catalogs are also valuable, since these data are not necessarily available elsewhere; what minor terminological inconsistencies exist by no means detract from having these data readily available for citation, and I have already had cause to draw on the ceramics data for my own research. The text is accompanied by high-quality maps and figures. Perhaps most of all, these volumes are a testament to the sheer quality of the Laval field school program. The expectation that students should publish their work as part of a program supported by both the academic community and the local and regional governments offers a model that other field schools in the Anglophone world might want to consider. It is true that the volumes are only fully accessible to readers with a fair grasp of French, but those who can understand the text will find much to reward them, particularly—but by no means exclusively—in the artifact catalogs.

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