

and/or their contrast is insufficient. Other figures (4.13 & 4.14, for example) could be removed. Overall, the book would be more useful to other researchers if the authors had focused upon the water-control features. They might have added illustrations depicting how water flowed through the features, and considered quantifying both flow and water loss.

The obsidian-sourcing data (Appendix C) was wonderful, but I would have liked it to have been better integrated into the excavation summaries. It would be useful to know how these sources varied through time, especially between the Middle Preclassic and Late Preclassic periods. As the site has Late Classic deposits, it would also have been a good idea to separate these results from the others. It is, however, clear that San Martín Jilotepeque provided the majority of obsidian to Chocolá, as with other sites in the area.

The discussion of the monuments at Chocolá and nearby sites (Chapter 6) synthesises a great deal of useful sculptural data. The cupule monuments, large stones with circular depressions apparently used in water rituals, are particularly fascinating. They are common at Preclassic sites of the Southern Maya region, but are only occasionally found in the Lowland Maya region—examples exist at Nixtun-Ch'ich' and Zacpetén in Petén, Guatemala. Of course, good work leaves one wishing for more. I would have liked more figures in this section documenting the various monuments. In addition, it would have been useful to label some of the identified motifs in some figures—for example, a non-Mesoamericanist would have trouble seeing the 'u'-shaped element in Chocolá monument 1. It would also be useful to summarise better the meaning of these monuments. Kaplan and Paredes Umaña encountered a potbelly figure possibly associated with a cupule monument at the top of the stair of structure 6-1. Could these be a variant of the stela/altar pair? What is the significance of the potbelly figures, especially in light of their possible association with the cupule monument? Kaplan and Paredes Umaña's assessment that the Shook Altar probably originated near Chocolá as a 'marker' for the exchange network seems sound. Yet I would not agree that it necessarily indicates direct interaction with the Olmec proper. It seems more probable that Chocolá was connected to a long-distance network of ideas and commodities. More broadly, we should not assume that the Olmec were the ultimate origin of the various traits that are classified as Olmecoid.

As with other recent scholarship, Kaplan and Paredes Umaña clearly reveal that social complexity developed in the Maya region earlier than previously thought. The landscape of Chocolá, including the placement of the site, coordination of the architecture and creation and maintenance of the system of conduits, would have required a degree of coordination and planning. The surplus production of cacao probably allowed the emergence of an early state centred upon Chocolá, and the authors propose that this was grown in formal orchards. While there is limited evidence for this interpretation, the fact that they found cacao residue on a large number of vessels, and that the area still produces cacao today, certainly shows it is a possibility. I respectfully disagree with Kaplan and Paredes Umaña, however, on the necessity of kingship in this early state—we might call this the Camelot syndrome. The search for kingship was one of the factors delaying the realisation that states emerged earlier than the Early Classic period. Many societies—the Preclassic Maya among them—developed in a more cooperative manner without using kings as dominant symbols. Overall, however, this excellent book will be useful to scholars interested in the early Maya and those concerned with the role of water management in the development of social complexity.

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STEPHANIE WYNNE-JONES & ADRIA LAVIOLETTE (ed.). *The Swahili world*. 2018. Abingdon & New York: Routledge; 978-1-138-91346-2 £165.



This edited volume provides a compilation of research carried out on the Swahili coast and its archaeological sites. It is divided into three parts: Part I: environment, background and Swahili historiography; Part II: the Swahili age; and Part III: the early modern and modern Swahili coast. The Introduction explains that the book focuses

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on pre-colonial Swahili, in other words what they refer to as 'the Swahili age'. The editors criticise the myth of external origins for the Swahili and rightly emphasise that the Swahili are Africans. They have more difficulty, however, when trying to integrate recent research findings extending inland, arguing that the Swahili are not just a coastal people. I would argue that the Swahili (not only in respect of their very recent name: 'those of the coast') are a primarily maritime culture with networks of exchange spread all around the Indian Ocean. Although this Introduction is far from comprehensive, the editors do acknowledge a link between the medieval Swahili and the modern Swahili, and they recognise the Swahili as a Muslim culture.

After two good chapters on the coastal landscape and the resources of the ocean fringe there follows a more critical chapter on history and archaeology: a tentative historiography. John Sutton explains that James Kirkman, the pioneer of Swahili archaeology, worked in virtual academic isolation. This seems slightly nonsensical; surely all pioneers are to some degree isolated? Sutton is, in my opinion, overly critical of Kirkman and his colleague Neville Chittick, and some of this criticism is entirely unwarranted. He suggests that these two deliberately avoided using radiocarbon dating because they were sceptical of the technique, but his example of how this led to erroneous conclusions is from a part of the site of Gede (outside the city wall), which was not discovered until after Kirkman's death. Chapters 6 and 8, entitled 'Defining the genetic ancestry of the Swahili' and 'The Swahili language and its early history', respectively, are very clear and informative. They demonstrate the diversity of the Swahili and the ways in which different Indian Ocean peoples and languages were integrated with local Bantu/African populations and cultures.

Part II starts with an interesting chapter on the Swahili origins, co-written by Horton and Chami, two important figures of Swahili archaeology who hold very different opinions on this topic. Horton promoted the Nilotic origin of the Swahili, whereas Chami emphasised the role of Bantu populations. This excellent chapter combines these two different visions to argue for the now established conclusion, supported by most linguists and biologists, that the Swahili have multiple origins including Arabia, India and Persia.

There then follows a succession of very short chapters all relating to the main Swahili archaeological sites,

from Manda, Shanga and Malindi in the north to Pemba and the Zanzibar islands in the south. Throughout this section, and to some degree the whole book, there is a marked absence of illustrations, with almost no plans of the sites and monuments or material culture. Researchers or students will have to refer to articles or monographs to access the material mentioned. A notable exception is the chapter on 'Gede' (Gedi) by Matthew Pawlowicz, which is well documented, includes a good description of the site and (at last!) a good plan. The historiography of the site is, however, divided into three parts, giving equal weight to 10 years of work by Kirkman, five years of my own research and a single season by a PhD student. One might argue that affording equal prominence to investigations that lasted a mere one and a half months as to a combined 15 years of work (Kirkman and Pradines) is not scientifically realistic!

Wynne-Jones provides a chapter on the sites of Kilwa and Songo Mnara, although she makes limited reference to the previous research and conservation work carried out in Kilwa over a period of 10 years, and without mentioning the previously drawn map of Songo Mnara. Then we have two chapters on the Comoros: the first human settlements in the Comoros are still subject to discussion due to some suspicious radiocarbon dating, but most probably date to around the sixth to the eighth centuries AD. It would be extremely interesting for research purposes to understand what motivated these first settlements. It is, however, clear that by the ninth century, the main archaeological site of Dembeni was an active centre for the international trade of rock crystal, exporting to the Abbasid caliphate and Fatimid Egypt.

In the 'Daily life' section, it is encouraging to see that the editors have started to use ethnography to understand the Swahili. I agree with them that we have to distance ourselves a little from using comparative material, as the modern Swahili society is different from that of the medieval period, albeit not entirely. The chapter on metal work by Bertram could have benefited from greater engagement with historical sources. Although we have very limited historical information on sub-Saharan Africa, texts such as that of al-Idrisi specifically mention iron production on the East African coast and the quantities exported to India. Swahili archaeology is not just African archaeology or Islamic archaeology, it is a discipline related to medieval archaeology or historical

archaeology, and therefore primary sources are important in order to understand and situate past material culture.

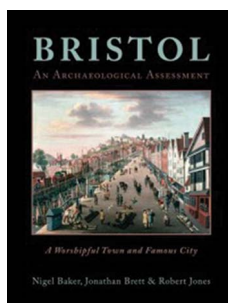
The next sub-section is devoted to trade and connectivity, with an interesting, although again poorly illustrated, chapter on dhow trade. Two further high-quality chapters by Walz and Kusimba examine the relationships between the Swahili and inland areas. The chapter on the currencies of the Swahili world is rather vague and would have benefited from greater input from numismatists. On the other hand, the chapters by Marilee Wood (on beads), by Seth Priestman (on Islamic ceramics) and by Bing Zhao and Dashu Qin (on Chinese ceramics) are excellent and well documented, with ceramic drawings and even photographs of the Chinese material.

Horton's chapter on the Islamic architecture of the Swahili coast deals exclusively with religious architecture: mosques and tombs. I would question whether this categorisation is appropriate—one could equally argue that Islamic architecture also encompasses palaces, forts, town walls and houses. This chapter also misses out some key German and French publications. Fortunately, the following chapter by Gensheimer does deal with Swahili houses and is more grounded in recent literature, despite again having too few illustrations.

Part III is devoted to the early modern and contemporary Swahili coast. I am pleased that this part attempts to acknowledge that Swahili culture is still very much alive. The chapter on 'Islam in the Swahili world' by Bang is essential to understanding coastal Muslim traditions and society. It is important to take into consideration the Sufi brotherhoods throughout the Indian Ocean, not only for anthropologists but also for archaeologists seeking to explain the presence of multiple mosques at sites such as Songo Mnara or Kua on the Tanzanian coast. The article by Biginagwa and Mapunda on the Kilwa-Nyasa caravan route provides insights into a major axis of the ivory/slave trade with the hinterland, an alternative to the famous route from Bagamoyo-Ujiji. Overall, this book has many positives, but is firmly focused on the Anglophone world.

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NIGEL BAKER, JONATHAN BRETT & ROBERT JONES.  
*Bristol: a worshipful town and famous city. An archaeological assessment.* 2018. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78570-877-0 £40.



This substantial volume follows in the footsteps of a series of pilot studies for the Urban Archaeological Strategies programme carried out for Cirencester, York and Durham, commissioned by (then) English Heritage in 1992.

These were then extended to detailed studies of some 30 towns with extensive archaeological remains, including Bristol. The database of evidence, which is at the core of this book, was created in 1996 and the first draft of the text was produced in 2002. This is therefore a project more than 20 years in the making.

Bristol seems to have its origins in the late tenth or early eleventh century, although prehistoric and Roman activity are known in the area, including near the city centre, albeit under thick natural deposits of 4m or more. Bristol became a major town during the medieval period as a result of its involvement in overseas trade, first with Europe and then with America; this in turn fuelled the emergence of new industries in the city at the end of the seventeenth century and raised its fortunes before a gradual decline in the nineteenth century. The book is divided into three parts: the background to the archaeological study of the city (approximately 40 pages); the development of Bristol (around 345 pages); and the assessment of the archaeology (some 23 pages). An appendix lists a selection of 'events' or interventions that have produced significant archaeological results.

The first part includes a fast-flowing resumé of the history of Bristol with few bibliographic references (Chapter 1); the setting, geology and topography (Chapter 2); and the history of research (Chapter 3). For a city that is 'topographically complex' (p. vii), the maps in the introductory chapter do little to help the reader grasp its setting or principal features. The first figure is a map of the area, lacking a scale, north sign, any major labels (e.g. Wales, the River Severn) or the standard British Isles inset to place the area

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