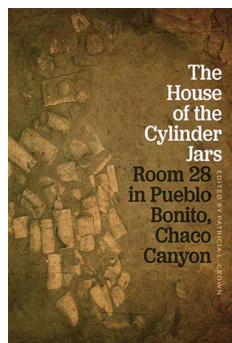


both contrast and focus). With an enormous bibliography of just under 950 sources, however, Guernsey's volume provides a welcome summary of the entangled transformations in both Mesoamerican socio-political life and the role of representations of humans in stone and clay during the long Preclassic period. It will be an outstanding and thought-provoking reference work for scholars for years to come.

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PATRICIA L. CROWN (ed.). 2020. *The House of the Cylinder Jars: Room 28 in Pueblo Bonito, Chaco Canyon*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press; 978-0-8263-6177-6 hardback \$95.



This is a book about a single room. Not just any room, but arguably one of the most important rooms in North American archaeology. Room 28 in Chaco Canyon's Pueblo Bonito great house is where, in 1896, excavators George Pepper and Richard Wetherill found a large cache of mysterious cylindrical vessels. Approximately 200 such cylinder jars are known in the American Southwest, 112 of which were found in this room. In 2009, Patricia Crown and W. Jeffrey Hurst discovered residue traces of theobromine on Pueblo Bonito cylinder jar sherds, probably from cacao beans imported from distant Mesoamerica. Chaco archaeologists now interpret Room 28's vessels as part of an important—perhaps exclusive—drinking ritual that we understand only poorly, but which may have been an important part of Chaco's history as a political and religious centre between *c.* AD 900 and 1140.

Understanding more about the nature of Chacoan ritual and the significance of this room were the motivations for the new research described in this volume. Crown, a leading Chaco scholar at the University of New Mexico, along with her colleagues and students, undertook a one-month re-excavation of Room 28, on the hunch (correct, as it turned out) that there were deeper levels that Pepper and Wetherill had not investigated. Researchers painstakingly sifted through the backfill and just as carefully sorted through records and photographs. Reaching the floor, they continued into previously unexcavated, earlier deposits. The research also included a new examination of Pepper's artefacts stored at East Coast museums, many of which were unanalysed, until now.

After contextualising the research in her first chapter, Crown turns to the architecture in Chapter 2, providing a biographical history of the room's diachronic transformation from an outdoor work area that may date to as early as the 600s (the Basketmaker III period), to a dark storage room for the cylinder vessels, to its burning and subsequent use of the burnt room as a turkey pen. Her work emphasises the dramatic change over time, with the plaza surface outside the room rising so much that over the centuries, Room 28 was transformed from a room on the plaza to a subterranean space.

The room was known to have been burned, and a major research question was to understand the relationship between that event and the heap of cylinder vessels that Pepper found on the floor. Crown's reconstruction of the event is startling: a tableau set, with cylinder vessels lined up on a wooden shelf and pottery vessel 'guardians' blocking the doorway, ornaments and precious materials sprinkled throughout, and a fire set with the intent of ritually terminating the cylinder vessels and their dwelling room, thereby neutralising their dangerous power.

Chapter 3 is Crown's detailed study of all of the ceramics from Room 28. The large data set, along with her findings and ideas, all make this required reading for archaeologists interested in Chaco ceramics. She notes, for example, the non-local production of some of the cylinder vessels, the possible maker's marks on some bases, their significant use-wear, and a transition from the use of large two-handed to smaller one-handed vessels. Sadly, there is no new physical evidence of cacao; Crown explains that the fire would have destroyed any residues.

Chapters by specialists add extensive detail. Kocer (Chapter 4) analysed lithics and groundstone, including sandstone lids made for specific cylinder vessels. Mattson and Kocer (Chapter 5) summarise the ornaments, painting a fascinating picture of a very special room. Thanks to the careful definitions and attributes provided, their chapter will be useful to any archaeologist working on ornaments in the American Southwest. Webster (Chapter 6) summarises the textiles, which were few and fragmentary, but which included cotton cloth and yarn, in addition to yucca and feather-wrapped cordage. Chapters 7 through 10 discuss the faunal and plant remains. The plant remains are particularly surprising; in her chapter on pollen studies, Smith (Chapter 10) discusses the presence of species that do not grow at Chaco today, conjuring the gourmet cuisine that might have characterised meals and ceremonies at even very early Pueblo Bonito. Brewer (Chapter 11) offers a short description of the historic artefacts left behind by the original excavators. Chapter 12 is Crown's conclusion, which draws together all the evidence to interpret the site's history.

The volume is, in some senses, a traditional archaeological report, but it is a highly readable one that brings the room's history to life. Crown paints images of ritual practitioners emerging dramatically through twin T-shaped doors and of factional struggles mediated by competitive cacao rituals—even as competing forms of drinking vessels appear. Appendix A, which gathers photographs of all the cylinder jars and other vessels from Room 28, is useful for ceramicists.

This research is also a useful example of re-excavation. One might expect a reanalysis of nineteenth century backfill to be rather uninformative, but Crown and her colleagues were able to piece together a remarkable body of data from it. Through the refitting of pottery, among other evidence, they were able to determine exactly where the backfill originated, thereby

expanding the research project beyond Room 28 and providing new information about several neighbouring rooms.

Excavation on US public lands, including Chaco, has been limited in recent decades, so this volume adds important new data on everything from cattail use, to non-local lithics, to the offerings found in postholes. The quantity of information gleaned from a re-excavated room measuring less than 9m² is remarkable, with insights spanning from some of Pueblo Bonito's earliest occupation to its latest periods. The volume represents a valuable contribution to archaeologists' understanding of the Chacoan world, and particularly of the role of cylinder vessels and drinking rituals in the social developments that marked Chaco's last decades.

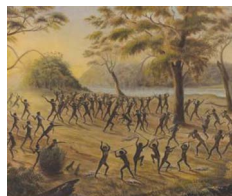
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CHRISTOPHE DARMANGEAT. 2020. *Justice and warfare in Aboriginal Australia*. London: Rowman & Littlefield; 978-1-7936-3231-9 hardback £81.



**JUSTICE AND
WARFARE IN
ABORIGINAL
AUSTRALIA**

CHRISTOPHE DARMANGEAT

Did Australian Aboriginal peoples fight each other? This question arises in the context of a fierce debate over whether hunter-gatherer societies practised warfare or not. Darmangeat's book is an important contribution towards answering this question. The author's great achievement is having created an impressive database containing detailed information on war amongst Australian Aboriginal peoples between 1803 and 1951. As the author deplores, archaeological studies usually provide disappointingly little data on warfare in Aboriginal Australia, and most ethnographers—with a few exceptions, such as Lloyd Warner—only entered the field at a time when societies were already disintegrating and populations disappearing. Darmangeat manages to

tap rich sources of historical data on warfare, such as accounts from early explorers and settlers, colonial officials and police officers, as well as castaways and escaped convicts.

In Chapter 3, he explains the basis of his data set, which consists of 199 cases of violent clashes between armed groups. He excludes duels and corporal punishment, as well as penalty challenges, and focuses instead on regulated battles and “judicial assassinations” (p. 54) that targeted more than one individual. In 39 of 199 cases, the armed clashes took the form of raids and ambushes, and in 124 cases, open battles. In 46 of 199 cases, collective violence caused 10 or more fatalities. Some cases of warfare are excluded as doubtful—among them the massacre at Irbmangkara reported by Ted Strehlow. The discussion of this

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