

instances, erroneous information is given in the text and captions. A particularly egregious case involves one petroglyph that is assigned to two different locations (figures 2.11 and 11.4), both of which are incorrect.

Wording is sometimes repetitive, and punctuation problems exist. Organization throughout is a major issue. Worst of all, the placement of the photographs is random, confusing, and chaotic throughout the book, and the pictures selected commonly lack any connection to the topic being discussed. Overall, this volume has the appearance of a hastily assembled first draft that should have received much more editorial attention and organizational revision prior to publication.

At a time when the general public is increasingly aware of and intrigued by rock art and when site visitation is rising, Jones's humanistic appeal was written for a worthy cause. When conceived of and appreciated as art, these rock paintings and petroglyphs are perhaps a little less likely to attract graffiti. Although this potential outcome and the intent of the book are positive, it is disappointing that greater care and editorial oversight were not given to its preparation and production.

Pecos River Style Rock Art: A Prehistoric Iconography. JAMES BURR HARRISON MACRAE. 2018. Texas A&M University Press, College Station. xiv + 98 pp. \$35.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-162349-640-1.

Reviewed by Julie Francis, University of Wyoming

The rock paintings of the Lower Pecos region of west Texas and northern Mexico comprise some of the most spectacular and complex rock art in North America, if not the world. The distinctive, mural-sized, polychrome paintings are incredibly detailed. They exhibit multiple episodes of overpainting, and they have long been recognized for their otherworldly qualities. Several have been dated by AMS to portions of the Texas Middle and Late Archaic periods (4000-1500 BP).

In *Pecos River Style Rock Art*, an outgrowth of his master's thesis research in anthropology at Texas A&M University, Macrae takes a formal approach to the analysis of 43 Lower Pecos-style rock art sites. He outlines an iconography of religious and spiritual core motifs (scenes or compositions) and enigmatic characters within individual murals to argue that these represent a series of canonical narratives of an ancient Lower Pecos spiritual belief system. He proposes that this iconography and its underlying belief system developed as a crisis response to increasing aridity and nucleation of human populations in the canyons of the Lower Pecos. Macrae furthermore

suggests that the emergence of this iconography reflects the development of a nonegalitarian political system for the indigenous hunter-fisher-gatherers of the Lower Pecos.

This beautifully illustrated volume is filled with color photographs and detailed drawings. It is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the Lower Pecos region and its culture history. Chapter 2 outlines the general theoretical perspective. Macrae differentiates his "structural iconographic" approach somewhat from classic anthropological structural analysis, and he utilizes Linda Schele's methods to identify specific symbols and patterns of associated symbols. These reflect a syntax or grammar-like structure to give meaning to scenes. He also considers the Lower Pecos style to be religious, ceremonial, spiritual, and mythological in character rather than solely shamanic. Chapter 3 presents Macrae's basic analytical units, including the typical anthropomorphic and zoomorphic categories used by rock art researchers, along with items of material culture (often weaponry), geometric designs, and enigmatic characters. These iconographic elements are then organized into 19 core motifs or thematic compositions. Chapter 4 presents the resulting typology and outlines a richly illustrated catalog of the core motifs, more detailed attributes, and enigmatic characters with accompanying references to earlier research and identification, along with interpretations of general meanings. Many of the enigmatic characters—for example, the mountain lion, centipede, and gar—are interpreted as supernatural beings with associations to diverse supernatural realms, and they often reflect the "shamanic" aspects of transformations of the human spiritual leaders into these beings. Chapter 5 provides a general discussion and conclusions. Among the important observations made by Macrae are the metaphorical relationships between natural features of the rock and human beings, the conveyance of social power through access to supernatural power, the expression of religious concepts by the core motifs, and the role of the murals as "public art" to express differential supernatural and political power in a nonegalitarian social structure.

This volume condenses extremely complex concepts, data, and inferences in a readable manner, and it will appeal to a general audience. Many rock art researchers may also wish to learn more about Macrae's analytical techniques. *Pecos River Style Rock Art* makes an important point for those of us involved in heritage management and the consulting industries: hunter-gatherer rock art reflects aspects of religious and spiritual beliefs of ancient Americans, holds special religious significance for Native peoples, and should be treated

and preserved as cultural patrimony. Macrae also quietly establishes the importance of integrating of rock art research with “dirt” archaeology and the potential to enrich and enhance what we think we know about the ancient history of North America.

I am by no means an expert on the prehistory of the Rio Grande Valley, and I was filled with questions while reading this book. For example, is utilization of the rock shelters—as evidenced by the presence of burned rock middens—older, contemporaneous with, or younger than the paintings, or all of the above? How were uplands utilized? Did Lower Pecos rock art appear “full blown” as complex paintings about 4,000 years ago? Is there temporal patterning to the core motifs? Why did ancient Americans stop painting these magnificent murals? Are there more recent paleoclimatic studies of the region? What is the significance of these rock art sites to modern Native American communities?

Macrae’s study is largely synchronic, and a consideration of change over the 2,500-year duration of the Pecos River style, along with more detailed considerations of archaeological and ethnographic data, could provide some very exciting insights into the ancient history of this region.

Art and Myth of the Ancient Maya. OSWALDO CHINCHILLA MAZARIEGOS. 2017. Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut. xii + 289 pp. \$65.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-3002-0717-0.

Reviewed by Patricia A. McAnany, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

The loose ends and contradictions within Maya mythic narrative are legendary, and they have provided fertile ground for endless speculation and fill-in-the-blank interpretation. The desire to understand the foundational propositions that both unified and distinguished America’s great pre-columbian civilizations has propelled many a career among archaeologists, art historians, social anthropologists, historians, linguists, and folklorists. The situation is compounded by a wealth of primary sources (visual, oral, and documentary) that span 2,500 years—not the least of which is the extraordinary *Popol Vuh*, a K’iche’ Maya creation narrative that has been compared to the Christian Bible. In many books and papers, primary sources often are cherry-picked to build a cohesive narrative over a very long arc of time. As a result, mythic narratives have suffered much abuse in the service of Maya and Mesoamerican studies. Analogical or associational reasoning that jumps from one visual cue to

another has tended to dominate interpretation of Mesoamerican mythic depictions.

In *Art and Myth of the Ancient Maya*, Chinchilla Mazariegos takes a different and refreshing approach that is impressively comprehensive in scope. His primary goal is to decipher the mythic scenes depicted on Late Classic Maya (AD 600–800) painted and inscribed pottery vessels—the divine stories that provided the paradigm for human stories. Because of the naturalistic technique of portraying humans and nonhumans, these vessels—mostly from burial contexts—have been rapaciously looted, and they are now housed in museums and private collections that are not always accessible for study. Chinchilla Mazariegos, however, has amassed and presented images from a very large corpus of vessels. His stated intent is to draw out nodal events and characters within Mesoamerican cosmogony—not just Maya cosmogony. To get there, he guides us through mythic narratives and visual depictions from highland Mexico, Oaxaca, and Guerrero, as well as the Gulf and Pacific coasts. In presenting this large array of mythic accounts, Chinchilla Mazariegos reveals and revels in the rich diversity of iconographic depictions and narrative lore, while at the same time emphasizing the common themes—such as failed attempts to revive the father of a heroic god and, consequently, the inevitable acceptance of death and ancestor veneration as a necessary part of life.

The text is crafted around six protagonists (each of whom occupies a chapter): the maiden (a welcome change from traditionally androcentric analyses of Mesoamerican myth), the grandmother (often a sexually dangerous character), the sun’s opponents (the birth of solar and lunar deities being paramount in Mesoamerican creation narratives), the sun, the perfect youth (personified in the hero twins or twin headband deities of Maya lore), and the father (who cannot be revived after an untimely death and who becomes a subject of veneration).

In Dickensian fashion, mythic characters overcome extreme adversity and go on to become epic monster slayers and solar gods who rival Marvel comic book heroes. Other deities—particularly the maize god, who is modeled as a paradigm of rich fecundity—preferred to dally with well-endowed females. It is hard to back away from the impression that wariness of the dangerous power of human sexuality and reproduction was deeply and didactically encoded in Mesoamerican myth. Grandmothers, in particular, are portrayed as dangerous sexual beings. Chinchilla Mazariegos proposes the existence of grandmotherly protagonists with toothed vaginas, although mythic descriptions of such extraordinary reproductive features are