

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

somewhat veiled and are not shown iconographically in this book (Figure 47, however, does show a Nahua Tzitzimitl with a serpent between her legs). Nevertheless, in a world in which a woman likely completed her childbearing years in her late thirties or early forties and could become a grandmother at the age of 32, grandmothers would have been formidable characters—still sexually active, but in mature and powerful ways that revealed male vulnerabilities.

By arraying mythic narratives from all over Mesoamerica and examining their “goodness of fit” with scenes depicted on Maya Preclassic murals, Classic period pottery vessels, and—to a lesser extent—Postclassic codices, Chinchilla Mazariegos takes us on an open-ended exploration of Mesoamerican ontologies and embedded constructs of moral authority and existential dangers. Revealing a rich and varied knowledge tradition, *Art and Myth of the Ancient Maya* is written in a manner that is accessible to undergraduates, and it should be read by every student of Mesoamerica.

One wishes, however, that Chinchilla Mazariegos had moderated his stance against synthetic interpretation by composing a final chapter that returned to the common themes underlying his superpower-equipped nodal characters and their extraordinary adventures. Printed on glossy paper with hundreds of high-quality color photographs and black-and-white line drawings, the hardbound edition is priced accordingly—which dampens its potential utility for undergraduate and graduate courses in Maya archaeology, art history, folklore, or myth. Hopefully, a paperback edition will soon be available.

The New Nomadic Age: Archaeologies of Forced and Undocumented Migration. YANNIS HAMILAKIS, editor. 2018. Equinox Publishing, Bristol, Connecticut. xiv + 253 pp. \$50.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-78179-711-2.

Reviewed by Randall H. McGuire, Binghamton University

Around the world today, hundreds of thousands of people fleeing violence, poverty, and abuse have left the Global South seeking to enter Europe and the United States. The nations of the Global North have erected barriers (physical and legal) to deter migrants and refugees. They have dispatched their border guards to turn them away. Migrants and refugees travel thousands of miles, expend thousands of dollars, cross deserts, and float in stormy seas. Tens of thousands die, many end up in squalid camps or detention

centers, and some make it to the North where countless must live in hiding. Contributors to Yannis Hamilakis’s *The New Nomadic Age* use archaeology to study forced and undocumented migration during the twentieth century.

Hamilakis points out that this modern migration entails material and sensual experiences in time, and that the craft of archaeology engages with the material, the sensual, and the temporal. Thus, we can use archaeological methods to study and understand modern migration. Following the lead of scholarship in refugee and forced migration studies, *The New Nomadic Age* engages with modern migrations as a humanitarian crisis and seeks social justice for migrants and refugees.

The 19 chapters of the book—many of which originally appeared in 2016 in the *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology* (3[2])—span the globe from North America to Europe to Australia and Asia, and they participate in a growing archaeological commentary on the contemporary world. Contributors focus on dynamic material relations and the lived experience of the modern world. Archeological techniques help identify detail in the seeming chaos of the modern material world, unearthing the complex relationships that material shares with social relations, meaning, and agency. The chapters in *The New Nomadic Age* seek to understand migrants’ journeys: what they left behind, how they built new lives, and what the heritage of migration is.

Modern migration entails movement through space and kinesthetic experiences of landscapes and seascapes. Such movement is fraught with danger—thousands have died in the deserts of the southwestern United States in recent years, and tens of thousands have died in the Mediterranean Sea. Archaeologists in *The New Nomadic Age* find the materiality of modern migration in remnants such as backpacks and personal effects that migrants and refugees leave on the landscape (Chapter 3, Stewart et al.). The chapters discuss various types of abandoned material culture, including life jackets on Greek islands (Chapter 9, Tryikos-Ergas), and dozens of cars abandoned on the Finnish-Russian border (Chapter 11, Seitsonen et al.). Migrants and refugees also mark their routes with graffiti and shrines (Chapter 4, Soto).

The experience of modern migration creates empty spaces, in both social and material senses, in the places that people leave. Certain chapters in *The New Nomadic Age* discuss buildings left behind in the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan (Chapter 1, Riggs and Jat) and the bedrooms people left behind in Albania (Chapter 7, Pistrick and Bachmeier). In both examples, the materiality of absences is powerful.