

contributions investigate cultural identity, social status, and myth through iconographic and intertextual analyses. The chapters by Pozorski and Pozorski and by Park Huntington compare figural styles on ceramics to similar figural elements on monumental architecture in early cultures of the coast of Peru. They both conclude that elements of the figures are used to express a unique cultural identity amid neighboring societies. Scher combines formal analysis of costumes on Moche figural vessels with theories of ideology from Roland Barthes and Elizabeth Demarrais to reconstruct Moche ideas about the supernatural. She argues that human representation in Moche ceramics reveals societal ideals through the costumes they wear. Finally, Carrasco and Wald show how iconographic analysis can be employed alongside textual interpretation in the study of Maya pottery and stone monuments. They argue that visual images on Maya ceramic vessels are not just mythological narratives but are also depictions of political events for elite audiences that contrast with public stone monuments.

In Part III, "Symmetry Patterns and their Social Dimensions," authors use symmetry studies or "plane pattern analysis" to identify culture transmission and culture change. Whereas Washburn uses symmetry analysis to study the "step fret" motif on Mesoamerican and Southwest pottery, Minich and Price use that tool on Caddoan pottery of the Red River region. Both contributions conclude that changes in the structure of symmetry are related to culture change.

Finally, in Part IV, "Charting Innovation through Diachronic Studies," contributors examine changes in ceramics over time and show how they relate to larger regional and interregional social, political, and economic change. Bey analyzes "ceramic sets" at Tula and in the northern Maya Lowlands to identify economic changes that resulted from changing socio-economic relationships. Feinman takes a diachronic approach to the study of changing ceramic forms and styles in the Valley of Oaxaca, identifying patterns of change in relation to known sociopolitical changes there. Finally, Hirshman uses archaeology and ethnoarchaeology to study the organization of ceramic production during the rise of the Tarascan state, arguing that ceramic production did not undergo a significant reorganization with state emergence but remained in the household.

This volume comes at an important time in the history of ceramic studies in the ancient Americas. For various reasons, the number of practicing ceramic analysts has decreased in recent years, and there are not enough specialists to meet the demands of our field. I hope that this volume will inspire emerging

archaeologists, art historians, and ethnoarchaeologists, as well as remind senior archaeologists of the value of ceramic research and the analytical power of multidisciplinary collaboration.

*Colonial and Postcolonial Change in Mesoamerica: Archaeology as Historical Anthropology.* RANI T. ALEXANDER and SUSAN KEPECS, editors. 2018. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque. xiii + 433 pp., 111 figures, 27 tables. \$85.00 (hardcover). ISBN 978-0-8263-5973-5.

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The contributors to this volume are experienced researchers in the historical archaeology of Central America, primarily Mexico. All the chapter authors—Rani T. Alexander, Susan Kepecs, Thomas H. Charlton, Patricia Fournier García, Janine Gasco, Cynthia L. Otis Charlton, Joel W. Palka, and Judith Francis Zeitlin—were led to historical archaeology by Thomas Charlton (to whom the volume is dedicated) and his pioneering work on the historical archaeology of Mexico, which bridged the divide between the deep prehispanic and the "historic" past. Though one might expect a *Festschrift*, the current volume is instead a statement of theory and practice inspired by Charlton. Although the latter half of the volume presents individual case studies (covering Central Mexico, Tehuantepec, Soconusco, the Lacandonia region stretching into the Petén, and Yucatan), the contributors team up in the chapters of the first half to synthesize broad themes such as identity, religion, and economics. This does lead to some repetition between these synthesis chapters and the case studies in an already voluminous work. The benefit of this approach is a more unified synthetic accounting. Many of the ideas and data presented by these authors mirror contributions elsewhere, but these chapters are some of the most complete, synthetic, and broadly useful presentations of this work. As discussed in the volume's concluding chapter, there is a clear intent to make *Colonial and Postcolonial Change* a major source and statement on the historical archaeology of Mexico and Central America.

This statement springs from a second inspiration: Fernand Braudel and the *Annales* school of multiscalar analysis of material and documentary evidence on a world-system scale. The volume aims to break down two conceptual barriers—one chronological, the other methodological. It is successful in its more unique transgressive goal of examining the *longue*

*durée* trajectory of Mexico from the late prehispanic period through to the early twenty-first century. This approach delivers on the often promised but less commonly delivered potential of historical archaeology to examine the roots of the global system that emerges from European colonialism.

Using this approach, the book critically examines both (to paraphrase Stephen Silliman) the short *purée* of the initial Spanish–Mesoamerican encounter and the *longue durée*, if this latter term is meant to emphasize persistence and cultural survival. Dynamic changes of various scales and speeds intertwine with long-term trends and cultural practices that change, adapt (for example, ongoing recombinant patterning and bricolage eclipse static syncretism in the chapter on religion and ritual by Zeitlin and Palka), and sometimes disappear (deskilling and denotation are major themes of several chapters). In the conclusions, Kepecs and Alexander note that no one theoretical or methodological approach was required of contributors. There is an attempt (in a synthetic chapter by Kepecs and Fournier García and a case study on Yucatan by Kepecs) to apply Kondratieff waves—50- to 60-year cycles of world system boom and bust within larger 150-year hegemonic periods—to Mesoamerica as an organizing principle of the volume. Yet the K-wave approach is not explicitly followed up in most of the contributions, which instead often demonstrate the importance of local conditions on historical trajectories. A study (Kepecs, Fournier García, Alexander, and Otis Charlton) of different approaches to agave plants (resulting in henequen and pulque) in Central Mexico and in Yucatan demonstrates the complex and varied interplay between geographically, chronologically, and socially distinct settings and global economic forces.

However, the broader hegemonic periods echo through a general chronological trajectory that emerges from the synthetic and case study chapters. A Late Postclassic Mesoamerica varying between centralized empire and independent trading cities in the east undergoes an initial century of reorganization after the Spanish invasion. Historical records emphasize *congregación*, but the material record is mixed, with indigenous agricultural patterns persisting to varying degrees, depending on competition with Spanish economic goals (the role of livestock in indigenous and *ladino* lifeways is all over the map) and broader economic variables.

The synthetic and case studies generally attest to a subsequent period of colonial and indigenous economic and demographic languishing, loosely contemporary with the rise of the British Empire at the expense of the Spanish. Different regions have their

own trajectories in this period, but with the exception of the ethnogenesis of the Lacandon (Palka), indigenous cultural and economic independence declines in this period. The subsequent period of Mexican independence is clearly detected across the board through the transformations wrought by foreign, especially U.S., capital and the subsequent growth in economic inequality leading to the Mexican Revolution. Archaeology is particularly strong here in erasing the informal barrier separating Early Modern/Colonial and Industrial/Republican (from the perspective of Latin America) studies, emphasizing that the economic, social, and landscape reorderings in Mexico were on par with that of the initial Spanish conquest.

The Mexico focus of the volume becomes noticeable in the twentieth century as the revolution and government reforms again change the landscape through strategies that lower economic inequality and decrease foreign dependence, yet trigger longer-term destruction of traditional economic knowledge and landscapes. Finally, a post-NAFTA neoliberal reintroduction of transnational capital leads to social and economic ruin, resulting in displacement and the narco economy. These effects are particularly palpable on the page as the contributors describe their own experiences with changes in the communities they study. Connecting Late Postclassic Mesoamerican society and culture to twenty-first-century globalization in a data-driven and grounded way is an important accomplishment of this volume.

The other major stated aim of the volume—breaking down the barriers between documentary, material, and oral data—is less ambitious and meets with mixed results. Mesoamerican studies have a long history of blending archaeological, ethnohistoric, and ethnographic data, although this volume is explicitly more careful in critically situating ethnohistoric and ethnographic data as changing rather than timeless ideals. Within the volume (I recognize as an archaeologist that this may be my bias), some of the strongest demonstrations of broader themes come from chapters rich in presentation of material evidence, such as changing architectural practices or artifact production, for patterns unattested or in contradiction with the documentary evidence. This is seen in the synthetic chapter on resistance (Alexander, Kepecs, Palka, and Zeitlin) and in the concluding chapter. That same concluding chapter notes that the situational and performative nature of identity favors documentary over material evidence.

Overall, *Colonial and Postcolonial Change in Mesoamerica* is an important testament of the deeper colonial roots of contemporary problems in Mexico and of the promise of historical archaeology for making the past relevant to the present.