

Ceramics of Ancient America: Multidisciplinary Approaches. YUMI PARK HUNTINGTON, DEAN E. ARNOLD, and JOHANNA MINICH, editors. 2018. University Press of Florida, xiii + 370 pp. \$110.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-8130-5606-7.

Reviewed by Michael Callaghan, University of Central Florida

Ceramics are the most analytically powerful class of artifacts available to archaeologists in the ancient Americas. We have used ceramics to reconstruct site chronologies, patterns of exchange, political networks, organization of production, aspects of identity, religion, and ideology. Unfortunately, analysts from different disciplines have rarely come together to work or publish on specific projects, yet when they did, the results were extraordinary: see the exhibition catalogs *Painting the Maya Universe*, *Lords of Creation*, *The Fiery Pool*, and, of course, *Blood of Kings*. These projects resulted in generative data, methods, and models that propelled ceramic research and pre-columbian studies in transformative new directions. This is the argument and value of Park Huntington and colleagues' edited volume on ceramics from the ancient Americas. Together, the collected chapters show how multidisciplinary approaches to ceramic datasets can better inform our knowledge of human behavior in the past and provide the foundation for transformative methods and models in the future.

The volume begins with an introduction in which the coeditors make their argument for a multidisciplinary approach. The chapter is a useful roadmap and introduction to the varied methods employed by the analysts in the volume. The coeditors include an extended discussion of authenticity and the ethics of studying unprovenanced vessels. It was refreshing to read a discussion of ethics driving the volume, but I was disappointed to see that it was not extended to the other chapters. Ceramic analysts working in the Americas have wrestled with this problem for decades, and it would have been useful to read how the contributors reconciled this ethical dilemma in their own studies. Along similar lines, another valuable

discussion that was in the introduction but not addressed by contributors was on the power of ethnoarchaeology. The coeditors present a concise review of some foundational models produced by ethnographic study; for example, the distance to potting resources, the *chaîne opératoire* of pottery production, and the effects of different firing techniques and atmospheres. Unfortunately, with the exception of Hirshman, contributors did not explore how ethnoarchaeology can inform the analysis and interpretation of ancient datasets. This omission narrows the scope of the volume, relegating studies to only archaeological and art-historical methods.

After the introductory chapter, the volume is separated into four parts, each focusing on a different theme or series of methods in ceramic studies. The introductions to each part are particularly helpful, because they synthesize the contributions and relate them to one another, calling attention to shared themes and methods of analysis (something contributors did only sparingly in their chapters).

In Part I, "Revealing Natural and Supernatural Concepts through Formal Analysis," authors present studies on the relationships between humans and nature materialized through vessels and figurines. It begins with a chapter by Dye who uses a six-step method of iconographic analysis proposed by Vernon Knight (*Iconographic Method in New World Prehistory*) to study ceramic motifs on "medicine" bottles of the Lower Mississippi Valley during the Protohistoric period. Dye uses multiple lines of evidence to argue that these vessels were used to spread the ideology of religious sodalities during a turbulent sociopolitical period. Next, Farmer focuses on the portrayal of the human body on figurines from Ecuador and Mesoamerica. He makes a compelling argument that changing representations of the human body—eventually resulting in the development of the "contrapposto" position known from Classic Western art—illustrate the evolution of philosophical concepts about the body, which previously had not been thought to exist in the ancient Americas.

In Part II, "Investigating Identity and Social Narrative through Iconographic Analysis and Intertextuality,"

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.

Reviewed by Jeb J. Card, Miami University

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*