

characterized as composite objects. Hein then employs these composite objects to trace shared burial traditions across the landscape and to delineate the identities of the varied groups occupying this complex region. This approach is productive in mortuary analysis because it forces archaeologists to be attentive to the multifaceted nature of burial rituals, and it reminds us to consider the complicated connections between burial assemblages and human behavior at varied scales.

Hein takes an exploratory and multivariate statistical approach to the burial record of the Liangshan region to increase understanding of this area's past social organization and regional dynamics before the Han dynasty encroachment in the early first millennium AD. Liangshan is an area that largely exists on the margins of archaeological research in China. Hein argues that Liangshan is marginalized because of preservation issues, disproportionately low levels of research in the region compared to others, and, perhaps most significantly, the heterogeneity of the Liangshan material record. This complexity has hindered archaeological research in the area as culture-historical models commonly used in China to identify regional archaeological cultures are ineffective. To address the heterogeneous nature of the Liangshan material record, the author integrates the concepts of life histories (derived from *chaîne opératoire* approaches in archaeology) and communities of practice into the core of the project's research design. Hein argues that this approach enables a multiscalar analysis wherein burial structures, interred goods, the body, and related features and artifacts can be analyzed separately before reassembling the components to analyze intra- and intersite relationships through time.

The book is organized into three parts. The first part includes chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 2, the author offers an overview of the research design's core theoretical and methodological issues. Most of the chapter is dedicated to breaking apart each component of the model, which the author terms a "mortuary *chaîne opératoire*." Chapter 3 introduces the geography, climate, and soil morphology of the Liangshan region. Hein also discusses the research environment of the region, the limits of the available data, and how she employs a "reliability index" to approach the complex datasets from Liangshan burials, which includes data covering 1,059 burials from 213 sites.

The second part consists of four chapters that form the core of Hein's research. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 provide the results of Hein's extensive quantitative analyses of the separate components of the burial record: grave construction and related features (chapter 4), the body and interment practices (chapter 5), and interred goods (chapter 6). In chapter 7, Hein brings together the separate components by connecting the various burial

practices and social dynamics identified in the previous chapters through time and across space. In addition, Hein proposes a chronology for the Liangshan region.

The final section is composed of two chapters. In chapter 8, the author builds on the analysis in chapter 7 and provides a broader discussion of group differentiation, geography, and chronology in the Liangshan region. Chapter 9 furthers the discussion of group differentiation and examines the implications of Hein's model in the study of the material record, particularly the burial record. The author concludes in these chapters that geographic limitations caused by the Liangshan region's numerous mountains and river valleys held a substantial role in shaping burial rituals and contributed to the differences among Liangshan groups. However, Hein acknowledges that the natural landscape is just one of many factors shaping the boundaries between regional groups, as these groups also changed along with shifts in the complex networks that crossed the region. Moreover, it is not uncommon in the region for cultural concerns to overcome natural limitations. For example, in Liangshan's Anning River Valley, some large stones used in the construction of megalithic graves were transported over long distances, despite the complex geography of the region. Hein argues stones procured nonlocally were obtained from places that held special meanings for those constructing the graves.

Given the complexity of the regional data and the fact that the author's approach relies heavily on context, a full appreciation of the pre-Han societal dynamics in the Liangshan region requires a dynamic perspective on several levels of archaeological data. However, the discussion of settlements and other nonburial sites is somewhat limited, which at points limits the effectiveness of her conclusions about regional dynamics. Despite this, it is clear the author has done intensive research on settlements that could be more comprehensively integrated into the kinds of contextual arguments developed in this book. Overall, Hein's rigorous application of her model is both commendable and worthy of further exploration in mortuary archaeology.

*The Power of Ritual in Prehistory: Secret Societies and the Origins of Social Complexity.* BRIAN HAYDEN. 2018. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. xii + 398 pp. \$125.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-1085-7207-1.

*Reviewed by* Gordon F. M. Rakita, University of North Florida

Anthropologists have long noted correlations between changes in sociopolitical complexity and religious organization. Whether these correlations are causally

linked or not and—if they are—in what direction the causal arrow points are questions that have been debated for just as long. In this volume, Brian Hayden argues that in the case of transegalitarian groups and secret religious societies, correlation does indicate causality, and that changes in secret societies drive developments in broader forms of complexity. In this dense and ethnographically rich exploration of secret societies, Hayden dissects these unique religious organizations and their roles in sociopolitical evolution. Although these groups were the focus of considerable anthropological attention in the late 1800s and early 1900s, there has been considerably less focus on them since then. Hayden argues that the importance of secret societies has been at best interpreted in strictly functional terms by prehistorians, and at worst, secret societies have been overlooked entirely.

Hayden defines a secret society as “an association with internal ranks in which membership, especially in upper ranks, is exclusive, voluntary, and associated with secret knowledge” (p. 8). Other distinguishing features of these groups are that they involve the appropriation of surplus production, the concentration of that surplus and secret knowledge in the hands of those at high ranks in the society, sacred ecstatic experiences, and the strategic deployment of violence (or threats of violence) to ensure the acquiescence of peoples both within and outside of the ritual sodality. Hayden derives this characterization from a detailed examination of cross-cultural, ethnographic, and ethnohistoric accounts of such societies.

After an introductory chapter, the volume is divided into three parts. Part 1 includes five chapters describing secret societies in the New World, including the Pacific Northwest, California, the American Southwest, the Plains region, and the eastern United States. Part 2, composed of three chapters, explores secret societies in the Old World: Oceania, Central Africa (very briefly), and West Africa. Examples of ritual organizations Hayden includes in these summaries are the Northwest Coast *Hamatsa*, the ‘*Antap* and *Kuksu* of California, *Katsina* groups in the Southwest, *Midewiwin* societies of the Plains and Eastern Woodlands, *Suque* and *Tamate* societies of the New Hebrides, and West African *Poro*, *Sande*, and *Egbo* groups. It is helpful that many of these chapters have “overview” callout sections that offer summaries of the rich ethnographic data provided. The final part of the volume includes two concluding chapters. The first explores the archaeological correlates of secret societies and presents some possible prehistoric examples. Identifying secret societies in the archaeological record is understandably difficult, and Hayden recommends a polythetic approach that arrives at

probabilistic rather than deterministic statements. His examples of possible secret societies come from the Middle and Upper Paleolithic of Europe, Neolithic and Bronze Age Europe, the pre-pottery Neolithic in the Middle East, prehistoric North America (the U.S. Southwest, California, Northwest Coast, and Mesoamerica), South America (Chavín de Huántar), Jomon-period Japan, Neolithic China, and Guam. A final chapter begins by reviewing the important sociological, psychological, ideological, and economic characteristics of secret societies and then dives into theoretical matters.

Hayden emphasizes the agency of secret society members and the self-serving motivations of those members in accruing both surplus production and political power. In doing so, however, he significantly de-emphasizes the agency of nonmembers and theoretical approaches that employ system-serving, communitarian interpretations of ritual societies. The pictures he paints are of conniving secret society members who intimidate and bully nonmembers, and of secret societies as not functioning to “ameliorate social stresses or to better integrate communities” (p. 356). What is lost, to my mind, is the reality that in order to affect the move toward greater sociopolitical complexity, secret societies must simultaneously promote both community cohesion (however illusory it might be) and establish institutionalized authority structures within the group. Ritual organizations and practices are able to do so by virtue of their ability to transmit multivocal representations of community that are acceptable to most community members while simultaneously establishing a small number of individuals within positions of decision-making authority.

I have some other quibbles with the volume. The depth and geographic extent of the ethnographic accounts of secret societies is quite variable. The chapters on Central Africa and the Eastern Woodlands are very brief in comparison to other chapters. A mere three pages on *cofradías* and caves in the Maya region added to a lengthy discussion of *Katsina* ceremonialism is apparently enough coverage to title the chapter “The American Southwest and Mesoamerica.” There are no accounts of secret societies in South America or vast sections of Asia. Equally disappointing is the woefully underdeveloped index, which hampers the use of the ethnographic data contained in the volume. However, the detailed information about those secret societies that Hayden reports is a strength of the work. Likewise, the focus on data of relevance to archaeologists, especially material correlates, despite the tendency of ethnographers not to focus on these things, is a selling point for the volume. I completely agree with Hayden’s final admonition that “secret

societies need to be looked at in new ways” (p. 372). This book does that, with a richness of data that will make it a key resource for archaeologists interested in these sorts of ritual societies.

*Vernacular Architecture in the Pre-Columbian Americas.* CHRISTINA T. HALPERIN and LAUREN E. SCHWARTZ, editors. 2017. Routledge, London. xiii + 228 pp. \$132.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-138-64615-5 (2017). \$38.36 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-367-87651-7 (2019).

*Reviewed by* David M. Carballo, Boston University

Most of us spent a lot more time at home this year, and chances are you have reflected a little more than usual on physical and geographic variability in domestic life. You may have ruminated on how social relations might be shaped differently by whether we live in dense or dispersed settings, whether we reside in single-family houses or connected apartments, or the amount of private space we occupy and how is it balanced with the public spaces we are accustomed to enjoying. This timely edited volume by Christina Halperin and Lauren Schwartz examines variability in domestic lifeways within the precolumbian Americas through the particular lens of what, following a linguistic analogy, could be branded as architectural vernaculars. Evocations of linguistics within architectural studies are common, because they capture tensions between tradition or rule-boundedness with innovation and creative expression in semiotic practices. They have been adapted by archaeologists as is the case here and in parallel scholarship on “architectural grammars” or “space syntax.” Contributors to the volume did not converge on a unified definition for vernacular architecture, and some terms that they use as synonyms include common or ordinary buildings, domestic architecture, and utilitarian building practices. Yet, in the aggregate, the chapters demonstrate how the construct can be heuristically employed to highlight how past peoples made conscientious choices in building styles and techniques across the spectrum of settlement type and socioeconomic status.

The volume is organized into three thematic sections with bookending introductory (Halperin and Schwartz) and concluding (Julia Hendon) chapters. Authors often engage multiple themes, but the division provides greater coherence to the cases. The first part focuses on issues of construction and production and features cases from the coastal (Jerry Moore) and highland (Anna Guengerich) Andes and

from lowland Mesoamerica (Schwartz). The section that follows places greater emphasis on issues relating to style and cultural or household identity, with cases from the Wari (Donna Nash) and Maya (Halperin) worlds. A final section engages more with temporal change and includes cases from highland Mesoamerica (Kristin De Lucia) and from the wide-ranging North American interaction spheres centered on Cahokia, in Illinois (Susan Alt), and Chaco Canyon, in New Mexico (Kellam Throgmorton).

Halperin and Schwartz open by noting that vernacular architecture “is both everywhere and nowhere” (p. 3). Although it may constitute more than 90% of the world’s built environment, the pivotal role of the everyday rhythms of life once lived in such structures was ignored by earlier generations of archaeologists in favor of elite and public architecture. Excavations of non-elite architecture were largely an outgrowth of the disciplinary shift in attention to settlement survey, when excavation of domestic spaces was often folded into regionally based research. As De Lucia notes in her chapter, a focus on vernacular architecture helps remind us that non-elites possessed agency and that we should reject implicit assumptions in the framing of analyses of elite or monumental buildings in terms of intentional actions and strategies, whereas analyses of common buildings are framed merely in terms of function and rule-bound tradition.

Varied strategies of non-elites are explored by authors using different methods. Both Moore and Guengerich incorporate ethnographic analogies from the Andes into their studies. Yet whereas Moore’s study is an ethnoarchaeological exploration of the use life of dwellings made from *tabique*, Guengerich draws on contemporary Andean practices of reciprocal labor in kin networks in proposing that houses in the Chachapoyas region reflect a neolocal residence pattern, with variance in labor costs relating to social capital and networks. Several contributors examine how vernacular architecture can be in discourse with types and styles of buildings promoted by powerful political and religious institutions. This could be manifested in local adaptations or “losses in translation,” as Schwartz argues was the case for circular shrines at smaller sites in the Maya region juxtaposed with monumental examples at state capitals. Stylistic variability and hybridity could also indicate tensions in administrative relations and worldviews between colonizing and subject populations in expansionistic states and empires, as suggested by Nash for the provincial Moquegua region during the Wari horizon. Architectural variability within shared macro-traditions may relate more to utilitarian and ecological concerns, as Throgmorton argues for the