

in the Maya area continue to insist that epigraphy has little to offer their research, this volume lays those tired assertions to rest. It establishes firmly that the ancient Maya left a body of literature that speaks to the very nature of social complexity. Martin's elucidation of this canon makes it impossible to justify setting aside Indigenous voices any longer.

Part I includes chapters on "Modelling the Maya," which reviews the history of scholarship on Classic Maya political organization; "On Archaeopolitics," which positions the current study within the history of debates about the evolution of the state and centralized authority; and "Worlds in Words," a powerful articulation of the "viability of using [writing] to understand long-extinct political systems" (p. 48). By the end of Part I, the reader knows exactly where Martin stands in terms of historical arguments about Maya political structures, the recursive turn in contemporary political science and political anthropology, and the usefulness of texts to inform us about not only individual events but also networks of power and allegiance.

Part II, "Epigraphic Data on Classic Maya Politics," constitutes almost half the book, with historic details from the epigraphic record organized into discussions of key institutions of power within Classic Maya society. Its seven chapters, each with associated case studies, detail how Maya elites wrote about their relationships with one another and with the institution of royalty. Chapter 5, "Identity," reviews the many titles, roles, and ranks conveyed in the inscriptions as a form of institutionalized authority with impact on all levels of society. Chapter 6, "Constitution," emphasizes how language was part of the active processes by which Maya nobility created and maintained political community. We learn that the familiar terms *ch'ok* ("youth"), *ch'een* ("watery holy cave"), and *hul* ("to arrive") were used to convey changes in status and sanctioned authority. Chapter 7, "Transcendence," delves into how writing and art were shaped by and in turn shaped spiritual beliefs within all of Maya society. These texts do not discuss theology per se, but rather how the sacred sanctioned royal power and thus how Maya people perpetuated divine authority and naturalized inequality. Chapter 8, "Matrimony," is the most comprehensive discussion of this fundamental form of alliance building in the literature; it engages with issues of power through institutions of kinship and how Maya elites used kinship to connect polities and dynasties. Chapter 9, "Conflict," flows directly from the discussion of alliance building in the previous chapter to address the language used when competition between polities could not be resolved in any manner other than war. Continuing his consideration of external polity relations, Martin titles Chapter 10 "Hierarchy." In it,

he explores how polities recorded their involvement in larger political configurations through terminology that stated the possession, oversight, or supervision of other royalty. Part II concludes with Chapter 11, "Coda," which explores how the diminishment of written records in the ninth century can help inform models of the social transformations underway at the end of the Classic period. Martin's observation that these late inscriptions concern foundational aspects of the literate tradition such as calendrical ceremonies and ritual performance, rather than historical particulars, illuminates the role of language in cultural preservation, especially during times of social crisis.

In Part III, the final section, Martin returns to political anthropology, drawing on comparative literature to place the patterns he has identified into a global context. "Classic Maya Networks," "Defining Classic Maya Political Culture," and "Hegemony in Practice and Theory" synthesize the details presented in Part II and draw on substantial statistical and distributional analyses of the patterns identified earlier. Few books have attempted such an overarching panorama on Maya politics and culture. Given that this section rests on the monumental corpus of data presented earlier, both epigraphic and archaeological, it offers a fascinating and largely convincing perspective.

The significance of this work hardly diminishes despite one omission noticeable to this reviewer. Why did some polities *not* use writing? Why are there areas of the Classic Maya world that did not engage in this powerful form of culture building, even as they shared architectural, funerary, mythological, and dietary practices with other Maya people? That is a question we can hope to answer now that Martin has so convincingly made the case for literacy as a tool of Maya complexity.

Already accumulating accolades and awards, *Ancient Maya Politics* brings Maya Studies into conversation not only with political anthropology but also Indigenous Studies, historical archaeology, comparative politics, and many other fields. This is a transformative work and a genuinely important one.

South American Contributions to World Archaeology. MARIANO BONOMO and SONIA ARCHILA, editors. 2021. Springer, Cham, Switzerland. xii + 461 pp., 101 b/w illustrations. \$149.99 (hardback), ISBN 9783030739973.

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This volume emerged from a 2016 World Archaeological Congress symposium designed "to illustrate

how particular cases of South American archaeology have contributed to the understanding of a global research issue: human relations with their environments and landscapes during the past” (p. 2). The resulting 17 studies written by 43 scholars represent a continent-wide sample with global implications, incorporating “subdisciplines such as zooarchaeology, taphonomy, archaeobotany, and geoarchaeology that contribute data from various lines of evidence in the interpretation of archaeological sites and contexts” (p. 3). This brief review only hints at the breadth and depth of the contributions.

Several chapters are reviews at continental or macroregional scales. For example, Haas provides a valuable model of the development of sedentism, arguing that population growth and recursive mobility intersect and result in protracted occupations. Verano surveys past and current research on bioarchaeology in the Andes; his article will be much cited.

Other chapters, although focused on a specific region, have broad implications. Borrero and Martin summarize the late Pleistocene occupation of southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego at about 12,900 and 11,400 cal BP, documenting pioneering adaptations to the last continent inhabited in prehistory. Similarly, Méndez and Nuevo-Delaunay review 12 millennia of marine adaptations, focusing on a 40 km stretch of the coastal Chile containing some 400 archaeological sites; their analysis of 25 sites indicates five distinct modes of shellfish exploitation over time. Villagran and colleagues present micromorphological and spectroscopic analyses of the Middle Holocene Zapatero shell midden, located on the coast south of Antofagasta; they document a shift from shellfish to fish, with depositional continuities punctuated by brief hiatuses until the midden was reworked by a tsunami event at about 4000 cal yr BP.

On the opposite side of the continent, Belardi and colleagues present data from the Coyle River basin, a region of high arid steppe in southern Patagonia where extensive but low-intensity use of the region by mobile guanaco hunters was a stable strategy. In the western Pampa region 1,800 km to the north, Berón and colleagues document 9,000 years of hunter-gather adaptations to a region marked by scarce and scattered resources—fresh water, lithic resources, food resources, and minerals—where prehistoric “catastrophic or environmental stress situations” (p. 105) may have led to abandonments or new adaptations.

Other studies explore how precontact societies transformed South American landscapes. Rojas Mora and Montejo Gaitán present data from GIS, pollen, and soil studies of raised field agriculture in the Caribbean region of northern Colombia; their 76.5 km²

study area is a sample of a *staggering 6,000 km² of raised fields*, “the largest [precontact] landscape modification in South America” (p. 187). Another study of an anthropogenic landscape is Giannotti’s analysis of earthen mounds (*cerritos de indios*) as adaptations to floodplain environments in northeastern Uruguay. In Amazonia, Shock documents interactions between people and key resources, principally fruits, palms, and nuts (FNPs), observing that “groves of FNPs and their potential abundance were maintained by human behaviors over generations. And thus, they are the product of human decision” (p. 236).

Other regional overviews have implications that extend beyond their immediate study areas. In their excavations in the northern Ecuadorean highlands, Ugalde and Dyrdaahl document the differential engagements of Formative (ca. 1500–500 cal BC) communities with craft production and exchange involving obsidian, Spondylus and other shellfish, and precious metals—findings significant for understanding coeval developments in Colombia and far northern Peru. Archila and colleagues present a theoretically subtle study of the Checua Valley in the Sabana de Bogotá that is focused on “the history of landscapes as socio-cultural scenarios where the links between organisms in-their-environment involved an inseparable relationship between them and their *lifeworlds*,” a concept proposed by Tim Ingold (p. 16). Engaging with diverse archaeological signatures—settlements, dwellings, rock art, burials, clay sources, and salt springs—this research deserves wide attention.

Given the prominence of perspectivism in Amazonian ethnography, Bonomo and colleagues present a fascinating study of zoomorphic features on Goya-Malabrigo ceramics produced by societies occupying the middle and lower Paraná River from about 2000 BP to the early colonial period (sixteenth to seventeenth centuries). Of the 483 zoomorphic features, 399 could be identified to species, genus, family, or order. Two basic points emerged. Specific taxa were emphasized: the features were overwhelmingly of birds, with parrots prominent. Based on midden analyses, the animals portrayed were not eaten, suggesting a “taxonomy whereby some animals were consumed while others were depicted/protected/worshipped” (p. 438).

Not every chapter is successful. In their essay on hybridity that they refer to as “the concepts of mixing and transforming institutions, identities, and cultures” (p. 387), de Almeida and colleagues explore variations in material culture among Tupian groups in Amazonia. Although their research goals are unobjectionable—“studying the increasing interaction scale over social forms and information flow not only as a

byproduct of migration processes, but also as a source of collective identity formation with premises beyond kinship” (p. 403)—the assumed correlations between pottery styles and social groups require further scrutiny.

In a deft and generous final essay, Tim Denham outlines parallel lines of archaeological research in South America and the Indo-Pacific region (his research area), in the process commenting on Tom Dillehay’s contribution to the volume. Dillehay bemoans the limited impact that South American archaeology has had on global archaeology, contending that

archaeologists working in other regions—particularly the “Old World”—consider South American archaeologists as “generally too ‘provincial,’ ‘myopic’, and too infrequently relate their findings to global theoretical and comparative issues” (p. 322). There is truth in this comment, but I was reminded of a presentation I gave once in the United Kingdom to a room of highly educated academics: they were *stunned* to learn that the Amazon River drains a region the size of Europe. Parochialism is global. *South American Contributions to World Archaeology* will help remedy this.