

chronology, and objects found rather than the concepts and assumptions informing the contributors' various deductions and conclusions. Concepts essential to reconstructing past social and religious systems embedding the mounds—such as social elite, resistance, ideology, ceremonialism, temple, and domestic sphere—are left undefined and not critically examined. Such concepts, however, have considerable interpretive baggage and thus need to be explicated precisely and used knowledgeably. The quantity and supposed wealth of grave goods are unquestioningly equated by some contributors with the status of the deceased, despite well-known qualifications of this assumption. Basic questions about cultural dynamics and their relation to archaeological statics are not raised. With the notable exception of Krause's essay, there is little sustained or systematic attempt to move analysis from the particular aspects of the archaeological record being investigated—the mounds—to the behavioral context that created them—a varying organizational and symbolic blend of public ceremony and private (mortuary) ritual. The result, from the wider perspective of the discipline, is an empirically valuable yet rather parochial volume which is uncomfortable with theory building and a comparative level of analysis.

The Managed Mosaic: Ancient Maya Agriculture and Resource Use. SCOTT L. FEDICK, editor. 1997. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City. xiv + 424 pp., 110 figures, 19 tables, references, index. \$60.00 (cloth).

Reviewed by Geoffrey E. Brasswell, State University of New York, Buffalo.

Until the 1970s the Maya Lowlands were frequently depicted as biologically and geologically homogenous, as well as poor in natural resources. Environmental determinists of the day alternately viewed the impoverished landscape as the cause of collapse and all social ills or as the source of inspiration that drove the Classic Maya to evolve a state-level society. Common to both perspectives was the belief that Maya subsistence strategies were based solely on swidden agriculture. During the late 1970s and 1980s, most Mayanists rejected this dogma in favor of a model of environmental diversity and intensive agriculture. Paradoxically, many chose to depict this diverse landscape as highly and uniformly cultivated in raised and drained fields.

The title of this superb book reflects a new model, one that recognizes both environmental and agricultural variability. Simply put, the ancient Maya used a variety of different techniques (including extensive long-fallow swidden agriculture) in a variety of environments. A substantial section of the book is devoted to describing these

techniques and why they are well suited or unsuited for particular regions. Nicholas Dunning, for example, discusses how intensive manipulation, such as that known from Pulltrowser Swamp, was not possible in the Petextbatún wetlands because of extreme yearly variations in the water table. In contrast, he documents relatively small terrace systems designed to catch fertile Rendolls, as well as notes the presence of checkdams and weir terraces. His observations suggest an explanation for why raised and drained fields have been so elusive in the central and eastern Peten: local conditions were not conducive to their use.

Laura Levi discusses diversification as a strategy for avoiding subsistence failure and presents a stimulating model for interpreting settlement patterns. Additional contributions to this section include a discussion on the importance of *rejollada* (sink hole) agriculture in Yucatán (Susan Kepecs and Sylviane Boucher), the use and misuse of modern land-evaluation methods for modeling ancient Maya agriculture in Belize (Scott Fedick), a description of the benign effects of tropical lowland flooding (Alfred Siemens), and three contributions concerning raised and drained fields in northern Belize (Peter Harrison; Mary Pohl and Paul Bloom; Kevin Pope et al.). Conflicting interpretations suggest that we still do not understand the chronology of these features, or even know if they are anthropogenic or natural in origin.

A second section, perhaps the least strong in this formidable collection, discusses the mismanagement of natural resources. Although most of us are in agreement that the ancient Maya and their agricultural practices created significant stresses on their environment, this no longer seems an adequate explanation for the collapse. People are not rabbits; we do not breed ourselves into oblivion. Given that many Maya agricultural practices were destructive, it seems more important to ask why a dynamic cultural system failed to adapt to these new challenges. By avoiding this issue, we abandon anthropology in favor of ecology. K. Anne Pyburn, in what for me was the most powerful essay in the volume, addresses this point. She reminds us that intersite relationships were more important in shaping ancient society than soil types and fluctuations in the water table.

Two more sections focus on botanical and faunal studies and on the management of water and other resources. I was particularly intrigued by H. Sorraya Carr's speculative contribution on the management of deer. Fedick provides a final chapter on landscape archaeology that reads more like an introduction than a conclusion.

Although the book is well edited and produced, the figures are meager and often of low quality. Many look like poor photocopies that have been reproduced too many times. The volume could perhaps have been improved if data on hydraulic and agricultural features in

the Maya highlands (particularly the Preclassic canals of Kaminaljuyú) and lowlands of Tabasco and southern Campeche had been included. But given the wide scope of the work, it seems persnickety to wish for even broader areal coverage. My most serious complaint is a haunting sense of *déjà vu*: several of the contributions have appeared elsewhere in only slightly different form.

The Managed Mosaic neatly summarizes a good deal of data and interpretation. It should be read by all landscape and environmental archaeologists, as well as Mayanists. I regret that it was not available when I last taught human paleoecology; it certainly will be in the syllabus next time.

Historical Archaeology and the Study of American Culture. LU ANN De CUNZO and BERNARD L. HERMAN, editors. 1997. Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, Delaware, and University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville. xi + 497 pp., 87 figures, 17 tables, 3 appendixes, footnotes. \$39.95 (cloth).

Reviewed by Christopher Ohm Clement, University of South Carolina.

Under the impact of postprocessualism, the mainstream of historical archaeology is rapidly changing from a synthetic discipline concerned with empirical generalizations about the historic past to one concerned with "thick description" of particularistic phenomena in specific geographical and temporal settings. Whatever the paradigmatic effect of this change, an interdisciplinary historical archaeology united by the material remains of the historic past will result. De Cunzo and Herman's edited volume provides powerful examples of interdisciplinary approaches to particularistic problems. Contributed chapters from historical archaeology and several related fields offer different perspectives on the past uniting these disparate views in a central concern for material culture, broadly defined as excavated materials, texts, public and private records, maps, landscapes, standing structures, and extant artifacts. Together, these add up to a materialist perspective informed by an anthropological approach to history. In addition to introductory chapters by De Cunzo and Herman discussing the historical context in which historical archaeologists operate, the volume contains three sections: "Construction of Context: Negotiating Consumer Culture," "In the Active Voice": Remaking the American Landscape"; and "Working Toward Meaning: The Scope of Historical Archaeology."

Section one examines material culture within the context of its use. John Worrell, David M. Simmons, and Myron O. Stachiw, in the "site biography" (p. 46) of an early nineteenth-century agricultural/crafts site in rural

New England, discuss change in domestic and economic organization as evidenced by domestic architecture and yard proxemics set within the context of a neighborhood economy in transformation from agricultural to industrial society. Ann Smart Martin uses probate inventories and merchant records to examine differential adoption of "fashionable" material culture and attached meaning by individuals removed from the centers of introduction. Jane Perkins Clancy highlights how the cultural meaning of Rockingham ware decorative themes, which are well described, reflects temporal variation in societal roles. Paul Mullins applies a marxist perspective to individual reactions to increasing industrial capitalism by examining technology, decorative technique, and workplace organization in Rockingham County, Virginia, potteries. Linda Welters, Margaret T. Ordoñez, Kathryn Tartleton, and Joyce Smith discuss the role of textiles and trade networks in contact-period Native American culture. Welters and her colleagues are textile specialists and provide a useful and exhaustive description of European textiles from sixteenth-century New England Native American burial contexts. Finally, Charles Orser orients toward traditional archaeological uses of material culture, calling for greater concentration on intersite relationships and exchange networks within a world systems perspective. His admittedly preliminary study, using published data from three plantations on the Georgia coast, is jarring in that Orser's focus is on network analysis rather than material culture's contextual attributes.

Section two presents landscape studies. Gerald Kelso discusses pollen deposits associated with management and laborers at Boott Mills Corporation, Lowell, Massachusetts, to illustrate different uses of yard areas by residents. Included in the paper is a valuable summary of palynological methodologies in urban settings. Martha Zierden's more traditional approach examines backyards in mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth-century Charleston, South Carolina, domestic compounds. Changing activity areas reflect evolving cultural values and the gradual shift from a busy seaport town to the quintessential antebellum city. A final urban study by Eric Sandweiss examines St. Louis, Missouri, in its transition from colonial village to late-nineteenth-century urban center. Context is provided by the scale of examination; broad strokes illuminate the social order guiding overall city planning, while neighborhood and household scale "vignettes" (p. 336) supply glimpses into how ethnic groups responded in their everyday lives. Section two concludes with the argument by Ritchie Garrison that patterns of tradition, simplicity, and household independence have been emphasized in rural landscape studies at the expense of complexity, change, and markets. Garrison focuses on historic farmsteads in the Connecticut River valley, linking archaeological,