

and class relationship models are used in a study of Annapolis, Maryland, to show that the Georgian "order-creating" instruments (clocks, watches, scientific and musical instruments) occurred contemporaneously with increasing inequality of wealth. When social hierarchies were threatened ideology defining and naturalizing order was brought into play, its material correlates ranging from housing to gardens, from individual objects to entire inventories. The ordering and reordering of life followed class lines beginning with the rich and diffusing to the poor. My colleagues and I have found this a fertile issue for argument. Some, including myself, believe that such "trickle down" ideology is the primary form of ideological diffusion. Others, such as Vince Schiavitti, interpret McGuire's chapter in this book, "Dialogues with the dead," as being indicative of class-specific ideology creation. Still others, such as Eleazer Hunt, argue that "trickle up" ideology is as important as "trickle down."

Orser's "Toward a theory of power" is a historically materialist class study of power relationships at Millwood Plantation, South Carolina, during slavery and afterwards when tenancy became the way of organizing production. Orser's analysis shows that the artifacts used in the 1860s were not different from those used after the Civil War but the social relationships were. These changing relationships could be found reflected in the material culture in contextual indicators such as an index of centrality.

As one who does himself do this type of archeology I find this book stimulating and provocative. "Interpretation," "meaning," and "capitalism" are important topics and central to Western society. We are the "natives" and we have the "native view" of capitalism. In addition, work on these topics cannot help but be productive of new ideas. The authors use the "methodology of ambiguity" to choose their problems. They examine the archeological record and the historical documents for areas of discrepancy, which they believe represent the fundamental issues for archeological research. This methodology appears to work. On the other hand, I think the authors reach very far to get what they get. There are many steps between the data and the interpretation that are not made explicit and are not obvious, and at many junctures in the research other interpretations could be obtained.

With respect to its style and aesthetics, the book was carefully prepared. Good introductions unify the chapters, the text flows easily, and stylistic differences are kept to a minimum. Those nameless layout artists, figure drawers, photographers, and cover designers also did a superb job. In short, this

book is itself a small gem of material culture. In her chapter "Craft and culture change in the 18th-century Chesapeake," in which she traces the meaning of printing throughout the pre- and post-Revolutionary period, Little concludes that "material culture does more than reflect social reality; it creates it." In the case of this book, it will.

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Dwellings and Power

Household and Community in the Mesoamerican Past. RICHARD R. WILK and WENDY ASHMORE, Eds. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1988. xii, 305 pp., illus. \$32.50. Based on a meeting, Pittsburgh, PA, 1983.

The Pre-Columbian peoples of Mesoamerica, now Mexico and Upper Central America, are justly famous for the artistic and intellectual achievements of their civilized societies. As always, however, the transcendent glories of the elite few were realized only through the support and hard work of the humble majority of commoners. Social energy was the first and foremost fuel of ancient power. Although it is both less glamorous and more difficult to investigate the anonymous ways of the populace, the reproduction of civilization is ultimately to be found not only in the wombs of the commoners but also in their homes. This collection of papers looks at the basic social building block of large-scale society in Mesoamerica, the household, with particular emphasis on the lowland Maya region (the focus of 9 of the 12 contributions). This is a good book and a timely contribution to the field. It is empirically substantive, theoretically thought-provoking, and intellectually cohesive.

The first of two major sections of the book deals with houses and households. From the vantage of modern Zapotec villagers in Oaxaca, Sutro and Downing observe that the construction of dwellings by groups of relatives and neighbors reinforces traditional ideals of architectural design. Commoners may be anonymous, but they, along with the extravagant elite, reproduce collective beliefs and values in their artifacts. This is an important guide to the interpretation of dwellings within societies and over time. It is also a way of bolstering the notion that sustaining populations count in the cultural evolution of complex societies. Yet though it is the consensus among contributors that the cultural foundations of civilization are manifested in household archeology, the

nature of that basic culture remains controversial.

Wilk, for example, urges caution in attempts to correlate Maya rules of family organization, such as the reckoning of descent through males or females, with rules of residence and household organization. In particular, he suggests that a nonunilineal multiple-family household may have been the norm in ancient Maya civilization, rather than the patrilineal extended-family household. An implication of such reasoning is that the larger and more complex archeological residential ruins might register wealthy patrons and poorer client families living together rather than senior and junior families of a patrilineage. Haviland demurs and makes the case for the elaboration of a household compound as a product of sustained patrilocal residence over generations in a "lower-class" extended family at the major site of Tikal, basing his argument on sequential architecture and burial evidence. Tourtellot, drawing upon archeology from the Maya site of Seibal, fashions a series of hypotheses to test the same general idea—that the complexity of residential compounds registers additions to a founding homestead over time—and finds himself supporting the prospect of residence rules. Weeks, reading early historical census data from the lowland Maya, points out that residential groups must respond to immediate historical and ecological pressures and that the improvisational nature of social reproduction should not be ignored. Though he is further impressed with the importance of marriage alliance as an integrative principle operating to link up residence groups, he does observe that patrilineal descent orders all his social groups to some extent. Finally, Leventhal and Baxter tackle the general issue of the internal organization of Maya residential groups from the vantage of an intensively excavated sample of structures at the site of Copan. Their statistical analysis of ceramics, however, raises as many questions as it answers concerning Wilk's thematic hypothesis that the residential compounds embrace both elite and commoner factions, although the authors believe that it generally supports this characterization of Maya complex residential groups.

The second section of the book relates households to communities in efforts better to understand the organization of both. Looking at early village organization in Oaxaca, Whalen suggests a pattern of increasing household size and complexity over time as a layer of intermediate decision-making authority between nuclear families and community leaders. Ringle and Andrews report on the remarkable community density clus-

tered around a civic-religious center at the early northern lowland Maya community of Komchen. They cautiously propose that the trend to extended families organized into larger communities such as Komchen may have dampened social conflict over limited arable land in this agriculturally marginal area. Cliff, also dealing with the era of emergent Maya elitism, observes sustained nuclear-family dwellings at the densely occupied site of Cerros. Instead of a trend toward extended family organization, his single-family dwellings evince increasing disparities in elaboration and wealth—culminating in a sudden and dramatic reorganization of the entire community.

At the other end of the Maya temporal spectrum, Rice discusses the profound changes in community organization in the Peten region accompanying and following the ninth-century collapse of civilization there. His conclusion that the collapse of central governments dramatically affected the organization of households and communities belies the often proposed notion that Classic-period Maya elites had little practical—socioeconomic—connection with their commoners. The relationship of the elite to the commoners is a theme in Ashmore's discussion of the Maya site of Quirigua. There she suggests that elite households might have been spatially embedded in the commoner community, or at least arranged to facilitate the integration of commoners into the community. Finally, Drennen reviews general information concerning the compact or dispersed arrangement of households in communities from throughout Mesoamerica and from many time periods. One intriguing conclusion of his effort is that the known dispersed quality of Maya households in large communities may register intensive agriculture by their occupants in nearby plots. The embedding of farming families in their fields implies a significant degree of economic autonomy from the central authorities—another controversial theme in household archeology.

The book has an introduction by the editors providing a useful guide to the contents and issues, but it has no conclusion. This is unfortunate in a way, for there are some conclusions to be drawn concerning the value of household archeology. Despite the great difficulties facing the analysis and interpretation of households, the resolution of really fundamental issues in the study of ancient civilization lies in this empirical arena. Large-scale, hierarchical society survives through the constant renegotiation of relationships between those who provide power, the commoners, and those who wield it as elite. The language of such negotiation, the culture of a civilization, derives from

both sides; and so too do the success and failure of complex societies. It is noteworthy that the ancient glyphic Maya texts left by the Pre-Columbian elite focus significantly upon matters of family, descent, and marriage alliance—royal household organizations. Perhaps this is a coincidence, but more likely it is a matter of the shared experience of kin and homelife linking the exalted and the ordinary people and providing a basis for dialogue—a dialogue to which the modern study of past households must contribute.

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A Pair of Mayanists

A Dream of Maya. Augustus and Alice Le Plongeon in Nineteenth-Century Yucatan. LAWRENCE GUSTAVE DESMOND and PHYLLIS MAUCH MESSENGER. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1988. xxii, 147 pp., illus. Paper, \$19.95.

There are many aspects to the proper study of archeology, not the least of which is the intellectual history of the discipline itself. The archeology of the Americas provides a case in point, for the present-day configuration of the field is emphatically the

culmination of centuries of exploration, documentation, and varied intellectual approaches to the interpretation of ancient things. However, with some noteworthy exceptions in the work of Wauchope (1962), Willey and Sabloff (1974), and a few others, this area has remained relatively neglected as a focus of study. For that reason alone, I was pleased to hear about the publication of the present volume. Now, having read it, I am even more enthusiastic.

A Dream of Maya fills what was a conspicuous gap in our knowledge of the history of Maya research by dealing with the lives and works of Augustus Le Plongeon (1826–1908) and Alice Dixon Le Plongeon (1853–1910), surely two of the most interesting personalities in the long and tangled saga. Most important, Desmond and Messenger give us a glimpse of two worlds that we do not often see—Yucatan in the final quarter of the last century, and the intellectual politics and intrigues of that era as they played out in Merida, Mexico City, and the northeastern heartland of the American archeological establishment.

The volume contains all the essentials of the background of both Le Plongeon, including the work of Augustus in both surveying and mapping (which I did not know about) and his long history in photography. The core of the work deals with the Le Plongeon in Yucatan between 1873 and 1884 and their exploratory work and photo-



Alice and Augustus Le Plongeon in the Governor's Palace at Uxmal, about 1874. "They set up housekeeping in the central rooms, with hammock and mosquito netting hung in the inner room and dishes, including wine goblets, in the foreground. Field equipment—guns, butterfly net, surveyor's instrument, tripod and tape measure, and helmets—stand ready. The view camera sits . . . amid a pile of books on the table. Augustus writes field notes, with Trinity their dog napping at his feet." Alice "wrote extensive descriptions of life in the Governor's Palace in a series of 1881 articles" for *The New York World*. [From *A Dream of Maya*; Manly P. Hall Collection, Philosophical Research Society, Los Angeles, CA]