

# A Catalyst for Ideas

## Introduction

**Vernon L. Scarborough**

For more than three decades, the School of American Research (SAR) has significantly influenced anthropological archaeology through its various on-campus forums. By professional consensus, former SAR president Douglas Schwartz reestablished SAR as a unique and visionary institution that complemented the intellectual activities and agendas of both universities and museums. Under Doug's tenure, nearly 150 resident scholars were invited to live and work for an academic year on the seven-acre campus that he acquired and significantly altered to accommodate his image of a reflective scholarly environment free from teaching and committee assignments. Some ninety sole-authored books and dissertations were inspired and produced in this setting. Additionally, more than one hundred week-long advanced seminars involving more than a thousand participants were convened, resulting in approximately sixty edited SAR Press syntheses covering a wide range of anthropological issues and problems, including themes as central to anthropological inquiry as the emergence of agriculture and the origins of statecraft. The Press was established as the principal outlet for disseminating highly crafted essays capturing the synthesized



**Figure 1.1**  
*Schwartz Seminar House at SAR.*

energy and timeliness of the reified forums conducted at the School. By any measure, Doug's contribution is legendary.

Doug was trained first as a southeastern US archaeologist but was drawn subsequently to the southwestern United States through his work in the Grand Canyon and later at the ancient pueblo of Arroyo Hondo, the latter in immediate proximity to the School. Thanks to Doug's energy and discipline, Arroyo Hondo is one of the most completely reported and published ancient Puebloan communities in the archaeological corpus of the US Southwest. Although Doug expanded the School's focus to include all four subfields of anthropology, his archaeological background—emphasizing the scientific method, material culture, and societal problem solving—were frequently integrated into the School's mission. During Doug's tenure, archaeology thrived at the School—the subdiscipline drawing on the other facets of anthropology in further enhancing and strengthening its prominence both inside and outside anthropology. As a crossroads for social scientific inquiry, the School has had many effects and influences. Under Doug's sage direction, archaeological anthropology remained central to its identity.

The following collection is the outgrowth of a session held at the 2002 Society for American Archaeology meeting in Denver to honor

Doug and his decades of visionary leadership. The forum and intent of the symposium were not to mimic the concentrated focus of an advanced seminar at the School but rather to tap individual scholars who have been the beneficiaries of the School's largesse and draw on their years of reflection and insight on anthropological issues for which they are now professionally acknowledged. Although the chapters in this book suggest a slight geographical bias toward the ancient Maya Lowlands (chapters 9, 11, and 12) and the US Southwest (chapters 3 and 4), a historical emphasis of the School, the contributors attempt a global reach for their crosscutting topical concerns drawing from several regions of the world. Eight former resident scholars and the School's then newly appointed director, Richard Leventhal, provided presentations at the Denver meetings, with three additional scholars agreeing to participate in the subsequent *Festschrift*. Participants were requested to address a timely aspect of anthropological archaeology that might best characterize their own interests and accomplishments in the field. They were encouraged to develop their own field-retrieved data sets to ground their arguments, but not at the expense of theoretical perspicacity. The session organizers (Vern Scarborough and Richard Leventhal) and the editor of this volume attempted to broadly categorize each participant's work and then construct a series of "big picture" topics that significantly influenced anthropology and Doug's own vision for the School.

Not all aspects of the field were represented, nor was every issue examined by the School addressed. Nevertheless, several timely themes were evaluated, drawing from both past and present assessments of what is anthropological archaeology. Whether by design or caprice, the topics selected provided a degree of crossover, allowing complementary themes to develop for the audience and now the readership. My hope is that a representative portion of the theoretical breadth and conceptual integration that have identified the School, and Doug's vision for it, is presented.

The contributors to this volume reflect apparent, though subtle, shifts in our interpretations of how societies are organized. Although contemporary anthropology seems subject to numerous "New This" or "Post That" themes, culminating in essays and volumes suggesting a significant change in the discipline's orientation, the present volume's

contributors were not selected for any particular theoretical bias or trend. Nevertheless, but not unexpectedly, the chapters stress an evolutionary approach in keeping with archaeology's unique temporal depth. Each author examines aspects of a timely topic in anthropological archaeology and addresses it from his or her unique perspective. The only prerequisite for participation, in addition to having been a resident scholar at the School, was that each contributor have been immersed in material data sets and recognize the potential and constraints in working with these data sets regionally.

More than a generation ago, the developmental principle for evolutionary anthropology was the band, tribe, chiefdom, and state trajectory, and although the profession today quickly distances itself from this lineal trend, it frequently falls back on the same tired terminology and its implications (compare Yoffee 2005). More than any other subfield in anthropology, archaeology has been forced to wrestle with this inadequate interpretative framework. Elman Service's (1962) original text introducing the sequence attempted to organize and categorize the myriad societies that anthropologists had identified at various socioeconomic levels of complexity (compare Feinman, this volume). His was a heuristic device to order a tremendous amount of knowledge, but it became an organizing schema that transformed into a handy, if misdirected, evolutionary typology. Few anthropologists contest the presence of bands, tribes, chiefdoms, or states in the past or the present; although many developed subtleties exist, it is the sequence of development through time that confounds. Because archaeology implicitly maintains an evolutionary approach, it is best positioned to challenge this persistent and fundamental issue for anthropology more generally.

Coupled with these terminological issues and their evolutionary implications is the role of hierarchical order in evolving complex societies. The latter is a logical outgrowth historically and empirically of the band-to-state trajectory because hierarchy is identified by vertical levels of ascending complexity associated with increasingly limited access to wealth and power. Frequently viewed as a static condition in place and time, hierarchy is actually a comparative and flexible evaluation useful only when assessed in the context of some other hierarchy in place and time.

Although several measures identifying degrees and kinds of social complexity are championed by archaeology, perhaps the most powerful methodology for determining an ancient society's level of "social development" is regional survey and the rank ordering of site sizes. Several architectural and artifactual indices are frequently added to the mix of identifiers, but site size and its associated density of debris, when compared with the distribution of all other sites in a region, continues to represent the principal arbiter of past complexity. Regions of the world with four or five tiers of ranked site size at a particular period of time are understood as states, and those areas with only three tiers are interpreted as chiefdom-like. Any constellation of contemporaneous small sites or sites undifferentiated in form from their neighbors is untiered and likely indicative of tribal or band organization. The latter is without hierarchy—populations grounded on the social principles of egalitarian organization and identifiable by great mobility.

This package of model building has produced the paradox and quandary in which we now find ourselves: the association between a rich and growing archaeological data set and the puzzlement of current interpretation. Because our data acquisition methods are an extension of earlier attempts to test for the presence of hierarchy, degrees of centralization, and aspects of what Julian Steward called "multilineal evolution," we continue to repeat and cycle through previous facets of outdated theory. We all know the inadequacies of the band-to-state theme, but we often fall back on its limited merits.

Nevertheless, another view of social complexity appears implicitly in several of the chapters herein. This view does not neglect or disparage the significance of hierarchy in the ancient record, but it does suggest the import of heterarchy or the complicated web of interdependencies that unite social institutions (Crumley 1987, 1995). Whether they are bands of collectors or foragers linked by physical patterns of mobility or archaic states identified by specialized labor and knowledge within and between complicated polities, the role of decentralized and self-organizing interdependencies extending laterally across a region and connecting sites of all sizes receives considerable attention in this volume (compare Scarborough and Valdez 2003). Few of the contributors allude directly to heterarchy, but its applicability is frequently assumed.

Although archaeology continues to accept anthropology as its disciplinary home, several fissures have erupted in the past decade. The postmodern contributions to agency, practice theory, performance, resistance, gender, and power have forced archaeology to access data sets in ways unlike before, sometimes stretching the interpretive limits of the material remains. Aspects of an evolutionary approach have been significantly redefined by some and challenged altogether by others. All of this is probably healthy and within the parameters of anthropological archaeology. Nevertheless, archaeology remains grounded in the material record contextualized by biophysical and social environments. The chapters in this volume do not shy away from the “New This” and the “Post That” themes current in the field, but they do imply another encompassing approach to data and its interpretations by way of heterarchical relationships and interdependencies. The School has done much to cultivate the dialogue between what is fundamental, what warrants assessment and change, and what is new, risky, and interesting. The contributors to this collection review aspects of what is old and what is new.

In reviewing what is fundamental, archaeology has traditionally examined three pivotal junctures in prehistory with innumerable additional twists and turns composing the breadth of the field. The three great shifts in our human past are the behavioral and anatomical transitions to *Homo sapiens sapiens*, the transitions to agriculture and village life, and the transitions to civilization and complex society. In keeping with what is old and foundational and what is new and meaningful, the contributors to this volume treat aspects of all these interests to a greater or a lesser extent.

Because anthropological archaeology implicitly encompasses socioeconomic and sociopolitical evolution, Richard and I were compelled initially to resurrect those rather awkward and arbitrary tags of band-tribe-chiefdom-state as a foray into the timely intellectual history of the School and as a way to elicit novel views of social evolution. Within that restrictive divisioning, we asked Bob Kelly (foragers), Linda Cordell (supra-household organizations—tribes), Gary Feinman (supra-household organizations—chiefdoms), and Gil Stein (statecraft) to provide their insights and interpretations. Linda presented a fine paper, but she was unable to contribute to the volume.

Fortunately, recent Resident Scholar Steve Plog agreed to examine the issue of “tribes” for the book in concert with his student Carolyn Heitman.

Because we were attempting to provide the breadth of inquiry examined at the School, Richard and I included a series of topics that further captured the enduring quality of issues studied by anthropologists—topics that are approachable through an evaluation of the material record. To that end, we emphasized the origins and spread of agriculture and asked Chip Wills to contribute. In juxtaposition to the dynamics of food production, Henry Wright agreed to examine the origins of civilization and complex society. Anna Roosevelt provided an assessment of human ecology, and I prepared a contribution for the topic of engineered landscapes. Carla Sinopoli accepted the challenge of assessing aspects of the political economy, and Grant Jones examined the subdiscipline of ethnohistory. Norm Yoffee presented a well-crafted presentation on power and aspects of ideology but was unable to submit a final contribution to the volume. Nevertheless, former resident scholar David Stuart was pressed into service and treats this contentious though timely topic. Jerry Sabloff, together with Richard, provide closure to the volume with assessments of the chapters, the role of SAR, and the future direction of the discipline.

The origin of *Homo sapiens* is a topic that the School has broached on several occasions. Generally, the physical origins of humanity are a highly functional assessment dependent on the biophysical environment in which finds are made. Although living analogies are necessary, they are as apt to be drawn from nonhuman species as from known human behaviors. When the issue of culture emerges, however, anthropological archaeology makes itself fully visible. Kelly’s contribution (chapter 2) comes closest to entering this functional arena of biophysical change, with his interest in evolutionary selection and the human mind. He identifies and frames the debate between evolutionary psychology and human behavioral ecology in addressing how the mind works in the manner that it does. By using the concept of sharing, Kelly reviews the several selectionist interpretations—variance reduction, tolerated theft, aspects of generalized reciprocity, costly signaling theory—and concludes that all these biological factors likely affected the development of the mind but culture was the key. He indicates that

selectionist approaches cannot account for behaviors like generosity and strongly suggests that a more probing assessment of Middle and Upper Paleolithic assemblages, coupled with aspects of the ethnographic record, is the best avenue to test the journey our mental pathways have taken. Kelly further argues that optimal foraging models of present-day foragers have severe limitations when attempting to address the human mind and culture.

The transition to agriculture and the role of sedentism have occupied significant amounts of time and space at the School as well as in anthropology more widely. Here we are walking on firmer ground, with fundamental contributions from cultural anthropology, as well as linguistics, historically affecting archaeological interpretations. Bioarchaeology has made significant contributions to our understanding of diet, environs, conflict, gender, inequality, and even biogenetic relationships during this period of human development. The abundance of human-generated material remains alters and heightens the kinds of problems that are addressed. In addition to those mentioned above, topics that now receive focused attention include divisions of labor, surplus and storage, notions of property and ownership, land use, nuanced views of inequality, and aspects of conflict, cooperation, and exchange. Although several SAR seminars have treated aspects of the agricultural transition, one pivotal collection, *Last Hunters, First Farmers* (Price and Gebauer, eds. 1995), specifically examines the role of risk and resource scarcity as opposed to self-interested accumulations of abundance.

One of the contributors to that volume, Chip Wills, provides here (chapter 3) an insightful assessment of agriculture's fragility when confronted with significant stress. Wills's case study is located in the US Southwest, and it examines the dynamic interplay between foragers and sedentary farmers through time. Although the Southwest is not a primary hearth for agricultural origins, Wills demonstrates the underlying processes affecting the acceptance of food production. Rather than view agriculture and sedentism as highly adaptive economic strategies, he argues that the fragility of local resources drove groups to decide cyclically whether a foraging way of life was better than a sedentary one. Wills suggests that Southwestern populations—and, by extension, several other regional populations of the world where semi-



aridity prevailed—were always influenced by major relocations of sedentary populations affected by drought cycles and overexploitation of agricultural settings. Until perhaps the 1400s, groups simply moved to less degraded environments within the Southwest or reverted to a collector’s strategy of foraging mobility. In this context, Wills turns the “Golden Age” of Southwest prehistory on its head and argues that the 1,000-plus-room pueblos along the Rio Grande were not great ecological success stories, but rather highly involuted and failed experiments that attempted to overintensify on a fragile landscape. By taking a page from Kelly’s contribution, Wills shows that conservative cultural constructs—not selectionist adaptations—fueled an increasing socioeconomic and sociopolitical distance between the last farmers and the enduring foragers. The Spanish, then, were not great conquerors, but only the inheritors of a faulty organizational experiment at a particular period of history—the puebloan organizational model characterized by a deep and otherwise successful antecedence in its dual economy. Wills’s contribution is exceptionally persuasive and will influence our understanding of early agricultural adaptations for some time.

Drawing on the same culture area as Wills, Carolyn Heitman and Steve Plog (chapter 4) examine aspects of the band-tribe-chieftdom-state evolutionary sequence directly. Noting that few archaeologists accept this linear trajectory, these authors indicate that alternative approaches have produced little that can be considered categorically better. Heitman and Plog revisit Fred Eggan’s classic works treating the Western and Eastern Puebloan groups of the US Southwest, suggesting that political and ideological dualities are manifest in puebloan material culture and that no single type of kinship organization can characterize a sizable and complex group through time and space. Through an examination of Chaco Canyon’s great houses—especially Pueblo Bonito—Heitman and Plog demonstrate the complexity of the interrelationships among ritual, economy, and politics. By employing a “house model” (also alluded to by Wills) as the nexus of most activities both permanent and ephemeral—preserving functional aspects of survival, as well as sustaining ideological continuity—they present another way to view cultural variability while identifying and establishing meaningful cultural similarities through time.

Gary Feinman (chapter 5) presents an overview of the kinds of

queries we ought to address when examining “chiefdoms,” or middle-range societies. Like “tribal” organizations, chiefdoms occupy that most amorphous space between foragers and archaic states yet do not adhere to evolved or devolved forms of either—they represent a diverse range of organizational constructs and institutions that frequently “stand alone” theoretically in the archaeological record. These middle-range societies are supra-household groupings strongly associated with aspects of social and material inequality, as well as nascent, although complex, leadership roles. One of Feinman’s most insightful observations is the lack of comparisons in the archaeological record between pre-state chiefdom orders and those organizational groups derived from a collapsing state and the status-scarce trappings of former state-level elites. Another idea that others in this volume assess is the degree of interdependence within and among supra-household groups and how this heterarchical profile differs from other complex orders—especially archaic states. Like Wills, Feinman is an “old hand” at SAR, who recently coedited the highly influential advanced seminar collection *Archaic States* (Feinman and Marcus, eds. 1998) and was a contributor to the edited SAR volume *Chiefdoms: Power, Economy, and Ideology* (Earle, ed. 1991).

The study of the transition to civilization and complex society has demanded much of the energy and resources provided by the School and by anthropology more generally. Its obvious timeliness and immediate applicability to the contemporary world have generated much more energy and intellectual capital than they have consumed. This arena of anthropological archaeology may well hold the most promise for unifying the subdisciplinary divisions and the many crosscutting and evolving theoretical perspectives within the social sciences. Issues of social stratification (power, domination, and subordination), formalized warfare (coercion), barter and trade (cooperation), craft specialization, and landscape engineering are topics with heightened interest because of their import to our present planetary societal divisions. Archaeologists have traditionally addressed these topics using the political economy, modeling aspects of the earliest experiments in statecraft on either a structural orientation—derived from thinkers such as Marx, Polanyi, and Wallerstein (world systems)—or a functional view based on cultural ecological tenets. Recent interest in

agent-driven assessments of social complexity such as complex adaptive systems and self-organization are exciting alternatives to both approaches (see Lansing 1991). The role of ideology has been markedly elevated as a consequence of recent and clever ways in which the material record is interpreted or reinterpreted. Some archaeologists have moved ideology from a subordinate influence to the primary trigger in altering past organizations. Regarding the early state and its symbology, SAR is again responsible for another influential advanced seminar collection, *Ideology and Pre-Columbian Civilization* (Demarest and Conrad, eds. 1992).

Gil Stein, who has done extensive work in the Middle East, provides our first pass at state complexity (chapter 6). Stein emphasizes the disproportionate influence that decipherment and access to ancient writing has had on our interpretations of the early state. Because of the longevity of archaeological interest and research in the Middle East and the interpretive role of the written record, models of statecraft everywhere have implicitly compared themselves to what the Sumerians—most specifically—said about their lifeways. However, the excavated contexts for many past archaeologists were temples, palaces, and royal cemeteries, locations most apt to yield museum-quality items as well as writing. Although much has been gleaned about Mesopotamia, these data reflect the behaviors of only a small fraction of the entire population. Stein suggests that hierarchies of power and control were clearly apparent with the world's first cities directed by the few kings, priests, and private estates that we are told about. Nevertheless, several other influential sectors help identify the greater society.

Stein indicates that perhaps 50 percent of the sedentary population lived in settled villages and another incalculable number of pastoral nomads inhabited the hinterlands. In an argument not dissimilar to Wills's separation between foragers and early agriculturalists, Stein indicates that much more attention needs to be paid to the resilience of these underrepresented groups in defining ancient Mesopotamia. He shows that many craft specialists operated outside the bounds of the city and those within were not always subject to the directives of the elite. These independent craft specialists might well have competed with or duplicated goods produced and services performed within the

kingly palaces, temple ovals, or private estates by attached specialists. Stein refers to this dichotomy as a “dual craft economy,” although only attached specialists and their manufactured high-prestige goods mark a significant distinction between elite and the non-elite. The preserved textual remains tell only half the story.

All of this has tremendous implications for anthropological archaeology, as our standard yardstick for the archaic state is not the steeply pitched, hierarchically structured state that we once understood. This is not to say that early Mesopotamia was not highly centralized at times, but that Wills’s notion of cycling, this time of power relationships, between cities and regions likely affected ancient urbanism. When the “city-state” was strong, it could have considerable influence over its immediate domain. When it was weak, it might well persist, but in a much more interdependent economic and political association with its sustaining population. What Stein is really introducing is heterarchy as noted above with reference to Feinman’s contribution.

Henry Wright was one of the first anthropological archaeologists to examine hierarchy within the early state by using the independent methodological avenue of settlement scale (Wright and Johnson 1975). Such rank ordering of settlements throughout a region identified by systematic ground survey is a hallmark of archaeological modeling. His contribution here (chapter 7) is a wide-ranging assessment of the six areas of the globe on which primary states developed: Mesopotamia, the Nile, the Indus, China, Peru, and Mexico. He demonstrates that the early state was not a well-defined spatial unit; its genesis focused not on a core area but rather on two or more centers that coalesced to produce a great tradition. This notion of polycentricity for the archaic state is not unexpected, given the earlier comments about cycling and heterarchy. The strength of Wright’s model is in its suggestion that not only are the city and its hinterlands interdependent but also embedded regional polities are sharing economic, political, and ideological information to generate the steps necessary for a truly complex society. Wright’s wide-ranging expertise positions him to propose such an all-encompassing assessment.

Providing a broad interpretative review of human ecology, Anna Roosevelt (chapter 8) examines aspects of all three pivotal transitions that have helped frame this introduction. She points out several biases

archaeologists have harbored, including male/female dichotomous thinking, the dominant role of red meat presumed in our diets during all periods of prehistory, and our limited ecological understanding of tropical environs. In a careful evaluation, Roosevelt shows that new and reinterpreted old evidence demonstrate that our first bipedal ancestors were likely more at home in tropical forests than open savannas, and that savannas themselves were not a climax vegetational association but, in part, induced by human use. Regarding agriculture, she makes the astute assessment that neotropical environments are now revealing repeatedly that early cultigens were first domesticated there and subsequently found in semiarid localities. Moving to the early state, she argues that scalar measures are a significant index of complexity, but densely urban aggregates need not be the yardstick for social complexity. Her identification of early Amazonian chiefdoms and the complexity of the ancient Maya states show that scale must be assessed regionally in tropical settings. Roosevelt challenges the underpinnings of some of our most entrenched dogma.

My contribution (chapter 9) is an extension of a recent SAR volume, *The Flow of Power* (Scarborough 2003). In that book, I propose that archaic states are organized as a consequence of their rates of socioeconomic change coupled with a set of processes affecting that change. I suggest that the biophysical environment is a key factor in the transformation to statecraft, with semiarid and temperate settings stimulating rapid exploitative changes to the environs and semitropical settings tending to support slower accretional adjustments to the engineered landscape. Nevertheless, like all the presentations in this volume, culture is viewed as the final arbiter in the unique pathways that each state treads. In this contribution, I emphasize the methods by which states concentrated resources, suggesting that some early cities in semiarid settings, such as Uruk or Teotihuacan, had population densities akin to definitions of nucleated urban areas found in today's world. In both these cases, however, the density drop-off beyond the well-defined city limits was abrupt, suggesting the kind of dichotomy Stein challenges for some times and places elsewhere in Mesopotamia. Under such dichotomous economic and political arrangements, a set of "technotasking" processes evolves. Here, technology is substituted for labor in a constant effort to subordinate the occupants of the

hinterlands and control their resources. Formal advances in the technology of warfare are emphasized (compare Roosevelt, this volume). On the other hand, semitropical settings tend to cultivate “labortasking” processes based on a much more difficult extraction and concentration of resources. These conditions lead to “cities” with much less density, along with hinterlands that are widely settled and required by resource limitations to interact with the urban nodes. The latter arrangement cultivates a highly resilient political economy capable of significantly altering the agricultural landscape. My recent work in Bali is shown to complement the evidence from the Maya Lowlands. This work emphasizes heterarchical organization.

Both Roosevelt and I share an interest in establishing that tropical environments and the societies that reside in them represent something other than nontemperate settings. We have much to learn from these valued settings as to the range of human adaptation and diversity. SAR entered into the arena of such economic and ecological debate long before our papers were presented. The advanced seminar collection *Historical Ecology: Cultural Knowledge and Changing Landscapes* (Crumley, ed. 1994) represents yet another influential volume anticipating this timely arena of study.

Carla Sinopoli (chapter 10) was charged with examining the theme of political economy. Hers is a distillation and focused assessment of her years of work at the South Indian site area of precolonial Vijayanagara. Like Stein, she points out that the integrative or “adaptationist” approach to state modeling, based on general systems theory from the 1960s and 1970s, fostered the view that centralized authority and decision making were required to coordinate sizable populations and their resources. Also like Stein, and in keeping with my contribution, Sinopoli questions the inattention given in the literature—both the ancients’ and ours—to the rural sectors of society. She revisits the Eurocentric view held by Marx that South Asia was a stagnant, village-based society that only replicated itself through time and allowed omnipotent despots to dictate all aspects of life. Through an evaluation of craft specialization, using both textual evidence and the material remains, Sinopoli shows how poets, potters, and metallurgists were variously organized. Poetry, predictably, is the one aspect of her analysis that cannot be cross-checked by “dirt” archaeology, although it was a component of all archaic states (compare Helms 1992). From written

sources, she demonstrates that even these “attached” specialists had degrees of autonomy, although they were never united as a singular sector. Potters were of a very lowly caste because of the impurity of their product or the difficulty in cleaning and reusing such surfaces. Archaeological traces do suggest their subordinate position. Bronze and iron working were subject to aspects of the state’s military institutions, but here, too, autonomy was apparent. Sinopoli concludes that even this well-developed state was not rigidly hierarchical.

David Stuart (chapter 11) approaches ideology cautiously, taking the position that it legitimates authority and power. From his case study among the Maya, a highly ritualized society, rituals surrounding the kingly ideal were grounded in the everyday elements of life—such as agricultural productivity. Neither economy nor politics were dictated by ideology. He questions the emphasis now placed on royal lineages, at least prior to the late Classic period (A.D. 700–800), perhaps suggesting Wills’s use of “house societies” (compare Joyce and Gillespie, eds. 2000) as a more flexible and sustainable way of recruiting labor and maintaining property. Stuart further challenges the role of shamanism among Maya nobility, now widely popularized, suggesting that statecraft seldom overtly accommodated such practice. Stuart may well be the most knowledgeable translator and interpreter of Maya script. His measured assessments reflect his depth of understanding.

Grant Jones (chapter 12) takes on ethnohistory as his charge. He revisits the timely issue of indigenous resistance, using his encyclopedic knowledge of the historic Maya. But the chapter is a cautionary tale for the archaeologist in that Jones shows the evolving character of data acquisition and interpretation through his own careful work. He indicates implicitly that we need not assume that any other school of study is any closer to the “truth” about the past than archaeological discovery itself and that interdisciplinary work requires cross-checking the accuracy and logic of all incorporated disciplines in addressing a problem. The use of text in informing the archaeological record—whether archival history, cuneiform decipherment (compare Stein, this volume), or Classic Maya epigraphy (compare Stuart, this volume)—requires as much scrutiny for accuracy as any aspect of field archaeology. In his own case study, Jones shows that the historic Itza Maya of the southern Yucatán were not a group invested in resistance to the colonial Spanish as much as a highly organized expansionist society

pushing at the margins of Spanish territorial control from an established center or territory of their own. In this scenario, the Spanish were just one more adversary to Itza expansion. His example demonstrates the changing interpretations associated with any scholarship—including his own earlier emphasis on Itza resistance rather than their state-like expansionism—and the necessity to move forward in a complementary and balanced manner with other support studies to assess a historical problem.

Richard Leventhal and Jerry Sabloff (chapter 13) close the volume with a discussion of present and future directions for the discipline. Their combined experience from the helms of some of anthropological archaeology's premier research institutions—principally the School and the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania—permits a different vantage to the applicability and meaningfulness of archaeology. What is it that we do that is relevant to the often mundane world of funding agencies and private foundations, and how do we show responsible directionality for the discipline? Although Richard and Jerry do not explicitly address these issues, they show that anthropological archaeology is a vibrant field of intellectual inquiry and will continue to establish its own set of agendas derived from critical and responsible dialogue among peers.

The contributors not only identify aspects of the major theoretical currents running through anthropology but also convey their significance with grounded examples. In addition to my appreciation for the energy and time invested by my scholarly collaborators, I wish to acknowledge SAR Press and especially Dr. Catherine Cocks, acting director, for the attention paid to this book. The School has been a catalyst for ideas since the beginning of Doug's tenure, but it has also demanded a practical assessment of those ideas by way of formal explanation. In other words, practice or the repeated examination of theoretical tenets remains the critical component at the School of American Research. This collection, I hope, is a fitting gift to one person's enormous contribution to the discipline.

Excerpt from

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Edited by Vernon L. Scarborough

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