

“perissological resonator”—in other words, a strategic artifact. This bringing together of domains (which might be kinship, subsistence, death, etc.) is often termed “condensation,” though it is usually employed in describing ritual contexts (somewhat confusingly, the author only brings this up later in the book, pp. 143–145). He readily admits that condensation is an essential aspect of ritual. But, he argues, it is not limited to ritual, as it occurs in “mundane” settings too, for many kinds of nonverbal communication. This is, I think, Lemonnier’s masterstroke: to liberate the idea of condensation from its application to purely ritual contexts. So even though Baruya fences are in no way ritual (in that they make no reference to invisible beings), they are nonetheless strategic artifacts that condense social relations. Lemonnier himself admits that to then call them “mundane” is strange (p. 150): labeling a garden fence as “mundane” before performing a detailed ethnography only serves to curtail the analysis of relations before it has even begun. His outlook is firmly relational, which entails recognizing the continuity across materiality, the constant connections and relations, so that differences are of degree not of kind (p. 147). Just as Alfred Gell’s “methodological philistinism” provided a means for assessing art and nonart objects side by side, so Lemonnier’s move here dissolves the artificial scholarly barrier between ritual and nonritual.

Another way in which the author’s approach is liberating is in his opening up of the cognitive. The spotlight in cognitive anthropology has tracked too easily toward ritual and religion (e.g., Pascal Boyer, Harvey Whitehouse). But if condensation occurs across ritual and nonritual settings, and if it has a cognitive component, then why not also think of the cognitive dimensions of materiality more broadly? This

is why the work of Edwin Hutchins on “material anchors” has real traction for Lemonnier; others working in distributed and embodied cognition might have been usefully cited too, in a move to a more “mundane” cognitive anthropology. When thinking of the cognitive in this context, the question also arises of the relationship between this study and the “Matière à Penser” group; although Lemonnier cites Jean-Pierre Warnier very positively in stressing the importance of gestures and bodily conducts (p. 19), perhaps more discussion of the relationship between their respective approaches, if only to confirm a basic alignment, would have been useful. It may be that Lemonnier’s approach differs from Warnier’s praxeology in its greater attention to change and innovation. In a fascinating section (pp. 156–157) on whether strategic artifacts are the foci of transformation or stability, Lemonnier’s relational thinking leads him to stress the impossibility of knowing a priori whether an artifact of this kind will encourage or hinder change—it depends on the surrounding “system.” This concern with the dynamics of the overall assemblage parallels current interest with “entanglements,” which have a strong temporal thread in that they can lead to path dependences over the long term. This is a research area in which much more could be done, and it signals Lemonnier’s outward-looking perspective, sympathetic to the interests of neighboring domains (e.g., archaeology), which is why *Mundane Objects* should prove a hugely engaging read for students of material culture in many fields.

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“Strange Lands and Different Peoples”: Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Guatemala by W. George Lovell and Christopher H. Lutz with Wendy Kramer and William R. Swezey.

The Civilization of the American Indian, 271. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 288 pp.

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Many books are written on European colonialism and its effects on natives in the Americas, particularly in Mexico and South America. However, *Strange Lands and Different Peoples* departs from many works by focusing on the highlands of Guatemala. The goals of the book include the development of political and economic power differentials between Maya and rulers of European descent, which still reverberate in

the country, and a new treatment of the Maya demographic decline. The complexity of this work is in its use of primary documents and the authors’ decades of research in Guatemala.

The preface outlines the volume’s contents: insights on the development of indigenous and nonindigenous societies in Guatemala and the deep divisions between them. The authors utilize new written sources or apply critical reappraisals of documents and publications. They also indicate that individuals and historic events must be considered

when studying the formation of colonial society. This book involved the collaboration of historians, a geographer, and an archaeologist, but ethnohistory predominates.

Part 1 covers “Conquest and Resistance” and describes the Spanish invasion of Guatemala, including the violent treatment of Maya subjects and the exploitation of their labor and resources, heralding social conditions in the region for centuries to come. The authors explore the participation of Kaqchikel Maya in the conquest of their K’iche’ enemies, the Kaqchikel rebellion against their Spanish allies, and the existence of the culture hero Tecun Uman, who is not mentioned in Spanish documents. However, these and other controversies are not resolved, which fairly assesses the vagaries in Spanish documents. The authors highlight the realities of conquest, like the deaths of many Mexican allies with few Spanish losses, and the fact that Kaqchikel Maya joined the Spanish to defeat their enemies and gain prominence. Kaqchikel Maya elites sought lands and tribute from co-rulership with the Spanish, but when they learned this would not be the case, they fought back.

Part 2 on “Settlement and Colonization” discusses core and periphery regions within Guatemala. Previous scholars alluded to a Maya western part of the country and an eastern sector dominated by colonists, a core highland region versus a lowland periphery, and the existence of “closed corporate” peasant communities. However, in their nuanced discussion of economic change, demography, and the development of separate regions, the authors show that the reconstructions of cores, peripheries, and communities contain exceptions. The municipalities (*municipios*) of modern Guatemala—the basis of local politics, economy, and identity even today—originated in the colonial congregation programs, but they were built on Maya ethnic organizations, including the basic social unit *chinamit* or *parcialidad*, the endogamous, land-holding group with its collective economy and identity.

Valuable discussions in part 3, “Labor and Tribute,” elucidate Maya settlements and demography and how they were transformed. The authors state that the origins of *encomienda*, or the colonial policy of controlling

indigenous labor, land, and resources, have not been satisfactorily addressed in Guatemala. Through *encomienda*, Spanish overlords received payment in materials like gold, cacao, or food stuffs. The conquistadors eventually had to provide assessments of tribute quotas to Spanish authorities. These assessments lend critical information on the colonial economy and society. Interesting details emerge regarding long-standing ties between Maya communities from different ecological zones.

Part IV, entitled “Dynamics of Survival,” builds on the assessments of *encomiendas* to estimate indigenous populations before and after the conquest. The debate regarding New World indigenous demographic collapse is an important one. In the Maya area, the discussion of demography is central for our understanding of native politics, economics, and social organization and how they were impacted by the colonial period. Scholarship on demography in the New World consists of high or low population estimates. The “high counters” champion high population counts and indigenous demographic collapse, whereas “low counters” do not believe in massive depopulation but recognize decline. The authors calculate that Maya populations dropped 79 percent in the colonial period. This figure is less than a proposed population drop of 90 percent but higher than the 25 to 50 percent losses suggested by recent researchers. Maya deaths were due to poverty, strenuous labor, abuses by the conquerors, and the introduction of Old World diseases.

In summary, “*Strange Lands and Different Peoples*” is for scholars interested in the details of the conquest of Guatemala and the political, economic, and social aspects of colonialism and how they affected the Maya. It emphasizes documents, including original passages; tribute paid by Maya communities; and population counts. The authors also assess the utility of records and how they are important for the ethnohistory of Guatemala. With these strengths in mind, this work is relevant for scholars studying Guatemalan history, the development of society in the country, and historical anthropology.

The Brotherhood of Freemason Sisters: Gender, Secrecy, and Fraternity in Italian Masonic Lodges by Lilith Mahmud.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. 256 pp.

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Profound paradoxes motivate Lilith Mahmud’s singular ethnography of Italian Freemason women: although the Enlightenment’s core democratic values of liberty, equality, and fraternity in many ways originated within Euro-American Freemasonry, most Italians suspect

present-day Freemasons of involvement in nefarious antidemocratic conspiracies. Moreover, Freemasons’ marginalization of women betrays how deep-rooted exclusivity compromises their guiding principle of universal brotherhood. It is among the social networks of women who nevertheless gravitate to Freemasonry’s official auxiliary societies and to mixed-gender or women-only lodges not sanctioned by Freemasonry’s paramount governing body