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SPECIAL SECTION: PAPERS IN HONOR OF T. PATRICK CULBERT

INTRODUCTION

Ancient Mesoamerica is pleased to honor T. Patrick Culbert, one of the foremost scholars in the field of Maya archaeology, in this Special Section. A brief survey of Culbert's many contributions to Maya studies reflects the general contours of the advances that have occurred in Maya archaeology over the course of the past four decades, and these patterns illustrate Culbert's role in the forefront of these trends.

In the early 1960s Culbert accepted the responsibility of conducting the typological analysis of the ceramics of Tikal. The type-variety system of classification had recently been imported to the Maya area from the southwestern United States (Gifford 1960; Smith, Willey, and Gifford 1960), and Culbert (1963) applied it to great advantage in the Tikal analysis. Certainly one of the reasons that this classification system appealed to analysts was its capacity for standardization and regional comparisons, but Culbert's vision of the system also emphasized cultural factors in the interpretation of taxonomic categories, encouraging a concern with broader issues of social and economic integration. Another milestone involved trace-element analysis of Maya ceramics (Culbert 1987, 1988a). The use of such technologically sophisticated analyses, now routinely employed in many projects of the Maya area, provided an example to scholars of the mid-1980s.

Turning from analyses to synthetic contributions, Culbert is perhaps best known in the literature for organizing and chairing the advanced seminar of the School of American Research on the Classic Maya collapse, which resulted in the seminal volume, *The Classic Maya Collapse* (Culbert 1973). This work brought together historical and current opinions on causes of the collapse and provided students and professionals with a point of departure upon which to build further contributions. Many scholars, including Culbert himself, began to explore specific causes of the collapse, especially those rooted in economic and political processes (Culbert 1977, 1991; Culbert, Kosakowsky, Fry, and Haviland, 1990), agriculture (Culbert, Levi, and Cruz 1986, 1987; Culbert, Spencer, and Magers 1976; Culbert, Magers, and Spencer 1978; Kunen and Culbert 2000), and demography (Culbert, Kosakowsky, Fry, and Haviland, 1990; Rice and Culbert 1990). A natural outgrowth of these interests was to seek information from hieroglyphics and epigraphy that might shed light on these factors, and Culbert's career again represents a reflection of the field as a whole (Culbert 1988b).

In addition to his intellectual contributions, Culbert is widely appreciated by many as a mentor, colleague, and friend, as attested by the papers presented here.

In his appreciation of Culbert, **Norman Yoffee** first reflects on his experiences with the scholar, and particularly highlights Culbert's work on the nature of Maya polities, their size, and their degree of political integration. Yoffee then compares Culbert's support of "big state" models in Maya polities to his own work on Mesopotamian political and social relations.

Laura J. Kosakowsky acknowledges Pat Culbert's groundbreaking ceramic research at Tikal, as he turned away from traditional descriptive typologies alone to establish chronologies, and employed three systems of classification for pottery: a traditional type-variety analysis, a visual inspection of pastes, and an analysis of vessel shapes. She then uses this same approach at Cuello, a site in northern Belize, to explain the behavior associated with ceramic-vessel usage during the Preclassic period. By using Culbert's vessel-shape classes from Tikal, Kosakowsky analyzes the distribution of these classes within different types of archaeological deposits.

Working with ceramics from Penoles, a pre-Hispanic site in the periphery of the Valley of Oaxaca, **Stephen A. Kowalewski** investigates differences in production and consumption between core and periphery areas. His research suggests that simple vessel forms, plain surface treatments, and ceramic standardization point not to cultural "backwardness," but a constraint on peasant markets located on the periphery of a market area.

Hattula Maholy-Nagy considers the hiatuses at Tikal with evidence from architecture, settlement patterns, caches and burials, domestic artifacts, and inscriptions on portable artifacts. She suggests that hiatuses in the southern Maya lowlands could be regarded as indicators of political disorganization and subsequent reactions to it, and specifically supports the idea that the Tikal hiatus was caused by internal stresses rather than defeat by an outside force.

Robert E. Fry examines social rank and wealth at Tikal through ceramic consumption patterns. His work adds to the work on ceramics at Tikal by Culbert and others through analysis of peripheral areas around Tikal. Here, Fry uses the technique of multidimensional scaling to see whether there are qualitative differences in pottery reflecting wealth or status relationships.

Marshal Joseph Becker identifies a *barrio* within Tikal, made up of several residential groups who formed an extended kin unit involved in an economic focus on the production of high-quality ceramics. He also explores the idea of kilns, or firing areas, tied to the production of ceramics and the location of these areas among architectural features associated with a house lot.

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Through the use of airborne and satellite imagery, **Thomas L. Sever and Daniel E. Irwin** investigate settlement, subsistence, and landscape modification in the dense forest environment of the northern Peten. By using remote sensing, they identify features such as sites, roadways, canals, and reservoirs in large seasonal *bajos*. The technology made available by NASA to Sever and Irwin allows scholars to view information that is often invisible to the naked eye. Through their research, they provide evidence that the ancient Maya used *bajos* as an important subsistence strategy.

K. Anne Pyburn investigates the hydrology of Chau Hiix, a site located between Lamanai and Altun Ha in Belize. At Chau Hiix, she has identified extensive hydrological control features indicating that the site was located on an important trade route for an interdependent economy of Classic-period sites. Pyburn then uses Culbert's ideas on political economy to demonstrate her model of intersite hegemony and exchange between cities.

Charles D. Cheek discusses the role of one type of structure, the *popul nah*, also called a community house, men's house, or council house, at Copan. He uses ethnohistorical evidence to present the form and activities characteristic of the public buildings as described in Spanish writings. He also examines what the presence of these two buildings at the site tells us about the political develop of Copan, particularly between competing lineages in the Late Classic period.

By reevaluating and correlating evidence from three different regions, the Greater Peten, Central Yucatan, and the Puuc Hills, **R. E. W. Adams and Jane Jackson Adams** discuss the controversy over the nature of political forms and the leadership class during the Classic period. They use volumetric assessments of site sizes in three ranked zones of architectural styles.

Anthony P. Andrews, E. Wyllys Andrews, and Fernanado Robles Castellanos discuss recent adjustments in the understanding of the ceramic spheres and chronology of the northern Maya lowlands during the decline of Terminal Classic Yucatan polities within the collapse of the southern Maya states. Using the new chronological reconstruction, they propose eliminating the Early Postclassic period because it no longer signifies the beginning of a new era and assigning the final occupation of Chichen Itza to the Terminal Classic period, ending in the eleventh century.

Justine M. Shaw hypothesizes that anthropogenic deforestation, in addition to internal imbalances in the cultural system, led to a failure in societies of some regions of the Maya area during the ninth century, leading to the eventual collapse of Maya civilization.

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