

Chapter 4 demonstrates that in the first cities, states, and civilizations, differentiated social groups became recombined in cities. Cities were nodal points of pilgrimages, exchange, storage, and redistribution, as well as centers for defense and warfare. The countryside was also restructured with new identities as citizens were created, but this did not entirely supplant existing identities as members of economic, kin, and ethnic groups. Cities forged identities with citizens in other cities who shared a common, if created, heritage, which was maintained and reproduced over time.

Chapter 5 contains case studies of identity and agency in early states—how great men achieved status and transformed traditional societies by getting access to guns or iron axes, as K. V. Flannery (1999) put it. Cities generate the development of new social roles, new identities, and the degree to which these roles are embedded in the political structure or free floating with respect to emerging relations of power. This chapter contains an interesting section entitled “Imagining sex in an early state,” which discusses *nuditus* who were real estate ladies of the Old Babylonian period and *kezertus* at Kish who had distinctive hairdos, sang songs, and danced in cultic performances. The lives of these women were remote from state intervention, examples of what states do and cannot do and how individuals construct their lives to the extent and under the circumstances they can.

Chapter 6 deals with collapse of ancient states and civilizations. Stability in states is maintained when those in the periphery consider that the resources they provide the center also return benefits to them. These benefits are the circulation of goods and services, the settlement of disputes, and the creation of values and symbols that supply this- and other-worldly well-being. Here and throughout the book, Yoffee points out that in ancient states or civilizations the periphery was never monopolized by the state, neither in the bases of organization nor in the internal management of produce resources. The goods and services required by the state for its continued stability must be acquired from the traditionally organized groups that provide them in return for real and perceived benefits. States collapse when the center refuses to incorporate the needs and goals of local leadership in the formulation of political goals and when it attempts to replace the beliefs and values of peripheral groups with the beliefs and values of the central ruling elite. Collapse ensues when the center is no longer able to secure resources from the periphery, usually having lost the legitimacy through which it could distribute goods and services of traditionally organized groups. This chapter contains a detailed analysis of the collapse of Mesopotamian civilization and its regeneration.

Chapter 7 contains explorations of social change and points out more weaknesses of the old neoevolutionist band-tribe-chiefdom-state taxonomy. Societies have their own histories and cannot be relegated as stages in overall global trajectories towards states. Certain societies were not only not on a putative, normative pathway to statehood but also resisted such a social trajectory. Examining Chaco Canyon from about C.E. 900 to 1150, Yoffee points

out that Chaco culture did not end and that collapse is really a species of cultural transformation.

Chapter 8 is an attempt to resolve some of the issues facing archaeologists: namely, being seen as magicians able to bring a hidden past amazingly back to life, on the one hand, and as scholars with contradictory and multiple versions of the past, on the other hand. Comparisons are necessary, and so is the explanation of causes and effects. Social evolutionary theory requires a revivified comparative method that importantly includes comparisons of developmental sequences. The primary rule is to understand the past on its own terms, insofar as this can be imagined. This chapter ends with weak praise, “I do not say that the game is easy; I do think we’ve made a good start.”

Yoffee discusses the last myth in chapter 9: namely that cities, states, and civilizations are rare and precious entities in the evolution of human societies and so require special explanations for their development. This is based on a fallacy of time, because most of human prehistory consists of hunter-gatherer societies, states—which rest on agricultural surpluses—have been reckoned atypical. Histories of societies that do not become states require as much explanation as various kinds of earliest states.

In critique, this is an exceptional book, written for scholars of anthropology and classical studies. The book contains latest research on many parts of the Middle East, as assimilated, analyzed, and explained by a careful and insightful scholar. It also deconstructs neoevolutionary theory as being too hierarchical and typological. The author supplants it with a social evolutionary theory that is more processual, dynamic, and flexible. Finally, the author presents many illustrative examples of the daily lives of these ancient peoples. This book provides a summary update on social evolutionary theory and an excellent source for the earliest cities.

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Cultural Politics in Colonial Tehuantepec: Community and State among the Isthmus Zapotec, 1500–1750.
 Judith Francis Zeitlin. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005. 323 pp.

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Contemporary perceptions of the Tehuantepec Isthmus in southeastern Mexico rest on the vivid portrayals of its

inhabitants by the likes of Miguel Covarrubias and Manuel Álvarez Bravo, on local struggles for political autonomy, and on the peculiar balance of gendered roles: three topics traditionally emphasized by anthropological scholarship. Nevertheless, this distinctive territory—a crossroads for trade and sociopolitical interaction characterized by a colonial official as “the throat of the realms of Mexico and Guatemala”—lacked an extensive treatment of its late Prehispanic and colonial past until now. This book, which focuses on the cultural and political history of Isthmus Zapotec settlements between the 15th and the 18th centuries, is not only a landmark regional study but also a thoroughly interdisciplinary analysis that makes three important contributions to the study of native responses to colonial domination. First, Judith Zeitlin presents a fine-grained analysis of indigenous adaptations to changing patterns of colonial rule that complements recent scholarship on the distinctiveness of similar responses in Mesoamerica and the Andes. Second, this work highlights transformations in social memory through a contextualization of Zapotec pictographic and alphabetic narratives. Third, this book offers an insightful and daring reinterpretation of the earliest regional indigenous rebellion against colonial rule in the Americas: the 1660 Tehuantepec uprising.

The author carefully weighs the often fragmentary extant documentary evidence, introduces archaeological evidence when appropriate, and presents closely reasoned conclusions. For instance, Zeitlin's treatment of the various accounts of the Zapotec conquest of the Isthmus in the 15th century notes the discrepancies among pictographic dynastic histories, oral versions derived from collective memory, and the work of Spanish chroniclers. Instead of teasing out a single authoritative account—perhaps an impossible task—Zeitlin highlights recurrent structural components: a narrative about the conquest of the southern Isthmus by rulers from the Zapotec kingdom of Zaachila; references to a ruler called Cocijoeza, “Rain God Flint-Knife”; and a marital alliance with a powerful enemy state. While there are minor differences between Zeitlin's readings and those of other specialists—such as Michel Oudijk and Maarten Jansen—all of these scholars agree that these sources evoke earlier genealogical statements that were mirrored by more recent rulers. Thus, while two Mixtec codices refer to a mid-14th-century Rain God Flint-Knife married to a woman called Feathered Serpent, these names recur as those of the Zaachila-born Isthmus conqueror and his Mexica wife in the 15th century.

Furthermore, the author unveils political, demographic, and economic evidence regarding the transformation of indigenous rulership in Tehuantepec that comple-

ments John Chance's influential analysis of the diverging fortunes of colonial native elites in Puebla, the Zapotec Sierra, and the Valley of Oaxaca. After the death of the last Zaachila ruler known as Rain God Flint-Knife, his son Bichana Lachi was baptized as Don Juan Cortés. He led a Zapotec state with distinctive privileges as a *coqui* (highest hereditary ruler) over the *queche* (Zapotec regional polity), which included control over salt beds and a class of serf-like associates who received landholdings at the ruler's discretion. Don Juan's trajectory offers a particularly poignant depiction of the challenges that hereditary rulers faced elsewhere in Central Mexico: After establishing a mutually beneficial alliance with Hernán Cortés, Don Juan's attempts to retain his patrimonial resources culminated in accusations of mistreatment by his subjects and his removal from office because of an idolatry conviction. Don Juan's descendants managed to preserve their patrimony and political salience until the mid-17th century, at the same time that ranching facilitated the prosperity of other Zapotec elites. Zeitlin, however, stresses a crucial transformation in the status of Zapotec traditional lineages: By the early 18th century, the control of civil offices shifted away from the former ruling lineage towards other kin groups and the officials in charge of *queche* kin-based subdivisions, or *collaba*.

Finally, Zeitlin's treatment of the 1660 Tehuantepec rebellion astutely highlights native testimony to suggest that the regional scope and the character of the rebellion is misrepresented by the high colonial official and author Montemayor y Cuenca as part of an attempt to install two of his allies—and the reputed authors of accounts of the rebellion penned by him—into key regional provincial governorships. As the author notes, the rebellion's regional sway appears to be narrower than these accounts indicate; furthermore, the rebels' rage targeted not only the provincial governor but also a Zapotec ally. Zeitlin insists on the mistreatment of native officials and the increasingly egregious abuses within the framework of *repartimientos* (purchases of goods forced on native communities) as recurring precipitants for both this rebellion and later unrest in the early 18th century. Moreover, this work characterizes the 1660 uprising not as a frontal attack on Spanish rule, but as an attempted return to less-exploitative colonial policies, a conclusion supported by Friedrich Katz's well-known characterization of most peasant rebellions in Mexico as reformist rather than radical.

In the end, this work summarizes complex lines of evidence regarding local indigenous adaptations to colonial rule in clear prose, which render it an appropriate choice for upper-division courses on colonial cultures, ethnohistory, cultural history, and Mesoamerican studies.