Arnold presents a detailed examination of Maya pottery production that spans more than four decades. During this time Arnold followed Ticul potters and entrepreneurs in order to document the changing scale and intensity of traditional Maya pottery production in the face of changes associated with Mexico’s changing economic climate, the introduction of the government sponsored workshops, and the tourist trade (attached workshops).

Using participant observation, Arnold collected narratives and detailed the changing pottery production units relevant to understanding modern and ancient Maya pottery production. Many of the traditional Ticul potters included in this diachronic study are descendants of the area’s ancient Maya. He couches this study in evolutionary theory to understand the production unit changes through time. The household is the unit of analysis, and selective forces on the unit of production occurred because of governmental forces, learning structures and materials, time devoted to learning the craft, economic conflicts associated with gender related roles, and the consequences of education. As a result of this study, Arnold created three databases: (1) Genealogical (1190 individuals, 287 nuclear families, and 659 events associated with the Roots Magic program); (2) Production Unit (type of pottery, location, address, kinds of pottery produced, and associated non-family potters), and (3) Potters (451 individuals and their learning networks).

Arnold divides the Ticul potters into five distinct production units that reflect differences in scale and intensity. The first unit (Chapters 3 and 4) is defined by traditional household production that typifies patrilineal learning and land inheritance. These seven families produce non-cooking vessels, have expanded production outside of the father’s house lot, and have switched between full-time and part-time production depending on demand. As demand decreases, family members seek other employment (and education) such as tricycle transport services. More prosperous houses have larger house lots for drying vessels and storage. The second unit (Chapter 5) involves production of cooking vessels. These households employ a different pottery manufacturing knowledge because temper, paste recipe, surface texture, and firing technology become important. This unit of production does not overlap with the traditional non-cooking vessel production. With the introduction of metal cooking vessels, this unit of production has ceased to exist; however, these individuals still mine and sell clay and temper to other potters. The third production unit involves entrepreneurs associated with the Mexican government workshops that are from outside of Ticul, but not related to the traditional potting families. The workshops opened to help alleviate the collapse of the clay water jar industry that resulted from the advent of piped water. These potters replicated ancient Maya pottery—they were supplied with blanks and painted Maya scenes. Arnold states that this production unit was short lived because learning was not transmitted—once the potter died, so did the unit. Ticul potters creating non-traditional pottery comprise the fourth production unit. Non-traditional forms include plant pots made from vertical half molds, and these potters learned how to make pottery from other local potters and passed on the knowledge to others (there are some entrepreneurs in this unit). Arnold defines the final production unit as potters working within attached workshops. Hotel managers (Hotel Uxmal and Hotel Principe) control pottery production (form, decoration, and distribution), select potters to be employed, and relocate the potters to the hotels for pottery production during times of high demand. This unit of production has the highest level of conflict due to the hierarchical pay scale.

The only shortcoming of this study is Arnold’s use of evolutionary theory to study the change in Maya pottery production units through four decades. He describes the paradigm in Chapters 1 and 2 but does not expand on it in the other chapters. While this may be seen as a shortcoming, the reader does not need this paradigm to see the changes with Ticul potters. On
the other hand, what is most important about this study is Arnold’s very detailed description of house lots, thus demonstrating that different potters/potting families require different amounts of space depending on varying scale and intensity of production. In Chapter 9, he discusses the effects of rain on the built environment (space needed) for pottery production. Do Maya archaeologists take the rainy season into account when estimating production units? It is an intriguing insight that needs consideration. Finally, Arnold suggests that we (archaeologists) need more than one measure of change because changes that take place in pottery production involve at least six contributing factors whereas archaeologists typically only consider space and production unit.

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This volume is a comprehensive read of the prehistory of warfare. Rather than discussing each chapter in turn, I have chosen to highlight the editorial themes and then attempt to briefly gloss interrelated chapters and cover the book as a whole. Bookended with an introductory chapter by the editors and a conclusion by an outsider and former Dumbarton Oaks fellow (Haldon), the thirteen chapters are organized according to geographic region in Mesoamerica and the Andes, and then within each region by geography (e.g., Joyce, Oaxaca; Arkush, South-Central Andes) or culture (e.g., Restall, Maya; Ogburn, Inca).

Scherer and Verano take an inclusive definition of warfare, emphasizing that it is more than just violence, but also political action, social construction, reproduction and destruction. Given that both editors are bioarchaeologists, readers might expect a volume favoring the skeletal and bioarchaeological evidence for warfare, but this volume is interdisciplinary and holistic. Many of the contributions rely upon multiple lines of evidence weaving together different data sets from archaeology, bioarchaeology, ethnography, ethnography, iconography, history, and even linguistics (Lau). The editors tasked their contributors with focusing on place—that is, the battlefields of pre-Columbian warfare—and the body. Several chapters do draw on bioarchaeological evidence (Joyce, Chávez Balderas, Tung, Castillo Butters, Verano, Toyné and Narváez Vargas, Ogburn) and some detail and concentrate on the scarred and embattled bodies that materialize evidence of warfare or prisoner sacrifice (Tung, Verano, Toyné and Narváez Vargas). Some authors also aptly demonstrate how bodies are central to warfare beyond their material evidence and injuries, such as in the mobilization of forces (Ogburn), in the creation of a warrior identity and enactment of an imperial agenda (Tung), and in the performative role of prisoner capture (Verano).

The battlefields that Scherer and Verano emphasize include those landscapes of war where conflicts occurred—and not just battlefields in the Eurocentric and conventional sense, but also the landscapes as they were used in military strategy and tactics (Scherer and Golden, Restall), as well as in détente and in wars of attrition (Gutiérrez). The landscapes of frontiers and boundaries and the landscape of opposition (Lau) as places of warfare figure prominently in many of the chapters (Scherer and Golden, Arkush, Ogburn), even if the warfare in question occurs within territories or ethnic groups or reflects agonistic encounters between the self and other (Lau). The landscape concept as it used in the volume embraces iconicographic and epigraphic depictions of warfare and how these objects and murals were displayed, manipulated, and defined in acts of war, in ritual performance, and in social production, destruction, and reproduction (Inomata, Scherer and Golden, Gutiérrez, Castillo Butters).

In their introduction, Scherer and Verano note how warfare reifies gender norms, as