treatment previously to another child with similar symptoms. Other factors played a part in the reluctance to seek out her assistance, too, naturally – guilt, traditional lines for the pursuit of healing, family obligations, and financial limitations – which the author adeptly discusses while bringing her own case into the narrative of this illness.

A revealing passage towards the end of the book highlights an awareness of greater well-being not depending on physical (medical) health, and a shift from illness to suffering. Women selected for in-depth interviews rarely mentioned their physical health in narratives about their well-being, instead illustrating how "being taken care of" was their language for well-being, as this framed their safety, potential, and the impact of their agency within their communities.

Holten offers a discussion on moral anthropology, nicely juxtaposing the term "morals" with ethics, and the different contexts in which she employs them. Some of the thoughts in chap. 10 (Medical Ethnography as an Ethical Trajectory) could have been placed earlier in the book, in order to already situate the summaries of these explorations as a guide for what is ahead – to allow the reader to better place the researcher and author within the context of the product of her fieldwork. It also would set the scene for her self-admittedly clouded vision, especially towards the beginning of her fieldwork, about therapy management, and frame her subsequent analysis. For example, in reference to illness prevention, Holten illustrates that prevention does not take priority in this setting, but through her examples the reader is able to understand that this is in reference to prevention in the biomedical sense, as there are many examples of the fulfilment of social roles or following customs that reflect attempted prevention throughout her informants' narratives. In all, this ethnography will be a useful contribution through its thick description and analytical depiction of the relationships, choices, and decisions surrounding pregnancy and childhood illness management in rural Mali.

Isabelle Lorraine Lange

Jackson, Sarah E.: Politics of the Maya Court. Hierarchy and Change in the Late Classic Period. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 173 pp. ISBN 978-0-8061-4341-5. Price: $ 29.95

Jackson's book adds to the growing literature on the royal courts at Classic Period (ca. A.D. 300–900) Maya capitals, primarily in Guatemala and Mexico. Whereas other scholars have focused on palace architecture, images of courtly life, portable wealth, or dynastic histories, Jackson highlights the titles claimed by sub-royal nobles as preserved in hieroglyphic inscriptions. The Late Classic period (ca. A.D. 600–900) witnessed the greatest fluorescence of Maya divine kingship, when the size of the aristocratic class and the number of political centers reached their maximum extent. With so many kings, mostly ruling small polities, engaged in alliance and warfare with each other, the regional system ultimately "collapsed" and gave way to different political configurations in the Postclassic period. Most of the surviving inscriptions date to the Late Classic, as rulers and their noble subordinates jockeyed for advantage.

Jackson examines changes in the politics of the Maya court during those later centuries, drawing primarily upon the inscriptions as well as some of the imagery of Maya court functionaries. Much of courtly life was dedicated to rituals, and those centered on the divine king or "holy lord" (*k'uhul ajaw*) were often recorded in hieroglyphic inscriptions on monumental stone architecture: stelae, lintels, or other surfaces. Taking a textual (historical) approach, the author is able to investigate the royal court through some of its individual members as well as categorizations of roles determined from titles and other data. She is interested in how political hierarchy within the court and between different regal centers was constructed and expressed. Rather than present a static picture of Maya tradition, she is concerned to demonstrate spatial and temporal variation, revealing the unfolding of intracourt dynamics in real time. There is also attention paid to ritual practices and to linguistic tropes or metaphors as the media for expressing and enacting roles and relationships within the formal courtly organization.

The author lays out her analysis in six well-illustrated chapters. The first, "Entering the Classic Maya Royal Court," provides a brief review of prior research on Maya courts and courtly life in order to introduce the author's approach focused on courtly titles. Although the *k'uhul ajaw* title was widely used across the Maya world to indicate the paramount ruler of a polity, Jackson observed that only five additional titles have been identified by epigraphers during the Late Classic. These indicate some shared understanding of subroyal courtly roles and functions across political boundaries, allowing scholars to expand their understanding of the king's court. The five titles are *sajal* and *ajk'uhuun*, which make up the large majority of preserved titles, and the rarer *yajaw k'ahk'*, *ti'huun* or *ti'sakhuun*, and one that cannot be read phonetically but whose logograph is a "banded bird." As with the *k'uhul ajaw*, these five positions were special, requiring an accession or induction ritual in order to be claimed by their holders. The assumption is that they implicated certain ranks or responsibilities and were not simply inherited. The meanings of these titles are not completely deciphered; however, Jackson's analysis moves beyond mere decipherment to demonstrate from contextual evidence and imagery what functions these titles may have referenced. Her investigation of published and unpublished sources revealed 221 known examples of these titles claimed by approximately 160 different named individuals in various Maya centers. An appendix lists all the occurrences of the titles.

Chapter 2 is intriguing. "Profiles of Courtly Officials" reveals the individual human biographies of nine titled officials, bringing them to life and illuminating the relationships between the title and its holder. Although much of this analysis draws upon previous scholarship, Jackson shines the spotlight on the lives of courtly individuals other than the king, even as they are typically mentioned only in royal inscriptions. From these biographic reconstructions she is able to demonstrate that the titles are not

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honorifics or nicknames but actual positions within the court hierarchy, despite the wide variation in how they were used.

Chapter 3, "Membership in the Court," moves the analysis in the opposite direction, aggregating the inscriptional data to investigate courtly elites as a group, specifically as an "identity group" comparable to ethnicity or gender. Jackson's intention is to examine how this identity was "performed" by undertaking certain "practices" or action associated with the "work" of the court. The next chapter, "Courtly Variation and Change," focuses on the variation in the operation of Maya courts during the Late Classic, a time of growth and turmoil. Jackson's objective is to reveal how courtly positions were variably used in strategic ways for political advantage, rather than adhere to some established tradition. This helps to explain why so few court titles were widely shared.

Chapter 5, "Metaphors, from the Quotidian to the Sublime," takes a different tack. The author explores the common use of metaphorical references in play in the Maya court; specifically, agricultural and cosmological metaphors expressed in texts and imagery. Although this information is drawn from other sources, it is usually discussed in the context of Maya religion. Jackson aspires to link Maya cosmology more directly to courtly practices and political power. This chapter also utilizes information from colonial dictionaries to supplement the pre-Columbian data. Chapter 6, "Leaving the Court," briefly summarizes the author's findings.

To model the possible workings of the Maya court, Jackson draws upon certain contemporary social science theories (practice, performance, the court as theater, metaphor), although they were not always effectively deployed in the interpretations. She also engages in some limited cross-cultural comparison to courtly operations elsewhere in the New World. More could be gained from the richer data on Asian, African, and even European royal courts, especially in terms of the organization of the aristocracy into corporate groups and types of courtly privileges.

New understandings of Maya internal court politics are revealed by Jackson's focus on the sub-*ajaw* titled positions, but certain caveats must be kept in mind due to the reliance on inscriptions, almost all made under royal aegis, as a principal source of information. Although Jackson is careful to remind readers about the limited nature of the evidence, there are instances where the 221 known examples of titles are given too much evidentiary weight; for example, treating the appearance of titles in surviving known inscriptions as indicative of the relative existence of actual titled positions in order to assess how they changed over time (chap. 4).

Jackson's book provides a more balanced and experiential view of the inside of Maya court politics as lived by individuals and categories of court denizens. Ritual, cosmology, performance, and linguistic tropes are integrated with warfare, alliance, and strategic maneuvering within a political landscape that is revealed as more dynamic and varied than is usually thought. Although this volume will be of value to anyone interested in these topics, its impact may be limited because it has been written to appeal to Maya specialists. Understanding the illustrations, mostly of isolated hieroglyphic texts or objects with texts, requires familiarity with the Maya writing system, and the jargon beloved by Maya scholars is not explained. Readers would also have benefitted from a pronunciation guide for Maya words and personal names.

Susan D. Gillespie

Joseph, Suzanne E.: Fertile Bonds. Bedouin Class, Kinship, and Gender in the Bekaa Valley. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. 233 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-4461-3. Price: $ 74.95

This monograph approaches Bedouin society in Lebanon from a novel angle. Emerging largely from participant observation and semi-structured interviews with Bedouin women in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, it tells a story from an under-researched perspective: women's views on life, social reproduction, and social relations. It is a study in the field of demographic anthropology, for some, a subset of Medical Anthropology. It addresses themes of reproduction, fertility and their interface with the recent sociohistorical context of French neocolonialism and later marginalisation in the developing nation-state of Lebanon. Bedouin are not often associated with Lebanon, that Arab nation so often called the "Switzerland" of the Middle East. Yet Bedouin in Lebanon have been the subject of rich ethnographic study three times in the past 50 years. The first ethnography was conducted by a doctoral student of Raymond Firth at the London School of Economics. That student, Shaykh Fadl al Faour, was the son of the Emir of the Al-Fadl tribe and he conducted his fieldwork in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon and the Golan of Syria in 1962–1963. The dissertation, unfortunately, was never published. A decade later, I was looking for a Bedouin sample where I could test my hypotheses regarding the economy of the Bedouin. I chose to study this same social group a decade later in order to understand the changes that had occurred in the intervening decade. That doctoral research identified the important technological transformation from camel to truck transport among the Bedouin. Then in 2000–2001, Suzanne Joseph, a native Lebanese anthropologist commenced her study among the same group. Her data and her anthropological analysis are particularly focussed on women and fertility, giving richness to the collected body of anthropological work on Bedouin in Lebanon.

The book takes up the questions of class, kinship, and gender in Bedouin communities in Lebanon. It sets out to understand how reproductive health and health inequalities are structured. Joseph describes her approach as a political economy of biodemography. I would argue, however, that the political economy approach is not the strongest aspect of her study; the socio-demographic approach is. A detailed political economy approach would have required a much deeper digging into the perceived discrimination and marginalisation experienced by the Bedouin as well as those who provide them with health care. What she succeeds admirably in doing is challenging the traditional anchoring of reproduction in biology

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