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specialists in the history of Native Americans' engagement with racial ideology may wish that Saunt had devoted more time to discussing how traditional Creek perspectives on difference merged with those of the dominant Euro-American society. Other specialists, familiar with debates on the need to respect Indian peoples' silences on certain issues, will look for a discussion of the intellectual, political, and ethical implications of narrating a deliberately hidden story. These points notwithstanding, this book remains a wonderful example of what can happen when a talented historian tells an important story about which he cares deeply. The results are likely to stay with you for a long, long time.

Joshua Piker

University of Oklahoma

Chaco Canyon: Archaeologists Explore the Lives of an Ancient Society. By Brian Fagan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 256 pages. \$30.00 cloth.

Authors from many walks of life have published prolifically on Chaco, the Pueblo society that emerged in the American Southwest in the 800s to 1200s CE. The National Park Service (NPS), stewards of Chaco Canyon, conducted a research project in the canyon in the 1970s and 1980s and various studies have followed. The project produced, and is still producing, many pages of detailed reports. The Chaco Project lacked a synthesis of these materials and took measures to provide one. Stephen Lekson organized a series of topical meetings whose participants in turn convened to generate an overall view of Chaco: the "Chaco Capstone." In addition to the professional papers assembled, Lekson and the NPS planned a publication for the general public, the sponsors of the various efforts. Brian Fagan is the acknowledged doyen of writing about archaeology for popular audiences, and the capstone organizers were pleased when he agreed to undertake the popular book. He attended the penultimate capstone meeting in 2003 and produced the present book in a very timely fashion—the capstone volume itself is still in preparation.

This book appeared at the same time as two others aimed at a general audience: Kendrick Frazier's updated *People of Chaco: A Canyon and Its Culture* (2005) and David Noble's *In Search of Chaco: New Approaches to an Archaeological Enigma* (2005), each of which took a different approach to the challenge of a popular synthesis of Chaco studies. Noble's book incorporates articles by various students of aspects of Chaco. Frazier's work, like Fagan's, speaks with a single voice but covers a wider range of topics.

Having been involved with Chaco studies since the 1970s and having participated in the capstone meetings, I was pleased to have the opportunity to get an early read of Fagan's book. That intimate involvement with Chaco studies means that I read the book differently from its intended audience, paying attention to detail and nuance that those reading the book for a broad overview might not. I do find editorial, factual, and theoretical problems in the book, but a final assessment of it must come down to whether it succeeds as a popular publication. I will attempt to balance those perspectives here.

Editorial problems seem to be especially pronounced in the notes section: misnumbered references, erratic renditions of names (Steve Lekson is given no fewer than four different middle initials, sometimes different ones in the same note: the correct answer is *H*; and the correct spelling of my name can be found below—it's a bit of bad luck to whet the reviewer's appetite by misspelling his name). Other editorial problems exist in the text as well. Readers should be aware, for example, that the phase name is Los Pinos ("Piños" doesn't exist) and that Atlati City is Atlatl Cave—an archaic site not a city (as interesting as an Archaic city would be)—and there is no such thing as a supernova platograph (although also an interesting concept). Moreover, yucca are not cacti, nor is pollen (not pollens) spores.

Illustration is important in works created for a general audience. A great discovery made by Fagan is the set of 1920s and 1930s photographs by George Grant. Not only do they show the canyon before the fall of Threatening Rock on Pueblo Bonito, but they are of superior quality. Movement of populations is a crucial part of the Puebloan occupation of the Chaco region and was continual and complicated. Even knowing the area, I sometimes found it hard to follow the ebb and flow of settlement. Time-linked maps would be a helpful addition.

Chaco Canyon uses the rare or even unique to illustrate the commonplace. The round metate (100) is very unusual and unlikely to be a corn-processing implement, and, as the text notes, cylinder jars are among the rarest of all forms but only two other vessels are shown (figs. 10.1, 9.4). Moreover, cylinder vessels are used to illustrate connections with other communities; I am personally very attached to that idea, but only because nearly all cylinder vessels were found at Pueblo Bonito, certainly not at outlying sites. The context of many figure references is frankly mysterious: relationships of African villagers to the dead (illustrated by a sandal from a Chaco cliff dwelling), movement into the area in the 800s (illustrated by a ca. 1080 tower kiva), incorrectly identified masonry styles, discussion of Pueblo Pintado (illustrated by a photo of Kin Bineola), and higher productivity around the edges of the San Juan Basin (illustrated by a truly marginal artifact class, one of less than thirty stone axes from all Chaco researches). As is invariably true, Adriel Heisey's color aerial photos, which constitute fifteen of the sixteen color images, are stunning, a wonderful addition to any text.

Fagan identifies himself as a "parachutist" who views things from afar on a grand scale, and he would surely peg me as a "truffle hunter" (113) who searches for and is immersed in detail. This difference in personality makes my conflicting views inevitable. Even truffle hunters, however, can occasionally rise above the forest duff and see a larger picture. Few of those emergences are of interest to Fagan. He does convey the contrasting tensions of interpretation, although sometimes this seems to be through statements that do not appear entirely to follow one from another; I get the impression that some of the text was written in haste (and I marvel at the speed of its production) and then not adequately edited. In keeping with the parachute-truffle dichotomy, I find that the book's more general discussions are easier to approve than its examination of hard data.

Fagan has clearly settled on Gwinn Vivian's view of the canyon and the culture. The book is dedicated to Gwinn and his father, Gordon, and a predominance of interpretive material cites Vivian's major work, *The Chacoan Prehistory of the San Juan Basin* (1990). Vivian is a logical choice for the main source of the Chaco story, having grown up in Chaco and devoted more career years to Chaco than any living archaeologist. However, as an admirer of Vivian who does not always disagree with him, I feel that Fagan's book is often dismissive of other views of Chaco writ large and small. The perspectives of many more recent students of Chaco are given in passing, and Fagan carries on a running argument with Lekson. In addition to seeing the capstone effort through, Lekson has written voluminously and sometimes controversially about Chaco. Fagan recognizes the important role Lekson has played in making Chaco scholars rethink their assumptions, especially about the scale of interaction and contact within the Chaco "world" (a term Fagan rejects, but which to me refers only to the frequency of interaction) and with regions farther away. Fagan is probably correct that most southwestern archaeologists do not accept the Casas Grandes leg of Lekson's Chaco Meridian, but most—including Fagan—accept the Chaco-to-Aztec succession (contra the statement that "few archaeologists involved with any of the three sites [Chaco, Aztec, Paquime] accept Lekson's alignment" [212]). Fagan rejects several of Lekson's more political, less environmental positions out of hand, and I believe that Lekson has shown us repeatedly that we need to keep our minds as open as possible and to take the high-altitude parachutist's interpretive view at least some of the time.

Fagan stresses, correctly I believe, the criticality of moisture cycles to human events in Chaco, but he takes the environmental explanation further than most archaeologists today. Social factors are more ascendant now than at other points on the pendulum. He presents two moisture charts, but these complex charts are never explained and are to different y-axis scales. Though one is summer rainfall and one annual, it is very hard to tell if they show two different things. I have always been struck by the fact that during the most frenetic building episode in the canyon at the end of the 1000s, moisture was below average, suggesting that building more was a way to restore favorable conditions. Confusingly, Fagan tells us that "waves of construction in the canyon coincided with periods of more plentiful rainfall," citing increased moisture between 1020 and 1050, 1050 and 1075, and 1090 and 1116 (198), yet soon thereafter we read, "Then came a more serious drought in 1090, an intense dryness that lasted for five years" (201).

In the early 1100s building in Chaco and its region as well as pottery style and decoration underwent a marked change, the badly named "McElmo phase." Fagan mentions the McElmo phase but does not specify what it is or its importance. He accepts the northern connection implied—incorrectly I believe—by its name. The record clearly shows that a dramatic social change occurred, yet in spite of his great attention to flux, this important transitional time receives scant notice in the Fagan account, in spite of reference to relevant articles.

Fagan accepts the importance of ritual gathering at great houses, but he perpetuates the interpretational mistake of many studies in focusing on great

kivas as loci of such gatherings. Among the many impressive features of major great houses, perhaps the most overwhelming is their huge plazas, clearly spaces for great dramatic performances, allowing for intermingling of people from throughout the pueblo's world, as continues in plazas today, a continuity Fagan stresses.

Throughout the book, and indeed the literature, we see references to "the Chacoans." I find this to be a misleading term, because I believe that the more we study how things worked in Chaco, the more indications we see that what went on in Chaco Canyon and what followed it drew upon a diverse area and probably a diversity of traditions, including languages and beliefs. To refer to the Chacoans as if they were a uniform group obscures this. Fagan recognizes this diversity in his discussions of movement in and out of the north, the Chuska Valley, the Red Mesa Valley, and other locations manifesting the "disconnected heterogeneity" (chapter 10) but does not recognize the implications of it and "veneers" it with "Chacoans." The term is conducive to the kind of thinking that leads to the interpretation that only one form of agriculture was taking place in the canyon after the development of irrigation systems (128–29). There is no reason I know to think that dune and wash strategies were abandoned.

"Almost all of what we know about Chacoan great houses comes from Pueblo Bonito" (116). This is bad news for all the work that has taken place in great houses, including Pueblos del Arroyo and Alto, Kins Kletso and Nahasbas, Chetro Ketl, and Una Vida in the canyon, many of whose excavators receive positive coverage, not to mention great houses outside the canyon. Rather than not knowing anything more about great houses, it tells us that great houses are not all the same, that Pueblo Bonito was probably a very particular place among great houses.

Academic carping aside, does the book succeed as a popular introduction to and overview of Chaco archaeology? The sections on dendrochronology and climatology are very good, as is the treatment of the geological and geographic setting of the San Juan Basin, always a slippery concept. This book is strongest when placing Chaco in a global context through the author's broad knowledge of archaeological cultures. The fundamentality of agriculture in a difficult environment and the consequent complete meshing of ritual and the rest of life are well illustrated. It is a bold thing to try to encapsulate an ever-expanding literature into a compact, readable package. Fagan has consulted and references a huge quantity of literature and provided his valuable "spin" on Chaco.

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