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## *People and Culture in Ice Age Americas: New Dimensions in Paleoamerican Archaeology*

Rafael Suárez and Ciprian F. Ardelean (eds.)  
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### **Reviewed by Amy E. Gusick**

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This edited volume is a must read for anyone interested in early occupations in the Americas. Emerging from a 2014 symposium at the Society for American Archaeology annual meeting, the contributors present recent Paleoamerican research, including numerous discoveries and excavations not previously available in English language journals. As an archaeologist interested in the earliest occupations in the New World and who speaks very little Spanish, I greatly appreciated the presentation of data and research approaches from Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia, and other regions in Central and South America. Paleoamerican research and theories are often driven by discoveries originating in North America, which has resulted in a northern-centric view of numerous aspects of the earliest New World dispersals and occupations. This volume addresses that oversight by presenting a diversity of data from early sites, and it touches on the myriad factors that define Paleoamerican research, with contributions and discoveries from the entire hemisphere. The volume's 13 chapters explore integral themes within Paleoamerican archaeology through the presentation of new data and research methods, new analyses of previously reported discoveries, and syntheses of broad-scale data. This informs readers on the current state of Paleoamerican archaeology, while introducing new ideas and promoting a "hemisphere-long approach" (Dillehay, Ch. 13) as being central to understanding terminal Pleistocene/early Holocene New World occupations. Such an approach encourages new questions and a "healthier debate" in the quest to understand some of the earliest occupants in the New World (Dillehay, Ch. 13).

A number of the chapters focus on the Patagonia region of Chile and Argentina, where caves and rockshelters have been the focus of research and have yielded

a majority of the evidence for early human occupation in the region (Franco and Vetrivano, Ch. 2). Martin and colleagues (Ch. 1) review the evidence for a terminal Pleistocene occupation at the Cueva del Medio rockshelter in Chile and critically examine the assumed association between late Pleistocene fauna and human presence at the site. Franco and Vetrivano (Ch. 2) consider data from another rockshelter, the La Grunta 1 site in Argentina, along with data on paleoenvironmental factors and locations of siliceous raw material sources, to propose a model of hunter-gatherer occupation for the region. Mendez and colleagues (Ch. 3) move away from an emphasis on caves and rockshelters and instead focus on the extensive surface artifacts identified in the central-western Patagonia region. By modelling geomorphological and environmental features known to be archaeologically sensitive, they attempt to recognize surface expressions in open-air locations in order to develop a broader view of the activities of the earliest occupants in the region, previously known only from rockshelters. Further north, Suárez (Ch. 4) describes evidence for the earliest known occupations in South America—in Argentina (Monte Verde) and Brazil (Arroyo Seco 2)—while adding two pre-13,000 cal B.P. sites (Urupez and Tigre) from Uruguay to the discussion of the earliest occupations on the southeastern plains of South America. Additionally, by reviewing the chronology and associated cultural changes suggested by the occurrences of the Fishtail, Tigre, and Pay Paso projectile point types, Suárez touches on the diversity and environmental adaptations of human groups in South America during the terminal Pleistocene and early Holocene.

Moving up the hemisphere into Central America and Mexico, Aceituno-Bocanegra and Uriarte (Ch. 5) and Acosta-Ochoa and colleagues (Ch. 6) take different approaches to understanding Paleoamerican dispersals and occupations. Aceituno-Bocanegra and Uriarte use natural corridors, geographic distances, and known archaeological site clusters as factors in a GIS analysis of the possible routes used by early groups in settling the Columbian Andes, where the earliest known sites in Columbia are located. Arguing that a focus on the diagnostic technology well known from Paleoamerican sites obscures such other data as subsistence patterns and other adaptations, Acosta-Ochoa and colleagues provide zooarchaeological and flora data recovered from

the “Clovis-like” and Fishtail occupations at the Los Grifos site in Chiapas and argue that the data support a wide-ranging diet for the site inhabitants. Elsewhere in Mexico, Ardelean and colleagues (Ch. 7) exercise caution when they collect samples from Chiquihuite Cave in northern Zacatecas to test Lorenzo’s Model, which posits a 40,000-year human history in the Mexican region. Their test pit yielded a deposit—with two pieces of bone (a bear baculum and an unidentified fragment) in association with three presumably human-made flakes—that returned both OSL and AMS dates in the 25,000-year range. Not surprisingly, they call for caution and additional research rather than considering the dates as conclusive evidence for an ancient occupation.

The next five chapters focus on research from North America and Beringia and echo the same sentiments as the previous contributions concerning the need to move away from northern-centric paradigms and traditional methods of considering Paleoamerican occupations. Williams and colleagues (Ch. 8) argue against using Clovis as a benchmark, and suggest the question of Clovis’ origins needs to be a separate debate from that of early human occupations. They then present the earliest evidence for occupation at the Gault site, with dates ranging from 16,000 to 20,000 years ago, and assert that when considered in a wider context that includes stemmed points, the Gault assemblage fits a regional pattern, a fact that would have been missed if analyzed from a Clovis perspective. Lemke and O’Shea (Ch. 9) also echo previous sentiments by promoting a move away from a technology-focused analysis of Paleoamerican sites and towards a consideration of how to elucidate other aspects

of culture. Their underwater research in Lake Huron has yielded evidence of over 60 stone caribou-hunting features that they use to argue for both seasonality and social organization. Shott (Ch. 11) addresses the Clovis-centric overkill hypothesis, arguing that sample bias is an issue in the analyses of kill sites and suggesting that the paucity of stone tools in Midwestern North American kill sites does not support the overkill hypothesis. Using DNA evidence, Schurr (Ch. 12) argues that the Altai-Sayan region of Asia is crucial to understanding the peopling of the New World, and suggests that DNA evidence supports a single major expansion into the Americas, with multiple population “streams” subsequently moving into the Americas.

Although moving away from the Clovis-centered debate that dominated Paleoamerican research for decades has been a slow process, this volume helps that process by highlighting the multi-faceted, diverse populations that thrived in the Americas during the terminal Pleistocene and early Holocene. As pointed out by Adavasio and Pedler (Ch. 10) in their synthesis of terminal Pleistocene occupations in the New World, the “andro-litho-centric” Clovis First model served to “constrain rather than enhance” discussions surrounding the migrations, diverse lifestyles, and non-Clovis technologies that we now know were integral to understanding Paleoamerican populations. Thanks in part to researchers such as those presented in this volume, the field of Paleoamerican research now seems to encourage new perspectives and new opinions, interjecting lively new debate into the age-old questions surrounding the earliest New World dispersals and occupations.

