

Adaptive Radiations in Prehistoric Panama. Edited by OLGA F. LINARES and ANTHONY J. RANERE. Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1980. Maps. Illustrations. Tables. Bibliography. Pp. xx, 529. Paper. \$20.00.

The prehistory of the "Intermediate Area" of the New World has long been neglected. While archaeological research on the advanced native civilizations of Mesoamerica and the Andean areas has been intensive and has flourished for decades, the rugged zone of Lower Central America (eastern Honduras to Panama) has been investigated only sporadically. Because of this lack of sustained interest, and consequently the sparser data base, the limited archaeology that has occurred here has generally lagged behind both the type and level of research being conducted elsewhere in the Americas. The Linares and Ranere volume has taken a major step toward correcting serious deficiencies in the prehistoric record of one important region of Lower Central America, specifically western Panama, while at the same time producing a unique, modern model for future researchers in this area.

Their approach, largely ecological and systemic, is innovative (particularly by regional standards), and the results are praiseworthy. The volume commences with a thorough discussion of the archaeological problem ("to reconstruct a prehistoric example of adaptive radiation among human populations in the New World tropics," p. 3) and research design as it evolved over nearly a decade of investigation, beginning in 1970. From this point the nine principal authors focus on the ecological setting in Panama, the traditional archaeological evidence (ceramics, lithics, settlement), and less traditional paleoecological data (plant, faunal, and molluscan remains). The wealth of paleobotanical and zooarchaeological information supplied will prove useful to many researchers in the tropics. Pertinent ethnohistoric and comparative ethnographic data dealing with the Guaymí Indians of Panama are also successfully used.

Factually, the report provides new and badly needed data on preceramic settlers in Central America, with information on developments in western Panama as early as 4600 B.C. The volume documents evidence of early hunter-gatherer groups of the central highlands of Panama, through the subsequent widespread adoption of seed-crop cultivation (corn) and later prehistoric utilization of the Panamanian coastal zones (both the Atlantic and Pacific) up to the Spanish conquest. One of the most interesting, and more debatable, ideas presented by Linares and Ranere is that there was a common highland origin for these radiating coastal settlers.

Generally, the conclusions are carefully and cautiously drawn. In ad-

dition to the sixteen basic chapters, the book also has twenty separate, appendixlike reports. This two-part volume organization permits a more even, uninterrupted reading of the principal points of the editors. For those professionals wanting all the details, contextual data, and fuller explanation of various lines of argument, these technical reports should prove satisfactory. They provide concrete, specialized documentation of many statements briefly made, or glossed over, in the first half of the book.

In sum, this volume is a most worthy effort, which makes significant theoretical, methodological, and factual contributions. It will surely have a long-lasting, beneficial effect upon future archaeological research in this poorly known area of the New World. Indeed, it can be argued that the book, although dealing with Panamanian research, provides significant comment upon our understanding of both pre-Columbian cultural evolution in Lower Central America and our ideas of human processes of adaptation in general.

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COLONIAL AND INDEPENDENCE PERIODS

Relación de los ritos antiguos, idolatrías y sacrificios de los indios de la Nueva España, y de la maravillosa conversión que Dios en ellos ha obrado. By FRAY TORIBIO DE PAREDES MOTOLINÍA. Introducción, transcripción paleográfica y notas de colación con los manuscritos de la Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo El Real de El Escorial y de "The Hispanic Society of America" de la ciudad de Nueva York, by JAVIER O. ARAGÓN. Mexico City: n.p., 1979. Illustrations. Index. Pp. xlii, 131, 245. Cloth.

The literary heritage of the celebrated Fray Toribio de Mendieta or Paredes, better known by his Indian name of Motolinía, poses serious questions with respect to authorship and the relation between his various writings, especially between the important chronicle commonly, but improperly, according to the editor of the book under review, known as the *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, and the no less important *Memoriales*. The heat generated by controversy over these questions sometimes recalls the ferocity of Fray Toribio's own diatribe against Bartolomé de Las Casas, as witness the recent sharp exchange between two