

recipientes como variables esenciales en la interpretación de estos vestigios.

Rewriting Maya Religion: Domingo de Vico, K'iche' Maya Intellectuals, and the Theologia Indorum. GARRY G. SPARKS. 2019. University Press of Colorado, Louisville. ix + 434 pp. + 4 illust. \$99.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-60732-969-5; \$79.00 (ebook), ISBN 978-1-60732-970-1.

Reviewed by Mark Christensen, Brigham Young University

Best characterized as a companion piece to his *The Americas' First Theologies* (2017), Sparks's current work offers additional analysis on the Dominican friar Domingo de Vico and his 1553–1554 *Theologia Indorum*, with an emphasis on demonstrating its impact on ecclesiastics and K'iche'an Maya religious and mundane texts. Composed in Highland Guatemala likely in K'iche' Maya, the *Theologia Indorum*'s nearly 900 pages survive today only in fragments of copies of the original that are scattered throughout numerous archives. Like so many other pieces of theological text produced in the Americas, the *Theologia Indorum* was never printed and remains largely overlooked by scholars. With this present study, Sparks once again contributes to the historical resurrection of Vico and his work while connecting both to a larger conversation of how various theological ideologies and Indigenous worldviews interacted and affected the course of evangelization. The work contributes to various existing historiographical trends exposing (1) the diversity of Catholicism both in the Americas and Europe, (2) its messengers both ecclesiastic and Indigenous, and (3) the ecclesiastic- and Indigenous-authored texts that emerged from its negotiations with various European and Indigenous ideologies. Sparks's expertise in theology and linguistics runs throughout his work, which is best suited for graduate students and scholars.

The book is divided into three parts. Part One begins with a history of the Highland Maya. Striving to avoid Eurocentric paradigms, Sparks suggests viewing the “Old World” as representing both Europeans and natives prior to 1492, and the “New World” as the new worlds created from postcontact interactions. Moreover, Sparks argues that several factors, including a delay in the establishment of both Spanish administration and the Tridentine Church, as well as the “strong, continued, and autonomous agency on the part of the Maya for at least an additional century”

beyond the 1520s, warrants an extension of the Post-classic era of the Maya (AD 900–1520s) to the 1650s. He states, “The recognition of the role and value of the Maya through this later date then means that the colonial era of the Maya did not begin in the 1520s but rather in the 1650s” (pp. 33–34). Chapter 2 highlights the diversity of Iberian Catholicism and examines the various schools of thought of Spanish Dominicans and Franciscans, as well as the impact of the University of Salamanca. Here, Sparks provides an important reminder of the importance of considering the theological background of mendicants when examining their actions in the Americas.

Parts Two and Three of the book focus on Vico, the composition of his *Theologia Indorum*, and its impact and legacy. Chapter 3 employs fine archival sleuthing among Spanish and Indigenous sources to create an “ethnobiography” of the friar, and both Chapters 4 and 5 reconstruct his text from surviving manuscripts while examining the process through which it was created. Sparks illustrates the impact of both European and Native worldviews on the structure of the *Theologia Indorum*, which he argues reads more like a summa. He also provides insightful analysis on how Vico negotiated specific Indigenous concepts of the Highland Maya and local, everyday vocabulary and images with his own theological training to create a text whose content and prose resonated with both.

An argument running throughout the work is that “the difference in linguistic ideologies or semiotic theories between Spanish Franciscans and Dominicans undergirded the respectively different approaches mendicants took to convey Catholic theology to indigenous Mesoamericans” (p. 163). For Sparks, Spanish Franciscans were generally nominalists and favored Latin or Spanish words in their translations, whereas Spanish Dominicans, from a scholastic Thomism school of thought, encouraged the use of Indigenous terminology and ideas to convey Christianity. His primary examples derive from Vico's work and Highland Guatemala. Although he engages the Yucatec Morley Manuscript, additional examples, however brief, would help illustrate more clearly the presence or absence of nominalist and Thomist ideology in translation decisions throughout Mesoamerica, as he claims, and add context to Vico's actions.

Chapter 6 uses impressive linguistic and ethnohistorical analysis of specific words and phrases along with intertextual comparisons to illustrate the impact of the *Theologia Indorum* on the *Popol Vuh*, composed around the same time. Through his reading of the text's opening lines, Sparks proposes that the authors of the *Popol Vuh* “accommodated [Hispano-Catholicism] as inferior and incomplete to that of

ancient Maya truth” (p. 273). Subsequent chapters employ a similar methodology to propose the *Theologia Indorum*’s influence on various Highland Maya texts, including the *Title of Totoncapán* and other *títulos* and notarial texts. Throughout, Sparks emphasizes the hyperlocal audiences and perspectives of such texts and the need to read all such K’ichean texts intertextually to achieve a full understanding of their content. The role of the Maya author Diego Reynoso in composing and extending the influence of the *Theologia Indorum* also appears in more detail throughout these final chapters. Overall, Sparks’s work offers various new proposals for scholarly debate, and reveals even more the significant role of the *Theologia Indorum* and its composers while exemplifying the importance of considering locality, various European and Indigenous influences, and intertextuality in the study of colonial religion.

Las Varas: Ritual and Ethnicity in the Ancient Andes. HOWARD TSAI. 2020. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa. 160 pp. \$49.95 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-8173-2068-3.

Reviewed by Robyn Cutright, Centre College

Andean archaeologists have tended to focus their work on either the coast or the highlands, leaving ecologically and culturally peripheral or intermediary zones on the eastern and western slopes of the Andes understudied. This book represents a welcome addition to a growing body of research on the prehistory of the *chaupiyunga*, or middle valley region, on the western slopes. Howard Tsai explores how ritual provided the context for the expression and negotiation of ethnicity in the *chaupiyunga* community of Las Varas in the middle Jequetepeque Valley.

In Chapter 1, Tsai traces anthropological thinking about ethnicity. Early nationalist and evolutionary archaeologies saw ethnic groups as stable, homogeneous entities. Later work by Leach, Barth, and Hodder questioned the existence of immutable ethnic groups or identities and instead called attention to the social dynamics through which heterogeneous ethnic groups persist or change. Bourdieu and Rappaport proposed that identity and culture are shaped by practice, performance, and ritual. Building on these ideas, Tsai argues that ethnicity is “the product of interaction and not isolation” (p. 22): it is an historical and cultural construct maintained by strategic practices such as ritual. Rather than using patterned differences in

material culture to draw boundaries around groups, Tsai suggests, archaeologists should focus on how past people used material culture to signal difference in relation to others and to mediate interactions among different groups.

Chapter 2 sketches the ecological and historical context of the *chaupiyunga*, the warm, agriculturally rich, coca-growing zone between the Pacific coast and Andean highlands. The *chaupiyunga* is both ecologically transitional between the coast and the highlands and socially distinct. Tsai uses early colonial sources, including the Huarochirí manuscript and records of legal disputes, to show how highlanders defined themselves as distinct from those dwelling at lower altitudes, whom they called *yuncas*; this relational distinction was embedded in myth and reenacted through ritual performance.

Chapter 3 introduces the central case study of the book: Las Varas, a community in the middle Jequetepeque Valley occupied around AD 1000. The high concentration of Coastal Cajamarca painted bowl sherds visible on the surface of Las Varas sets it apart from neighboring middle valley communities, where ceramic assemblages and architecture largely follow coastal canons. Tsai’s research aimed to test whether Las Varas was a highland colony (as suggested by Murra’s classic vertical archipelago model), but his findings question a strict coast–highland dichotomy by providing evidence for *chaupiyunga* agency and identity.

Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to archaeological data. Chapter 4 describes household architecture and contents, supported by a rich collection of photographs, plan and profile drawings, and architectural reconstructions. Tsai finds numerous affinities with highland domestic architecture and household activities and little emphasis on coastal material culture in Las Varas houses. I wish that the descriptive summary had been accompanied by more detail on household assemblages, especially subsistence remains and utilitarian ceramics. In particular, more quantitative data would facilitate comparisons of these assemblages to those at other sites. Tsai does discuss in detail the distinctive Coastal Cajamarca style that dominates the Las Varas ceramic assemblage. He argues convincingly that, even though this style is visually similar to highland Cajamarca cursive styles and often found at coastal sites, its origin lies in the *chaupiyunga*.

Chapter 5 describes two ritual spaces at Las Varas, which Tsai refers to as the Reception Platform and the Plazas of the Malquis. The Reception Platform, at the western end of the site, has more coastal ceramics and shellfish than any other context at Las Varas, which Tsai reads as evidence that visitors coming from the