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Household dynamics and the reproduction of early village societies in Northwest Argentina (200 BC-AD 850).

Julián Salazar.

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Archaeology of Households, Kinship, and Social Change

Archaeology of Households, Kinship, and Social Change offers new perspectives on the processes of social change from the standpoint of household archaeology.

This volume develops new theoretical and methodological approaches to the archaeology of households pursuing three critical themes: household diversity in human residential communities with and without archaeologically identifiable houses, interactions within and between households that explicitly consider impacts of kin and non-kin relationships, and lastly change as a process that involves the choices made by members of households in the context of larger societal constraints. Encompassing these themes, authors explore the role of social ties and their material manifestations (within the house, dwelling, or other constructed space), how the household relates to other social units, how households consolidate power and control over resources, and how these changes manifest at multiple scales. The case studies presented in this volume have broader implications for understanding the drivers of change, the ways households create the contexts for change, and how households serve as spaces for invention, reaction, and/or resistance. Understanding the nature of relationships within households is necessary for a more complete understanding of communities and regions as these ties are vital to explaining how and why societies change.

Taking a comparative outlook, with case studies from around the world, this volume will inform students and professionals researching household archaeology and be of interest to other disciplines concerned with the relationship between social networks and societal change.

Lacey B. Carpenter is Visiting Assistant Professor in the Anthropology Department at Hamilton College and a Research Associate at the American Museum of Natural History.

Anna Marie Prentiss is Regents Professor of Anthropology at the University of Montana.

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Archaeology of Households, Kinship, and Social Change

Edited by Lacey B. Carpenter and Anna Marie Prentiss

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**Edited by
Lacey B. Carpenter and
Anna Marie Prentiss**

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4 Household dynamics and the reproduction of early village societies in Northwest Argentina (200 BC–AD 850)

Julián Salazar

Household archaeology has been successfully applied as a descriptive tool through which the most basic unit of society could be addressed (e.g., Gonlin 2013; Kuijt 2018; Manzanilla 1990; Nash 2009; Nielsen 2001). Following the original idea of Wilk and Rathje (1982), it is commonly proposed that "...the household is the most fundamental spatial/activity unit of human society. It is responsive to social, economic, and political change, and it functions as a unit of adaptation" (Douglass and Gonlin 2013:2). Several scholars have enhanced interpretations of the past through multiple lines of inquiry in household archaeology, focusing on such themes as societal trends (Nielsen 2001; Hastorf and D'Altroy 2002; Kuijt, Chapter 12), cooperation (Pluckhahn and Wallis, Chapter 3), primary and craft production (Hagstrum 2001), gender (Bowser and Patton 2004), inequality and differentiation (Blanton 1995; Spencer and Redmond, Chapter 14), among others.

Nevertheless, I think that concepts of households were restricted to enclosed building blocks of larger entities with more effective and determinant attributes, be they cultures, adaptive systems, or societies. This framework could be related to the dominant ontology of society, which supposes that without *relations of interiority* (those necessary and causal relations linking parts within a homogeneous organism), a whole cannot have emergent properties, becoming a mere aggregation of the properties of its components (De Landa 2006). By contrast, Harris (2014, 2018) proposed to understand social groupings that archaeologists often try to grasp, in terms of *assemblages*,¹ that is to say, heterogeneous compositions of parts in a permanent state of becoming. According to Deleuze (De Landa 2006; Deleuze and Guattari 1988; Jervis 2018), the flux of assemblages is defined by movements through which component parts are put together, or territorialized, and broken apart due to the continuous changes, or deterritorialized (Table 4.1). Deleuze hypothesized that the concepts of difference and becoming should have priority over identity and being; that is an emphasis on experience and emergence rather than on a world defined and conceived of in advance (Jervis 2018).

Early village societies (Bandy and Fox 2010) are good settings to revise the conceptualization of social groupings and challenge assumptions that households, villages, communities, and cultures were functionally integrated

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Notes

- 1 Assemblage is a concept already used in archaeology. For Clarke (1968), an assemblage is an associated set of contemporary artifact types. Nevertheless, if some resemblance in the relational approach can be noted, this archaeological sense is an ordering of materials, whereas here it is a process of gathering and implies a shift from seeing archaeological objects or deposits as possessing some form of static essence, to view them as always becoming something (Jervis 2018).
- 2 New materialisms are theoretical frameworks of archaeological studies, reacting against Cartesian dualities in social sciences. The main claim is that human beings are not ontologically distinct from other entities and, therefore, they should be considered in the same plane of existence. Despite the lack of intentions, nonhumans can act (in the sense that they make differences in trajectories) in a way that can be equally effective, less effective, or even more effective than human actions guided by intent, depending on the relationships. This does not seek to redress the balance between people and things by privileging the material but, instead, places an emphasis on processes of mixing and hybridization, seeing agency as emergent from distributed collectives (Jervis 2018). The application of these ideas offers archaeological research the possibility to fully understand the relevance of objects and material culture in the processes under study.

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