

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON  
**LANDSCAPES**  
OF **WARFARE**

EDITED BY HUGO C. IKEHARA-TSUKAYAMA  
AND JUAN CARLOS VARGAS-RUIZ



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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON  
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War does not only incur immediate human and material losses; it forces individuals, families, and communities to change their perspectives and ways of life, and it fundamentally alters landscapes. For people who can migrate, war may mean leaving places their families have inhabited over generations and continuing their lives within other societies, often with unfamiliar cultural norms, a lower status, and different social roles. In search for safety, some people arrive in regions with different ecological and physical settings, requiring new approaches to practices, material culture, meanings, and interaction with the environment. For those who do not migrate, war means adapting to a new life—one shaped by fear and possibly scarcity and famine, hard borders, and banned territories—or being subject to practices that would be unacceptable in other situations, such as abuse or loss of freedom.

The scars left by wars go beyond psychological. Conflict, violence, and fear can be fixed and materialized in landscapes. In designing defenses, communities move residences, build fortifications, invest resources, create alliances, and negotiate with human and nonhuman beings for help. The histories of how territories were appropriated and transformed by communities at war offer insight into how built landscapes not only reflect what happened but also influence generations to come. We present in this volume eleven cases of transformed landscapes, of different geographic origin, time depth, social complexity, and historical context.

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*Landscapes of People at War*

HUGO C. IKEHARA-  
TSUKAYAMA AND  
JUAN CARLOS VARGAS RUIZ

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This chapter briefly reviews how the main topics of warfare and landscapes have intersected in archaeological literature, how the physical manifestations of violence and conflict have become permanent features in landscapes, and how the chapters in this volume contribute to a better understanding of the topic.

## LANDSCAPES

Through archaeological studies of landscapes, we consider a wide range of questions and approaches—from those related to settlement patterns to symbolic and experiential approaches—that have been used in order to understand and explain past human geographies (Anschuetz et al. 2001; Bradley 1998; Knapp and Ashmore 1999; Moore 2005; Parsons 1972; Tilley 1994). These approaches differ in how they view the relationship between people and their social and natural environments. Some archaeological and anthropological approaches have focused on explaining environmental influences on how people obtained food and other resources, how people distributed themselves in a territory, how they organized themselves and interacted with other groups, and even how their religious beliefs were shaped, in adaptive terms, to keep their sociocultural system in balance. Landscapes were modeled in these terms especially but not only during the apogee of the New Archaeology.

The postprocessual critique cast doubt on many of the assumptions that drove archaeological research until the 1970s and promoted a theoretical agenda asking for reflexivity, new epistemologies, individual volition, and practices (Hodder and Hutson 2003; Shanks 2008). Some of these new questions have shaped the way archaeologists understand space and study landscapes today. First, archaeologists were interested in the role of humans as agents of change in opposition to social structure (Dobres and Robb 2000). For instance, people were no longer considered passive beings adapting to predetermined environmental conditions; it was acknowledged that environments were in constant transformation and that people were active agents on it (Blume and Leinweber 2004; Crumley 2017; Hayashida 2005; Roberts et al. 2017). People have contributed to species extinction, transformed species (domestication), and modified environs (niche construction) to fit to their own needs. The view that *most* landscapes are anthropogenic was considered by many researchers for a long time, but during the last few decades this concept has been explicitly stated and even have become a subject of archaeological investigations.

The notion of place—locations meaningful to people due to certain historical, identarian, and experiential circumstances linked to the construction of

individual and/or collective memories and practices—has been used in contrast to the notion of space—an abstract, objective, and quantifiable quality of spatial extension, a set of relationships between the subjects and objects and the positions everyone plays. The concept of place not only represents a location of physical activity; it also refers to the behavioral settings happening on it or in reference to it (Bradley 1998; Tilley 1994; Whitridge 2004).

The landscapes studied by archaeologists are both manifestations of how people interacted with other people and nature, and how they have assigned meanings to these places. In the Central Andes, for instance, Inka landscapes integrated incredible transformed places with meanings linked by mythical stories and a ceremonial system (e.g., Bauer 2000; Kaulicke et al. 2004; Kosiba 2015; Santillana 2012; Taylor 1987) whose details have reached to us through early colonial records. This “reading” of past landscapes has been practiced in some national archaeological traditions since the early twentieth century (e.g., Tello and Miranda 1923) but also in nonwestern views of existing landscapes (Reid et al. 2014; see also Kim and Quick, chapter 6 in this volume).

A. Bernard Knapp and Wendy Ashmore (1999) observe that three processes interplay in the conferral of meaning to places in landscapes. Certain locations (including those without human modification) became places of special cultural significance because they are associated with specific social practices and experiences or are articulated within narratives of how people view their world, forming part of what Knapp and Ashmore call conceptual landscapes and ideational landscapes, respectively. Some places perpetuate or fix meanings through the physical transformation of their topography, the third process resulting in constructed landscapes. While some constructions, such as monuments, are highly visible, other subtler modifications can have powerful meanings, too.

Landscapes are not fixed but subject to constant change and reinterpretation, because both natural settings and culture are in constant flux. This flux allows archaeologists and other students of the past to reconstruct ancient landscapes through time; if landscapes were fixed and static, the remains from the past would be indistinguishable from the present. The constant change enables us to consider the historically specific forces, conditions, and contexts through which landscapes have been transformed. In this sense, landscape scale is integrative because it allows us to study human activities within their local historical context (Crumley 2007).

Local history matters also matters because people occupy territories that, most of the time, were already modified by their antecessors. Landscapes are not only the result of people interacting with their social and natural

environment at one moment in time; they are the medium that makes human actions possible (Anschuetz et al. 2001, 161; Giddens 1984), a form of “structure” derived by multiple cumulative past actions that condition the decisions of generations to come (Arkush 2011, 12). In this way, built landscapes reinforce the path dependency in local history and memories of social phenomena (Tilley 1994, 30).

Some postprocessual critiques have also enriched current archaeological studies on settlement patterns. Although not all of these studies have engaged in the symbolic and more experiential approaches, this kind of study forms an important part of the archaeological understanding of ancient built landscapes. For instance, siteless survey (Dunnell 1992; Dunnell and Dancey 1983; Peterson and Drennan 2005) is among the most important methodological developments related to the studies of regions. The use of archaeological sites as bounded units of observation and analysis has been considered a limitation to the consideration of landscapes as spaces where people’s movements are fluid and whose activities do not always leave discrete and evident traces such as buildings or high-density clusters of artifacts. Another example of alternative perspectives about landscapes is historical ecology, a framework focused on the interaction between people and environment in historically specific contexts, highlighting human agency, the long-term effects of human actions on the environment, and the need for the collaboration of specialists from multiple disciplines to understand and explain how landscapes are constructed through time (Crumley 2017; Hayashida 2005; Meyer and Crumley 2011).

Despite its obviousness, the common ground of all landscapes studies that is important to emphasize is the presence of people and the effects of their actions on the land, whether we are focused on natural resources, natural features, monuments, or dwellings. The recent renewed interest on demography (Bouquet-Appel and Bar-Yosef 2008; Drennan et al. 2015) is very relevant because it allows archaeologists to understand how changes in population might or might not relate to cultural processes that modified landscapes.

One way to study the relation between people and landscapes has been the economic dimensions of these interactions. From this perspective, the study of landscapes is related to the use, appropriation, and modification of land and its resources by human communities through time (Metheny 1996). People’s investment (labor, resources, and social relationships) materializes and accumulates in the form of infrastructure (buildings, agricultural facilities, public spaces, fortifications, etc.), which can be transmitted, inherited, disputed, enhanced, or destroyed over time. Landscapes, then, become a critical resource for the negotiation of power relations in human societies as well as a way for

the archaeologist to approximate to the goals behind each construction (Earle and Doyel 2008).

Landscapes are also physical manifestations of power relations within society. Some places may symbolize the power of specific groups, especially those territorial referents that are involved in the construction, reinforcing, and re-creation of social identities. The strategic modification of landscapes can be a medium through which to communicate the importance, influence, strength, and capabilities of some groups to the rest of the society, including enemies, or can modify or reinforce the way in which groups are perceived and conceptualized by others (Branton 2009).

These contrasting approaches are not mutually exclusive; collectively, they provide a more complete understanding of the multiple dimensions in which landscapes evolve *together* with the people on them (Anschuetz et al. 2001; Fisher and Thurston 1999). In this volume we are interested in how landscapes have been appropriated and modified by communities at war. While there is a strong emphasis on the built/constructed aspect, these landscapes were shaped by perceptions of fear and threat, which were influential in the (re)definition of social boundaries and communities' identities. The cases in this volume permit comparison of regions with contrasting ecologies and topographies, of communities with different historical trajectories and at different socioeconomic situations, and, because the contributors were trained in different archaeological traditions, of different ways in which space and landscapes are studied.

## LANDSCAPES OF WARFARE

The origins of war, as well as the ultimate and proximate factors that spark violence, have been extensively treated in multiple publications (Allen and Arkush 2006; Arkush 2011; Armit 2011; Chapman 1999; Guilaine and Zammit 2005; Keeley 1996; Kelly 2000, 2005; LeBlanc 2006; Thorpe 2003). In general, war is differentiated from other kinds of violence, such as domestic violence or personal revenge, because it has been defined to signify the exchange of violence between social groups (Kelly 2000; Thorpe 2003). This broad definition of warfare includes a wide range of actions, from small-scale raids of tribal societies to the highly organized, large-scale, and highly destructive encounters of modern armies (Keeley 1996).

Abundant historical, ethnographic, and archaeological evidence has demonstrated that war is more complex than it was initially considered to be in anthropological models (Carneiro 1970, 1998; Wilson 1987). Understanding warfare requires acceptance of the fact that the exchange of violence between

people is intimately related to other aspects of life. Material conditions (such as resources and environment), local and regional politics, social structure and culture—the most common cited causal factors—are not mutually exclusive, but operate together and influence each other, not always in the same way, in each moment of increased conflict (Arkush 2011, 7). In this complex matrix we cannot underestimate the agency of individuals, their personal histories, feelings, perceptions, interests, and goals, which, in certain circumstances, can change history (Flannery 1999). The combination of these factors in a region could determine the ways in which people build, appropriate, and transform their landscapes.

Variation in warfare can be explained by the political systems and aims of the groups in conflict (Arkush 2011). Julie Solometo (2006) categorizes the observed variability into six interrelated dimensions: social distance, social scale, tactics, goals, frequency and predictability of engagements, and duration of war. Social distance affects how destructive war can be; it is expected, for instance, that related communities do not combat until the extermination of the other. The size of warring parties may affect the scale of investment of defending populations: to face large armies, people might build massive defenses such as ramparts and ditches, for instance. The tactics and the technology used in each confrontation are related to the reasons and goals for which wars are waged: territorial expansion, slave raiding, resources control, warlords' competition, and so forth. These elements influence the degree of violence incurred to enemies, how frequent and predictable attacks are, and how people prepare to defend themselves. If attacks are rare and predictable, people may not need strong protections; however, if attacks are frequent and unpredictable, communities might choose to concentrate within fortified settlements. Finally, the duration of violent interaction between groups may be shaped by several other factors, from the impetus of war leaders to live in constant war (benefiting from it, Carneiro 1998) to the capacity of certain polities for supporting long-term investment in the military. Because defensive strategies depend on how a threat is perceived, analyzing how landscapes were fortified allows us to reconstruct how war was waged in specific historical moments. This approach has been used by several authors of the present volume, some more explicitly than others (see Ikehara-Tsukayama, chapter 11 in this volume).

Because the scale of the fighting party could be a strong factor in the success in combat, wars encourage the formation of political factions and alliances (Redmond 1994). These groups can unify groups to face the menace of a large enemy (Ikehara 2016), but they can be also instrumental in breaking the power parity between competing polities in a region (Allen 2008; Arkush