Weaving Together Evil Air, Sacred Mountaintops, and War

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Until recently in the Andes, relatively few intensive excavations targeted fortifications (see next set of references and Connell et al. 2003; Earle et al. 1987). At some of the more well documented fortified sites, evidence for ritual activities, as well as “nondefensive” practices, is present (Arkush 2005, 2011; Brown Vega 2008, 2009; Ghezzi 2006, 2007; Lau 2010a, 2010b; Lippi and Gudiño 2008; Mantha 2009; Swenson 2007, 2012; Vogel 2012). Detailed analysis of surface features has also proven to be very informative regarding defensive and other (including ceremonial) activities that took places at these sites (Brown Vega et al. 2011; Mantha 2006, 2009; Topic 1989; Topic and Topic 1978; Topic 1990; Topic and Topic 2009).

It is this kind of “mixed” evidence that has led some scholars to minimize the role that conflict or war may have played at these sites. Some interpretations of fortified sites lack consideration of conflict or reject outright the possibility of conflict. Sites located on remote hilltops that have perimeter walls and slingstones have been unquestioningly called ceremonial sites or temples (adoratorios) (Van Dalen Luna 2009:272). In other instances, defensible location, perimeter walls, or even ditches are overlooked without mention of fortification. In still other instances, the concept of tinku (ritual battles) is invoked, and cosmological motivations for building forts are favored over “practical” defensive strategies (Topic and Topic 1997; Topic and Topic 2009). This tendency pervades many interpretations of sites in the Andes that have some defensive characteristics (Arkush and Stanish 2005:3–4).

Yet foregrounding the defensive functions of these kinds of sites to remedy this situation perhaps tends to minimize evidence for ceremonial activities. In response to recent survey work on walled hilltop sites (Brown Vega et al. 2011), some colleagues have taken issue with my apparent overemphasis on fortification, arguing that these sites are not fortresses but mountaintop shrines. However, when one reviews the ethnographic and ethnohistoric literature for the region, there is ample support for more complex interpretations that recognize these sites as multifunctional. Archaeologists are increasingly critical of interpretations that separate ritual, economic, and other dimensions of past settlements and structures (e.g., Bradley 2005). While discussions still tend toward polarization, some archaeologists working in the Andean region, including myself, strive to draw attention to more nuanced interpretations that negate neither conflict nor ceremony (e.g., Swenson 2012). In this chapter I use Tim Ingold’s (2010, 2013) concept of meshwork to talk about war, healing ceremonies, and sacred landscapes as entangled threads that form a fabric of culture change. I use a specific case study from the Huaura Valley, central coast of Perú (Figure 6.1), where survey and excavation data identified evidence of both ritual and defensive activities at fortified sites. As key evidence for war, and for people's negotiation of
war, fortifications are better understood when evidence for ceremonies and concepts of the sacred are taken into account (see also Nielsen 2009). Activities aimed at both physical and spiritual defense should be expected at fortifications. To situate my use of the concept of meshwork, and my overall discussion, I provide some background on ritual battles (tinku) and sacred places (huacas).

**Tinku and Huacas**

Whether fortified or enclosed sites are either defensive or symbolic/ceremonial is not a new discussion, nor is it one specific to the Andes (Golitko and Keeley 2007; Keeley 1996; Parkinson and Duffy 2007). In the Andes, however, there has been a lengthy discussion of tinku (ritual battles) and the interpretation of fortifications (see a detailed treatment in Arkush and Stanish 2005). The word tinku means the coming together of two parts (la junta de dos cosas [Sp.]) (Holguín 2007 [1608]:224), but different aspects of tinku and closely related words can refer to violent encounters (Allen 1988:205–207). Ethnographically documented tinku are arranged affairs with spectators, associated festivities, and expected outcomes (Bastien 1985a; Orlove 1994). Tinku are viewed as highly ritualized, and analogies made between them and prehispanic conflict tend to characterize the latter as highly ritualized as well. Prehispanic warfare thus may be viewed as more about ritual and less about “real war” (Arkush and Stanish 2005). The dichotomy is a hindrance to our understanding of prehispanic conflict and how it was experienced in the region.

The tendency to characterize prehispanic warfare in the Andes as ritual is related to the documented belief in huacas as part of a sacred, or animated, geography (Curatola Petrocchi and Ziółkowski 2008). Huacas are sacred spots on the landscape that include both human-made constructions and “natural” features such as mountains. Fortifications built by people on potent features such as mountains, then, may be considered first and foremost to be huacas. While I agree that both tinku and huacas are important concepts, I think there is more to consider when we are dealing with evidence for conflict in the Andes. I now turn to a fuller picture of mountains and war.
Chapter 6

Meshworks

Ingold cautions us that isolating things as objects further distances us from understanding life (Ingold 2010:96). This is a matter not just of reanimating objects as if they were akin to people but of recognizing the world as flows of materials. One way to conceptualize these flows is to view them as a mesh, or meshwork. As Ingold defines them, meshworks are relational fields of interwoven lines (Ingold 2006:13). Significantly, these lines do not connect but rather entangle with each other (Ingold 2013:132). Rather than conceive of worldly relationships as links between points (say, people), and nodes (say, objects or features), meshworks emphasize movement. That is, people and things are constantly in the process of becoming in the world with each other, and all are attached to their trails (or lines) of history. Beings “thread their own paths through the meshwork” (Ingold 2006:14).

To operationalize this concept, I treat winds and mountain summits as separate threads. In doing so, I intend to show how winds and mountains intertwine with each other, and I weave in treatments of illness, aspects of worship, and geography. I then discuss fortifications and offerings, and how they thread through all of these things. That treatment adds an additional consideration of time to examine how the changing relationships between these various worldly components shifted over a couple of millennia.

Winds, Evil Airs, and Sickness/Illness

An abundant ethnographic literature on the Andean region links the landscape in general to bodies and health (Bastien 1985b; Greenway 1998). Two important relationships are pointed out that describe contemporary Andean communities: first, “the body cannot be separated from the landscape,” and second, “an individual’s health [cannot] be disassociated from that of the household or community” (Greenway 1998:993). Individual health, community health, and the physical landscape are linked, or better said, entangled.

Many illnesses that have been characterized as psychosomatic or folk illnesses in the Andes are caused by aspects of the landscape and weather conditions, such as wind or air. Wayra (wind) is generally “conceptualized as a localized circulatory agent of subterranean energy” (Allen 1988:53). Wind is a tangible manifestation of sami, an animating essence found in many things. Sami is in constant flow, and its direction can be guided through ritual (Allen 1988:49–54). Wind and other forces, such as water and light, are animated currents that circulate in the world in which people act and live (Allen 1988:226).

There are different kinds of winds. Evil airs, or males aires, enter a person’s body when he or she is vulnerable. Males aires infect individuals from the inside and require removal through healing ceremonies. Machu wayra (bad winds [Quechua]), an affliction reported by Andean peoples, is caused by exposure to different kinds of winds (Carey 1993:284). Wind-related illnesses can vary, and there are variations regarding where they come from and what they do. Generally, however, they are caused by not making the appropriate offerings to spirits, deities, or ancestors in the landscape (Rotondo 1980; Simmons 1955:62–63). The winds literally attack people (Allen 1988:56). Healing ceremonies to correct these imbalances involve the use of a variety of items, including plants, minerals, and miniature items. The ceremonies also enlist the help of a ritual specialist well versed in the use of these cures.

Winds, however, can also heal and be called on for protection. In contemporary healing ceremonies the presence of wind can be a demonstration of a healer’s power (Glass-Coffin 2010:71–75). Powerful forces, such as deities called on during healing ceremonies, arrive “in the form of wind to receive offerings” (Ramirez 2005:145). One way to call the wind is to whistle (Glass-Coffin 2010:75). Whistling and musical accompaniment to healing ceremonies is well documented in the Andes and adjacent areas. As Fred Katz and Marlene Dobkin de Rios put it in their analysis of Ayahuasca healing sessions, “whistling is the way in which the spiritual forces of nature and the guardian spirit of the vine, itself, can be evoked by the healer” (Katz and Dobkin de Rios 1971:324).

What do airs and illness have to do with mountaintops? As I detail below, mountains are a source of tremendous power, both benevolent and maleficent.
Spirited Peaks

Studies of ethnohistoric literature and early colonial documents support the idea that a living landscape was prevalent in the Andes in prehispanic times (Besom 2009; Curatola Petrocchi and Ziolkowski 2008; MacCormack 1991:148; Salomon et al. 1991). Among the features that make up the "living landscape" are mountaintops and peaks, referred to as huacas and considered to be deities/sacred beings (Salomon et al. 1991:1). In the Central Andes, home of a large section of the Andean mountain range, there are abundant stories, myths, and histories linked to mountains, peaks, and even lower hills. Generally, mountains and people are in a reciprocal relationship. Appeals to mountains can result in benefits for individuals and communities, but people may also upset the mountains, with negative results (Sillar 2009:369). The highest snowcapped peaks on the landscape are apus, a special kind of mountain deity (Mishkin 1940:237). The lower peaks are in a hierarchical relationship with the apus and are less senior. Any illnesses caused among humans by lower peaks must be remedied through appeals to the apu (Mishkin 1940:237).

Bernard Mishkin (1940) relates a story from the Cuzco area in the highlands that specifically links mountains to deities that cause illness. Mountain divinities, known as aukis, owned the lands of the area in the "earliest of times." When a battle between the sun and the local inhabitants ensued, all perished, including those who had sought refuge and built their houses on the mountain peaks. Those vengeful entities who perished atop the mountains descend from the hills and cause illnesses among modern-day inhabitants (Mishkin 1940:235).

A key practice linked to mountains entails payments, or pagos, in the form of offerings. When payments cease to be made, spirits or enchantments of the mountains retaliate (Polia Meconi 1996:215–222). Hungry spirits that have not been placated with regular offerings attack passersby, causing illness such as susto (fright). Walking too close to or visiting a huaca might cause someone to suffer from evil airs (Glass-Coffin 1998:117; Platt 1997:216).

What I have attempted to illustrate are strands of health and danger that move in the Andean world. These flows are linked to individual bodies, ancestors, and sacred beings. Ancestors and sacred beings are mountain peaks. Thus, winds and mountains are part of a living environment in which humans also exist. Peaks in particular become additionally charged when people occupy them, becoming further enmeshed in other flows that include ancestors. The relationships between these various inhabitants of the world are negotiated through ritual practices, including the assemblage and offering of pagos. As Mario Polia Meconi observes, "In the Andes, enchantment is the 'normal' result of the interaction of the forces that animate nature and that humans can direct in their favor by means of ritual action" (Polia Meconi 1996:210; my translation).

While elevated mountainous peaks and ridges are viewed as sacred, they are also spaces used for defense. Mountaintop fortifications, then, would seem to be enmeshed along with other aspects of the environment in a greater conceptualization of existence. I now discuss the evidence for the fortification of some peaks and summits.

Ritual Spaces of Defense: The Huaura Valley

Recent investigations have identified numerous fortifications in the Huaura Valley of the central coast of Perú (Brown Vega et al. 2011). The earliest ones date to the Early Horizon (ca. 900–200 BC), but fortifications appear to be reused throughout subsequent periods up to the time of contact (ca. AD 1532) and even into the present. These sites have a long history, in most cases extending beyond two thousand years.

In the Huaura Valley one prominent set of hills, known as Cerros San Cristóbal, is my focus (Figure 6.2). Cerros San Cristóbal are located at the neck of the Huaura Valley (Figure 6.3). Five fortifications have been documented on these hills, all within 5 km of each other. Each of the five fortifications was initially built in the Early Horizon. The highest peak, known by the name Cerro San Cristóbal, has occupations on its summit and flanks that span all time periods up until the Late Horizon (ca. AD 1475). The surrounding four fortifications vary in terms of when they were in use. Three of the five forts on Cerros San Cristóbal were likely permanent settlements,
while the other two do not appear to have been intensively used.

In this valley, and elsewhere along the neighboring coastal valleys, present evidence indicates that people do not start building on summits until the Early Horizon (Brown Vega 2010; Ghezzi 2006, 2007). When they start, however, what they build, by and large, are fortifications. Despite a long tradition of building very large architecture, such as massive mounds, in these areas before this time, the efforts that predated the Early Horizon focused on valley bottom areas (Haas and Creamer 2006; Stanish 2001:45–46, 48–49).

Before the Early Horizon, summits do not appear to be perceived as spaces on which to build large settlements or other kinds of monumental structures. But in the Early Horizon people ascended their neighboring hills, such as Cerros San Cristóbal, to build concentric or perimeter defensive walls on summits. Many of these walled spaces also have parapets, bastions, and baffled entryways that give strategic advantage to those who would seek safety behind the walls. On their ascents people hauled large quantities of carefully selected river cobbles to be used as slingstones. Many of these were assembled in piles along the defensive walls. Early Horizon people used panpipes (antaras), which are ubiquitous at Early Horizon fortified sites. Antaras are wind instruments, consisting of a series of tubes, and fragments indicate they were made of fired clay.

According to one early native chronicler, in an earlier age (Auca Pacha Runa, Age of Warlike People [Quechua]), long before the Inca Empire came

FIGURE 6.2. Cerros San Cristóbal (photo by Nathan Craig).

FIGURE 6.3. Detail of Cerros San Cristóbal fortifications. Inset: The Christian cross that tops the highest peak today.
to power, people went to war with weapons that included antaras (Guaman Poma de Ayala 2001 [ca. 1615]). Judging by ethnohistoric and ethnographic examples, musical instruments were and are integral to rituals in the Andes. The sounds of antaras and trumpets were like the wind, and would be used to call nonhuman agents to intervene in battle on behalf of humans (Nielsen 2009:230).

After a first thrust of fort building in the Early Horizon, these sites rarely lay in ruin. They were reused in various ways and in some cases augmented extensively. They remain important points on the landscape to the present day. In the early part of the Early Intermediate Period (ca. 200 BC–AD 500) two of the forts around Cerro San Cristóbal continued to be used. Two forts were in use during the subsequent Middle Horizon (ca. AD 500–1000), and three were used during the Late Intermediate Period (ca. AD 1000–1475). There are indications that one fort, the Fortress of Acaray, was used in the Late Horizon (ca. AD 1475–1532). The very name of the hills—after Saint Christopher—suggests that the extirpators of idolatry in the early Colonial period (post–AD 1532 to the mid-1600s) took an interest in this location. A Christian cross now marks the highest peak, Cerro San Cristóbal, and it is the focus of yearly pilgrimages. From the Early Horizon to the Late Horizon, this geographical feature is one of a few areas where we see a high density of fortifications in the valley. These hills are the focal point of fort construction, rebuilding, and visitation for more than 2,500 years. The prehispanic use of these hills and ancient structures, and their potency and influence, might have something to do with colonial Spanish interest in appropriating them.

Detailed information on changes in the relationship between people and their landscape through time comes from excavation data at Acaray, one of the Cerro San Cristóbal forts. Acaray was built in the Early Horizon as a permanent walled settlement. People built terraces and used the hillslopes of Acaray as early as ca. 800 BC. However, radiocarbon dates from the defensive walls indicate that these perimeter walls were not constructed until the end of the Early Horizon, ca. 200 BC–AD 0 (Brown Vega et al. 2013). Destruction episodes detected in excavated architecture indicate that the site was likely attacked and partially destroyed. Early Horizon architecture on the summit of Acaray was dismantled; stairs, benches, and pillars of a plastered stepped platform were removed. Unlike the case in ritual closing events, which have been documented elsewhere in the Andes and at one other Early Horizon fortified temple (Ghezzi 2006), the destroyed architecture at Acaray was left unburied.

Although previously I argued that the site lay in ruin for the next millennium (Brown Vega 2009), recent radiocarbon dates and a few fragments of Early Intermediate Period pottery suggest that Early Horizon conflict extended into the early part of that period and that people may have used the fort. Some Middle Horizon pottery on the site’s surface also suggests people may have at least passed through the site (Brown Vega 2008). Current evidence, however, does not indicate the building of new architecture or regular intensive use of the fort between AD 0 and 1100.

By the Late Intermediate Period there is abundant evidence for a massive remodeling of the Early Horizon fortification. Partially standing walls were “filled in” where collapsed, and entirely new defensive walls were built. Radiocarbon dates indicate that these rebuilding efforts occurred no earlier than AD 1100 (Brown Vega 2009). Little evidence was recovered from excavations to indicate that people were living within the walls of the fort for long periods. Despite a large rebuilding effort, it appears the site was used sporadically. Excavations also revealed evidence that around this time people reconfigured one of the principal summit structures. There are indications that people engaged in periodic visits to this building and carried out rituals within it. These rituals are of special interest because of the items used.

The Early Horizon structure had numerous benches and steps and at least one column. When reconfigured in the Late Intermediate Period, however, the space was divided into smaller rooms built of crudely quarried stone, most likely reused stone. Small pits were dug into the ancient floors of the structure, which had been finely plastered in its interior (Figure 6.4). These pits, filled with a variety of remains, were associated with small, one-time burning events. Additionally, new benches were constructed that were dedicated with offerings.
**Pits and Burned Features**

Food remains of peanut, friar’s plum, squash, beans, maize, and lúcuma and pacay fruits were deposited in the pits. These food remains were found along with plants that tend to be characterized as weeds or processing waste: *cola de caballo* (horse tail), cotton, *capuli* (cape gooseberry), *molle*, and *pájaro bobo* (river alder). Seeds from the coca plant were also recovered. Coca seeds are usually accepted as a sign of chewing the leaves, which has potent social and ritual connotations. But it is interesting to explore the ethnographically documented use of many of the weeds and seemingly mundane foods and plants as ritual and medicinal items.

As I have noted elsewhere, a number of these plants are known to have other significance or to be used in magical and healing rituals (Brown Vega 2015a). Beans of various kinds, maize, lúcuma (fruits and leaves) and pacay are found in a variety of caches and offering contexts along the coast of Perú, sometimes in association with burials (Towle 1961). The association with “weeds” that are used to treat ailments of various kinds in contemporary healing contexts (Bussmann et al. 2010; Bussmann and Sharon 2006) suggests that the pits were not merely wastebins. A mineral, probably alum (*alumbre*), was deposited in one pit along with these plant remains. Alum is a common item used in healing ceremonies in the Andes.

The pit features are associated with the remains of what I have characterized as ephemeral (or one-time) burning events (Brown Vega 2008: 267–276). These features are consistent with the kinds of residues left behind from “crematory basins” (Kuznar 2001:59). Ethnographically, these shallow features have been linked to altars used at sacred places by contemporary Andean peoples (Kuznar 2001:50). The burned items, sometimes referred to as *despachos* (burned offerings), accompany pagos.

**Buried Offerings**

Offerings were excavated from within two different benches, in two separate rooms, inside the summit structure. A vessel filled with maize and beans, with a handstone placed on the jar’s opening, was placed inside a bench during construction. The offering of these items, especially a still
useful piece of groundstone, suggests they were deposited for sacrificial purposes, interred perhaps to harness their power (Walker 1995, 1998).

Inside another bench in an adjacent room, people deposited a dedicatory offering that is similar to ethnographically documented mesas, or altars, used in healing (Bolton and Bolton 1976; Tschopik 1951). The offering (Figure 6.5), consisting of two textile bundles that contain a series of smaller bundles and items, is an assemblage of various items that I discuss in greater detail elsewhere (Brown Vega 2015b). Here I highlight some of the more significant inclusions.

One item in the offering, a bag of bundled tips from the plant cóndor, is used today by healers to cure various maladies, including mal aire, as well as to ensure luck (Bussmann et al. 2010:615). A necklace contained in another bag inside the offering is made of ishpingo seeds. Ishpingo is used to cure mal aire, susto, and enchantment (Bussmann et al. 2010:614). At the center of each textile bundle was a bag containing a white mineral similar to comestible earths known to be used for medicinal purposes (Browman and Gunderson 1993). Another bag holds miniature items, including miniature seed necklaces and small pieces of the white mineral just mentioned, reminiscent of miniature items found in numerous ethnographically documented pagos (Lorente Fernández 2010).

Discussion

The pits, the remains from the burning events, and the offerings contain items that could have been used as payment to earthly deities. These remains and offerings, pagos, might also have been used in healing ceremonies. Based on ethnographic information, the two are not mutually exclusive (Bolton and Bolton 1976). It is problematic, however, to project contemporary ethnography and more recent history to the Late Intermediate Period. That is not my intention here. What I would like to consider, however, is that animism and the belief in a lively world full of human and nonhuman beings has deep roots among the peoples of ancient Perú. The relationships between human and nonhuman agents would have changed over time, however.

For the Early Horizon, it is difficult to characterize the nature of the relationship between people and mountains. Nevertheless, I think it is reasonable to say that people viewed mountains not solely as natural, static features but rather as forces that also inhabited the world. In seeking
to build structures for safety atop these animated spaces, people would have had to contend with, and perhaps draw on, the forces that inhabited these summits. They may have appealed to them for aid. Music from antaras, like whistling, could have been used at Acaray, and probably at other Early Horizon fortifications, to call other forces via winds and sounds for spiritual protection. This transformation of the relationship between people and mountains would have been brokered through rituals to pay or appease mountain spirits. The plastered summit structure might have been a place where human and other forces negotiated this relationship.

Once people began to construct on and inhabit the summits of Cerro San Cristóbal, additional strands of history become further entangled in this animated landscape. After the Early Horizon, in addition to being a social or cosmological force, the summits at Acaray are now built on, becoming the focal point for memories associated with old wars, ancestors, and living in fear. Those strands further intertwine over time as people continued to relate to Acaray and Cerros San Cristóbal as part of their world, if in less frequent ways. In the Early Intermediate Period and Middle Horizon the forts show signs of less use. At Acaray specifically, periodic visits and offerings were carried out less often. There is no material evidence for the same kinds of ritual activities taking place on top of the fortified mountaintops at these times. The relationship between people, mountains, and other forces changed.

In the Late Intermediate Period a number of worldly and social forces converge in such a way that the fortified summits become the site of community rituals. This is manifest in the rebuilding of Acaray, where efforts were also afoot to cure illness through healing ceremonies. Memories, histories, and sacred beings were either harnessed or appeased for protection (see also Buchanan, this volume). It is possible that such beings began to create problems for those living in the valley bottom below, in part because of histories and memories. People suffered as war loomed, but they may also have endured the ire of angry mountain spirits and ancestors. The threat of war was heightened as people prepared to defend themselves with weapons and walls against outsiders. They also defended themselves by making appeals, through ritual, to powerful and possibly angry forces. The social balance between those beings that inhabited the world (people, mountains, winds, and their animating forces) broke down and had to be repaired. The pits and offerings discussed above were assemblages that forged new relationships between various materials, landscapes, and people. Intertwined with these new relationships were memories and histories that bound people and landscape into reciprocal relationships.

Given the links between illness and imbalance as well as the landscape and community that have been documented ethnographically, we might consider what happens during times of conflict and war in the late prehispanic period. Cosmological imbalances resulting from strained or broken relationships between landscape spirits and people translate into social imbalances. Social imbalances manifest themselves in individual and social ills. During times of war there would certainly seem to be a breakdown of social relationships. Those eroded social relationships would be not only between people but tied to hungry spirits upset by the social imbalance. Ritual neglect, community fissioning, and intra- or even inter-community conflict might elicit the wrath of the living landscape. The spirits and animated flows of that landscape would unleash illness on their human counterparts.

Efforts aimed at healing illnesses may be prompted by outside threats to the community, and may relate to a struggle for continuity and resistance to unwelcome culture change (Greenway 1998:1002). Because healing imbalance is important for community health and survival, it is expected that conflict would go hand in hand with efforts to heal not only physical injury but social imbalances. Geography and cosmology would be intimately linked. Prior suggestions that Andean fortifications would have little to do with defense of territories or populations (Topic and Topic 1997:585) are thus problematic. I contend that fortifications were locales at which people would seek physical and spiritual defense against harm, even if the peaks themselves were in part responsible for the harm. Fortifications were strategic for community health and safety, as well as for maintaining community lands. Huacas, such as mountains and the structures people built on
them, “represented the history and concerns of the community” (MacCormack 1991:147). Thus mountaintop fortifications are enmeshed in the multiple threads that make up the world, carried through from ancient times. Given the flows of people, materials, and landscapes that exist in the world, we should not treat fortifications as mere objects of defense. By drawing on ethnohistoric and ethnographic data to specify the entangled nature of ritual and war, archaeologists are better equipped to analyze culture change and conflict.

Conclusion
Fortifications like the ones documented at Cerros San Cristóbal are enmeshed in flows of airs, animating forces, and spiritual beings that inhabit the world with humans. Within the meshwork of being, these lines converge, entangle, and become knotted. In a recent treatment of meshworks, Ingold expands on the concept. Specifically, he argues that places might be knots in the meshwork, where many threads or lines are drawn together (Ingold 2013:132–133). In some ways, what I have tried to discuss are two contexts of knotting at Acaray: the bundling together of various loose strands that continue on beyond their knots to entangle with more threads to make more knots.

Because of this meshwork, and this knotting, discussing fortifications solely in terms of war presents an incomplete picture of the social world and culture change. On the other hand, characterizing mountaintop walled sites as only ceremonial sites obscures an appreciation of the dangers people faced as they sought to defend themselves. Threats and attacks by human enemies and other worldly forces motivated people to arm themselves and invest in physical structures for defense. That this occurred at different moments in time and in different ways speaks to the changing relationship between human communities and nonhuman entities as they moved forth, sometimes entangling, in an animated world in flux.

Acknowledgments
I am grateful to Meghan Buchanan and Jacob Skousen for inviting me to participate in the Society for American Archaeology session they organized, in which I presented the paper that became this chapter. I thank both of them for their feedback on the chapter as it further developed and their hard work in seeing this book through to publication. I also thank the anonymous reviewers, who encouraged incorporation of some more recent literature that has further shaped my thinking of Acaray, and being in the world more generally. That new thinking is only hinted at in this chapter and will have to await a future opportunity for further elaboration.

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Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois, Urbana.


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