

honorifics or nicknames but actual positions within the court hierarchy, despite the wide variation in how they were used.

Chapter 3, “Membership in the Court,” moves the analysis in the opposite direction, aggregating the inscriptional data to investigate courtly elites as a group, specifically as an “identity group” comparable to ethnicity or gender. Jackson’s intention is to examine how this identity was “performed” by undertaking certain “practices” or action associated with the “work” of the court. The next chapter, “Courtly Variation and Change,” focuses on the variation in the operation of Maya courts during the Late Classic, a time of growth and turmoil. Jackson’s objective is to reveal how courtly positions were variably used in strategic ways for political advantage, rather than adhere to some established tradition. This helps to explain why so few court titles were widely shared.

Chapter 5, “Metaphors, from the Quotidian to the Sublime,” takes a different tack. The author explores the common use of metaphorical references in play in the Maya court; specifically, agricultural and cosmological metaphors expressed in texts and imagery. Although this information is drawn from other sources, it is usually discussed in the context of Maya religion. Jackson aspires to link Maya cosmology more directly to courtly practices and political power. This chapter also utilizes information from colonial dictionaries to supplement the pre-Columbian data. Chapter 6, “Leaving the Court,” briefly summarizes the author’s findings.

To model the possible workings of the Maya court, Jackson draws upon certain contemporary social science theories (practice, performance, the court as theater, metaphor), although they were not always effectively deployed in the interpretations. She also engages in some limited cross-cultural comparison to courtly operations elsewhere in the New World. More could be gained from the richer data on Asian, African, and even European royal courts, especially in terms of the organization of the aristocracy into corporate groups and types of courtly privileges.

New understandings of Maya internal court politics are revealed by Jackson’s focus on the sub-*ajaw* titled positions, but certain caveats must be kept in mind due to the reliance on inscriptions, almost all made under royal aegis, as a principal source of information. Although Jackson is careful to remind readers about the limited nature of the evidence, there are instances where the 221 known examples of titles are given too much evidentiary weight; for example, treating the appearance of titles in surviving known inscriptions as indicative of the relative existence of actual titled positions in order to assess how they changed over time (chap. 4).

Jackson’s book provides a more balanced and experiential view of the inside of Maya court politics as lived by individuals and categories of court denizens. Ritual, cosmology, performance, and linguistic tropes are integrated with warfare, alliance, and strategic maneuvering within a political landscape that is revealed as more dynamic and varied than is usually thought. Although this volume will be of value to anyone interested in these topics, its impact may be limited because it has been written to ap-

peal to Maya specialists. Understanding the illustrations, mostly of isolated hieroglyphic texts or objects with texts, requires familiarity with the Maya writing system, and the jargon beloved by Maya scholars is not explained. Readers would also have benefitted from a pronunciation guide for Maya words and personal names.

Susan D. Gillespie

**Joseph, Suzanne E.:** *Fertile Bonds. Bedouin Class, Kinship, and Gender in the Bekaa Valley.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. 233 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-4461-3. Price: \$ 74.95

This monograph approaches Bedouin society in Lebanon from a novel angle. Emerging largely from participant observation and semi-structured interviews with Bedouin women in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley, it tells a story from an under-researched perspective: women’s views on life, social reproduction, and social relations. It is a study in the field of demographic anthropology, for some, a subset of Medical Anthropology. It addresses themes of reproduction, fertility and their interface with the recent sociohistorical context of French neocolonialism and later marginalisation in the developing nation-state of Lebanon. Bedouin are not often associated with Lebanon, that Arab nation so often called the “Switzerland” of the Middle East. Yet Bedouin in Lebanon have been the subject of rich ethnographic study three times in the past 50 years. The first ethnography was conducted by a doctoral student of Raymond Firth at the London School of Economics. That student, Shaykh Fadl al Faour, was the son of the Emir of the Al-Fadl tribe and he conducted his fieldwork in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon and the Golan of Syria in 1962–1963. The dissertation, unfortunately, was never published. A decade later, I was looking for a Bedouin sample where I could test my hypotheses regarding the economy of the Bedouin. I chose to study this same social group a decade later in order to understand the changes that had occurred in the intervening decade. That doctoral research identified the important technological transformation from camel to truck transport among the Bedouin. Then in 2000–2001, Suzanne Joseph, a native Lebanese anthropologist commenced her study among the same group. Her data and her anthropological analysis are particularly focussed on women and fertility, giving richness to the collected body of anthropological work on Bedouin in Lebanon.

The book takes up the questions of class, kinship, and gender in Bedouin communities in Lebanon. It sets out to understand how reproductive health and health inequalities are structured. Joseph describes her approach as a political economy of biodemography. I would argue, however, that the political economy approach is not the strongest aspect of her study; the socio-demographic approach is. A detailed political economy approach would have required a much deeper digging into the perceived discrimination and marginalisation experienced by the Bedouin as well as those who provide them with health care. What she succeeds admirably in doing is challenging the traditional anchoring of reproduction in biology

and instead she offers alternative ways of conceptualizing the relationship between nature and nurture. She successfully locates Bedouin women's reproductive lives within the framework of kinship and gender. And she succeeds in challenging common demographic misconceptions of Arab societies (and especially Bedouin) as characterised by persistently high fertility, high levels of polygyny, and close cousin marriage practices that oppress women. She also clearly identifies the historically changing regimes of both production and reproduction in Bedouin society.

In her chapter 2, she provides a historical overview of the transition from nomadic pastoralism to a more sedentary agrarian lifestyle among Bedouin during the 20th and now 21st century. Using micro histories of fertility, she is able to situate high and later falling Bedouin fertility in local context and in relation to the broader economic context of Lebanon. In chapter 3, she examines the cultural and demographic articulation of social-status differences in health outcomes. This analysis is not as strong as the rest of her study, largely because so little is actually known about social inequality in nomadic society and the impossibility of separating out completely the Bedouin-peasant interaction. Joseph finds that there is a "demographic class distinction between Bedouin and peasant groups in the region." I, however, would replace the term "class" and replace it with "ethnic." Differences do exist between the Bedouin and the peasantry, but I do not believe they are based on an aspirational hierarchy of class. Rather they emerge from the classic Arab historiographical distinction of otherness in the *bedulhadher* (desert/settled) dichotomy. It is in understanding the nature of the "other" that Bedouin-peasant relationships are best understood. Chapter 4 turns to the question of gender inequality and provides a powerful analysis of the nature of Western feminist misrepresentations of gender and Third-World women's reproduction. In this view, high fertility is generally seen as "proof" of women's oppression within the family. Yet Joseph's local narratives are used to provide an alternative understanding of the cultural value of children and large families. Chapter 5 provides a sound ethnographic interpretation of kinship and marriage between close kin. It makes sense of consanguineous marriage as part of the process of kinship-making and the articulation of occupation and gender. Joseph shows, how Bedouin by marrying kin reproduce the tribal kinship system which is at the core of the tribal/lineage identity and ethnicity (being *'asha'iri* [tribal] is the preferred self-identification term that this social group uses). Chapter 6 examines the high Bedouin fertility in the broader Malthusian-Marxist debate on population and poverty. The Bedouin in the Bekaa Valley, contrary to the expectations of Malthusian theory, do not exhibit concomitant disease, death, and abject poverty with their high fertility. Chapters 7 and 8 compare and critically evaluate rural studies on social-class disparities in fertility and health. Here, Joseph's analysis is less persuasive. Class/caste analyses with regards to the Bedouin of Lebanon are hard to prove. Bedouin in the country are clearly discriminated against. Many Western held perceptions of their backwardness or "primitiveness" are expressed in educated urban circles.

Yet in the Bekaa Valley and the frontier zones of Lebanon, where most Bedouin live and work, their relationship with the peasantry is symbiotic. Historical evidence even suggests that Bedouin were the first to introduce mechanisation into agricultural work in this valley. There certainly is difference, but this difference, or "othering" has roots in the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic boundaries as elaborated by Frederik Barth, rather than in Marxist analysis of control of production, power, and the class system. Questions of inequality require a close examination of social relations and social structures both within and amongst Bedouin communities as well as those of their surroundings.

This is a valuable ethnographic work in anthropology generally, and medical anthropology, specifically, which integrates questions of biopolitics and culture into discussions of social production and reproduction. Among the Bedouin of Lebanon, high fertility is explained as a correlate of a social system which revolves around the kin group. At the same time, this high fertility is not associated with the Malthusian markers of poverty. On the contrary, high fertility among the Bedouin is also associated with moderate overall mortality, high nutritional status, minor gender disparities in child survival, and overall lack of class like disparities in health. It is the high degree of social and demographic equality within the Bekaa Bedouin society and their reliance on kinship ties, sharing, and reciprocity that give its overall demographic profile such resilience. This book is an invaluable study for anthropologists, demographers, public health specialists, and students in Middle East studies as well as readers interested in pastoralists, pastoral systems, and their interaction with the bureaucracies and services of the modern state.

Dawn Chatty

**Juris, Jeffrey S., and Alex Khasnabish** (eds): *Insurgent Encounters. Transnational Activism, Ethnography, and the Political*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. 444 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-5362-1. Price: \$ 26.00

In this volume, Juris and Khasnabish have brought together authors that share an activist engagement in the transnational networks they analyze. The book has three main objectives: (1) to demonstrate the advantages of ethnographic analyses of transnational activist networks, as opposed to other approaches; (2) to provide a critical assessment of the types of knowledge involved in such networks; (3) to explore the methodological and epistemological implications of researching multilocal, fluid collaborative efforts. These aims are addressed with an underlying understanding of the need for social transformation.

In line with Juris' previous work on the networks against corporate globalization, this volume brings together ethnographies of various activist networks. The purpose of the editors and authors involved is to provide critical reflections in the form of ethnographic accounts of participation within the observed networks. In the introduction and in several chapters, they make it clear that their involvement does not imply an uncritical assess-