with his student Smalley show that fermentation of the sugary juice from the stalk can turn into beer. While not falsifiable, the hypothesis fits the data. This recalls the chewed stalks of the Tehuacán archaeological collections. In the absence of sugarcane, introduced after the great Columbian exchange, the sugar in the stalks of maize was unique. We know the stalks of maize were used in many ways including simple wall constructions and for paste, as seen in the 16th-century crucifix exhibited in the 1991 "Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries" art exhibition.

Over the course of the scrutiny of maize, new ways of understanding its development have arisen. Three core chapters are focused on the different lines of evidence of maize in the archaeological record. Plants, and maize among them, are organic and their traces are not the most common nor as obvious as other aspects of the record. While archaeologists have known about these ephemeral remains, it is only in the past several decades that the study of plant remains has become a systematic part of archaeology. The first core chapter is on the macroscopic view of maize, the second is on the microscopic views of maize, and the third is on the elemental view of maize.

The study of the archaeology of maize has been growing. Early on, sites with maize were indirectly dated, but today carbon samples can be very small, allowing the conservation of most of the organic parts while sacrificing some to understand the timing of maize development and use. Blake has gathered all theses data together in the "Ancient Maize Map." Today there is an updated database on the directly dated maize and can be found online.

Blake's book, "Maize for the Gods," brings new light on an old subject. He has provided a source book for understanding the archaeological development of maize and the advancement of the science of the research on maize. There are some things that come to my mind having read this book, and that is the influence of maize around the world. James C. Scott, in his book "The Art of Not Being Governed" (New Haven 2009), addresses the adaptability of maize that rapidly proliferated around the world following the conquest of the Americas, calling it the basis of "escape agriculture." This has transformed agriculture practice around the world at the smallholder level as well as the expanses of monocultures, discussions that are fundamental to "Corn and Capitalism" by Arturo Warman (Chapel Hill 2003). These musing are the result of my admiration of Blake's synthetic study of maize, providing remarkable insights into the relationship of humans and plants.

Anabel Ford

Blier, Suzanne Preston: Art and Risk in Ancient Yoruba. Ife History, Power, and Identity, c. 1300. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 574 pp. ISBN 978-1-107-02166-2. Price: $ 115.00

The present voluminous publication contains an impressive amount of original research on the famous art objects of ancient Ife in the light of archaeological, anthropological, and historical evidence. It is lavishly illustrated by 31 colour plates and 100 black and white plates, representing not only classical art objects but also present-day individuals, shrines, and objects. The first part considers art, risk, and identity, exploring questions of art making, art viewing, aesthetics, and body-marking practices. Focussing on politics, representation, and regalia, the second part looks at the corpus of copper and copper alloy portrait beads, animal sculptures, crown and headdress forms, sceptres, and seating. Contrary to Frank Willett's seminal "Ife in the History of West African Sculpture" (London 1967), the author attempts to use our knowledge of present-day cultic performances, including the results of her own field research, to throw light on the context of art making and on the significance of art objects for early Ifẹ society, religion, and history. With the aim of filling some of the great lacunae in Ifẹ art scholarship by giving an overall view of all aspects of the city's ancient art, she analyses the relationship of this art to the city's early history and society. At the same time, she challenges the enduring Western preconception that African societies and their art are fixed through time and space. Looking at classical Ifẹ art in terms of risk and creativity, the book considers the central role of art in restoring a state of equilibrium for society and its individual members after situations of trauma. In this sense, the sculptures under consideration are believed to have promoted peace among the city's cosmopolitan residents and to have preserved the memory of specific events.

The major historical issue in this approach is to identify the period of risk and disruption during which the art objects fulfilled this purpose. Suzanne Blier approaches this difficult task by using an orally transmitted king list for establishing a semblance of royal chronology. She combines average reign lengths with archaeological datings and thus assigns the period of classical Ifẹ art to 1250–1350 C.E. In her opinion Ọbalufọn II (who is presumably represented by the famous copper mask – Plate 3 – found in the inner palace in 1935) was an intermediate king between Ifẹ's first and second dynasties. Since in the ensuing devastating civil war families and neighborhoods are supposed to have fought against each other, the artworks of that period are believed to have served in the aftermath of these events as visual loci to help repair the fractured center. Therefore, the objects are thought not only to have helped to reconcile the inhabitants of the city-state, but also to have been a means of recalling and commemorating the critical roles played by leading figures on both sides in the dispute and its resolution (17).

As an historian who has himself done field research in Ifẹ on the anthropological remnants bearing witness to important historical events, I can only congratulate the author for having attempted to bring together art historical, historical, and anthropological sources. Although I am unable to reach any judgment about the properly art historical aspects of this work, it does, however, seem necessary to caution against a seemingly historical and anthropological approach which tends to disregard basic standards of source criticism and systematic field research. With respect to the inadequacies of the historical method, certain misinterpretations can be noted: In order to support her assumption that Ifẹ was a flourishing cosmopolitan center with vast international connections in the late medieval

period, Blier argues that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa must be referring to Ifẹ in his descripton of Yūfī in 1356 C.E. He says that this place, which is situated on the River Niger downstream from Mali, is "one of the biggest countries of the Sūdān." However, historians generally identify Yūfī with Nupe (6, 473: n. 2; Levtzion and Hopkins, Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History. Cambridge 1981: 287, 415: n. 21). Similarly she asserts without expressing any doubt that the powerful monarch Ogane, who is described by the Portuguese historian de Barros in 1552 as ruling more than 1,000 km east of Benin, corresponds to the Ọọni (king) of Ifẹ, a town situated only 170 km northwest of Benin (6, 467; Hodgkin, Nigerian Perspectives. London 1960: 124). More importantly, she presents what she calls "a short history of Ifẹ" on the basis of a single king list found in an obscure and unpublished oral *ìkédù* account without discussing its similarities to and differences from previous published king lists (Akinjogbin [ed.], The Cradle of a Race. Ife from the Beginning to 1980. Port Harcourt 1992: 113–116). Thus, she does not address the problem of the creation of a king list in a sacred kingship in which the king is neither seen in public nor known by his name (36–39).

With respect to Blier's fieldwork it appears that it was mainly concerned with art objects and disregarded the organisation of cult groups, the premodern functioning of the palace system and the relation between these spheres. On the basis of field research in Ifẹ in the pre-Second World War period, Bascom aptly describes the Ọọni as a sacred king who lived in seclusion from the people he ruled, isolated in his palace. Screened off from the citizens of the town, the Ọọni had mainly religious functions, consisting in support for the religious cults in the numerous temples and shrines in the city. He appeared in public only once a year, at the major sacrifice to Ogun, the God of Iron, and even then he was concealed behind cloths held by his messengers and behind his beaded crown (Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria. New York 1969: 31, 34). Even in the palace he did not receive any visitors and for cultic purposes he was represented by the three major palace officials (Lange, Preservation of the Canaanite Creation Culture in Ife. In: P. Probst and G. Spittler [eds.], Between Resistance and Expansion. Münster 2004: 127–141). How could such a king, and in particular Ọbalufọn II, possibly initiate a thriving art after the civil war in which individual portrayals served as memorials to important persons, lineages, and religious figures whose lives were shaped by the devastating conflict that had racked the city and the whole society (460)? Similar criticism has been voiced by Rowland Abiọdun, who correctly states that Yoruba rulers would never allow themselves to be represented in art (Yoruba Art and Language. Seeking the African in African Art. Cambridge 2014: 253). A better understanding of the anthropological context would have prevented her from calling the earlier Ọbajio, the chief priest of the Oduduwa cult, a minister of finance, and from considering one of the roles of women to be that of diplomats (37, 42, 463). Such offices may have been held by palace officials but not by priests or other people of the town.

In spite of these shortcomings, Blier can only be applauded when she tries to set Ifẹ and the Yoruba within the context of global history, alongside other major 14th-century centers such as Mali, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Cairo, Florence, and Paris. However, she cannot avoid attracting criticism when she aggrandises Ifẹ's historical importance out of proportion without any evidence apart from the artworks themselves, with their doubtful historical meaning. *Inter alia* she assumes the existence of a great East-West trading route from Cairo via Nubia to Borno and on to Ifẹ and disregards the absence of any corresponding evidence in the medieval Arabic sources for an East-West trade route connecting the Nile valley with the Chad basin, let alone any other source that might prove the existence of continuous trading connections with the countries further south, including the relatively modest city-state of Ifẹ (4, 458 f.).

More pertinent criticism must be voiced with respect to her central thesis that the very structures of government, family, and religion in Ifẹ were reframed in the difficult sociopolitical *milieu* after 1300 C.E., when Ọbalufọn II lost his throne to an outside military force before he rallied the local population in support of his efforts to regain power. It is also difficult to follow her assumption that this king provided the financial incentive and artistic vision for creating the remarkable sculptural corpus of Ifẹ's Classical Period set up in temples built around the city to honor associated leaders (457 f.).

Had Blier looked more carefully at the anthropological context, she would have noted that the copper mask representing Ọbalufọn II was found in 1935 in the Ọmirin chamber of the Inner Palace, the Ilegbo, which is devoted to the Ọbatala-related group of palace servants. Nearly all other important art objects were kept in shrines in the custody of the priests of particular cults. Thus, the famous couple Ọbatala-Yemoo (Colour Plate 3) was unearthed at Ita Yemoo and should, therefore, be analysed in the context of the annual Ọbatala festival of Itapa which is still held today (Olupọna, City of 201 Gods. Ilé-Ifè in Time, Space, and Imagination. Berkeley 2011: 144–173; Lange, The Dying and Rising God in the New Year Festival of Ifẹ. In: D. Lange, Ancient Kingdoms of West Africa. Dettelbach 2004: 348–350). Within the context of this festival, it is clear that the conflict between Ọbatala and Oduduwa, which Blier believes to have been of a political nature and which she dates to the same period as the great civil war, actually belongs to the type of ancient Near Eastern religious celebrations known through the Ugaritic Baal Cycle (Lange 2004: 347–369). Though this does not exclude the possibility that historical events are also commemorated by such celebrations – as Blier rightly assumes – it would be an ideological bias to assume that only local African events are commemorated. Instead of considering the archaeological dates obtained from various excavations as indicative of the time in which the political figures portrayed are supposed to have lived, it seems more appropriate to consider that these persons may have lived long before the period in which they were first given their lasting figurative shape. In other words, Blier is quite right in suggesting that the

art objects of Ifẹ commemorate precise historical events consisting of great disruptions – which she calls a civil war. Her assumption that the sculptures concerned represent great historical leaders is certainly more correct than Abiọdun's assertion that they depict diviners or healers. However, it is erroneous to date these individuals to the early 14th century C.E. and to insist on their ideologically necessary local identity.

In order to visualise the alternative approach, we may think of the Ifẹ tradition of creation quoted by Blier. According to this tradition, Ọbatala was commissioned by the sky god to create the earth. However, since he got drunk meanwhile, his brother Oduduwa created it in his stead (11). Couched in the biblical stories of the Great Flood and Noah's subsequent drunkenness, the tradition commemorates in all likelihood the Assyrian conquest of Israel in 721 B.C.E. and the following annihilation of the Israelite state (Gen 9: 21–25; 2 Kgs 17: 3–6). In reference to these disruptive events, Ọbatala and Oduduwa probably represent the state gods of Israel and Assyria, Jahweh and Aššur, and the kings of these two countries at that time, Hosea (732–722) and Sargon II (721–705). When, after quoting the myth, Blier posits that the art of ancient Ifẹ, rather than illustrating mythical figures, accords primacy to individuals of renown, persons who were generally deified following their deaths, she is quite right, but instead of postulating a local situation, it would be more appropriate to overcome the regional paradigm and to take into account the great exodus after the fall of the Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C.E. (Lange, Origin of the Yoruba and the "Lost Tribes of Israel". *Anthropos* 106.2011: 591–593). Following this line of thought, it seems to be advisable to consider Ọbalufọn II in conformity with parallel elements in the Ọyọ-Yoruba dynastic tradition as an incarnation of the Israelite king Jehu (841–814) as opposed to the Assyrian conqueror Ọranmiyan/Shalmaneser III (858–824) (Lange 2011: 585–589). Therefore, by looking beyond the long period of the secluded kings of Ifẹ which started after the setting-up of the specifically anti-authoritarian Ifẹ city-state in about 600 B.C.E., it is possible to trace the great human and divine figures, in conformity with Blier's stimulating account of Ifẹ classical art as portraying individuals destined to overcome deep-seated historical traumas.

This criticism of Blier's central historical thesis does not do justice to the very valuable in-depth research on many different aspects of Ifẹ's classical art. The book will certainly be a standard reference work for further research on this art for a long time, and it will doubtlessly contribute to setting Ifẹ art in a more global perspective.

Dierk Lange

Boelens, Rutgerd: Water, Power and Identity. The Cultural Politics of Water in the Andes. London: Routledge, 2015. 366 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-71918-6. Price: £ 85.00

Boelens' book is a tour de force in Andean water management and power relations. It is both comprehensive in its description of cultural politics of water in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile and theoretically sophisticated in its use of social science literature. Drawing on his long experience in research and development in the Andes, Boelens, who is a geographer by training and who has specialized in the field of political ecology of water, employs action-research to explore the conflicting relationship between highland communities and their century-long tradition of water management, on the one hand, and, on the other, current neoliberal attempt to solve the region's water problems through participatory equality discourse and "normalization" of water management. The research questions that guide the book are twofold. Taking the perspective of the state it asks: How are water rights reconceptualized as the right to consume services provided by the dominant water game-players? How does it make water users demand the right to compete as equals? How does it strategize to conquer the faculty to imagine? And taking the perspective of Andean water users it asks: How do local water-user groups define their own cultural-political projects? How do they refuse to accept selfhood as a mechanic reflection of prevailing power relations? How do they react to use of the ruling symbolic order?

The book is organized in ten chapters. In the first Boelens presents the book's conceptual framework and introduces the social, political, and cultural arena in which the power holders and the water users struggle to control access to water and define water rights. In this discussion, the author reflects on the meaning of "normalization" and how water management is internalized by the dominated and thus accepted as common practice. Theoretically, Boelens draws heavily on Foucault and Latour, whose notions of discourse, knowledge, modernization, and network serve as helpful tools to understand how Andean water management becomes social habitus.

The second chapter discusses "the living water rights" of Andean people, that is, the actual, day-to-day lives of the region's water users and its variety of definitions and uses of the water right concepts. The aim is to show how these are linked to diverse normative sources and interacting socio-legal frameworks, and how Andean water conflicts emerge from the tension between collective and individual water rights. According to Boelens, these can be divided into *reference rights* that follow a particular normative framework's prevailing norms and principle, *activated rights* that refer to the process of transforming reference rights into operational rules and procedures, and *materialized rights* that refer to actual water use and distribution practices.

In the third chapter Boelens investigates the "regimes of water truth" that dominates Andean water management. To unravel these truths he explores the water engineering and policy frameworks of globalizing scientific and expert-interventionist empires as myths and deconstructs the "meta" behind the "physical" in the domains of water knowledge and control they create. To put his point into perspective Boelens compares contemporary "water truths" to earlier imperial regimes and local cosmologies and discusses how these shape Andean people's struggle for water rights.

Chapters four and five are not directly related to water management but address broader economic and his-