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Review of *Tierra Configurada: Investigaciones de los Vestigios de Agricultura Precolumbiana en Tierras Inundables Costeras desde el Norte de Veracruz hasta Belice*, by Alfred H. Siemens.

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Perspectives, consists of three articles concerned primarily with plan evaluations in the future.

Litchfield's article on "Plan Evaluation Methodology: Comprehending the Conclusions" is probably the most important in the book. Litchfield discusses and compares in detail the three basic approaches to plan evaluation, noting how he, Hill, and Voogd "have not only vigorously developed their own but have strenuously argued each against the methods of the others."

The organization of the book around a common theme allows the reader to move from author to author quite smoothly, although not without some difficulty due to the complexity of the topic. The book's complexity makes it most appropriate for graduate study and as a resource for experienced practicing professionals. It should be considered must reading for planners involved in plan evaluation. Overall, the book is a major contribution to planning literature and a fitting tribute by leading scholars of plan evaluation to a man who was, himself, one of the foremost scholars in the field. Key Words: *planning theory, goals achievement matrix, cost-benefit analysis.* Dennis K. Ehrhardt, University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Tierra Configurada: Investigaciones de los Vestigios de Agricultura Precolombina en Tierras Inundables Costeras desde el Norte de Veracruz hasta Belice. ALFRED H. SIEMENS. México, D.F.: Consejo Nacional Para la Cultura y las Artes, 1989. 337 pp., maps, photos, diags., and biblio. No price, paper (ISBN 968-29-2214-3).

Siemens has assembled in this volume two decades of his research on pre-Hispanic wetland agriculture in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize. Much of this material has already been published in edited volumes and journals in English and Spanish. Bringing this widely scattered corpus together is welcome enough; the addition of previously unpublished ma-

terial, including a selection of some 60 oblique aerial photographs, results in an essential resource for any scholar concerned with aboriginal agriculture in Mesoamerica.

The previously published materials span the years 1972 to 1985 and account for six of 12 chapters. In Chapter 2, Siemens recounts his discovery and investigation of the vestiges of ancient wetland agriculture along the Candelaria River. These landscapes of relic "raised-fields," initially so controversial, have ultimately had a profound impact on our understanding of Maya subsistence and society. Chapter 3 examines the role aerial reconnaissance and interpretation have played in Siemens' investigations. Chapter 5 extends the investigation of Maya fields to Belize. Chapter 7 examines Maya subsistence and its karst context in Guatemala. And Chapters 8 and 9 extend the investigation to Veracruz State. These materials are largely as they originally appeared but contain some revisions to reduce redundancies and smooth transitions.

Previously unpublished chapters are interspersed throughout the book, adding coherency, data, and fresh insights. In Chapter 1, Siemens provides an overview not only of the importance the investigation of wetland agriculture has for reconceptualizing Maya ecology, but of the changing perception of wetlands as sustaining—and sustainable—rather than wasteland. Chapters 4 and 6 elaborate on the Candelaria and Belize investigations and place the ancient fields within the context of a dynamic cultural landscape by contrasting the land use of the ancient Maya, of the colonial era, and of modern Maya, Mexican, and Mennonite communities. In Chapter 10, Siemens maps out his current research program and methodology in the San Juan wetland near the port of Veracruz, including the excavation of relic fields to determine function, chronology, and cultivars. Chapter 11 deals with the initial indications of vestiges of ancient sloping-field terraces on the piedmont to the west of the San Juan

wetland and a possible ecological relationship between the two systems. As in the Maya realm, the indications of early intensive agriculture in Central Veracruz demonstrate the need to reevaluate this region's role in the broader history of Mesoamerica. Chapter 12 presents a substantially reworked model for the function and historical development of wetland agriculture.

The translators have preserved the author's eloquent prose. The binding and printing are satisfactory, particularly the photographs, maps, and figures. One improvement would have been to integrate the illustrations with the text instead of presenting them as an appendix. Other useful additions would have been an index and a list of figures. A major disappointment is the bibliography, which lacks many of the works cited in the text and might otherwise have been a valuable resource.

Finally, the publication of this volume in Mexico as part of the *Colección Quinto Centenario* demonstrates the author's commitment to the people and language of the country in which he has carried out the bulk of his research. Such an effort deserves emulation. Key Words: *Mesoamerica, pre-Hispanic, raised fields, Maya, subsistence, wetlands*. Andrew Sluyter, The University of Texas at Austin.

Rural Change in Machakos, Kenya: A Historical Geography Perspective. MARILYN SILBERFEIN. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989. xi and 197 pp., maps, tables, index, and biblio. \$36.50 cloth (ISBN 0-8191-7470-X).

Africa's rural areas are being slashed by a double-edged sword. One edge is rapid population growth; the other, declining per capita food output. In combination, they create streams of city-bound migrants, many of whom cannot find adequate food, shelter, or employment, and beleaguered rural survivors in places often as bereft of promise as city slums. Se-

rious environmental degradation makes matters worse. Such facts led the World Resources Institute to proclaim that Africa south of the Sahara is experiencing a profound economic and environmental crisis (*World Resources 1990-1991*, 89). Marilyn Silberfein agrees: "When we look at the economic situation in Africa today it continues to appear grim."

Yet Silberfein's main purpose is not to belabor the continent's rural miseries. Instead she focuses on one well-known semiarid Kenyan district, examining historically and spatially the relationship between the Kamba people of Machakos and their resource base. She asks how a flexible and diverse traditional system of production was altered by colonial and post-colonial forces of change. She realizes micro-scale studies like hers can neither uncover nor resolve all problems of rural malaise, so she sets her sights simply on understanding the processes of change and their local consequences.

Silberfein sketches the scene in two introductory chapters on "the crisis" in African agriculture and the land and people of Machakos. She then proceeds to trace person-resource relationships chronologically through the colonial (three chapters) and post-independence periods (one-plus chapters). In a concluding section, curiously called "The Final Amalgamation," she reflects upon the forces of continuity and change in Machakos. She concludes that both colonialism and "modern" rural development undermined a whole set of Kamba survival strategies and traditions and replaced them with inflexible packages of "quick-fix" technologies. Many disasters later, Silberfein says that "there is finally . . . a new appreciation of small-scale, low-cost interventions suitable to particular settings and reflecting indigenous structures and designs." I wonder.

In trying to evaluate this monograph, I found myself anxiously pacing the office floor. At one end of the room, I thought the book just another example of a sad story many times told. The landfill of Af-