

Preface

This is the fourth and last published volume in the series that can be considered an archaeological and historical study of the Araucanian and Spanish interaction in the sixteenth and seventeenth century period in the Purén and Lumaco Valley in south-central Chile. The first tome, published by the Cambridge University Press in 2007 was a combined archival, archaeological, ethnoarchaeological, and ethnographical study of the Araucanian resistance to the Spanish Crown. The Purén and Lumaco Valley was chosen because it was the historically recognized center of political and military power fronting the Spanish. Beginning in 1978, when I was in the valley for the first time, I heard about and observed the high density of earthen mound sites there, which the local Mapuche called *kuel*. At the time, several of these were actively used in public ceremonies, and a few are still used today, though this tradition is dying quickly as modernization and change continue to take place in the valley. Upon observing these mounds for the first time, I immediately understood why the Spanish called the valley “*Purén Indomito*” (Unconquerable Purén). I had visited and carried out archaeological research in many parts of south-central Chile, but upon seeing these mounds and also visiting a few large domestic sites, dating to the late Hispanic and early Hispanic period, I knew the area represented a complex polity. The first volume addressed these issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. I was pleased when this book was awarded the Society of American Archaeology Book Award for 2008.

The second and third volumes dealt with site descriptions and settlement patterns and with a detailed analysis of the ceramics from the valley, respectively. These two volumes were published in the Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology of the Department of Anthropology. They are largely descriptive in nature.

This last tome primarily presents the archaeological data for excavated sites in the valley, most of which are mound or *kuel* sites. However, it also includes special studies related to the archival material, the archaeobotanical remains, and other analyses supportive of the excavation material. This volume also is largely theoretical, in addition to being descriptive, and argues that the Araucanian polity was a telescopic one, built up or extended from the lowest patrilineal level to a supra-regional level and centered around patriotism and patriarchy. I also refer to this organizational structure as a composite polity made up of four different domains,

each somewhat independent but supportive of the others. This last volume sets out to give an empirical portrayal of these mounds and their associated settlements that began their history at least 1,000 years ago and appear to be coming soon to an end as active participants within traditional Mapuche ceremonies.

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Dillehay, T.D.

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