

ANCIENT AMERICAN HISTORIES

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- MEXICO'S INDIGENOUS PAST.* By Alfredo López Austin and Leonardo López Luján. Translated by Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano. (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. Pp. 349. \$39.95 cloth.)
- READING INCA HISTORY.* By Catherine Julien. (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2000. Pp. 338. \$49.95 cloth.)
- THE INCA WORLD: THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-COLUMBIAN PERU, A.D. 1000-1534.* Edited by Laura Laurencich Minelli. (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000. Pp. 240. \$49.95 cloth)
- ZAPOTEC HIEROGLYPHIC WRITING.* By Javier Urcid Serrano. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001. Pp. 487. \$40.00 cloth.)
- STORIES IN RED AND BLACK: PICTORIAL HISTORIES OF THE AZTEC AND MIXTEC.* By Elizabeth H. Boone. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000. Pp. 296. \$55.00 cloth.)
- SOCIAL PATTERNS IN PRE-CLASSIC MESOAMERICA.* Edited by David C. Grove and Rosemary A. Joyce. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1999. Pp. 336. \$25.00 cloth.)
- GENDER IN PRE-HISPANIC AMERICA.* Edited by Cecilia F. Klein. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001, Pp. 397. \$40.00 cloth.)
- MESOAMERICA'S CLASSIC HERITAGE: TEOTIHUACÁN TO THE AZTECS.* Edited by David Carrasco, Lindsay Jones, and Scott Sessions. (Niwot, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2000. Pp. 559. \$49.95 cloth.)
- PRIMEROS MEMORIALES, PART 2. PALEOGRAPHY OF NAHUATL TEXT AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION.* By Bernardino de Sahagún. Translated by Thelma D. Sullivan. (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. Pp. 334. \$75.00 cloth.)

History has taken front and center stage in recent studies of Ancient America. This is especially true of research centered on the two areas of the most complex civilizations: Mesoamerica and the Andean region. The reasons for this historical turn are many: the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphic writing, advances in the reading of Mixtec codices, and the considerable theoretical debates in ethnohistory have been crucial

to the development and analysis of the textual material on which history thrives. Material culture has also contributed much to the emerging histories through archaeological techniques such as strontium analysis and neutron activation that allow for fine-grained identifications of provenience. In addition, several large-scale archaeological projects designed specifically to construct long-term histories have recently come to fruition. Finally, the long crisis of static or unitary “culture” has encouraged historical studies.¹

Much of the scholarly story here revolves around history’s interaction with the disciplinary regimes (especially anthropology, archaeology, ethnohistory, and art history) already in place. Many of the works below examine classic anthropological questions such as the rise of complex culture and urbanism and the hegemony of the elite. These questions are posed, however, with a great respect for their historicity. That said, this interest in history does not mean that there is an emergent unified field of Ancient American inquiry. As in any present historical endeavor, there is not always consensus around what sort of history should be written.

Mexico’s Indigenous Past by Alfredo López Austin and Leonardo López Luján is the pre-Columbian volume in a series on Mexican history commissioned by the Colegio de México. The authors rightly ignore meaningless national boundaries and create a coherent set of culture regions out of the area running from the Southwestern United States to parts of Honduras and El Salvador. This super-region is then divided into three areas: Aridamerica, Oasisamerica, and Mesoamerica. The former two areas include great parts of the Southwest United States, following definitions based on the work of the great Mesoamericanist Paul Kirchhoff in the 1950s.

The volume begins with a sketch history of the entire super-region. Crucial to the basic thesis of the book is the nature of the relationship among the three areas. The authors argue for real and extended contact between the two regions of more complex, sedentary culture—Oasisamerica and Mesoamerica—while noting how both regions were impacted by the movements and mores of the largely hunter-gatherer population that lived in between, called here Aridamerica. While this history on a grand scale is set aside to pursue the history of Mesoamerica proper, there is later in the text a valuable synthesis of recent work in Northern Mexico and areas adjacent.

Mexico’s Indigenous Past is a dialog between an historian and an archaeologist, both of whom are foremost in their respective fields. More

1. James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

than most projects, this synthesis was designed as a history of the area with material culture and masterful ethnohistorical exegesis sharing the burden equally. This intersection of history and material culture often creates trait lists with summary historical contexts. The form may be breathless at times, but is supremely helpful in reconstructing the larger arguments.

The authors are at their best when treating the developments in the Basin of Mexico, from Teotihuacán to the Aztec. Much of the central portion of the narrative is concerned with teasing out Teotihuacán's role in Mesoamerican history. Archaeological evidence for the role of the great Classic period capital is cataloged and evaluated for each major Mesoamerican area, which in itself is a valuable contribution. The authors see Teotihuacán's role as largely one of a trading empire, and argue convincingly for the absence of true Teotihuacán outposts. The decline of Teotihuacán is treated as an unsolved problem, with the major theses of barbarian invasion, internal revolt, shifting trading centers, and ecological degradation allowed to stand side by side.

A key theme of the book is the remarkable ethnic and linguistic diversity of Mesoamerica inside the shared envelope of Mesoamerican culture. The period after the fall of Teotihuacán is explained via this Mesoamerican heterogeneity: the Classic mode of organization according to ethnicity, exemplified in the rise of ethnic capitals and the existence of ethnic "barrios" at Teotihuacán itself, had to contend with a new regime, the "Zuyuans," who attempted to install a pan-ethnic elite ideology on the Mesoamerican landscape. For the authors, the language of Zuyuá—an esoteric knowledge system documented best among the elite of sixteenth-century Yucatán—had earlier provided the legitimization for control of territory larger than that associated with one ethnicity. The cult of the Feathered Serpent and the shared genesis at Tollan Zuyuá provided the glue for these disparate but now interconnected elites. The overarching creation of the world and humans by Quetzalcoatl (the Zuyuá patron) provided the universalist charter, a charter which trumped but did not negate the stories of local lineage founders.² While this may seem at first glance to be a revitalization of the old idea of a Toltec Mesoamerica, the authors insist on the difference between Toltec Empire and Zuyuan hegemony, the latter not built on traditional conquest of one ethnic group over another. Moreover, the Zuyuan system was not dependent on one capital, although cities could rise to particular prominence at specific times during the Zuyuan interlude.

2. Compare William M. Ringle, Tomás Gallareta Negrón, and George J. Bey, III, "The Return of Quetzalcoatl: Evidence for the Spread of World Religion during the Epiclassic Period," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 183–232.

The reign of Zuyuan ideology came to an end only with the rise of the Mexica (often called Aztec), who began their ascent as part of a Zuyuan Triple Alliance, and ended with their patron deity Huitzilopochtli “adopting” all Zuyuan and local deities. With the ascent to power of Huitzilopochtli and his people (the Mexica, a single ethnic group), universalism had once again an ethnic overlord. This late historical break is elegantly argued; the earlier distinction between Classic and Zuyuan modes of power is left as an exciting avenue for further research.³

Much of the book forms a handbook of recent Ancient Mesoamerican studies, where the most important recent scholarship is summarized and compared without necessarily taking a stand. In the end, the burden of a historiography, a history, and an archaeological description of this complex culture area in such a short space may disconcert the non-specialist. That said, this volume is a welcome and important addition to the few survey texts of Mesoamerican history and will serve both student and researcher very well.

The Inca World: The Development of Pre-Columbian Peru, A.D. 1000–1534 surveys a much briefer period in Andean history. The volume is a compilation of ten discrete essays by several well-respected experts in the field on aspects of culture and ecology, but as a whole it suffers from inadequate synthetic passages and a lack of cross-referencing. Several contributions stress the Inca debt to the earlier, more diverse Late Intermediate Period, a thesis that is not new but is clearly stated and illustrated here. Also explored is the importance of the tropical forest on the eastern side of the Andes to the development of Andean culture. Again this is clearly developed but is not new to Andeanists. The rather disjointed nature of the narrative is perhaps balanced by the beautiful photographs and enlightening line drawings seen throughout the book. Students will be well served by these illustrations and the extensive bibliographic documentation, but may prefer to consult the more coherent and engaging narratives of recent syntheses of the Andean area found in the works of Stone-Miller, Moseley, or Bruhns.⁴

The authors of *Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage: From Teotihuacán to the Aztecs* treat the importance of Teotihuacán in Classic Mesoamerican civilization and after. The constant juxtaposition in earlier histories of Classic difference vis-à-vis later periods is here placed in the background.

3. See the authors' *Mito y realidad de zuyua : serpiente emplumada y las transformaciones mesoamericanas del clasico al pos-clasico* (Mexico: Colegio de México, 1999) for an expanded essay on this thesis.

4. Rebecca Stone-Miller, *Art of the Andes* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002); Michael E. Moseley, *The Incas and Their Ancestors* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001); Karen Olsen Bruhns, *Ancient South America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Instead, the main theme is the role of Classic societies, and especially the metropolis of Teotihuacán, in the structuring of later Mesoamerican thought and history. The book contains several of the major theses developed by López Austin and López Luján above, including their more fully documented and more satisfying argument for the Zuyuan system in the Epiclassic and Early Post-Classic periods. William and Barbara Fash treat the interaction of Teotihuacán and the Maya, another key theme in the Zuyuan synthesis above. The Fashes bring two decades of research at the Classic Maya site of Copán to bear on the problem, which is described not only in terms of the appropriation of Teotihuacán imagery by the Maya, but also in terms of material culture patterns in the Maya city that speak of direct contact, if only for a brief time. The imprint of this brush with Teotihuacán power seemed to mark indelibly the Maya elite, as they were to refer to this moment time and again over the next five hundred years, until the collapse of that elite system by A.D. 900.

Several of the essays are concerned with Teotihuacán's impact on central urban space throughout Mesoamerica. Geoffrey McCafferty's essay on Cholula constructs a Classic period dialog between the two centers carried out largely through architecture. Doris Heyden synthesizes twenty years of work on the structuring of sacred space at Teotihuacán and its later effects. The author identifies the trope of cave with stream as a fundamental organizing principle, often accompanied by a bird perched in a sacred tree. These two articles are emblematic of the best work on the history of Mesoamerican worldview in their search for structuring principles and the recognition, especially in the McCafferty piece, of the dialogic nature of these constructions. Karl Taube searches for the structuring principles of warfare in Mesoamerican imagery and thought, thus adding an emic understanding to an element of Mesoamerican history now viewed as central to the rise of civilization in the area.

Gender in Pre-Hispanic America raises several serious, timely questions for pre-Columbian history. Since all contributors to the volume agree that gender (as opposed to biological sex) is socially constituted, then the first task is to explain how and when gender comes into existence in any given social context. Being socially constituted, gender is more practice than category, and therefore unrecoverable in some hardened form. Instead, this volume asks us to consider a shifting, constantly reconstructed gender in history.

Louise Burkhart examines the construction of gender in early colonial Nahuatl texts from Central Mexico. The author maps out the ideal husband/wife relationships through a close examination of colonial Nahuatl statements, but does not assume that these statements reflect pre-Columbian practice. She insists that colonial texts may not be

assumed to embody the pre-Columbian, any more than a colonial veneer may be stripped away to reveal a pre-Columbian core. Instead, colonial texts in native languages were created to make the indigenous knowable to the new Spanish overlords, and not necessarily to provide a transparent window onto native worldview and practices. Understanding the dialogic nature of the construction of colonial texts is an exciting, fundamental project for ethnohistory and through it for pre-Columbian history. That said, there is a privileging of disjunction between the pre-Columbian and colonial indigenous worldviews that the evidence, so astutely laid out here, does not warrant in all cases.

Cecelia Klein explores the dynamic practice of gendering in present day Highland Maya peoples and intelligently applies it to the Late Post-Classic Nahua of Central Mexico. Klein convincingly argues that gender ambiguity is an important element in period-ending ritual discourses. John Monaghan, the only ethnographer to contribute to the volume, also tackles the fluidity of indigenous gender categories through an exploration of gender in contemporary highland Oaxaca (Mixteca). Beyond a gender system that allows for change throughout one's lifetime, Monaghan finds that Mixtec gender is marked not by genitalia but by the ability to become pregnant. Further, he finds that gender complementarity is a powerful organizational force for the Mixtec, as it is for many other Mesoamericans, but this force functions differently in different contexts. Carolyn Dean's careful reconstruction of an Andean gender system finds many of the same characteristics: gender complementarity, gender change with age, and marked differences between the sexes in the performance of gender. The contribution of Rosemary Joyce is evidence of another trend, glimpsed also in Klein's work: the use of performance and queer theory to elucidate pre-Columbian culture and history. Judith Butler's work on the current performance of gender seems to be especially helpful in conceiving of a fluid gender system in pre-Columbian times. This fluidity was disciplined by the authorities in order to channel the productivity of human bodies, a point that Dean also emphasizes.

A slim majority of the contributions deals with societies close to the contact period, and thus with a large reservoir of directly applicable colonial documents with which to interrogate gender. Two pieces wrestle directly with the problem in situations where colonial materials are not seen to be directly valid. Mari Carmen Serra Puche's contribution describes and analyzes the female figures (more than four hundred in related caches) and related architecture and sculpture of Xochitecatl, Mexico, a recently investigated site with little iconographic or archaeological evidence of male power. This essay is instructive for its attempt to grapple with gender and gender theory without direct textual support (the period concerned dates to ca. A.D. 650–850) and towards the

beginning of an archaeological assessment. The author is careful not to draw too much concrete political information from the mountain of evidence for a cult of female ceramic figures and women's work. As other essays in this volume show, these representations are often a way for groups to capture the power of categories, rituals, and products associated with women, but not necessarily empower particular females or the female group itself.

In the same vein, Joan Gero's lead essay on gender in the north central highlands of Peru is instructive for its insistence that gender may not be "read off" the archaeological or iconographical record, but must exist in a theoretical and cultural frame. In this case the directly associated Recuay ceramics provide the public face of elite gender, which is then worked with feminist theories of Andean production. For Gero, the rise of distinct male and female iconographies alongside (male) warfare and gender-segregated feasting is fundamental to the development of complex power relationships in the north highlands of Peru between 200 B.C.–A.D. 600.

Margaret Conkey, an eminent archaeologist and gender theorist from outside Americanist studies, sums up the proceedings by arguing that many pre-Columbian gender studies are under-theorized (348). Mesoamericanists have been especially hostile to theory, viewing the incursions of theory as a colonizing move by outside scholarly interests. It should be remarked that theory here refers to the particular body of thought largely descended from Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics and applied to problems of meaning in various disciplines.⁵ There is a significant reason for the hostility evinced by many Mesoamericanists: the richness of the archaeological, ethnohistorical, and ethnographic data from Mesoamerica, coupled with the clear case made for certain continuities in thought and practice, makes for a powerful argument against the importation of "outside" theory and method. A related critique of theory in Mesoamerican history points out that few theorists are writing with the interests of Mesoamerican history in mind—that as a consumer of theory Mesoamerican history is constantly employing that which was crafted for another situation. However, the best theory exists to make texts speak in a richer voice, and critical textual analysis, at the heart of much theory, should not be viewed as foreign to any field. That said, it is the belief of many in the field that the important continuities in Mesoamerican culture should not be ignored or theorized out of existence. Theory in Mesoamerican studies must balance these two competing interests. Perhaps volumes like this one will

5. See Jonathan Culler, *Ferdinand de Saussure* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986).

cause us to reevaluate the relationship between the rich critical sources locked in theory and the construction of a Mesoamerican history. There is something at stake here, given theory's ability to create fecund new perspectives from which we may view old data. In the end, thinking on and through gender may aid the creation of a "perspectival suppleness" that encourages an intellectual empathy with other ways of thinking, including an intellectual empathy with indigenous modes of thought in general.⁶

Social Patterns in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica treats developments in Mesoamerica in the last two millennia B.C. The fundamental problems posed for this period have long been the rise of urban centers, monumental architecture, and social complexity. This volume continues to explore those problems, but from a vantage point often outside the central urban spaces themselves. Instead, the contributors investigate household patterns and their transformations in search of a more "bottom up" view of the creation of complex culture.

Rosemary Joyce, who also appeared in the volume on gender, is here equally perceptive in her analyses of Pre-Classic burials and the beginnings of competitive group behaviors as evidenced in those burials.⁷ Joyce shows through an examination of Tlatilco (central Mexico) materials that early burials were not just about status or crafting individual identities, but about creating differences in groups (here defined as "houses") competing on the social scene. Especially insightful is the author's hypothesis that children were an important focus of burial ritual (a pattern found throughout Pre-Classic Mesoamerica) due to the fragile nature of the links between groups the dead child represented. The development of costume as an important burial variable signals both differential status within groups and different ranks between groups. Individuals buried outside residential areas, often in monumental mounds, were permanent testaments to a group's claim for special status in the larger social sphere. These monumental or extra-residential burials contain more material and symbolism exchanged with other areas of Mesoamerica—in short, these burials witness the creation of a Mesoamerican elite.

A theme shared by several of the authors is the creation of public space, often viewed as arising out of and differentiating itself from residential space. Norman Hammond shows how at a rather small Maya

6. Jonathan Culler, "Introduction: What's the Point?" in *The Point of Theory: Practices of Cultural Analysis*, ed. Mieke Bal and Inge E. Boer (New York: Continuum, 1994), 13–17.

7. See also John E. Clark and Michael Blake, "The Power of Prestige: Competitive Generosity and Emergence of Rank Societies in Lowland Mesoamerica," in *Factional Competition and Political Development in the New World*, ed. Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and John W. Fox (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 17–30.

site, mass human sacrifice appeared together with monumental architecture. In fact, the mass sacrifices seem to be an integral part of the building of these early monumental constructions. Julia Hendon, in a superbly documented piece, shows how the pre-Classic Maya residential group was the place of economic production (especially of textile and ornament) that the centralization brought on by divine kingship was not able to detach and capture. Thus the ritual and economic centrality of the household continued in dialog with the increasingly powerful monumental urban center.

William Ringle and David Grove provide thoughtful meditations on the structuring of those first great urban centers. Specifically, the authors examine how monuments were organized on the landscape and what role monumental construction could have played in these societies. Ringle reconstructs an emic principle in early Maya planning: that of the proper circulation of *ch'ulel*, a Maya term encompassing blood and a fundamental life principle. Grove sees distinct private, elite space juxtaposed against the space of public performance in the early cities as a major structuring device, although he also points out the major differences inherent in early urban plans across Mesoamerica. Both of the authors see the creation of a center/periphery dichotomy in the early cities, a dichotomy which constructed the civilized nature of the urban space against the wilder, more dangerous and natural space of the periphery.

In *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztec and Mixtec*, Elizabeth Boone describes indigenous conceptions of history as seen in the manuscripts produced in Mexico before and after the Spanish invasion. The author is interested in both the historical data and the way those data are structured in the native manuscript tradition. Boone is specifically engaged in reconstructing the historical genres that structured the writing of history in Ancient Mexico. This approach assumes a developed indigenous historiographic tradition, a point to which Boone returns throughout the book and continually reaffirms. The author notes that the highly pictorial nature of the Mexican manuscript tradition runs counter to the Western grounding of history in alphabetic writing, causing many colonial and modern scholars to dismiss the indigenous historiographic tradition out of hand. Boone edited an earlier, fundamental volume examining this prejudice and its consequences, and thus is ideally placed to argue the point here.⁸ Boone insists that in the constitution of Ancient Mesoamerican history, the pictorial manuscripts must serve as key documents. This is as true for historians of the pre-Columbian period as it is for historians of the early

8. *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter D. Mignolo (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

colonial period. That these works have been viewed as difficult or even intractable in the past she admits, but then goes on to synthesize an enormous body of scholarship, thus putting the latest readings and contexts into the hands of non-specialists. In this way Boone has rendered the field of Mesoamerican history an invaluable service by stressing the importance of indigenous historical conceptions and then giving a state-of-the-art summary of those conceptions through a close reading of the fundamental sources.

Catherine Julien also takes on the task of revaluing indigenous historical conceptions, but this time in the Andes. *Reading Inca History* is a sustained, careful argument for the historical value of colonial texts on pre-Columbian Inca history and society, as well as an exemplary methodological primer for analyzing those texts. Rather than attempting to prove the historical truth of the texts, Julien, like Boone, begins by reconstructing the literary genres through which historical memory passed. Since none of the Andean genres comes down to us whole from pre-Columbian times, the author compares statements related to Inca literary practices with the Spanish, mestizo, and Inca historical texts of the colonial period. Through this triangulation and careful textual comparison, the outline of pre-Columbian Inca historical practices emerges.

Julien argues that Inca historiography had both a genealogical and a life history genre. The former organized the nobility and ranked *capac*, a term that embodied the ability to rule, while the latter recounted a particular person's (often the ruler's) deeds. The genealogy of the Inca ruler was official yet private: it appears to have been a series of painted portraits or scenes, stored in a particular room in the capital. The life history of the ruler, however, was the property of that ruler's *panaca*, a segment of Inca society founded by the ruler in question. With the locus and nature of these Inca genres in hand, Julien is able to tease out the pre-Columbian sources from the colonial narratives.

Julien draws a clear distinction between her historical work and that of her more structurally oriented colleagues. For Julien, structuralism tends to flatten history through the insistence on the reproduction of timeless structures. This is certainly not a new criticism of structuralism, but in Andean studies the debate takes on a particular importance due to the elegant structuralist formulations of R. Tom Zuidema and his analysis of Inca urban planning, calendars, astronomy, and kinship systems. To take but one example, Zuidema views the *panaca* system of royal organization not as a residue of royal history, but as an organizational principle useful in administering territory and managing calendrical rites, among other domains.⁹

9. R. Tom Zuidema, *Inca Civilization in Cuzco*, translated by Jean-Jacques Decoster (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 61–66; 81.

While structuralism in the Andes has been viewed as less interested in history, it is the structural analysis of texts that provided the ground for the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphic writing and the subsequent flowering of Maya history.¹⁰ The neighboring Zapotec (highland Oaxaca) script remains undeciphered, although hypotheses as to the basic meanings of many texts are not lacking. Javier Urcid's volume, *Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing*, is without doubt the most important contribution to the study of this script since Alfonso Caso's foundational work of the late 1920s. The author has spent the last twenty years collecting and ordering the glyphic evidence, and the volume is a fundamental contribution on that count alone. Urcid has created much more than a definitive catalogue raisonnée of Zapotec writing, however; the first part of the volume is an exemplary history of the vagaries of ancient script decipherment using the Zapotec example as a case study.¹¹ Urcid's own approach respects the accomplishment of past epigraphers while going far beyond any previous work in the completeness of the corpus and the careful methodological considerations consistently employed throughout the analysis.

A fundamental premise here is the Zapotec script changed over the thousand years of its use and that any decipherment must take into account these changes. This would seem to make common historical sense, and yet the introduction of time as a variable into the decipherment process is one that introduces difficulties that may be ignored in other studies. Furthermore, Urcid has masterfully recreated the original contexts of several important inscriptions—no small task given the amount of resetting and reuse many of these monuments endured. A student of any ancient script would be well served by observing Urcid's meticulous methodology, based as it is on a respect for the historicity of the script and the careful attention to details of context. Most importantly, Urcid has produced a volume that will be the basis for any future advancement in the decipherment of this crucial but little-understood Mesoamerican writing system.

Thelma D. Sullivan's paleography and English translation of the Nahuatl text *Primeros Memoriales* by the sixteenth century Spanish friar Bernardino de Sahagún is the important finale to a publishing venture

10. See especially Tatiana Proskouriakoff, *Maya History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993); Linda Schele and David Freidel, *A Forest of Kings* (New York: William Morrow, 1990); Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube, *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000); William L. Fash, *Scribes, Warriors, and Kings: The City of Copán and the Ancient Maya* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001).

11. Compare Stephen Houston, Oswaldo Chinchilla M., and David Stuart, eds., *The Decipherment of Ancient Maya Writing* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001) for an important recent appraisal of the history of Maya hieroglyphic decipherment.

that began in 1993 with the publication of the drawings from the same manuscript. More than any other European, Sahagún carefully elicited central Mexican thought and practice from indigenous informants using surprisingly modern methods. The *Primeros Memoriales* are the fruit of the first stage of this labor, collected in Tepepolco between 1558–61, a process masterfully described by Henry B. Nicholson in the introduction. Not only is the manuscript early, it is also from a peripheral community, a rare thing in the early colonial period with its tendency to express metropolitan Tenochtitlán norms, given the location of the colonial regime there. Calendrical festivals are described here that may be profitably compared with the descriptions gathered from the center of the Mexica empire. The most important section provides intricate descriptions of the array of several dozen god impersonators, forming one of the chief deity lists we have for Mesoamerica. Thanks to Sullivan (and Arthur J.O. Anderson, who completed the translation after her death) we now have a definitive paleography and translation of this text.

Studies of worldviews, gender relations, writing systems, processual questions, and relations of humans and the environment are all being done in Ancient American studies, and at times these can be less historical and more interested in structure or process. But more and more of these approaches are firmly inscribing themselves into history. We wonder where these gender relations or human ecological interactions come from, how they were transformed over time, and how the individual agent plays a role in any explanation. At the same time, we query indigenous expressions not only for information but for the indigenous structuring of that information. As the textual sources become more of a focus of systematic study and application, the analysis of these sources becomes more subtle and complex. All of this bodes well for the continuing development of Ancient American histories.