

d'Arquian and Stolper adds the least to our knowledge of pre-Colombian cultures, although its low price might recommend it for a beginning collection.

México, D. F.

JOHN F. SCOTT

*El Palacio del Quetzalpapálotl.* By JORGE R. ACOSTA. México, 1964. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Illustrations. Appendices. Pp. 169.

This monograph deals with the sort of research for which the Mexican archaeologist, Jorge R. Acosta, has earned an excellent reputation—the excavation and reconstruction of major prehistoric Mesoamerican architectural remains. Examples of some of his previous accomplishments of this sort may be seen at the archaeological zones of Tula, Hidalgo, and Monte Albán, Oaxaca.

The Palacio del Quetzalpapálotl is located at the ancient metropolis of Teotihuacán in the Valley of Mexico. It was uncovered and reconstructed between 1962 and 1964 as a part of the Teotihuacán Project of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia which has as its ultimate goal the complete restoration of the ceremonial center of that great archaeological site from the Ciudadela to the Pirámide de la Luna, a distance of about two kilometers.

Acosta's monograph is primarily a technical descriptive account of the excavations of the complex of archaeological remains identified as the Palacio del Quetzalpapálotl. He discusses in detail the architectural features of the site and the carved and/or painted columns, pyramidal structures, and building façades in the unit. He outlines his reasons and methods for reconstructing the ancient buildings. There are short sections which deal with the age of the structure, the ceramics recovered from the ruin, and interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data. A profusion of excellent photographs, maps, and color drawings illustrate the volume. They comprise a most informative part of the account.

The Palacio del Quetzalpapálotl complex is associated with one of the thirteen ceremonial units which face the plaza in front of the massive Pirámide de la Luna. According to Acosta the Palacio was utilized as the living quarters for a group of priests who conducted sacred religious rites in a temple which had existed upon the adjacent pyramidal base. It was built primarily of stone masonry in a quadrangular plan about a central patio. Wood was used in the roof and for other purposes such as door jambs. Acosta believes it was built and utilized between the fifth and seventh centuries A.D.

The Palacio is named for the carved and painted zoomorphic designs

upon the stone roof-supporting columns about the patio of the structure. The designs feature conventionalized depictions of the quetzal bird and the butterfly—Quetzalpapálotl. Related to these figures are representations of eyes, snails, and shells, which may be associated with water and the deity Tlaloc. Acosta, however, hesitates to speculate upon the significance of the quetzal-butterfly figure.

The Palacio has been completely restored. The walls, roof, supporting columns, and the embellishments upon those features, all have been reconstructed. A visit to the Palacio in its present condition adds much to our understanding of the architectural, artistic, and religious aspects of the culture of Teotihuacán. Acosta's fine account tells of the meticulous, time-consuming nature of the archaeological research that is necessary before meaningful conclusions about an archaeological site can be made or restoration accomplished.

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*Göttergestalten in den mexikanischen Bilderhandschriften der Codex Borgia-Gruppe. Eine ikonographische Untersuchung.* By BODO SPRANZ. Wiesbaden, 1964. Franz Steiner Verlag. Illustrations. Pp. 345. Paper.

The Codex Borgia group consists of five lengthy Prehispanic pictorial manuscripts from south-central Mexico: the Codex Borgia (the most elaborate of all), Vaticanus B, Bologna (or Cospi), Fejérvary-Mayer, and Laud. These ritual screenfold books which, it is believed, served the priests as divinatory manuals, show meticulously painted figures of gods and calendrical symbols and are therefore of extraordinary importance for the understanding of ancient Mexican religion. The five codices are stylistically and iconographically related, contain a number of thematically similar passages, and are based on a common tradition. The themes depicted are generally known from interpretations by informed natives and were recorded shortly after the Conquest. The iconographic identification of the deities was greatly advanced by Eduard Seler, who frequently oriented his interpretations toward the thematic context and published extensive commentaries in the early 1900s. Despite Seler's monumental contributions, however, the meaning of the Borgia codices is yet not fully understood.

The only recent major contribution toward elucidation of the contents is by K. A. Nowotny, who based his systematic comparisons on the parallel passages of the manuscripts (*Tlacuilolli* [Berlin, 1961], reviewed in *HAHR*, XLIII, 461).