

Latin American Government Leaders. By LEWIS A. TAMBS et al. Tempe, Arizona, 1970. Center for Latin American Studies of Arizona State University. Paper. \$2.00. Pp. 60.

This booklet is a compilation of brief biographies of current and former governmental leaders in eleven Latin American countries. Entries are grouped by nationality. Selections emphasize the Central American republics and the Spanish Caribbean plus the South American nations of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, and Peru. There are token entries from other countries. Despite the unevenness of selection and presentation, this remains a handy guide for quick reference.

W.C.

Before Cortés: Sculpture of Middle America. By ELIZABETH KENNEDY EASBY and JOHN F. SCOTT. Foreword by THOMAS P. F. HOVING. Preface by DUDLEY T. EASBY, JR. New York, 1970. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Illustrations. Reading List. Pp. 322. Cloth. \$16.95.

This volume is the record of the first major exhibition of Pre-Colombian art by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The production principally of the Easbys, the show and catalogue are very up-to-date in selection and interpretation. The catalogue is an indispensable reference tool for the scholar, with sources cited throughout the captions and texts.

Despite covering Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean islands during more than three thousand years, a good representation was obtained. Instead of the famous examples, important lesser-known works were chosen: Aztec sculpture is represented by, among other things, an earth god found in the subway excavations in 1967 and sculptures brought from Hamburg, Vienna, Paris, and London. It would seem impossible to do justice to Maya sculpture with thirty-eight items, only eleven of them over twenty inches high, but imaginative selection produced a good overview. The catalogue is both a service to scholarship and a treat for the art lover.

T.G.

Mexican Archaeology. An Introduction to the Archaeology of the Mexican and Mayan Civilizations of Pre-Spanish America. By THOMAS A. JOYCE. New York, 1970, c. 1914. Hacker Art Books. Illustrations. Map. Appendices. Pp. xvi, 373. Cloth. \$15.00.

Archaeological research in Mesoamerica, born almost a century ago, is fast becoming a subject for historical studies, most of which deal with swashbuckling adventures in the bush of southern Mexico and the Maya area, or with the development of archaeological ideas and techniques. Thomas Joyce's summary, first published in 1914, has become a part of the history of prehistory in Mesoamerica, and the value of the reprint edition lies almost solely in this area. No work half a century old, nor in fact one published as little as twenty years ago, can be expected to mirror modern understanding of and approaches to the prehistory of complex Mesoamerican civilizations; read as a piece of history, however, such a work can be highly illuminating.

Joyce's summary came at a time when much surface exploration and very little controlled excavation had been carried out. He was forced, therefore,

to focus on ethno-historic data for his reconstructions of prehistory, adding bits of information on objects and structures where possible. Archaeology as such is rarely present in the summary, principally because the approach to such matters remained largely antiquarian in Joyce's day. He does, however, present some conclusions regarding inter-relationships in Mesoamerica which remain valid today. On the other hand, Joyce's "Provisional Scheme of Dating" (Appendix III), close to that of H. J. Spinden in several respects, is now generally viewed as running counter to archaeological evidence which was, of course, unavailable in the early decades of this century.

Mexican Archaeology cannot now be used as a textbook, but it might serve well in a course on the development of thought amongst Mesoamericanists. What is more, much of it remains highly interesting and readable today, something which cannot always be said of some of the later, more scientifically accurate works in the field.

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Archaeological Explorations on San Nicolas Island. By BRUCE BRYAN. Foreword by CARL SCHAEFER DENTZEL. Introduction by CLEMENT W. MEIGHAN. Los Angeles, 1970. Southwest Museum. Southwest Museum Papers. Illustrations. Notes. Appendix. Bibliography. Pp. xxii, 160. \$8.75.

San Nicolás is one of several Channel Islands offshore from southern California and is the farthest removed from the mainland. Despite its isolation and seeming barrenness it is well-known for the number of archaeological sites present there. Bruce Bryan and two companions undertook an archaeological reconnaissance of the island for two months in 1926. He returned for short visits in 1958 and 1960. *Archaeological Explorations on San Nicolas Island* is a report of these experiments.

The book is not, as the title might suggest, a systematic unfolding of the archaeological results replete with descriptive sections, tables of correlations, and interpretations. These are conspicuous by their absence. What is offered is instead a highly personal document much of it in diary form in which day to day activities and reactions are chronicled. Archaeological conditions, sites, and discoveries are given primary emphasis, to be sure, but this is done in the form of a daily log. The landscape and changing weather, particularly as they influence human life, are frequently commented upon. The relative ease with which sea food was obtained for the author's table suggests a reason for the intensive habitation of the island. He also observes that natural seepage of petroleum, now abetted by modern technology, provided prehistoric inhabitants with an important raw material in the form of asphaltum which accumulated on the coastal rocks. There are discussions of the recent history of the island and insightful comments on the changes observed between the earlier and later visits.

The text has the quality of a travel journal. To the extent that the archaeological data are not dealt with in somewhat greater detail, this reviewer was somewhat disappointed. However, Bruce Bryan was one of the first to systematically investigate the prehistory of the island and it was relatively unmodified in 1926, except by wind and water. Therefore, his descriptions and comments