

Horizon state centered at Teotihuacán. This book summarizes an extensive survey of settlement patterns carried out by the authors and a team of students and assistants between 1960 and 1975. The objective of this survey was to gather information pertinent to ecological and political processes in the Basin between 1000 B.C. and A.D. 1519. Working within the “materialist paradigm” of cultural ecology and anthropology, the survey team focused on the development of agriculture, especially irrigation and terracing, and on the demographic profile of the area over time. This imposing project surveyed 3,500 square kilometers—approximately 75 percent of the agriculturally usable land mass of the Basin—locating an estimated 80 percent of all spatially isolatable communities.

Three introductory chapters, with thorough discussions of research methods and problems, are followed by the substantive core of the book: four chapters on the natural environment, settlement history, demographic history, and resource exploitation of the Basin of Mexico. The richness of the material presented here will make these chapters a benchmark for future studies of the area. Three final chapters address interpretive and theoretical issues and the future of research in the Basin. The authors fashion a model from traditional and much discussed theories to describe and analyze the evolution of ecological control and political systems in the Basin. This model incorporates Boserup’s theory of demography and agricultural intensification and Wittfogel’s theory of hydraulic agriculture and political centralization. The principles of population growth, least effort in subsistence production, and risk management underlie this model. Excavations, comparison to contemporary ethnographic material, and estimates of population carrying capacity are used to complement the survey research in testing the model. Theoretically, as well as substantively, this book will provide grist for some of the most important debates surrounding the demographic, technological, and political processes of the evolution of civilization in Mexico and elsewhere.

College of William & Mary

STEPHEN B. BRUSH

*Los hombres de piedra: Escultura olmeca.* By BEATRIZ DE LA FUENTE. Mexico City: UNAM, 1977. Illustrations. Notes. Figures. Map. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 390.

This is a comprehensive work on the monumental sculpture of the Olmec civilization, Mesoamerica’s first high culture, which spanned the period from 1300 to 400 B.C. It should be read in conjunction with the author’s more fully illustrated *Catálogo de la escultura olmeca* (1973). Here

her intent is to establish general traits that characterize the Olmec style, and regional and local elements that artistically define zones and specific Olmec centers. Her approach is that of art history and formal analytical techniques, such as the use of the “golden section” to study proportion.

The book opens with an exhaustive and critical history of Olmec research, probably the best we have. I do, however, differ with some of her assessments of past Olmequistas and of earlier attempts to define the style and culture. I feel, for instance, that she has downgraded the pivotal role of the late Matthew Stirling in bringing the civilization to light in the first place.

From her analysis, the author concludes that the sculpture of San Lorenzo is the oldest, and takes this as her departure point for establishing the characteristics of the style. There is a stylistic evolution in colossal heads and other great basalt monuments through La Venta, ending with Tres Zapotes, although there is some overlap among these centers.

A final section deals with the controversial subject of Olmec iconography. Here the author puts herself on one side, and David Joralemon and me on the other. We believe that through structural analysis, many specific but interrelated gods appear in Olmec art, and that some of these might be interpreted using sixteenth-century ethnohistorical data from Mesoamerica. She rejects this approach in favor of her own, which seems to me impressionistic, romantic, and somewhat culture-bound (e.g., “the sphere is a symbol of the cosmos, the totality of what is known”).

Overall, this is a most valuable contribution, which should be read by both art historians and archaeologists interested in one of the world’s most fascinating art styles.

Yale University

MICHAEL COE

*Ceramic Figures of Ancient Mexico: Guerrero, México, Guanajuato, Michoacán 1600 B.C. –300 A.D.* By FRANCES PRATT and CARLO GAY. Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1979. Maps. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 288. Cloth.

This book is a lavishly illustrated compendium of pre-Classic figurines of Mesoamerica, arranged according to chronology, geography, and figurine type. The interpretation is aesthetic and intuitive rather than archaeological. Many of the specimens come from private collections and knowledge of provenance is scanty or nonexistent. The present work will probably enhance the commercial value of such figurines and encourage