

toward recent journalism. The overall impression is one of very hasty research, driven by a collective desire to criticize United States support of the regime and the unexamined fear that El Salvador might become another Vietnam. The chapters, however, are too brief (the chapter on the Catholic church in El Salvador is four pages long) and summary to be of more than cursory value. The bibliography at the end of the book is extensive, but incomplete, with many important sources missing.

This book appears to have been written by students with incomplete academic training, to appeal to fellow students already in opposition to United States policy in El Salvador. There is little that is new or even well synthesized, and there are now several books that cover the same territory better (T. S. Montgomery, Marvin Gettleman et al., and Jaime Labastida et al.). This book should be read only by persons doing research on the anti-United States policy groups that emerged on El Salvador.

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JOSÉ Z. GARCIA

*Order without Government: The Society of the Pemon Indians of Venezuela.* By DAVID JOHN THOMAS. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982. Tables. Maps. Figures. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 265. Paper. \$17.50.

The Pemon are a dispersed group of savannah- and forest-dwelling, Carib-speaking Indians of southeastern Venezuela. Thomas provides a solid, problem-oriented ethnography of that interesting and attractive society. The problem is of importance for historians and political scientists as well as anthropologists: how is a truly egalitarian social order maintained?

In the first two chapters the problem is introduced; and the people, their setting, and history are generously sketched. The next three chapters contain the meat of the book; they detail, with a nice balance of ethnographic generalization and specific case histories, the social world of the Pemon—kin and neighbors, leaders and followers, and “forces of disharmony.” The next chapter exemplifies the cultural rules and concepts just extracted, by means of a thematic analysis of three Pemon myths. The conclusion pulls together the evidence accumulated about the social relations and institutions that permit the Pemon to perpetuate their remarkably peaceful and unexploitative society. A graceful and humane epilog sees all too clearly the inevitable end of this society, as the Pemon are “civilized”—which, for them, means being incorporated into the lowest rung of rural Venezuelan national society.

The essence of Thomas’s argument is that in the absence of shortages that would permit economic coercion, the Pemon forestall political coercion by implanting all individuals in a dense, but fluid, social network where the demands and responsibilities relating any two people are continuously negotiable (within limits) and the principle of the essential autonomy of the individual is protected ultimately by the ability of any person simply to distance himself spatially from an intolerable situation. The point is well substantiated and the book is a valuable addition to the literature.

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STEPHEN BECKERMAN

*Chan Chan: Andean Desert City.* Edited by MICHAEL E. MOSELEY and KENT C. DAY. Foreword by DOUGLAS W. SCHWARTZ. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982. Maps. Illustrations. Figures. Tables. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxii, 373. Cloth. \$29.95.

Chan Chan flourished on the north coast of Peru between A.D. 1000 and 1500, as the capital of an empire second only to the Inca in extent. Its crumbling adobe walls cover six square kilometers. This multiauthored volume summarizes the results of a five-year program of archaeological investigations to reconstruct the growth of the city, identify the functions of the various kinds of structures, and reconstruct the sociopolitical and economic organization. Chapters discuss the *ciudadelas*, ten large, walled compounds, each containing the palace and tomb of a ruler; the burial platforms; the elite compounds; an area containing small rooms occupied by the laboring class; and the storage facilities. Changes in the proportions of adobe bricks provided a relative chronology that allowed tracing changes in the scope of storage facilities and the expansion of the city. This, in turn, shed light on the economic structure. Analyses of faunal remains, irrigation systems, and ethnohistoric documents aided in interpreting the evolution and character of the state. The authors envisage a hierarchical society, in which a powerful elite wielded absolute control over the production, storage, and redistribution of all resources, including labor. At its peak, the Chimú state controlled at least 66 percent of the irrigated land along the coast (p. 25). Around A.D. 1465, it was conquered by the Inca, who adopted several Chimú administrative features. Although containing more details than general readers may desire, this book exemplifies how archaeologists reconstruct intangible aspects of prehistoric societies and it provides much insight into the history, economics, and sociopolitical structure of this remarkable pre-Columbian civilization.

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