traditions are no longer studied in artificial isolation, but as part of the social whole of the communities from which they come and whose image is therein reflected.

UNAM MIGUEL LEÓN-PORTILLA

Tula: The Toltec Capital of Ancient Mexico. By RICHARD A. DIEHL. New York: Thames and Hudson, Inc., 1983. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 184. Cloth. $29.95.

Until fairly recently, the Toltecs of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica were rather shadowy figures: the semilegendary predecessors, often looming larger than life, of much better known sixteenth-century groups. Until the 1960s information about them was largely restricted to a complex corpus of mythological documentation, plus the physical remains of a comparatively small number of architectural and artifactual remains from a few ancient centers. Most archaeologists focused their attention on developments before about A.D. 900, while ethnohistorians understandably concentrated on the better documented groups of the Late Postclassic (c. A.D. 1300–1520). The Early Postclassic (c. A.D. 900–1300) remained one of the least well known eras of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica. Consequently, the Toltecs, who developed, flourished, and declined during that period, were less well understood than they deserved.

The situation has improved dramatically since the mid 1960s, in no small part owing to new fieldwork by North American and Mexican archaeologists at Tula, the major Toltec capital just north of the Valley of Mexico. Richard Diehl directed a substantial portion of this fieldwork during the 1970s, and in this book he aims to "summarize what we know about the Toltecs and Tula" (p. 13) for both his professional colleagues and the educated public. Two brief introductory chapters provide general background about the Toltecs, Tula, and Mesoamerican culture history. These are followed by two longer chapters on the history of archaeological research at Tula, and the development of Tula as a center before its major florescence after about A.D. 950. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 deal in more detail with Tula's population, polity, and economy during its florescent Tollan phase (A.D. 950–1200). Chapters 8 and 9 discuss the significance of Tollan-phase Tula in regional and supraregional contexts, while Chapter 10 considers the decline of Tula as a major power center after about A.D. 1200. The book's core focus is the author's own work at Tula, and consequently there is some degree of emphasis on domestic architecture and residential patterns—a refreshingly marked departure from most past discussions. Nevertheless, the scope is pan-Mesoamerican, and the book is a major synthesis of the Early Postclassic as seen from Tula.

The reader looking for penetrating descriptive synthesis and broad perception of major problems in Early Postclassic Mesoamerica will be well satisfied with this

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well-written and well-organized book. Such a reader will come away informed about the present state of knowledge about how Tula developed and functioned as a center within a region and within Mesoamerica and will also get a good idea of how this knowledge was laboriously acquired during years of fieldwork and analysis. Many basic questions are raised and pondered: e.g., Tula's origins in Classic times; its interactions with subordinate rural populations and competing centers; and the political and economic significance of the impressive array of close stylistic affinities in far-flung areas. The author clearly recognizes that few, if any, of these questions can currently be satisfactorily answered. Nevertheless, it is important to raise them, and seldom have I seen a clearer or more complete statement of their existence and significance.

Perhaps the greatest value of this book is the substantive and conceptual bridge it provides between the historic period of European contact in the sixteenth century and the archaeologically known Classic Mesoamerican civilizations of the first millennium A.D. More than any other single archaeological work I know of, Richard Diehl's book on Tula should help lay to rest finally the still persistent notion that what the Spanish conquistadors encountered in central Mexico in A.D. 1519 was developmentally unique or unrelated to what had happened there during the preceding millennium.

University of Michigan JEFFREY R. PARSONS

Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire: Myths and Prophecies in the Aztec Tradition. By DAVÍD CARRASCO. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xii, 233. Cloth. $20.00.

Carrasco interprets Quetzalcoatl as a god in many contexts (calendar, wind, creation, morning-star, and rulership), whose cult was attested since Teotihuacán, in some parts of Mesoamerica during more than a thousand years in the Aztec historical tradition. The "irony of empire" is explained by "Aztec dependency on the Toltec tradition for legitimacy and their application of the myth of Quetzalcoatl's return" (p. 5) to the appearance of Cortés in 1519. Interpreted by the Aztecs, the return of Quetzalcoatl found Moctezuma a fallen and disgraced ruler (p. 200). The conquest "uncovered an atmosphere of instability and cultural inferiority that had apparently plagued the Aztec capital since its foundation" (p. 156).

To arrive at this conclusion, Carrasco reviews evidence from preconquest texts and figural art, and recent historical writings. The introduction applies a quotation from Jacques Soustelle's *Daily Life of the Aztecs* to a concept of Aztec Mexico as "mosaics and centers" of settlement. Present opinion, however, is that in urban geography Aztec Mexico was less like a mosaic than a discontinuous map of scattered peoples, whence tribute was taken to a center such as Tenochtitlán.

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