

The publication is conceived as a textbook for university students and readers interested in a more profound consideration of Latin American history. In this respect it contains a single notable flaw: the bibliography is merely a list of books and articles. What is required here is a bibliographical essay to guide the reader through the vast array of titles—far too many for any one person to search out and look at. But on the whole, the volume is of great significance and will surely stand for many years to come as one of the indispensable reference works on Latin American history.

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Cartes des Amériques dans les collections de la Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}. By HOSSAM ELKHADEM et al. Brussels: Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, 1992. Plates. Illustrations. Notes. Index. xiii, 169 pp. Paper.

This book, another product of the Columbian Quincentenary, is the catalogue of a 1992 exhibition of maps of the Americas in the collection of the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels. The exhibition included 59 maps and plans from the fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, ranging from world maps to nautical charts and city plans. The catalogue includes excellent reproductions of about half the works exhibited, 14 in color and 12 in black and white. The authors give a detailed account of each map, with discussion of its provenance, biographical information on the individuals involved in its production, and analysis of the cartographic and written sources on which it was based. Each item is examined in the broader context of evolving geographic and cartographic knowledge of the New World, with discussion of such issues as the changing views of the shape and extension of the South American continent and the erroneous tradition of depicting California as an island. Extensive references for further reading are also provided.

Most of the maps included were made by professional cartographers who worked in Europe and had no direct experience of the regions described. Most provide general rather than detailed local information. As one would expect from the nature of the exhibition, the Low Countries predominate, with maps by Abraham Ortelius, Michel Mercator, Jodocus Hondius, Willem Blaeu, Frederick de Wit, and others. Iberian cartography is represented only by Juan de La Cosa's world map and an eighteenth-century map of South America by Juan de la Cruz Cano y Olmedilla, which is not reproduced. A plan of the city and fort at Willemstad on Curaçao is included, but Latin American cities are represented only by the well-known schematic views of Mexico City and Cuzco from the *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*. Maps of particular interest to Latin Americanists include Sir Robert Dudley's map of Guiana and the mouths of the Orinoco; Dutch nautical charts of the Atlantic and Caribbean by Willem Blaeu, Hendrick Doncker, and Gerard van Keulen; general maps of South America by Arnold van Langren and Vincenzo Maria Coronelli; and a map of New Granada and Popayán published by Willem

Blaeu but actually the work of Hessel Geritz, one of the few professional cartographers who did travel to the New World. A map of Pernambuco by Georg Marcgraf and one of California and the Southwest by Eusebio Kino were included in the exhibition but not reproduced in the book.

Although it does not provide a complete picture of local cartographical knowledge, particularly for Spanish and Portuguese America, the book does a good job of describing how such knowledge of the New World evolved in Western Europe; and the reproductions alone may make it worth having.

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Background

Mesoamerican Elites: An Archaeological Assessment. Edited by DIANE Z. CHASE and ARLEN F. CHASE. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992. Illustrations. Tables. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xiv, 375 pp. Cloth. \$39.95.

Mesoamericanists have often been criticized (and we have chastised each other) for overemphasizing elite culture, but we are all perfectly aware that the heart and soul of ancient Mesoamerica depended on the thought and behavior of the elites of the many different societies that inhabited the area. Indeed, elite interaction was the most critical factor in culturally unifying the area in Formative times, and continued interaction among elites was a fundamental process in the formation of complex society. A Zapotec lord of Monte Alban, after all, would have had much more in common with a noble from Teotihuacán or Tikal, despite the differences in language or ethnicity, than with the peasant subsistence farmers of Oaxaca who paid him tribute.

Similar considerations led Diane and Arlen Chase to assemble this volume, based primarily on papers presented at the 1987 meeting of the American Anthropological Association. The editors also note ruefully that research on Mesoamerican elites was in danger of being eclipsed by the search for the “common man” and “everyday life” (p. xii). Settlement pattern studies, they observe, have virtually excluded elites from consideration.

The 19 papers included in the book strike a fairly good temporal and spatial balance. About half of them are concerned wholly or in part with the Mayan area. Other regions covered include Oaxaca and Central Mexico. Some key areas, such as West Mexico and the Gulf Coast, are neglected or mentioned only in passing. For the most part, the editors have attempted a blend of theoretical considerations and empirical data summaries, although most of these papers address substantive matters more thoroughly than theoretical issues.

The opening essay, by the Chases, grapples with conceptual issues and methodological problems. One of the basic problems is the archaeological identification of elites through their material culture correlates, which is in turn part of the