

less understood than many of the other polities and peoples that comprised the Mesoamerican world.

In *Taricuri's Legacy*, Helen Perlstein Pollard, an archaeologist and ethno-historian who has devoted more than two decades to the investigation of ancient Michoacán, draws on documentary as well as archaeological and ecological studies to redress this intellectual gap. Although recent advances clearly have been made, the volume's necessary interpretative reliance on the sixteenth-century *Relación de Michoacán* (narratives of Tarascan noblemen, translated and transcribed by a Franciscan priest) signals that Tarascan research remains at a relatively preliminary stage. In contrast, for example, key recent breakthroughs in Aztec studies have occurred as similar early colonial narratives have been amply supplemented and modified by analyses of more specific legal-land records and by a diverse set of archaeological studies directed at houses, temples, and survey regions. In central Mexico, empirical sources have not always confirmed some aspects of the narrative histories, and one suspects that similar discrepancies may befall portions of the *Relación de Michoacán*.

Well aware of these limitations, Pollard manages to discuss Tarascan history, political organization, economy, religion, settlement patterns, and relations with surrounding peoples in a thoughtful manner that spurs questions of theoretical and comparative importance. She considers the complex historical processes that accounted for a number of similarities between the Tarascans and the rest of Mesoamerica, including the basic calendar system. (The Tarascan language, by contrast, was only remotely related to other indigenous Mesoamerican linguistic groups, and Tarascan temple construction followed a distinctive architectural plan.) Pollard also illustrates how the Tzintzuntzan economy apparently utilized redistributive mechanisms to a greater degree (and relied less on marketing) than did the contemporaneous central Mexican exchange system. She further proposes that while ethnic diversity was integrated into the Aztec political economy and social fabric, active ethnic assimilation was critical to Tarascan expansion and domination.

Each of these issues, as well as others Pollard presents, should guide further data collection on (and generate broader awareness of) ancient Michoacán. If it achieves this desirable effect, *Taricuri's Legacy* will have served to promote a much better definition and understanding of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican diversity and long-term change.

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Vision and Revision in Maya Studies. Edited by FLORA S. CLANCY and PETER D. HARRISON. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990. Maps. Figures. Bibliography. Index. x, 224 pp. Cloth. \$40.00.

It is often stated that archaeologists, anthropologists, art historians, and ethno-historians of the Maya would all benefit from studying each other's scholarship as

well as that of non-Mayanists. If we accept this premise—and also the reality that such cross-fertilization is seldom reflected in published work—this volume is both a welcome contribution and a slight disappointment.

The book originated in a 1987 itinerant exhibit of the Albuquerque Museum Foundation, “Maya: Treasures of an Ancient Civilization,” and an accompanying symposium held at the University of New Mexico. In their introduction the book’s editors trumpet the “new and changing methodologies” and “underlying excitement” reflected in the 12 essays. They point out that while prehistorians have always been revisionists because of a paucity of data, Maya scholars are now starting to decipher enough historical texts to make possible the kind of revisionism usually associated with “postmodern” approaches. Historians might argue, however, that their discipline also has always been “revisionist”; to make a contribution to a field, a new understanding of some form must be convincingly presented.

Judged by this criterion, most of these essays are outstanding. Peter D. Harrison and Richard M. Leventhal independently extrapolate from their research in Belize to suggest new and more sophisticated views of important aspects of Mayan civilization—food production and regionalism, respectively. Anthony Andrews provides excellent insight into the implications for periodization of recent work on the coastal Maya, while David M. Pendergast likewise convinces the reader of the validity of rethinking established period constructs (specifically, the “decadence” of the Postclassic). The essay by Grant D. Jones (on a 1638 rebellion) is typically first-rate, but his work is more pioneering than revisionist, and for several reasons his chapter sits oddly in this collection. Other chapters—by Flora Clancy, David A. Freidel, Clemence Chase Coggins, and Linda Schele, for example—present valuable scholarship. They will surely interest Mayanist archaeologists, although the significance of such microfocused studies is not always made as clear as one might expect for a volume of this title.

Clancy and Harrison appear to have a stimulating vision of where Maya studies is going and why this historiographical journey is significant; that vision might have had greater impact had they linked it more closely to the essays in the volume, perhaps in a comprehensive conclusion. Had a lengthier volume been possible, this first-rate collection of quality work by an eminent cast of scholars might have benefited from a broader consultation of theories, methods, and models from outside the small community of Mayanist archaeologists, and the inclusion of work by ethnohistorians of the Postcontact period, much of which offers new thinking based on new sources.

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