

of star players, but correctly avoids blaming misplaced dreams of making it big in baseball for unemployment and a lack of interest among Dominican youth in certain types of work.

Perhaps Ruck's most exciting contribution is his discussion of the *Cocolos*, British West Indians who migrated to labor in the Dominican cane fields. Hard workers, they carried a sense of discipline and community, and a love for cricket. "Without these English-speaking, cricket-playing sojourners, Dominican baseball would never have become the best in the Caribbean" (p. 118); it was *Cocolos'* sons and grandsons who transferred their skills and ambitions to the diamond.

This book will cause scholars some problems. It includes no notes, no bibliography, practically no discussion of methodology or theory. Spanish accents are erratic, maps inadequate, the sources of many quotes unstated, the narrative disjointed, the time frame often unspecified. Given these limitations and the price, it is unclear who the intended audience is. Although informative, Ruck's work must be read with Alan Klein's *Sugarball: The American Game, the Dominican Dream* (1991) and other studies to gain a fuller sense of Dominican baseball.

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Colonial Period

Aztecs: An Interpretation. By INGA CLENDINNEN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xii, 398 pp. Cloth. \$29.95.

In an eloquent series of essays, Inga Clendinnen proposes to reveal the collective psyche—the characteristic sensibilities, emotions, and attitudes—of the Mexica Aztecs of early sixteenth-century Mexico. She derives her interpretation from information contained in the *Florentine Codex*, an Aztec encyclopedia compiled by a Franciscan, Bernardino de Sahagún. She relies on this single source, with its idealization of categories and Spanish authorship, because of her impression that it preserves the authentic native voice. The topical focus is the notorious human sacrificial rites. These rites touched on various aspects of daily life, which are the subjects of the different essays: the city, the victims, warriors, priests, merchants, wives, mothers, and the sacred.

Clendinnen has laboriously pieced together scattered bits of information to "construct plausible psychological hypotheses" (p. 88) that recreate the texture of native life, sometimes rejecting the validity of passages on the grounds of "psychological implausibility" (p. 100). The resulting picture is bleak. The Aztecs are presented as a powerless, insecure, despondent people who were the pawns of a capricious supreme god. In Clendinnen's reconstruction, their misery began with the trauma of weaning and was relieved only by the finality of death.

A major factor contributing to this psychological state of affairs was a histori-

cal one: the Mexica Aztecs claimed to have been upstarts who quickly rose to power. Clendinnen imagines that they were riddled with uncertainty about their fragile position in the political hierarchy and had only recently invented terrifying ceremonies that manifested this anxiety. The rapidity of their societal transformation is critical to Clendinnen's thesis because of its profound psychological impact; however, it is based on a mythicized historical tradition that is contradicted by archaeological evidence.

Since direct psychological information is not available, the author reconstructs typical attitudes from standardized ritual behaviors that ostensibly reflect them, based on her assumption of universal human reactions, such as terror in response to human sacrifice. While she agrees that an outsider should not assume the emotional motivations and responses of an alien people, Clendinnen explicitly chooses not to deal with the symbolic meaning system of which these rituals were a part, preferring instead to concentrate on the moods they may have evoked, as if emotions can be analyzed apart from ideas and beliefs.

Needed caveats appear at the end of the book. A critical one is that the *Florentine Codex*, source of this bleak representation, was written during the traumatic aftermath of the conquest, which devastated the Aztecs. Another is the author's acknowledgment (p. 262) of the risks involved in her objective: "It is a perilous business to assert over close to half a millennium and vast cultural distance what the Mexica saw, and made of what they saw."

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Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development. By PATRICK J. CARROLL. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991. Maps. Tables. Appendix. Notes. Index. xv, 240 pp. Cloth. \$35.00.

In this monograph, Patrick J. Carroll wants to combine the study of African slaves and their descendants over time with that of regional development in central Veracruz from 1570 to 1830. His focus is on three districts (Jalapa, Córdoba, and Orizaba), and his aim is to uncover external as well as internal factors behind social development.

Most of his extensive research in Mexican archives, as well as the University of Texas research collections, was carried out in the early 1970s. The first result was a 1975 Ph.D. dissertation on basically the same topic. The book constitutes a thoroughly revised version, however. It takes up the main problems in a clearer and more sophisticated fashion. Quantification has become more systematic and is well presented in comprehensive appendixes. Recent contributions on slavery and colonial Mexico are brought into the discussion. Also, Carroll's style has changed (not always for the better, as, for instance, a glance at p. 91, with its "evolutionary deaths," will show).

As many monographs on Oaxaca, Guadajajara, and other Mexican provinces