

outside observer alters the observed, even before the issue of narrative choice comes up. Then again, underlining the “choice” dimension of any tale we choose to tell in our attempt to describe what is in essence a fluid reality is testament to the science-based posture of our discipline. If there is one thing that distinguishes scientific theorizing in its inherent openness to potential alternative explanations, it is the “slouching toward Bethlehem,” to use Yeats’s imagery, not the getting there. We never get there. Openness to potential dissent, non-corroboration, other views or views from other times, is always present.

In the final analysis, the point of this valuable collection is to provide us with evidence of *how* knowledge can be produced through anthropological lenses, even in the midst of a fluid reality.

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Anthropomorphic Imagery in the Mesoamerican Highlands: Gods, Ancestors, and Human Beings. Brigitte Faugère and Christopher S. Beekman, eds. Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2019, 456 pp. \$103.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-60732-994-7.

The contributors to this volume tackle a massive topic with an expansive spatiotemporal range: two- and three-dimensional prehispanic images of anthropomorphic beings created by highland Mexican peoples over three millennia, from the Formative (or Preclassic) period up through the Postclassic period that ended with the Spanish conquest in 1521. Originating in a 2011 symposium, thirteen US, Mexican, and European authors bring their expertise in archaeology, art history, and ethnohistory to perhaps the first major investigation of Mesoamerican anthropomorphic visual culture outside of the Maya area, where much of this type of research has proliferated. The essential subject, according to the editors, is representational conventions of the human body, be they living humans, ancestors, or gods, considered within their particular ontological contexts. The challenges for such an ambitious endeavor are twofold: the extreme cultural and temporal heterogeneity of this half of Mesoamerica compared with the Maya region, and the near-absence of contemporary written information.

Following the editors’ introduction, eleven case studies explore a wide variety of portable and fixed images deploying diverse analytical methods, some more convincing than others: Faugère on the iconography and function of Formative period Chupícuaro figurines in West Mexico; Beekman on Formative hollow ceramic figures of West Mexico likely used in public performances; Logan on the attributes that discriminate gender in paired ceramic figures in Formative West Mexico; Winter on unique

Late Formative earthen reliefs of near-life-size males and females sculpted on a cave floor in the Mixe region; Uruñuela and Plunket on Early Classic figurines at Cholula that may have been puppets used in supra-household ritual performances; Turner on differentiating yet again the varied depictions of the Classic period Teotihuacan Rain God in murals and effigy jars; Billard's iconographic analysis of Teotihuacan's "Old God" stone effigies to interpret their meaning; Testard and Serra Puche on Epiclassic female figurines from Xochitécatl, some likely representations of female deities comparable to Aztec gods; Kristan-Graham on Early Postclassic relief sculptures at Tula that may depict ancestors in upright and reclining positions as a "symbolic burial"; Peperstraete's examination of human body proportions in Late Postclassic Aztec mural art, suggesting that "naturalism" was dependent on the size of depictions and available space; and Dehouve's rethinking of the Aztec concept of *ixiptla* as "substitution" in the political domain, with the ruler as the *ixiptla* of principal deities even as he had his own mortal *ixiptla*. The volume thus forms an eclectic collection that, as the editors indicated, ultimately calls for more such work to be done.

None of the authors undertook a theoretical exploration of the human body, although many deferred to the seminal work on Aztec concepts of the body by Mexican historian Alfredo López Austin. Furthermore, the anthropomorphic images themselves were in most cases not the focus of the chapter but a means to another end—for example, to investigate specific art styles, forms of social organization, political institutions, ritual practices, or religious beliefs.

Despite its diversity, the volume is unified by certain themes, beginning with a preference for "emic" over "etic" perspectives. These terms were not well defined but seemed here to correspond to Erwin Panofsky's divide between formal (etic) and iconographic (emic) branches of art history, with "emic" equated with meanings, considered impossible to know without written documents. To overcome that huge "handicap," the editors proposed a "new approach," using "analogy" (actually homology) to assume that the images were products of a single shared "Mesoamerican ontology." This under-explained idea derives from French anthropologist Philippe Descola's assignment (critiqued by Dehouve) of Central Mexico to his "analogical ontology," wherein every entity is connected to every other entity. Methodologically, this permitted contributors to utilize much later colonial documents, primarily pertaining to the Aztecs, to interpret the meanings of earlier imagery of very different cultures. Such upstreaming has long been contested in Mesoamerican studies, and several contributors expressed doubts about its applicability. It neglects potential variability and elevates a few textual sources over prolific material data. In fact, the archaeologically-inclined chapters revealed that a "science versus meaning" dichotomy is overstated, by investigating how artifacts and structures become meaningful through interactive practices and contexts that question whether these images are indeed "representations." An implicit material semiotics approach in some chapters could also be further developed.

The volume is written for Central Mexican specialists familiar with regional, temporal, and cultural terminology. No synoptic map or time chart is provided in the

introduction. There are 135 black-and-white drawings and photos, although some are too small. Each chapter has its own, often impressive bibliography acknowledging contemporary scholarship.

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Migrations in Late Mesoamerica. Christopher S. Beekman, ed. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2019, 400 pp. \$85.00, cloth. ISBN 9780813066103.

The past thirty years have witnessed renewed efforts to incorporate migration studies into archaeological theory and interpretation. This book is the first systematic attempt to comprehensively examine the subject in Mesoamerican prehistory. It focuses on the 1,000 years before the Spanish conquest, a time for which archaeology and ethnohistory suggest an unusual amount of population movement resulting from Teotihuacan's collapse and the subsequent emergence of many new societies.

The eleven contributors to this volume include archaeologists, art historians, linguists, ethnohistorians, and a bioarchaeologist. Beekman describes the characteristics of migration in his introduction but does not impose a definition on the contributors. Most seem to adhere to that of Jeffrey J. Clark; "a long-term relocation by one or more social groups across community boundaries in response to spatially uneven changes in social and economic conditions" (p. 86 in *Rethinking Anthropological Perspective on Migration*, edited by Graciela S. Cabana and Jeffery J. Clark, Gainesville: University Press of Florida 2011). This definition incorporates modern ideas and realities that address the shortcomings of earlier concepts of migration in the human past, particularly those employed in the older Mesoamerican literature.

The volume contains eleven chapters: the introduction by Beekman and ten substantive chapters divided equally into sections on northern and southern Mesoamerica. Most deal with frontier regions, especially in the north. Contributors include Jane H. Hill (Nahua languages), Dan M. Healan, Robert H. Cobean, Christine Hernández (Coyotlatelco ceramics), Christopher S. Beekman (El Grillo and Jalisco), Susan Schroeder (the Codex Chimalpahin), B. Scott Aubry (Maya bioarchaeology), Andrew D. Turner (Cacaxtla), Erik Boot (northern Yucatan and the Itza), William Fowler (the Pipil of El Salvador), and Sergio Romero (the Pipil of Guatemala).

Space limitations prevent describing each contribution in detail, but I found all of them informative, insightful, and convincing. I invite the reader to come to their own conclusions; mine are as follows.