THE NAHUA NEWSLETTER

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ALAN R. SANDSTROM, EDITOR
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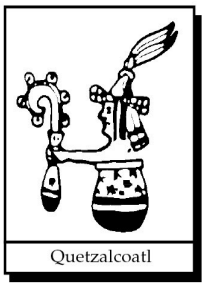
CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STUDIES



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NAHUA NEWSLETTER NEWS

Welcome to the *Nahua Newsletter* — your friendly portal into the world of indigenous Mesoamerica and adjacent regions. With issue number 48 (our second issue published solely online) we complete 24 years of publishing in the service of readers interested in the culture, language, and history of Nahua and other Native American peoples in this world area. Following tradition, in this issue you will find news items, announcements, calls for cooperation, book reviews, and commentaries.

Readership of the *NN* continues to grow and we receive a steady stream of positive comments from loyal readers. As explained in the last issue, our decision no longer to publish the *NN* in paper was not taken lightly. More than a quarter of our steady readers reside outside of the United States, and we are particularly committed to maintaining the international scope and readership of the *NN*. But because the costs of printing and postage (particularly overseas) have risen so dramatically, something had to be done. We also did not want to break the one iron-clad rule that the publication should remain available free of charge. Donations from readers have been reliable over the years and this source of funds has allowed us to publish continuously without relying on institutional support. It is a record of which we are particularly proud. Our goal is to create a sense of community among scholars, students, and all those with interests in the region and its people, and the digital format you are now reading seemed to be the best solution to the problem.

One problem with making the *NN* available through the Internet is that readers would have no way of knowing when a new issue is posted. We decided to institute an e-mail notification system, and we are trying out the new system with this issue. If you would like to be added to the list, please forward your e-mail address to the editor at sandstro@ipfw.edu.

As the *NN* transitions to its new electronic identity, the editor would like to announce a transition of another sort. Beginning in August 2009, I have retired from my position in the Department of Anthropology at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW). My plans are to continue conducting ethnographic research among the Nahua of the southern Huasteca and to prepare 38 years of field data for a series of publications. I hope to continue publishing the *NN* as a focus for people who share an interest in the indigenous cultures of Middle America.

The first *NN* was published in February 1986 by then editor and founder Professor Brad Huber. All previous issues are archived at the *NN* Web site, which can be accessed at www.nahuanewsletter.org. The archive contains many hundreds of pages that trace developments in studies of Mesoamerica over almost a quarter of a century. Many illustrious names can be found in the pages of past issues. Why not include your own name in the record? Send your questions, information, announcements, or anything that would be of interest to readers. It pays to network and the *NN* provides a convenient means to get your name out and inform others about your current research interests.

In our first news item, we report the passing of one of the foremost scholars of indigenous Middle America, Guy Stresser-Péan. We would like to dedicate this issue of the *NN* to Guy for his long life of significant accomplishment.

Please send all communications and donations to:

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NEWS ITEMS

1. It is with tremendous sadness that the *NN* acknowledges the death of Guy Stresser-Péan, who passed away on November 8, 2009. The following biographical details have been derived from a number of Internet news sources supplemented by the editor's personal acquaintance.

Guy Stresser-Péan was born in France on August 17, 1913, and after initially studying law, turned his attention to anthropology. His earliest interest was in African prehistory but he was persuaded by French anthropologist Paul Rivet to travel to Mexico to focus his attention on the previously neglected areas of the Huasteca and the Sierra Norte de Puebla. Rivet was particularly keen on having Guy investigate the famous but little understood *comelagatoazte*, or dance of the *voladores*.

At a time of increasing subfield specialization in anthropology, Guy successfully undertook research in archaeology, ethnohistory, and ethnography. He excavated the Huastec (Teenek) site of Tamtok, discovered and published a detailed interpretation of the 16th-century Codex Xicotepec, and recently published a translation of his magnum opus on religious change in the Sierra Norte de Puebla (see *The Sun God and the Savior: The Christianization of the Nahua and Totonac in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, Mexico* reviewed in this issue). Guy Stresser-Péan's long list of publications have helped to illuminate the least-studied regions of Mexico.

Guy founded the Mission Archéologique et Ethnologique Française, which later became the Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos, or CEMCA. He first entered the Huasteca on horseback in 1936, and remained an active scholar of the region throughout his life. The anthropologist and historian Miguel León-Portilla, in the prologue of a book dedicated to Guy (see the table of contents of *Viaje a la Huasteca con Guy Stresser-Péan*, below) noted that Guy followed in the great scientific tradition of Alexander von Humboldt, Eduard Seler, Konrad Theodor Preuss, Hermann Beyer, Alfonso Caso, and Paul Kirchhoff. Among many honors, Guy was awarded the Medalla Aguila Azteca (in 1995), and the Premio Banamex "Anastasio Sarabia" (in 1999). His colleague, Dominique Michelet, called him "un sabio en un mundo que ya casi no tiene más que cientificos."

Guy was accompanied to the field by his wife, Claude Stresser-Péan, who was a partner in his productive research and publishing career for 45 years. My wife, Pamela Effrein Sandstrom, and our son, Michael, were fortunate to have known them both and we continue to be in contact with Claude. We will always remember being invited to the Stresser-Péan's house in Mexico City for elegant meals in the French tradition and lively conversations about our mutual interests and commitment to the Huasteca. Their home is a virtual museum of artifacts collected over decades of field research and it has the finest and most complete private library that we have ever seen. We were flattered to be asked by the Stresser-Péans to help curate their extensive historic collection of paper figures cut by ritual specialists in the Huasteca and Sierra Norte de Puebla.

On one memorable occasion in May 1986, when we were in the remote outback of the southern Huasteca observing an elaborate Nahua curing ritual to which we had invited Mexican linguist Román Güemez Jimenez to make recordings, a man came to inform us that my parents had arrived in the village looking for me. I emerged from the thatch-roofed house puzzled and found Guy and Claude standing beside their four-wheel-drive Jeep Wagoneer. We invited them to the curing ritual where they sat patiently for hours as the ceremony unfolded.

Guy and Claude Stresser-Péan at a meal served following a Nahua curing ritual. Photo taken by Pamela Effrein Sandstrom in the *municipio* of Ixhuatlán de Madero, Veracruz, Mexico, May 1986.

They were totally prepared for the field, arriving with cots, tinned food, and excellent wine, and they slept the night in the abandoned schoolhouse with us. We wined and dined and enjoyed a thoroughly French experience in the middle of a Nahua village, regaled by Roman's rousing *huapangos* played on *jarana* amid the thunder and lightning of a seasonable downpour. The Stresser-Péans were very busy during their short visit, with Guy noting the potsherds and obsidian flakes that littered the ground after the rains, and Claude bargaining with women for examples of their beautiful embroidery. To this day, the people of the community remained convinced that Guy and Claude were my parents who had come to call on us.

Standing (left to right), Román Güemez Jimenez, Guy Stresser-Péan, Alan R. Sandstrom, Michael A. Sandstrom (in front), María Josefa Hernández, and Pamela Effrein Sandstrom. Photo taken by Claude Stresser-Péan in the *municipio* of Ixhuatlán de Madero, Veracruz, Mexico, May 1986.

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Guy and Claude have always been loyal supporters of the *Nahua Newsletter*.
It is a great honor to dedicate this issue number 48, November 2009,
to the life and work of Guy Stresser-Péan.

2. Two books were dedicated to Guy Stresser-Péan before his death, and we include the bibliographic information and tables of contents for the convenience of *NN* readers. The first work is an anthology of chapters by various authors written in Spanish, French, and English on different themes. Appended to editor's introduction is a bibliography of Guy's major publications and films.

Enquêtes sur l'Amérique Moyenne: Mélanges offerts à Guy Stresser-Péan. Coordinación de Dominique Michelet. Études Mésoaméricaines, vol. XVI. México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia; Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes; et Centre d'Études Mexicaines et Centraméricaines, 1989. 380 pp. ISSN 0378-5726. ISBN 968-6029-08-7.

From the table of contents:

Serge Gruzinski — Mémoires indigènes et identité ethnique: Indiens d'Oaxaca dans la seconde moitié du XVIIème siècle
Rafael Montejano y Aguiñaga — El bachiller Carlos de Tapia Zenteno, su obra y los plagios de su noticia de la lengua huasteca
Silvio Zavala — Noticias del Nuevo Reino de León en el siglo XVII

Quatrième Partie: Mexique Indigène Moderne et Contemporain

Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán — El negro colonial y su influencia en las corrientes de la medicina popular
Marie-Noëlle Chamoux — La notion nahua d'individu: Un aspect du *tonalli* dans la région de Huauchinango, Puebla
Francois Chevalier — Un double voyage dans le Bas Michoacán en 1947-1948: Indiens et *Gente de razón*
Jacques Galinier — L'endroit de la vérité: Réflexions sur le mécanisme du rituel et son débran-chement dans *le volador* otomi
André Lionnet s.j. — En relisant Lumholtz
Paul Jean Provost — Sincretismo en el pensamiento religioso de los nahuas de la Huasteca veracruzana
Henri Puig — L'agroforesterie au Mexique, un passé garant de l'avenir?
Alan R. Sandstrom — The Face of the Devil: Concepts of Disease and Pollution among Nahua Indians of the Southern Huasteca
Roberto Williams García — La Huasteca y los "Viejos"

3. The second volume, in Spanish, is composed of a number of rare or difficult-to-obtain articles authored by Guy Stresser-Péan that appeared in various outlets in Mexico and France.

Viaje a la Huasteca con Guy Stresser-Péan. Coordinación de Guilhem Olivier; prólogo de Miguel León-Portilla. Colección Antropología. México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica; Centro de Estudios Mexicanas y Centroamericanos. 539 pp. ISBN 978-968-16-8510-2.

From the dust jacket:

"Viaje a la Huasteca es el fruto de más de medio siglo de investigaciones sobre la región. Guy Stresser-Péan llegó a México en 1936 como investigador, aunque en realidad quería ir a África. Llegó convencido por Paul Rivet, uno de los etnólogos más representativos de Francia, y entró en una región que le revelaría todos sus secretos. Stresser-Péan reunió en dos años más de seiscientos objetos etnográficos, doscientas cincuenta muestras botánicas, más de tres mil fotografías de carácter esencialmente etnográfico e importantes datos en lengua huasteca. Una simple mirada al contenido de esta obra muestra la profundidad del estudio: Stresser-Péan no sólo observó y estudió la supervivencia de la danza del volador totonaca, sino que participó en sus celebraciones. Viaje a la Huasteca descubre a fondo una de las civilizaciones milenarias menos conocidas, por no decir olvidadas, de Mesoamérica. Stresser-Péan es 'el heredero de una tradición científica en donde se hicieron famosos autores como el barón Von Humboldt, Eduard Seler, Konrad Theodor Preuss, Hermann Beyer, Alfonso Caso y Paul Kirchhoff.' Dominique Michelet lo llamó 'un sabio en un mundo que y ya casi no tiene más que científicos.'"

From the prologue by Miguel León-Portilla (p. 11):

"Testimonios de una vida, con muy valiosas aportaciones a lo largo de ella, es este libro. El distinguido investigador francés Guy Stresser-Péan, dedicado a ahondar en el ser cultural de México, reúne aquí buen número de sus escritos, fruto de sus pesquisas a partir de 1937 hasta el presente. Más de 60 años de trabajo han entretejido su existencia: estudio, investigaciones etnológicas y arqueológicas, etnohistoriador y maestro, que ha formado a centenares de discípulos, muchos también investigadores.

"Conocí a Guy hace ya mucho tiempo y siempre me han impresionado su sencillez, afabilidad y sabiduría; es uno de los grandes personajes de la antropología mexicana. Su vida ha transcurrido principalmente en Francia y México. Se dice que su interés professional lo ha llevado a formar una rica biblioteca especializada, pero por partida doble. Casi todas las muchas y valiosas obras que ha reunido en su casa de París, las tiene asimismo en su residencia de México.

"Cuantos lo conocemos y apreciamos sabemos que es un genuino humanista que aborda sus temas de investigación desde múltiples perspectivas. Sólo cuando considera haber agotado los recursos a su alcance para ahondar en el asunto de que se ocupa, decide dar a conocer los resultados de su trabajo. Esto explica que durante tanto tiempo haya optado por mantenerlos inéditos. Me atreveré a decir que tan sólo la insistencia de algunos colegas y amigos ha logrado que Guy haya aceptado sacar a luz lo alcanzado por él en sus investigaciones."

From the table of contents:

Segunda parte: Arqueología

Tercera parte: Etnohistoria

Cuarta parte: Algunos datos sobre las investigaciones francesas
en México y en América central de 1936 a 1977

4. Following is news of the publication of *Bases de la documentación lingüística* (2007) a Spanish-language edition of *Essentials of Language Documentation* first published in 2006. See the INALI Web site at www.inali.gob.mx for more information about this volume. The authors of the translation can be reached by e-mail (John Haviland) at jhaviland@ucsd.edu or (José Antonio Flores Farfán) at flores@ciesas.edu.mx.

Bases de la documentación lingüística. Coordinadores John B. Haviland y José Antonio Flores Farfán. México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas, 2007. ISBN 978-970-54-0036-0.

Essentials of Language Documentation. Jost Gippert, Nikolaus Himmelmann, and Ulrike Mosel, eds. Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs, 178. Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006. ISBN: 9783110188646 (cloth). ISBN 9783110184068 (paper).

From the book jacket:

"El campo de la documentación lingüística es una nueva y emergente rama de la lingüística que ha experimentado un creciente interés en la última década. Sus preocupaciones están relacionadas con los métodos, herramientas y los fundamentos para compilar regístros representativos y duraderos, además de ser relevantes para distintos propósitos, tanto de investigación como de revitalización de una lengua natural. Este volumen presenta introducciones a profundídad de los aspectos más destacados de la documentación lingüistica. Éstos incluyen concienzudas revisiones de cuestiones éticas del trabajo de campo y del procesamiento de los datos, aportando directrices para la anotación y desarrollo de acervos digítales de corpora en formatos multimedia, destacando las posibilidades de construcción y mantenimiento de un archivo lingüístico. El libro tiene la virtud de conjugar consideraciones teóricas y prácticas, sugíriendo a su vez recomendaciones específicas para enfrentar los problemas más recurrentes en el campo de la documentación lingüística. La versión castellana de esta edición aparece en un momento muy adecuado, casi a la par de su versión en inglés. Los coordinadores han pugnado por adaptar los textos al contexto hispanohablante, aparte de desarrollar un cuidadoso trabajo de uniformación terminológica que provee a la obra de un estilo fluido a la vez que riguroso."

From the table of contents:

5. Caroline Dodds Pennock sends the *NN* word of the publication of her new book, *Bonds of Blood: Gender, Lifecycle, and Sacrifice in Aztec Culture*. Early Modern History: Society and Culture. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. xvi+225 pp. Illustrations. £50.00 / U.S. $75.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-230-003309.

The book has won the Royal Historical Society's Gladstone History Book Prize for 2008. The Palgrave Macmillan U.K. Web site at http://www.palgrave.com/products/title.aspx?PID=275847 provides further details and a sample chapter; in the U.S. visit http://us.macmillan.com/bondsofblood. From the publisher's Web site:

"The history of the Aztecs has been haunted by the spectre of human sacrifice. As bloody priests and brutal warriors, the Aztecs have peopled the pages of history, myth and fiction, their spectacular violence dominating perceptions of their culture and casting a veil over their unique way of life. Reinvesting the Aztecs with a humanity frequently denied to them, and exploring their religious violence as a comprehensible element of life and existence, Caroline Dodds Pennock integrates a fresh interpretation of gender with an innovative study of the everyday life of the Aztecs. This was a culture of contradictions and complications, but in amongst the grand ritual we can find the personal and private, the minutiae of life which make the world of these extraordinary people instantly familiar. Despite their violent bloodshed, the Aztecs were a compassionate and expressive people who lived and worked in cooperative gendered partnership."

From the table of contents:

6. Rakesh Khanna sends the following message to *NN* readers:

"I am writing from a small publishing company based in Chennai, India, called Blaft Publications [on the Web at www.blaft.com]. We are trying to put together an anthology of contemporary short fiction translated into English from many languages of the world. I am very interested to try to include a translation of a short story from Nahuatl. I have read a wonderful piece by Marcos Matías Alonso (at http://wordswithoutborders.org) and am wondering if you know how I might get his contact information or that of the translators, Earl and Sylvia Chairs? Or, if you can recommend any other good stories? Please contact me at snubcube22.gmail.com. Thank you."

7. Long-time reader Jonathan Amith (director of Mexico-North Research Network Program on Endangered Languages, and research affiliate at the Smithsonian, Gettysburg College, and the University of Chicago) writes to say: "I just received several copies of a book of Nahuatl texts that I edited, published by the Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas (INALI). The book includes six CDs of digital recordings (6 hours) from three villages in the Balsas, transcriptions of the material (monolingual Nahuatl) and a grammatical-introductory text. The book is free [although please check with INALI on shipping charges to the U.S.]. I am working on a Nahuatl grammar, dictionary, and texts from the Sierra Norte de Puebla and hopefully will get this material out as well. Thanks so much."

Readers can contact Jonathan Amith by e-mail at jonamith@gmail.com. The bibliographic information is as follows:

Ok nemi totlahtōl. Volumen 1: Estado de Guerrero: San Agustín Oapan (municipio de Tepecoacuilco de Trujano), Ameyaltepec (municipio de Eduardo Neri), San Francisco Ozomatlán (municipio de Huitzuco de los Figueroa). Jonathan D. Amith, ed. México D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas, 2009.
Pp. xviii+202, 6 CDs. ISBN 978-607-7538-01-1.

8. Here is a message sent by Anath Ariel de Vidas: "Estimada/os huaxtecologa/os y demás colegas,
Tengo el placer de informarles sobre la publicación de mi nuevo libro, *Huastecos a pesar de todo: Breve historia del origen de las comunidades teenek (huastecas) de Tantoyuca, norte de Veracruz*. El libro fue publicado por el CEMCA con el apoyo del Programa de Desarrollo Cultural de la Huasteca (CONACULTA). Se encontrará a la venta con descuento en el puesto del CEMCA en la Feria del libro antropológico que abre hoy en el museo de antropología en la ciudad de México. Saludos amistosos."

For further information, please contact the author by e-mail at anathariel@yahoo.com, or write to:

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École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales-CERMA
54, bd. Raspail, 75006 Paris, France

Huastecos a pesar de todo: Breve historia del origen de las comunidades teenek (huastecas). By Anath Ariel de Vidas. México, D.F.: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos (CEMCA), Programa de Desarrollo Cultural de la Huasteca, 2009. 167 pp. ISBN 968-6029-89-3.

From the publisher's Web site at http://www.cemca.org.mx/espagnol/affich_publication.php?id=262:

"¿Cómo surgieron las comunidades teenek o huastecas que conocemos hoy en día en los alrededores de Tantoyuca, al norte del estado de Veracruz? ¿Desde cuando están allí? ¿Quiénes son los miembros de estas comunidades y qué es lo que los relaciona entre ellos?

"Este libro intenta contestar a estas preguntas a través de una descripción breve de los orígenes prehispánicos de la población huaxteca en los alrededores de Tantoyuca y un análisis del proceso de las reorganizaciones y adaptaciones indígenas locales, a nivel social y agrario, desde el principio de la época virreinal hasta le época post-revolucionaria.

"A lo largo del libro, se muestra, y eso es la idea central de esta obra, que a pesar de las transformaciones profundas que sufrieron los indígenas huastecos, ellos se reorganizaron en cada época, según las coyunturas, en entidades separadas que les dieron finalmente la continuidad étnica conocida hasta el día de hoy."

9. This book published by the Leiden University Press at www.lup.nl in their series "Leiden Dissertations" (see www.dissertation.leidenuniv.nl) will interest everyone concerned with Nahua language, culture, and oral narratives:

The Ways of the Water: A Reconstruction of Huastecan Nahua Society Through Its Oral Tradition. By Anuschka van' t Hooft. Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2007. 294 pp. €25.75 / U.S. $33.00. ISBN 978-90-8728-010-9.

From the dust jacket:

"For Huastecan Nahuas, water is a symbolic reference. This book describes the multiple values attached to water through the practice of tale telling in this society. It analyzes several local tales about water manifestations such as floodings, thunderstorms, and waterlords, and explores what these mean to Huastecan Nahuas in their present socio-cultural context. The author shows how tales about this element represent and discuss current themes like the village's right to exist, social cohesion among villagers, the need to show respect towards nature, and life and death. The book reveals how the study of tale telling provides a promising angle to address and better understand today's indigenous cultures in Mexico."

From the table of contents:

11. Here is a request for information about the Nahua: "My name is Luis and for the past couple of months I've been searching and/or obtaining more information on my last name. As I Googled it, I ran into your *Nahua Newsletter* and saw my last name. I now know the definition of it, but I would like to know more about it. My last name is Tlacuatl and my family is from Puebla, Mexico. Based on what I read on your newsletter, Tlacuatl comes from the Nahuatl, but who were the Nahua, what happened to them? Is there a link where I can go and find more information and my last name and the Nahuat? I appreciate your attention." Readers may contact Luis by e-mail at albert.luis1@gmail.com.

12. Here is another announcement from a *NN* reader: "My monograph on all aspects of the Pico de Orizaba (100 chapters, 600 pages, 1,000 references) came out in 1993, and I am still interested in anything and everything related to the mountain. I have been down there eleven times." Readers may contact Winston Crausaz at wcrausaz18@yahoo.com.

13. An e-mail inquiry on the subject of "Indigenous Languages Linguistics" has recently been received:

"We are looking for linguists with expertise in the languages mentioned below to perform translations either on site and/or by phone. We would like to know if you know someone who might speak any of these languages: Guarani, Kekchi, Mam, Nahuatl, Tlapaneco, Totonaco (Highland variant), Trique, Zapoteco. We need to find at least one person per language.

"Additionally, we prefer translators who have lived in the US for three of the past five years. We are also accustomed to working with relay interpreters throughout this process for those who do not speak English, and training for those who need it. Please let me know if you can help us to locate an interpreter of any of these languages. Thanks for your support and any assistance in this matter. Best Regards."

Readers may contact the sender by phone: 503-248-9915 | by fax: 503-248-9948 | by e-mail: translationsolutions@comcast.net | on the Web at www.translationsolutions.org | or by writing to:

Rosa Capdevielle
Translation Solutions Corp.
121 S.W. Salmon Street, 11th Floor
One World Trade Center
Portland, OR 97204

14. Here is an announcement of a newly published work sent by Jaime Lara: "Kindly announce the appearance of my book on mid-sixteenth century illustrated texts, Bible translations into Nahuatl, and religious syncretism." Readers may contact the author by e-mail at Jaime.Lara@yale.edu, and find more information on the book at http://undpress.nd.edu/book/P01229/.

Christian Texts for Aztecs: Art and Liturgy in Colonial Mexico. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008. 392 pp. U.S. $75.00 (cloth). ISBN 13: 978-0-268-03379-8.

From the table of contents:

> Mission and Liturgy – Liturgical Reforms: The Eve of the Contact – Preaching: The Attractive Art of Conversion – Worship in New Spain: The Indian Sacraments – Worship in New Spain: Other Sacraments and Devotions – Processional Liturgy: The Witness of the Feet – Corpus Christi: The Sun of God – Liturgical Toys: Puppets, Props, and the Proscenium – Holy Blood: The Rehabilitation of Human Sacrifice – Inculturation in Word and Worship.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The World Below: Body and Cosmos in Otomí Indian Ritual. By Jacques Galinier. Translated by Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2004. Pp. xvii+271, illustrations, maps. U.S. $34.95 (paper) ISBN 978-0-87081-773-1. U.S. $42.50 (cloth) ISBN 978-0-87081-772-4. (Published in French as *La moitié du monde: Le corps et le cosmos dans le rituel des Indiens Otomi*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997; originally presented as "La moitié du monde: Essai sur les rituels des Indiens Otomi," Ecoles des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris, 1985.)

The World Below by Jacques Galinier is a fascinating read for anyone interested in contemporary Mesoamerican rituals. In this book, which is a translation of the author's 1985 Ph.D. dissertation, Galinier tackles one of the most persistent problems in social anthropology: the meaning of rituals to those who practice them and to the ethnographer who observes them (see Keane 1995; Arno 2003). Some scholars of ancient Mesoamerica (Graulich 1997, 1999) have found the meaning of rituals in myths. Others, working elsewhere (see Turner 1969; Keane 1995), have found the meaning in informant commentary. Galinier is in a third group of scholars who doubt the value of both informant commentary and myth.

Galinier writes that he gave up trying to understand the Otomí through their myths because "cosmogenic myths have undergone so much erosion over recent decades that some of them are no longer preserved except by shamans or old people who are hardly listened to any more." (p. 4) He also rejects

informant commentary or "external exegesis" elicited by the anthropologist. He prefers what he calls "internal exegesis," "all glosses provided spontaneously at some event or whispered by informants among themselves — interjections, songs, and specially, jokes" (p. xi). Galinier contends that relying on internal exegesis is in the postmodern tradition because glosses provided spontaneously are part of a "polyphonic discourse" (p. xiv). One of his aims as a postmodernist is to mount a "radical critique of the 'monologic authority' that is supposed to guide field study in classical anthropology" (p. x).

Galinier lays out one premise of his work by saying he was inspired by Alfredo López Austin's well-known work on the ancient Nahuas' view of the human body and cosmos. He had a crucial insight into how the Otomí view the human body in February of 1977 that gave him the key to the meaning of Otomí rituals: "That day was the climax of the Carnival. My attention was drawn by the whimsical ballet of a curious figure, the 'rotten father' *(sihta)*. Moving with ease through a dense, excited crowd, dressed in old clothes that must once have been a city outfit, he was continually 'taking pictures' of the lower bellies of the dancers, using a strange contraption made of beer cans, one of which was supposed to be a zoom lens" (p. x).

He was beyond the halfway point between starting fieldwork in 1969 and completing his Ph.D. dissertation in 1985, when he made this observation. He followed the rotten father's trail of associations and found many allusions to sexuality that are crucial for understanding Otomí culture. The path of associations took him from the Climax of the Carnival to climax during orgasm, when an Otomí has a vision of the "configuration of the interior of the female body" as well as "the nocturnal world in its totality and the forces that inhabit it, which cannot be grasped by the 'diurnal' consciousness" (p. 235).

To keep their day world in some kind of order and manage the forces of the night world, the Otomí carry out an exchange during sex and on ritual occasions not only between men and women but also between the living and the dead and with the saints. During sex, man "'feeds' the woman with his sperm," and "the seminal fluid changes into milk, restored food, in her body" (p. 213). Ritual exchanges with the ancestors keep the sexual exchange going. The ancestors are deceased elders who have accumulated "a force that flows from the bone marrow and materializes in the sperm" (p. 197) and so they are "bringers of life" (p. 107).

Galinier's readers will soon discover that the penis and sperm have primacy in his interpretation of Otomí rituals. He reports that the Otomí use the same word for sperm and sap and, in this way, they link human sexual reproduction with plant reproduction. While both the penis and the vagina are "human centers of energy," it is the penis that produces the life force, or *nzahki*, that eventually finds its way to the stomach. The Otomí also equate the penis with animal companions, further exemplifying their male-centered view of the universe.

The meaning of rituals hinges on an implicit equation between the human body and the rest of the Otomí world. Rituals carried out to venerate saints also "stimulate the fertility of the earth through a broad cycle of exchanges between humans and the restorative powers" and "protect the community against harm" (p. 123). Women, representing the earth, perform the "'dance of the flowers'" (p. 124) and sing songs, such as the "'Song of the Old Sanctuary,'" in which the earth sings of her love for her sons and reminds them of what she gives them.

The Otomí also carry out their rituals to manage forces that can do them harm, many of which have a connection to the same ancestors who are the bringers of life. They appear during Carnival as the "'sacred Little Old Men's Heads'" who are related to the Devil and are "the embodiment of all the ancestors of the Otomí nation" (p. 164). The Otomí honor their ancestors on Todos Santos and other occasions to avert

"calamity, tragedy, and misfortune since these dead exercise social control over the living, of which everyone is very much aware" (p. 103). Also there is the Old Father (*pohta*) of the Carnival who is not only the "Master of Pleasure" (p. 164) but is related to the Devil. Oratories involving offerings of food are the Otomí attempts to nourish and possibly placate the ancestors to prevent them from doing harm to the living.

Like many indigenous speakers in Mexico, the Otomí find themselves in a struggle between the forces of fertility and those of destruction, and they depict this struggle when they perform as flying pole dancers or *voladores*. Dancers, representing Old Men or Devils, climb up the pole in pursuit of Christ/Malinche, and then fall back to earth because of their sins. The play has subtle sexual themes because the pole is a giant penis and Malinche is the vagina.

Galinier's interpretation reaches an acute point toward the end of the book when he interprets a well-known oral narrative of bloodsucking witchcraft that circulates widely in Central Mexico (see Nutini and Roberts 1993). A more or less composite variant begins when a husband senses his wife getting up in the middle of the night. He watches her remove one of her legs and turn into a bird. She flies out of the house and through the walls of another house where she sucks the blood out of a young child, often a nursing infant. She returns home and vomits the blood into a casserole, fries it in lard, and prepares a concoction that looks like *mole*. The husband tells his mother, and she advises him to burn the wife's leg when she goes after her next victim. He follows his mother's advice, and, the next day, the wife suffers a horrible pain in her leg and dies.

According to Galinier, the story is about wrong exchange because a woman acts like a man but takes rather than gives sperm. The blood-sucking witch turns into a man by taking the form of a bird, and the Otomí associate the bird with the penis. She or "he" sucks the blood (equated with sperm) from the infant's head (equated with the glans of the penis), thus reversing the proper exchange in which a man gives sperm to a woman. Carrying out the exchange in this manner opens "the way to sorcery" (p. 214).

What Galinier does not acknowledge is that stories of bloodsucking witchcraft circulate very widely in other parts of Central Mexico and are about envy and food. They are part of a larger discourse about infant mortality and child death in which men blame envious women and women blame envious men, although each gender places blame in a particular way. In my experience, men tell the stories about bloodsucking witches, which are always envious women. Women tell their own stories of envious men who come from the land of the dead, usually around Todos Santos, and steal the souls of infants in order to get into heaven. Accounts of envy are about coveting the food of another, while jealousy, a less-dangerous emotion, is about sexual desire. Western-trained psychologists tend to conflate the two emotions, while the Nahuat I know keep them very distinct.

The stories are part of emotion talk, and one reason that Galinier might have missed an explicitly stated Otomí meaning of their rituals is that he did not consider how they talk about their emotions such as envy and love. Throughout the book, Galinier maintains that the meaning of Otomí rituals is unconscious or preconscious. It is not something they readily talk about, at least to outsiders, and thus is not easily accessible to the ethnographer. To Galinier, the Otomí seem suppressed or repressed. He writes that the "community ethic places heavy constraints on all behavior and stifles the spontaneous expression of emotion," and adds that "there are only ephemeral [ritual] moments when the deep sensibility of the Indians finds authentic possibility for expression" (p. 137).

He too-readily dismisses the work on the anthropology of emotion, some of which includes theories of emotion by which men and women interpret their own experiences as well as the behavior of others. Of

that work, Galinier says it "focuses essentially on the effects of socialization in terms of the embodiment of anxiety, sadness, and fear in accordance with a society's cultural standards" (p. xiii). However, some Nahuas explicitly say that they carry out many of their rituals in an effort to protect themselves and their children from the envious living, who practice sorcery (such as bloodsucking witches), and the envious dead who come for their small children.

The Otomí are not Nahuas, of course, and each group has had a different history contributing to important cultural variation in contemporary communities. Galinier notes that priests complained about Otomí "brutality, adultery, and especially drunkenness" (p. 16) while "expressing more indulgence toward the Nahuas" (p. 17). The Otomí lacked "centralized political structures" (p. 18) and escaped Spanish influence more than the Nahuas. And he notes that a "variety of historical and sociological data indicates that the Indianization of the Carnival among the Otomí has reached proportions unmatched in neighboring societies" (p. 29).

I cannot discount the possibility that the Otomí are more reluctant than the Nahuat to talk openly, even with each other, about the meaning of their rituals because of these and other historical experiences. However, as Keane (1995:104) argues, it is unwise to discard potentially useful information such as oral narratives or myths and explicitly stated commentary, even if in the form of "external exegesis." To be sure, some meaning may be implicit or even unconscious, but to deny people the potential of interpreting their own behavior silences polyphonic discourse that could dislodge ethnographers from a position of ethnographic authority.

Nevertheless, Galinier deserves a great deal of credit for patiently observing the Otomí and catching bits and pieces of their spontaneous expressions and assembling a description of Otomí culture that does have a ring of truth. I found this careful description of Otomí rituals stimulating, provocative, and fascinating, and I highly recommend Galinier's *The World Below* to the readers of the *Nahua Newsletter.*

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The Kowoj: Identity, Migration, and Geopolitics in the Late Postclassic Petén, Guatemala. Prudence M. Rice and Don S. Rice, eds. Mesoamerican Worlds: From the Olmecs to the Danzantes. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2009. Pp. xix+448, illustrations, maps. U.S. $65.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-87081-930-8.

Prudence M. Rice and Don S. Rice's latest edited volume, *The Kowoj: Identity, Migration, and Geopolitics in the Late Postclassic Petén, Guatemala* is an important contribution to Mesoamerican studies that will have broad appeal to scholars and students of the ancient Maya with interests in material culture, ethnohistory, ethnicity, and the complex webs of relationships that structured interactions between members of Guatemala's rival indigenous groups and Europeans during the Late Postclassic and Contact periods. The papers drawn together in this volume represent the latest phase (the Proyecto Maya Colonial) in 35 years of groundbreaking research that the Rices have directed in the Petén lakes region of central Guatemala. During this interval, their interrelated subprojects have provided significant insight into the often-neglected period between A.D. 1250 and 1550 by drawing on a variety of methods and data sets. Their work has included settlement pattern research, intensive site-center investigations, and paleolimnological studies that have advanced understandings of demographic patterns, political and ritual organization, and human impacts on the natural environment in this part of the Maya lowlands. The scope and duration of this multifaceted research program has lead to a level of insight into Late Postclassic and Contact period developments that is truly unprecedented in the Maya area.

At its heart, this volume is the product of the Rices' collaboration with noted ethnohistorian Grant D. Jones. In the late 1980s, Jones initiated a documentary study of Petén's Yucatecan-speaking peoples with an eye to illuminating their poorly understood histories, identities, and geographic distributions at the time of Spanish contact. Jones' historically based reconstruction provided a basis for linking the region's indigenous groups to specific locations on the landscape and thereby created a framework ideally suited to probing questions of ethnic identities, origins, and patterns of interaction from an archaeological perspective. As discussed early in the volume, Jones' research suggested the presence of three distinct Maya groups (the Itza, the Yalain, and the Kowoj) who occupied well-defined political territories bordering the Petén lakes in the seventeenth century. While the Itzá, whose capital of Nojpeten lies beneath the modern-day community of Flores on Lake Petén Itzá, are well documented, much less was known about the Kowoj, who occupied the eastern lakes of Salpetén, Macanché, Yaxhá, and Sacnab. At the time of contact, preexisting hostilities between the Kowoj and Itza resulted in differing attitudes or levels of resistance to Europeans and willingness to accept Christianity. As in other New World culture-contact situations, the Spanish were consequently able to manipulate this factionalism to their advantage. The studies presented here offer a reconstruction of the origins and identity of the Kowoj, report on investigations at the Kowoj center of Zacpetén, and reflect an effort to distinguish archaeologically the Kowoj from their neighbors.

The Kowoj is divided into six sections. Part I "sets the scene" by providing a historical overview of the Proyecto Maya Colonial and lays out the volume's structure and rationale. Part II, which includes papers by Prudence Rice, Grant Jones, and Charles Andrew Hofling, addresses issues of Kowoj identity from geopolitico-ritual, ethnohistorical, and linguistic perspectives. The five papers comprising Part III (coauthored in various combinations by Prudence M. Rice, Don S. Rice, Timothy W. Pugh, Rómulo Sánchez Polo, and Leslie G. Cecil) focus on architectural components of Kowoj communities. These contributions address a variety of overlapping topics including field methods and chronologies, fortifications, ritual performance, and elite and non-elite domestic contexts. Part IV examines Kowoj identity from the perspective of ceramic data sets in a group of three papers authored by Prudence Rice and Leslie Cecil. These chapters investigate issues of technological style, iconography, and ritual ceramics. The final (data-heavy) portion of the volume draws together a more disparate (but no less interesting) group of studies that provide further insight into Kowoj identity and origins. These include an iconographic and epigraphic

analysis of monuments from Zacpetén by David Stuart; an examination of Zacpetén obsidian sources relative to Postclassic exchange systems by Prudence Rice and Leslie G. Cecil; a bioarchaeological discussion of ritual violence at Zacpetén by William N. Duncan; and a consideration of Kowoj migrations in terms of analogies with the Lacandon Maya.

This volume is important on several fronts. On one level, it represents a significant contribution to Maya from the perspective of the valuable comparative data it makes accessible to the scholarly community. Each of the individual papers is not only methodologically sound, well written, and well edited, but each stands on its own. This quality not only speaks to the consistently high standards of the authors, editors, and publishers, but to the integrity of the overall research design. The volume's logical organization, with focused archaeological studies building on and testing specific implications of previously outlined broader historical reconstructions, makes it a useful reference. One of the great frustrations faced by Mayanists is the extent to which exciting research results with potential to inform colleagues' work are often slow to appear in press. The more comprehensive and long-term a project and the larger the number of data sets and collaborators that a research program seeks to include, the more logistically challenging it is produce a formal synthesis. *The Kowoj* represents a significant accomplishment from this perspective. Although the editors rue the fact that analyses of the project's ground stone and faunal assemblages were insufficiently advanced to include in the volume, the decision to publish the papers that *are* included in a timely fashion was unquestionably the right one.

Perhaps even more important than the volume's substantive contribution, however, is the degree to which it stands as a conceptual model for other research projects. Due to the simple elegance of the central research design, this volume has a topical, temporal, and geographic integrity that many edited volumes lack. The complementarity of the synthesized subprojects and the degree to which the Proyecto Maya Colonial integrates ethnohistoric, archaeological, technological, linguistic, and iconographic perspectives has not only produced a result that is unusually holistic, but an anthropological contribution that others should seek to emulate.

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Historia social de una comunidad tlaxcalteca: San Miguel de Aguayo (Bustamante, N.L.), 1686-1820. By Elisabeth Butzer, with contributions by Karl W Butzer and Carlos E. Cordova; translated by Jerónimo Valdés Garza. 1st ed. Saltillo, Coah., México: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo; Tlaxcala, Tlax., México: Instituto Tlaxcalteca de la Cultura, 2001; Austin, Tex.: University of Texas at Austin, Department of Geography. Pp. 315, illustrations, maps.

Elisabeth Butzer's book is a valuable contribution to the literature on town development in northern Mexico from colonialism to the first years of the republic. The work carefully pieces together available primary sources in history (she uses testaments to describe people's houses, for example), archaeology, and anthropology in order to explain the birth and development of a single community in north Mexico whose inhabitants had moved from Tlaxcala. *Nahua Newsletter* readers may find particular interest in the way the author weaves the mestizo and criollo colonizers, local Indian tribes, and the Spanish Crown into a coherent picture of the community. Another point of interest is the series of seven Nahuatl documents along with their histories that appear in the appendix.

In Chapter 1, Butzer describes how the town of San Miguel de Aguayo (later called Bustamante) in what today is Nuevo León, came to be colonized by Tlaxcaltecan families in the 16th century. The chapter documents the circumstances leading Tlaxcaltecans in the south to migrate to the desert lands of the north. Butzer includes maps showing the routes taken during the migration, and even identifies by name some of the leaders involved.

Chapter 2 is a political history of the town focusing on the way the founding fathers and their families took up residence. Chapter 3 discusses the local mining industry from the late 16th to the mid 18th centuries. It describes the rules established for mining, the way they were administered, and how financing was arranged. This chapter is not about production techniques used by Tlaxcaltecans partly because on this topic "se dispone de muy poca información" (p. 76).

In Chapter 4, the author traces the development of agriculture as it became part of the town's economy. The author provides meticulous descriptions of what was planted, when, where, how, and even why. For example, she shows in a table what was not harvested in a given year, and discusses why a certain crop was avoided. She also quotes the inhabitants of 200 years ago as they express their reasons for wanting to construct a new mill. This attention to detail, using statistical information but including the words and opinions of the actors, is typical of the book as a whole.

Chapter 5 offers a brief description of the town's administration along with information on how elected officials were chosen. Chapter 6 discusses the circumstances under which the Catholic Church began in the town. It describes the townspeople's concern for properly celebrating religious festivities and how they negotiated with regional authorities to have priests regularly visit the town. It also shows how the Church was financed.

The author discusses law and order in Chapter 7. Here she presents examples of cases ranging from trivial infringements to more serious crimes, and details how they were handled. At one point townspeople disputed unfair decisions by authorities and became so fed up that they began leaving the town in significant numbers. The author also discusses the interesting relationship between growing population, increased pressure on the land, and violence brought about by consumption of alcohol. Chapter 8 covers some of the dangers to life at the edge of civilization. Butzer describes the fighting that settlements endured with enemy Chichimec groups. We see Tlaxcaltecan colonizers fighting on the side of the Spanish King against what official sources describe as "wild Indians."

Chapter 9 is somewhat different in the way the author uses primary sources. She takes documents such as birth and death certificates and marriage registries from the parishes and extrapolates information about social trends. For example, Butzer notes how death rates are higher among illegitimate children than among those born in wedlock. She also demonstrates that ethnicity was malleable and more fluid than it often appears to be on the surface. She discusses how in good economic years couples married at a younger age while in economic downturns the opposite was true.

In Chapter 10, Butzer discusses ethnic cohesion and group identity, and how people tried to assert Tlaxcaltecan privileges that dated to the conquest. The appendix is particularly rich in primary sources. Some of these include San Miguel Aguayo's founding documents, lists of families who settled in the town, a list of people and their properties in the 18th century, and a letter to the Viceroy Marques de Valero, the subject of which was assistance to missionaries in Texas. The Nahuatl documents come from various official sources. The first is a suit asking for the return of property to the townspeople. The second document is a complaint related to damages done by someone's mules and horses. The third is a complaint about

trespassing. The fourth is a testament and the fifth is a set of instructions to take place upon a person's death. The sixth is a also testament and the seventh is a claim for inheritance. Many of these documents appear to be fragments. There is a brief analysis of the documents by Carlos E. Córdova, who notes that the characteristics of this dialect of Nahuatl relate it to Tlaxcala. Córdova points to features of the dialect involving lexical transformations, grammatical changes, syntax, and the use of directionals. The region of San Miguel Aguayo comprises what today is Nuevo León and Coahuila. One interesting observation he makes is that Coahuila Nahuatl of the 18th century tends to be conservative, with little borrowing from Spanish.

These texts help scholars of Nahua culture and language understand why it is that Nahuatl documents sometimes appear in places outside of the expected range. Her book also helps fill in blanks in Mexican history. Some of these gaps in knowledge include how New Spain colonized this northern region, just what the attitudes related to race and privilege were at the time, and the political makeup of a Tlaxcalan Nahua town.

The book is a great resource for those interested in how one kind of Mexican town developed. It is a meticulous work that examines a great number of primary documents from different angles. There is no grand conclusion about Nahua ethnicity specifically, nor about Mexican history in general. The author succeeds in showing the powerful identity the people of the town exhibited and its role as a strategy in preserving their privileges.

The writing is scholarly and somewhat technical and the non-specialist may find it difficult to read. There are many fragments of information, for example, half of a testament, a random mention about a church, or the only surviving document about the shipment of precious metals from a mine. The author explores all of these fragments in detail, which sometimes interrupts the flow of the narrative. For example, in Chapter 9 she discusses the mortality rate of children born out of wedlock. She then move to discuss the percentage of unwed mothers who eventually get married, followed by an interesting observation about the way most marriages were held in January and February. Butzer provides this raw material, but the reader would like to have the author draw more conclusions from it.

The book is certainly well organized and it is easy to follow the discussion. I am grateful that Butzer includes all of the detailed bits of information because they provide us with a vivid impression of life in the region. In fact, it is just this piecing together of fragments of information that makes Butzer's book so valuable. She succeeds in reconstructing an entire town and even the spirit of the town in a convincing way. For anyone who wants to understand the town's history, or the history of the Texas-Mexico border, this book is certainly a good place to begin.

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The Sun God and the Savior: The Christianization of the Nahua and Totonac in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, Mexico. By Guy Stresser-Péan. Mesoamerican Worlds. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2009. Pp. xxix+627, maps, figures, color plates, DVD (27 min.) "La Fête du maïs" ["The Corn Fiesta"] recorded in 1991 by Guy and Claude Stresser-Péan [narrated in English and Spanish].

This volume is the result of decades of indefatigable ethnographic and ethnohistorical research on religious change among indigenous peoples in the Sierra Norte de Puebla region of east central Mexico. It is a translation of the author's original French text *Le Soleil-Dieu et le Christ: La christianisation des Indiens de Mexique vue de la Sierra de Puebla*, published by L' Harmattan in 2005. Guy Stresser-Péan has been conducting research in the Sierra Norte de Puebla and the Huasteca region since he was a young man in the 1930s and he is widely recognized as the preeminent authority on the anthropology of these areas. Most of Stresser-Péan's contributions have been in the areas of ethnohistory and archaeology but here he expands his reach into ethnography and he has produced a massive study of religious conversion beginning in the 16th century and extending to the contemporary period. The volume is accompanied by a DVD that contains a videorecording with English or Spanish narration of a Totonac corn ritual featuring blood sacrifice. In the interest of full disclosure, I assisted in the copyediting of the English translation for the first quarter of this work, focusing on the writing but not the content.

Stresser-Péan reveals his goal for the book at the outset, stating "in the present work I shall examine the conversion of the Indians of Central Mexico, emphasizing the active role these Indians were able to play in the process, as well as how conversion affected them" (p. 3). He begins with the arrival of the first Franciscan missionaries and recounts their efforts to create a kind of Christian paradise in New Spain. He tells of the trials and tribulations of the missionaries as they tried to balance their zeal to make converts against political and military realities of the day. The Indians' hatred and fear of the Spaniards undermined these efforts. Ultimately, however, military defeat, devastating epidemics, and significant population reductions accompanied by brutal treatment at the hands of their Spanish overlords caused the people to become demoralized and to lose faith in many of the concepts and rules imposed in former times. Stresser-Péan suggests (pp. 18-24) that the Indians may have undergone a crisis of "cultural fatigue," a concept developed by Alfred Kroeber and more recently applied to peoples of Mexico by Hugo Nutini in the pages of the *Nahua Newsletter* (no. 23, February 1997). Despite mass baptisms and supposed conversions, Stresser-Péan argues that most of the indigenous people of central Mexico continued to hold their traditional view of the world that included the layered cosmos, the symbolic importance of cardinal points, traditional explanations for the seasons and weather phenomena, the calendar and its links to human destiny, concepts of the human soul, and the pantheistic quality of the prehispanic religions.

Stresser-Péan next traces the history of his region of study. The area was occupied early on by the Huastecs (Teenek), a Maya group living there by 1000 B.C. In the 9th century, the Totonac arrived, followed by Toltec and then Chichimec who brought the Nahuatl language. In the 13th century, the Otomí arrived, followed by Nahua peoples from the highlands during the next century. The result of this complex history is that Totonac, Nahuatl, and Otomí are the three main indigenous languages spoken in the region today. At the time of the arrival of the Spaniards the entire region had been conquered by Texcoco or Tenochtitlan and was made a province of the Aztec confederation. Beginning in the 17th century, Spanish-speaking people began to move into the region in large numbers and soon occupied most of the positions of power. Exploitation of hydroelectric power, the discovery of oil in the region, and the construction of roads and rail lines are factors that have led to profound socioeconomic changes throughout the area, as elsewhere in Mexico.

The book provides a detailed account of the incursion of Christianity into the Sierra Norte de Puebla beginning with the establishment of a Franciscan monastery in Tulancingo in 1527-28. The missionaries immediately began the process of conversion but were forced to rely on indigenous catechists, many of whom were unable to read and lacked a sophisticated understanding of Catholic doctrine. The result of this particular process of culture contact was that people combined their own understandings with the new teachings, or as the author states, "a Christian oral tradition began that was popular in origin and folklore-like in character" (p. 61). The civil-religious hierarchy developed in much of the region, Stresser-Péan argues, based on prehispanic traditions that were transformed by Spanish colonialism.

In Chapters 5 and 6, the author discusses six religious "crises" that occurred in the region during the 300-year colonial period. The first five of these amount to revitalization movements led by individuals who strove to rejuvenate and reinstitute prehispanic religious practices. Their cases were recorded during official proceedings against them. The sixth crisis was a series of rebellions of Tutotepec Otomís between 1766 and 1769, most of which were based on the religious visions experienced by one or more leaders; the revitalization movement was finally crushed violently in August 1769. These events make it obvious that the prehispanic religion was still a potent force more than 250 years after the Spanish conquest.

Stresser-Péan turns to the contemporary peoples of the region in Chapter 7, noting that although probably a majority of the people had been incorporated into Christianity at some level by the end of the 16th century, their world view was influenced by prehispanic traditions. Each indigenous community is believed by the inhabitants to have a mystical tie to a sacred tutelary mountain or to a pair of mountains that exist in male and female aspect. These male-female aspects of sacred mountains are represented, respectively, during rituals by the single-skin vertical drum and by the *teponaztli* (wooden slit-gong). In addition to venerating mountains, the Nahua and Totonac of the region regard caves as sacred and dedicate offerings including animal blood to a number of deities to protect their communities, insure harvests, and cure disease. Rituals are often conducted in small shrines and sometimes in local Christian churches. The author provides descriptions of traditional shrines, along with descriptions and drawings of sacred objects used during rituals. These include cut- paper figures, ancient small, decorated wooden plaques, and *ocopisole*, small pieces of pine wrapped in bark fibers with a tiny heart of copal. Chapter 8 contains detailed descriptions of drums and *teponaztlis* and the prehispanic figurines employed in these ritual offerings.

The following chapter contains information on major religious observations found in indigenous communities in the Sierra Norte de Puebla. Included are detailed descriptions of the ritual events, black and white photos of selected episodes, and line drawings of altars and offering displays. Chapter 10 describes the ritual accessories commonly found in the region. The author emphasizes animal flesh and blood offerings, ritual drinks, corn, divination, prayers, singing, music, dance, dolls and figurines of cut paper or other materials, cloth, masks, tobacco, copal incense, candles, and flowers. Chapter 11 covers the essentially Christian festivals found widely in indigenous communities, including Candelmas, Carnival, Holy Week, Easter, Corpus Christi, Holy Cross, Feast of the Dead, Christmas, and various saints' days. The latter part of this chapter and the entirety of Chapters 12 and 13 are devoted to describing ritual dances, including the famous *volador* aerial dance, and the dance of the Christians and Moors.

In the following chapter, Stresser-Péan discusses the disappearance of the traditional ritual specialists and learned people who were repositories of sacred knowledge. He again, invokes the idea of cultural fatigue to explain the rapid loss of prestige experienced by religious leaders between 1920 and 1930. After this period, ritual specialists were no longer able to attract followers and the knowledge they possessed gradually faded away. He notes that the series of master-apprentice relationships that connected the prehispanic past with the present was broken and that contemporary ritual specialists possess a kind of hybrid knowledge

combining Christianity with elements from the past. The author interviews a number of older people who recall burying or burning the sacred drums and *teponaztlis* from each community in acts that, in the author's view, affirmed the passing of an era. In the second part of Chapter 14, Stresser-Péan discusses the one area of contemporary indigenous life that retains many ancient traditions, namely curing. Indigenous people in this region believe that disease is caused by soul loss through fright, punishment for a ritual offense, infection by harmful winds, or sorcery. Curing rituals are designed to counteract these causes and return health to the patient.

In Chapter 15, the author presents a detailed study of the survival of the ancient calendar among contemporary people of the Sierra Norte de Puebla. He provides lists of the days with their sacred associations and compares them to the ancient calendars recorded in the 16th century. Just as in the prehispanic era, certain days are considered propitious while others have a negative connotation. In most cases, however, the calendar survives in fragmentary form and often people are not even aware of its existence.

Several researchers have recorded myths and stories from the people of the Sierra Norte de Puebla and Stresser-Péan devotes Chapter 16 to summarizing them. As I can testify through personal experience in the nearby southern Huasteca, it is often difficult to place the myths in a sequential order or to understand the relationships among them. There is no question that the myths are rooted in the prehispanic period and many motifs are recorded by 16th-century chroniclers. However, the myths often appear to the outsider to be fragmentary or somehow incomplete. The author lends order to this apparent chaos by dividing the narratives according to the time in which they appear in the overall process of the earth's formation. The sequence is as follows (pp. 422-23), and Stresser-Péan then presents a sample of myths from the study region that conform to his schema:

1. The time of giants
2. The deluge and the history of its survivor
3. The time of the Great Lord of the Sea and Thunder and of his messengers who lead the clouds for storms
4. The exploits of the young spirit or Lord of Maize, a culture hero
5. The appearance of the sun and moon
6. Perspectives regarding the end of the present world

Chapter 17 is devoted to the cosmology and world view of the indigenous peoples of the Sierra Norte de Puebla with emphasis on ideas about the sun, moon, stars, earth, fire, water, air or wind, lightning, animals, and human beings. The following chapter is dedicated to clarifying the complex of beliefs that people of the region hold regarding the souls of beings and things. He also discusses concepts of the fate of the soul following death.

Chapters 19 and 20, cover a number of topics related to contemporary indigenous religion. Following a brief discussion of the difficulty of translating Christian ideas into Native American languages and world view, Stresser-Péan describes some basic understandings that the people have of religious concepts. He shows how the people equate Jesus Christ and the cross with the sun, and how the Virgin Mary in the guise of the Virgin of Guadalupe is a key sacred figure in the indigenous pantheon. The indigenous concept of the Devil, he argues, is a mixture of prehispanic and Christian motifs. There are also a large number of spirit entities described, some of which overlap with previous discussions in the book. In Chapter 20, Stresser-Péan evaluates the well-known argument of Robert Ricard, who in 1933 wrote that peoples of the central highlands of Mexico were subjected to intense evangelization over hundreds of years, and that prehispanic

beliefs and practices were systematically eliminated there. According to Ricard, indigenous people in the more marginal areas such as the Sierra Norte de Puebla were more difficult to reach and thus influence and they developed a syncretic religion blending 16th-century Catholicism with local traditions. Stresser-Péan writes that ethnographic research by William Madsen and others has subsequently shown that prehispanic traditions do in fact persist in the highlands and that Ricard had overstated the facts. Regarding the development of syncretic religions in marginal areas such as his study region, the author states, "We are now in a position to establish that this was the case in the Sierra Norte de Puebla" (p. 546).

The final chapter is basically a summary of the entire work and concludes with the statement, "Thus, syncretism extended to all areas of Indian religion in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, from rites and dances to abstract ideas about God, spiritual beings, and the fate of souls in the otherworld" (p. 572). Stresser-Péan posits throughout the work that the indigenous people in the region are true Catholics who participate in the sacraments wholeheartedly but at the same time they have managed to retain some of their ancient traditions. The DVD that accompanies this book — the work of the author and his wife Claude Stresser-Péan — is a videorecording in color of a Totonac ritual offering that was specially reconstructed for the Stresser-Péans. The footage, with explanatory voice-over (in Spanish and English versions) offers a rare opportunity for readers to view a ritual rarely seen by outsiders.

With more than 600 pages of text, this book is encyclopedic in its coverage and represents a monumental summation of what is known about the religion of Totonac, Nahua, and Otomí people who live in the Sierra Norte de Puebla. As it stands, the work is a major contribution to the anthropology of a little-known region in Mexico. It is filled with detailed descriptions, maps, line drawings, photographs in color and black and white, and an extensive bibliography. The book is a major resource for anyone interested in contemporary Native American religion and in the historical background of the evangelization of Mexico since the 16th century. As someone who has conducted ethnographic research for nearly four decades among the Nahua of the Huasteca who live just outside of Stresser-Péan's research area, I can testify that investigating indigenous religion is one of the most difficult and intractable problems in Mexican anthropology. Yet this work focuses on not one but three separate groups. The accomplishment is all the more remarkable when it is realized that Guy Stresser-Péan undertook this writing project after he retired in 1977. Since that time he has published six books, in addition to the current monograph, and produced seven ethnological documentary films. These are truly amazing achievements.

Naturally, any work, even of this magnitude, is not without problems. The one that strikes me first is that it is not really an ethnography in the customary sense. While Guy and Claude Stresser-Péan did go to the field on many occasions and cultivated long-term relationships in multiple communities, they tended to make relatively brief visits that were problem-focused rather than holistic. The bulk of *The Sun God and The Savior* is ethnohistorical and the author makes much use of the findings of other ethnographers. This practice is fine as far as it goes. However, a significant part of the data presented derives from interviews and therein lies a problem. What people say may have little relation to what they do, and ethnographers are obliged to provide observational information to supplement interview-biased data. The analytical distinction between emic and etic perspectives is particularly acute in the study of religion among the Nahua, Otomí, Totonac, and Tepehua of this region of Mexico. In general, the people do not have a tradition of providing exegeses of their religious beliefs and practices and they expect that people will learn about their religion in essentially the same way they did — by growing up in the community and participating in rituals. I have had many opportunities to question individuals about certain ritual practices and have subsequently witnessed the actual performance. The differences between the verbal account and the event can be remarkable and there lies the research problem. The author does provide some observational data (and of course the book comes with a

video that presents ritual proceedings, albeit reconstructed), but most of the cultural information contained in the volume comes from informants' statements.

Multi-sited ethnography is all the rage following the postmodernist revolution in American cultural anthropology. Stresser-Péan, coming from an older European tradition, also has engaged in multi-sited research but his work has not overcome some of the obvious shortcomings of the approach. The reader does not get anything like a complete picture of the religious system of any one group. Treatment of the character of the so-called syncretic religions is at once detailed and superficial. The author does not show how the religious systems hold together or achieve a level of coherence for the people practicing them. The religions come off as fragmented, with some elements originating from ancient times and others from Spanish Catholicism, but with no framework to posit relationships among the elements. This approach makes it very difficult to assess the degree to which the religions are indeed syncretic. In my work among the Nahua of the southern Huasteca, I have documented myths, rituals, systems of symbolic representation, and beliefs that owe very little to Christianity. Even the Totonac ritual offering that was reconstructed for the Stresser-Péans and recorded does not appear to have much influence from Christianity. As a consequence of the focus on individual traits of this fascinating religious complex, the reader is left more unsure than ever just how to fit Christianity into the total picture.

The work is highly particularistic and develops no theory about religious change. For example, the post-conquest "crises" documented by the author were clearly classic revitalization movements in which people tried to reestablish their past religion. Yet the author does not link his data to theoretical developments in this arena. What matters to Stresser-Péan is the ethnohistorical and ethnographic data and he makes no attempt to develop testable explanations of what he records. This tendency to describe leads to another shortcoming common to ethnohistorical research. The author is not able to link the documents he cites with actual religious beliefs and practices he records in the field. The fact is that rural areas removed from urban centers are very poorly documented in the ethnohistorical record. We have documents referring to events such as rebellions or trials of revitalization leaders but we do not have records of how people reconciled the old religion with the new, nor know how this melding has led to current, on-the-ground, religious belief and practice. Many surviving documents reflect life in urban areas and the serious question is left unanswered as to whether they can be legitimately used to understand people and events in rural areas. Clearly the elaborate religious system recorded in the Aztec capital would have little relation to rituals and beliefs in remote villages.

In many ways, this monumental work of Stresser-Péan follows the program for anthropology established by Franz Boas. Just like Boas and unlike most anthropologists today, he clearly has mastered and conducted significant research in more than one of the four subfields of anthropology. His work in archaeology and ethnohistory is well known and highly regarded and the current work places him in the company of ethnographers and, to a lesser extent, linguists. Only bioanthropology remains outside the scope of his body of publications. His major focus in this work is the reconstruction of the cultural past achieved by interviewing the older members of the communities he studies. His emphasis on cultural reconstruction and reliance on historical explanation is reminiscent of the work of Boas and his students. Stresser-Péan's emphasis on the particularistic showing micro-level cases of cultural diffusion is also very Boasian. Boas was one of the great masters in anthropology and by comparing Stresser-Péan to him I mean to pay a significant compliment. However, this book would reach a far wider readership if it had taken into account some of the many theoretical developments since Boas's time.

Guy Stresser-Péan is to be congratulated on the wonderful achievement of publishing this volume. The knowledge and wisdom contained in its pages represent a lifetime's effort across several academic

disciplines. Despite some limitations, it will long remain as the definitive work on religious change and the religious systems of this area of Mexico.

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Standing (left to right), Alan R. Sandstrom and Jesús Bautista Hernández. Photo taken by Pamela Effrein Sandstrom in the *municipio* of Ixhuatlán de Madero, Veracruz, Mexico, March 1986.

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COMMENTARY

Observations about the Influence on Nahuatl on Modern Mexican Spanish
By Richard Dorfsman
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There was an ad campaign for American Express aired on Mexican radio last winter that introduces the topic briefly discussed here about the influence of Nahuatl on Spanish. The suggestion is that Nahuatl can be seen to influence Spanish grammar in Mexico City in certain instances at least in the mainstream media. This ad encourages the audience to participate in a type of raffle to win four Ford Lincoln automobiles, "...para ganar cuatro Lincoln...." This usage is where the ad could be, inadvertently, using elements from Nahuatl grammar in Spanish, even when Spanish doesn't normally use those elements. In

Spanish you could say, "para ganar cuatro Lincolns" or "para ganar cuatro coches marca Lincoln," because the letter "s" is used to form plurals. But it can sound strange to say "cuatro Lincoln," just as saying "cuatro manzana" or "cuatro peso" also sounds strange in Spanish. In Nahuatl, however, that would be correct, because inanimate things are not marked with a suffix, so you could say "nahui calli" or "nahui Lincoln."

Another company had a similar campaign around the same time in which one could also win a car. "Gana uno de seis Nissan Rogue..." states the ad on the radio and on the company's Web site. The phrase might say, "Gana uno de seis Nissanes Rogue" in standard Spanish, but interestingly, the same practice of *not* using the plural "s" appears. Other instances of this can from time to time be found elsewhere outside of the car industry. For example, in the food-service industry, one can occasionally hear the expression "three rice," whereby a waiter might ask a cook to serve "tres arroz" instead of "tres platos de arroz." Out and about in the city, one can also hear expressions like, "S/he has blue eye" or "tiene ojo azul" in describing a person, instead of saying "es ojiazul" ("s/he's blue-eyed") or "tiene ojos azules" ("s/he has blue eyes"). Speaking in the plural, in a similar way as is done in Nahuatl, occurs with certain frequency in Mexico City Spanish.

José Antonio Flores Farfán shows how in certain communities of the Balsas region of Guerrero, Mexico, Nahuatl influences Spanish in a similar way; see his "Transferencias Nahuatl-Español en el Balsas (Guerrero, México): Reflexiones sobre el desplazamiento y la resistencia lingüística en el náhuatl moderno." *Amerindia* no. 25, 2000; available at http://celia.cnrs.fr/FichExt/Am/A_25_05.htm. For example, he has found Spanish speakers using the singular form in plural expressions, leading to phrases like "cien peso" (see Cuadro III: "Las Influencias Más Significativas Entre El Náhuatl y El Español" in his article). He also has found reduplication, a different phenomenon of which we haven't found examples in Spanish, leading to plural words like "bobolitas." Flores Farfán says these phenomena are part of "linguistic substitution," a process whereby the possibility of a new monolingualism emerges in regions like this one where bilingualism is common.

The examples occurring in Mexico City that I have described above may perhaps be part of a pattern of speaking that would be worth studying. If they do represent such a pattern and are not simply three or four unconnected examples, works like those by Flores Farfán may help to determine whether Nahuatl is the influence, and just how this influence happens. It is common to say that Nahuatl influences Mexican Spanish words, but not so common to say it influences the grammar. Works like those of James Lockhart, Jane Hill, Jonathan Amith, as well as Flores Farfan's and others can be used to help show how Nahuatl moves from a village in Guerrero to an American Express ad in Mexico City. Maybe concepts like linguistic substitution can help make it easier to do this.

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