

THE NAHUA NEWSLETTER

WITH SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY,
INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY FORT WAYNE
ALAN R. SANDSTROM, EDITOR
A PUBLICATION OF THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STUDIES



NOVEMBER 2006-FEBRUARY 2007

NUMBER 42-43

ISSN 1065-4069

NAHUA NEWSLETTER NEWS

Welcome to issue 42-43 of the *Nahua Newsletter*. I am writing to you from the field in Mexico where Pamela and I are on sabbatical for the year, continuing our ethnographic research among Nahua people of northern Veracruz. We are far from our offices, files, and regular means of communication and so we decided to combine issues 42 and 43. We return in fall 2007 and will resume the normal biannual cycle of publication at that time.

In this issue you will find announcements, a book review, commentaries on Aztec sacrifice, obituaries of two long-time *NN* readers, Eileen Mulhare and William Bright, requests for information, and other features aimed at students, professional researchers, and anyone with an interest in the culture, language, and history of Nahuatl-speaking peoples and their indigenous neighbors. We publish the *NN* as a friendly portal into the exciting and rapidly changing worlds of indigenous Middle America and the researchers who publish on this fascinating region. We currently have more than 425 subscribers in 14 different countries and our readership continues to grow with each issue. Long-time subscribers know that the *NN* is sent out free of charge and that the costs of printing and mailing are covered through voluntary donations. If you would like to help out, please send a check made out to *Nahua Newsletter* and mail it to the address below. All money goes to defray production and mailing expenses and there is no administrative overhead.

Our research in Mexico this year has been extremely exciting and rewarding. We are finishing a long-term project on milpa horticulture in the context of rapidly changing economic conditions in the Huasteca region. In addition to making detailed maps of each milpa in the community of study for both dry and rainy season plantings over a period of eight years, we have just administered to each household a questionnaire on men's and women's productive strategies. We are also continuing work on the fascinating religious system of the contemporary Nahua of northern Veracruz. We have just returned from two physically demanding pilgrimages to sacred mountains, which provided us with rich ethnographic information on Nahua ritual and world view.

Our field site is in the *municipio* of Ixhuatlán de Madero, Veracruz, and just as in other remote areas throughout Mexico many people have converted to one of several Protestant sects. In response, the Catholic Church has promoted a reevangelization program designed to make local folk Catholicism conform more to the urban version of the religion. Caught between these forces, and probably invigorated by them, are people who call themselves Catholic but who practice a religion firmly rooted in pre-Hispanic traditions. They are led by the *tlatamiquetl* ("person of knowledge") who is called in Spanish "*curandero*" or "*adivino*." It is upon this last group of practitioners and their followers that we have focused our attention over the past three decades.

Several hundred thousand indigenous people in the Huasteca region follow the ancient religion, including, in addition to the Nahua, members of the Tepehua, Totonac, Otomí, and Huastec (Teenek) ethnic groups. We have found that few outside of the *NN* circle are aware of this religion and that little has been published on the beliefs and practices that define it. When speaking Nahuatl, the people call a traditional

ritual "*xochitlalia*," and in Spanish, "*costumbre*." Many *NN* readers are aware of the contemporary practice, rooted in the pre-Hispanic period, whereby people of knowledge cut paper for ritual offerings. Many of the paper images that have been documented represent disease-causing spirits or spirit entities connected to crop fertility. Travelers in Mexico and elsewhere may have noticed images of spirits cut from amate paper for sale in tourist markets. Otomí entrepreneurs from the community of San Pablito in the nearby state of Puebla have popularized their own paper images by offering them for sale. The area where we are conducting our research in the Huasteca veracruzana is at the heart of the surviving paper-making and paper-cutting tradition in Mexico although, with the exception of the examples from San Pablito, the paper images are never produced for sale.

A core practice of the *costumbre* religion is that adherents participate in pilgrimages to sacred mountains. These treks can be highly complex affairs lasting up to two weeks. They are often physically taxing because no accommodation is made for sleeping or eating during the sometimes arduous walk. Participants spend days preparing paper cuttings, floral adornments, offerings, and other critical items for the pilgrimage. When preparations are complete, the ritual specialists dedicate a large offering in the local shrine (*xochicali*) that lasts about two days. At dawn, people load up their carrying baskets with all of the offerings and adornments that have been prepared and proceed to walk toward their destination. The conclusion of the pilgrimage includes elaborate offerings dedicated to the mountain, spirits of crop fertility, and to the sun.

Illustrating this issue of the *Nahua Newsletter* are photographs that Pamela and I took during February and March 2007 of ritual offerings to the new year (*yancuic xihuitl*) and for two separate pilgrimages to Palaxtepetl and Tres Positos, sacred hills in the vicinity. For a color photographs and a description of a pilgrimage that we made several years ago to Postectli, the most sacred mountain of this region, please see the FAMSI Web site at <http://www.famsi.org/reports/01001/index.html>. Watch these pages for announcements of future publications on this fascinating and little-known religious complex.

We are dedicating this issue of the *NN* to Eileen Mulhare, an anthropologist and friend who was engaged in long-term research in the former Nahua town of Totimehuacán, now incorporated into the city of Puebla. Eileen, who was a loyal reader and contributor to the *NN*, died unexpectedly last December while continuing her research into the ethnohistory and contemporary religious practices of the people in that community. Just before she died, in an act of sharing knowledge that was very typical, Eileen sent along information on a little-known Mesoamerican journal and forwarded the tables of contents for the first issues so that other readers could see and benefit from the range of articles covered. She also sent a summary of her current research on the rosary, which is reproduced below in full. We had the privilege of visiting Eileen in Totimehuacán only a few weeks before her death and will not forget her generosity, compassion, and dedication to her work. She will be deeply missed by students of Nahua culture and history.

Please take a few minutes and send along announcements, questions for readers, summaries of research results, corrections, fulgurating insights, or measured responses to ongoing scholarly controversies to the address below. Please forward changes of address or information that you may have about other readers who have moved and may have neglected to inform us. We want to keep our mailing list as current as possible. If the text is longer than a line or two, please send it via electronic mail to save work on our part and to insure accuracy. If you find the *NN* to be of interest or use in your own work, please send a donation so that we can keep it coming. We have been self-supporting for over 20 years and the active support and participation of readers has created a forum and source of information of which we can all be proud.

Please send all communiques by e-mail to sandstro@ipfw.edu or by post to:

Alan R. Sandstrom
 Editor, *Nahua Newsletter*
 Department of Anthropology
 Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne
 2101 Coliseum Blvd. East
 Fort Wayne, Indiana 46805
 U.S.A.

NEWS ITEMS

1. The following information was compiled from the biographical sketch sent to the *NN* and the notice appearing in *Anthropology News* 48(March 2007):37, written by Michael Haines.

Eileen M. Mulhare died on Saturday, December 23, 2006, at the Johns Hopkins University Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland. She had been stricken with a heart attack and a massive stroke while on a visit to relatives in the Baltimore area. She was 53 years old. Eileen was born on January 18, 1953, in Norwalk, Connecticut, and at age 10 moved with her family to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There she attended high school at the Ursuline Academy and graduated summa cum laude from Carlow College with a B.A. in anthropology and theater. She received her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Pittsburgh. Studying under Hugo Nutini, her dissertation field research in central Mexico was supported by a Fulbright Fellowship.

Eileen moved to Hamilton, New York, in 1990 with her husband, Michael R. Haines, when he joined the faculty at Colgate University as Banfi Vinters Professor of Economics. She has been a Research Associate in the Colgate Department of Sociology and Anthropology since that time. She taught several courses at the university, including Introduction to Latin American Studies, Core Cultures (Mexico and Guatemala), and Introduction to Anthropology.

Eileen specialized in the peoples and cultures of Mesoamerica, specifically the Nahua and former Nahua of central Mexico. Her field site since 1978 has been the town of Totimehuacán, now part of the city of Puebla, Mexico. It was her practice to visit the town several times each year in order to continue her research. She has written a history of that town that was published in Spanish by the Ministry of Culture of the State of Puebla, which has gone through two editions. She has published a number of articles and chapters in books, including recent work on barrio organization and on popular religion in Mexico. Recent work includes a chapter on "Mesoamerican Social Organization and Community after 1900" for the *Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians* (vol. 6, 2000), editing *Mesoamerican Community Organization: Barrios and Other Customary Social Units*, a special two-issue edition of *Ethnology* (vol. 35, nos. 2-3, 1996), an article (written in 2002 with Barry Sell) on "Bead-prayers and the Spiritual Conquest of Nahua Mexico: Gante's 'Coronas' of 1553" in *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* 33:217-252, and "Social Organization and Property Reform in 19th-Century Rural Mexico" published in 2004 in *Continuity and Change* 19:105-140.

She was an active member of the American Anthropological Association, Mexican Scholars for Rural Development, the Newman Community at Colgate, as well as St. Mary's Parish in Hamilton. She is survived by her husband, Michael Haines, her two stepchildren, James and Margaret, her mother, a sister and two

brothers. Eileen maintained a Web site at <http://www.ixeh.net> dedicated to "better communication between the peoples of Latin America and the United States" that includes a noncommercial guide to the city of Puebla and a section on her research on the rosary.

2. The following notice is reprinted from *Los Angeles Times*, Home Edition, October 18, 2006, p. B10: "Obituaries, William O. Bright, 78, UCLA Linguist Worked to Preserve a Tribal Language."

"William O. Bright, a linguist who studied Native American tongues and worked to preserve the language of California's Karuk tribe, died Sunday [October 15, 2006] of a brain tumor at a hospice near his home in Boulder, Colo. He was 78.

"Bright was among the first professors of linguistics at UCLA, where he taught for 29 years, retiring in 1988. For 21 years, through 1987, he was editor of *Language*, the journal of the Linguistic Society of America. He wrote more than 200 books, articles and reviews, including several dictionaries of Native American languages that were on the brink of disappearing and books on the origin of place names in California and elsewhere.

"His work preserving the Karuk language, begun at age 21, ultimately led the tribe to make Bright its first honorary member in the days before his death.

"'He had an appreciation of the larger problems we were facing, and he used his talents not just for his own benefit but for our benefit as well,' said Susan Gehr, Karuk Language Program director, who was authorized to speak for the tribe. 'When Karuks felt emboldened to revitalize our language and culture,' she said, 'he actively supported us by visiting many times to do workshops and consult with Karuk individuals on anything related to the Karuk language that we wished.'

"William Oliver Bright was born Aug. 13, 1928, in Oxnard. His mother was a homemaker, and his father was a butcher who turned to chicken farming. Bright entered UC Berkeley and was taking summer courses in Mexico City when he became interested in the Aztec language.

"He graduated with a bachelor's degree in linguistics in 1949.

"Drafted by the Army in 1952, Bright was assigned to a military intelligence unit in Germany.

"After returning to Berkeley for a doctoral dissertation on the Karuk, he taught in India and at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute before joining the faculty at UCLA in 1959.

"Bright worked in several areas of linguistics, including sociolinguistics, which examines language in a social context.

"Twice widowed and twice divorced, he is survived by his fifth wife, University of Colorado linguistics professor Lise Menn; a daughter, Santa Cruz erotica writer and essayist Susie Bright; granddaughter Aretha Bright; and stepsons Stephen Menn, a philosophy professor at McGill University in Montreal, and Joseph Menn, a staff writer at the *Los Angeles Times*.

"In lieu of flowers, Lise Menn requested donations to fund the newly created Bill Bright Award for research, in care of the Endangered Language Fund, 300 George St., Suite 900, New Haven, CT 06511, or to the American Civil Liberties Union. Memorial services are to be held at the University of Colorado early next month and at the January meeting of the Linguistic Society of America in Anaheim."

3. Here is an announcement regarding Nahua prisoners: "Oregon Judicial Department searching for Nahuatl speakers for court interpreting."

"As in other states, the Mexican immigrant population has dispersed throughout urban and rural areas of Oregon. The Court Interpreter Services division of the Oregon Judicial Department seeks fluent, modern Nahuatl speakers to serve as court interpreters on a freelance basis. Recent requests for Nahuatl have included dialects from Puebla and Vera Cruz Mexico. Confirmation of an interpreting assignment usually includes a language assessment done by telephone to determine the correct dialect, some orientation on interpreting ethics and protocol, and personal appearance in court as an interpreter. Previous interpreting experience is not required."

To find out more, please contact Kelly Mills, Interpreter Liaison, Oregon Judicial Department, by phone at 503-986-7004, or by e-mail at kelly.mills@ojd.state.or.us.

4. James Loades sends the following request from Norway:

"I am a writer planning a novel set partly in Late Postclassic precontact central Mexico at the height of Mexica dominance. Part of the narrative follows the principal Mexica characters, a sorcerer and a priest, accompanied by tribute gatherers, to a rebellious vassal city in order to take one of its chief gods and its cultic regalia hostage and conduct it back to Tenochtitlan. The following sites seem, from a preliminary examination of my requirements, to fit the bill: Oztoman and Poctepec in Guerrero and Calli-Imanyan in the Tolocan valley.

"However, I have been unable to track down the kind of detailed archaeological, historical or anthropological information on these cities that I need. In particular I am interested in their religion (local-specific deities, adopted deities, and examples of syncretism); their political and economic relationship with Tenochtitlan, particularly during Moteuczomah II's regional campaigns; and site archaeology, especially if it gives any evidence of earthquake damage that could conceivably have occurred in the Late Postclassic (since this features in my plot).

"There must surely be experts who have either excavated these sites or interpreted pre- and post-conquest records to shed some light on the life of these towns, but to which, as only an interested amateur, I have no direct access. Although of course I am writing fiction, I would like to be as accurate as possible and to cause as little vexation to the dedicated specialists into whose field I come stumbling like Nanahuatl before his transformation into the sun.

"I would be exceedingly grateful if you could help me in any way with my enquiries, whether by finding an answer to my questions, pointing me in the direction of documents or colleagues that might be able to help me, or by posting my request in the *Nahua Newsletter*. Any help you might be able to provide me with would of course earn a very appreciative acknowledgment in the novel, and my eternal gratitude. If you have any questions about my work and this project in particular, I would be more than happy to answer them and discuss any issues that arise thereof. Once again, I would be very grateful for any help you could provide, and thank you for taking the time to read this letter."

Please reply to: James Loades, Schives Gate 6B, Oslo, Norway.

5. Keiko Yoneda sends this announcement for *NN* readers:

"En 2005 salió publicado mi libro *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan, número 2* que comprende la *Parte I: Linderos y glifos toponímicos* y la *Parte II: Lectura tentativa, descripción y análisis de los glifos* (México: Porrúa; CIESAS). El *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan* es un documento pictográfico producido en Cuauhtinchan, estado de Puebla, México, en el siglo XVI. En este trabajo se comparan los glifos con los datos etnohistóricos y arqueológicos, que en la mitad derecha del documento se encuentran registrados, enfatizando especialmente, los acontecimientos históricos sociopolíticos. La primera parte expone con detalle el análisis realizado, con el fin de identificar sobre todo los linderos y los glifos toponímicos que los conforman, mientras que la segunda está organizada como una obra de consulta, en la cual el lector puede buscar el glifo de interés para su información.

"Para la identificación de los logogramas fue útil analizar los siguientes aspectos y elementos de los glifos expuestos: la geología (la tipología prehispánica de los suelos y la minería); *tezcatl* (espejo), *xiuitl* (turquesa) y *chalchiuitl* (chalchuiute); *itzli* (obsidiana) y *tecpatl* (pedernal); puntos negros y pequeños círculos (*atoctli*, *chian*, *iztatl*, *nextli*, *tepoxactli*, *tizatl* y *xalli*); *quiauitl* (lluvia); *nahua* (sufijo locativo: cerca de), *tentli* (iabilo, borde) y *tlantli* (diente; sufijo locativo: *tlan* [el lugar de]); huellas de pies (con valor fonético: *can*, *pan*, *yan*, *temoa*, *ochpantli* y *ohtli*); y la flora y la fauna (Parte I, Cap. 1)."

6. The following is excerpted from the Princeton University Art Museum press release posted at http://www.princetonartmuseum.org/pop_press0107c.html:

"New Acquisition at Princeton University Art Museum Inspires Special Exhibition and Opportunity For Study — *Sorcerers of the Fifth Heaven: Ancient Nahua Art and Ritual of Southern Mexico* Exhibition; Dates: January 27–April 28, 2007."

"PRINCETON — This spring the Princeton University Art Museum presents the special exhibition *Sorcerers of the Fifth Heaven: Nahua Art and Ritual of Ancient Southern Mexico*.

"On view from January 27 through April 28, 2007, the exhibition focuses on a rare ceramic Mexican effigy censer from 1500 a.d., just prior to the European incursion. A significant recent acquisition for the art museum, the effigy censer is not only an extraordinary example of ceramic art, but also provides a unique opportunity for study.

"Ceramic is a pervasive medium in the arts of the ancient Americas, but too often the antiquity of the objects and an almost complete lack of historical context has left scholars little to work with in their efforts to interpret function and symbolism,' notes John M.D. Pohl, the Peter Jay Sharp Curator and Lecturer in the Art of the Ancient Americas.

"The effigy censer is an exception, because the ritual purposes for which it was created became the subject of intense study by Franciscan and Dominican friars throughout the early Colonial period,' Pohl continues. 'Their written accounts provide valuable information and indicate that the effigy represents a potent spirit force known as a *Maquiltonal* (meaning 'Five Soul' in the Nahuatl language of Southern Mexico), who bears the distinguishing iconographic characteristic of a white hand painted across the mouth.'

"The effigy censer is made in the shape of a seated figure with an enlarged head, expressive face, and bottle-shaped body to which tubular limbs are attached. Although much of the surface has been badly eroded, enough of the fresco survives to recognize a fundamental iconographic detail: the white hand across the mouth, which is the mark of sorcerers, astrologers, and healers, as well as witches and assassins.

"Considered by its creators to have been endowed with a life force, the censer was spiritually activated by placing copal, a pine resin incense, inside its base. The smoke billowed up through the hollow body and out through the mouth, sending a prayer to the *Maquiltonal*, who was believed to reside, along with his four brothers, in the fifth of thirteen heavens. 'Colonial friars were both fascinated and horrified by the activities of the indigenous sorcerers, especially their use of lavishly painted screenfold books, called codices, for divination and healing,' Pohl says. 'One friar wrote that the source of the iconic white hand came from the sorcerer's practice of rubbing his fingers with quick lime and tobacco while calling upon the spirit of the *Maquiltonal*, invoked through the censer, to possess him as he touched the pages of the sacred book.'

"Remarkably, many of the ritual practices with which the effigy censer was associated continue to the present day, despite concerted efforts over the last five centuries to eradicate them. The documentation of these rituals by sixteenth-century friars as well as modern-day observers provides art historians and archaeologists with an unparalleled opportunity to gain a more profound understanding of an ancient work of art by examining it in the context of a larger symbolic environment of related objects, Pohl contends.

"The exhibition creates a symbolic environment by displaying the effigy censer in a gallery of such related objects as ancient pictographic books, diving mirrors, and polychrome feasting vessels.

"Illustrated wall panels provide further interpretation and background information. Accompanying lectures this spring will examine more closely the use of related objects and the larger symbolic environment to interpret ancient works of art.

"The exhibition is accompanied by the publication *Sorcerers of the Fifth Heaven: Art and Ritual of Ancient Southern Mexico*, written by Pohl [see order information, below].

"Both the exhibition and publication were made possible by funding from the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation."



An illustration of the Princeton effigy censer is available on the Princeton University News Archive Web site at <http://www.princeton.edu/main/news/archive/> > Tuesday, March 27, 2007.

See <http://www.princeton.edu/plas/publications/Cuadernos/cuadernos.html> for information about ordering *Sorcerers of the Fifth Heaven: Ancient Nahua Art & Ritual of Southern Mexico*, by John M.D. Pohl. PLAS Cuadernos No. 9. Princeton University Program in Latin American Studies, 2007. 52 pp. \$22.00 paper. ISBN: 978-0-943012-45-2.

Related events posted online at http://www.princetonartmuseum.org/pop_press0107c.html include:

March 2 Lecture, 4:30 p.m., McCormick 101

Curers Who Kill: Medicine and Sorcery among the Nahua of Northern Veracruz, Mexico, by Alan R. Sandstrom, Professor of Anthropology, and Pamela Effrein Sandstrom, Head of Reference & Information Services, Helmke Library, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

March 30 Lecture, 4:30 p.m., McCormick 101

Nahua Sorcerers in Seventeenth Century Mexico: The Treatise on Superstitions by Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón, by Michael D. Coe, the Charles J. MacCurdy Professor of Anthropology, Emeritus, Yale University, and curator emeritus of the anthropology collection in the Peabody Museum.

April 21-22 Workshop, McCormick 106

April 21, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., April 22, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Studying Ancient Sorcery: Deciphering Mixtec Codices from Southern Mexico

Decipher and read the Mixtec Codices with renowned authority John Pohl, the Peter Jay Sharp Curator and Lecturer in the Art of Ancient Americas at the Princeton University Art Museum. Texts are provided. Registration is required; please call (609) 258-3043 or e-mail docent@princeton.edu.

7. The late Eileen M. Mulhare, Research Associate in Anthropology at Colgate University, wanted *NN* readers to be aware of *Mirada antropológica*, the academic journal of the Colegio de Antropología Social at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. She wrote: "Four issues have appeared thus far, each centered on a particular theme: Issue 1 (2003), 'Antropología y Ciudad'; Issue 2 (2004), 'Antropología y Religión'; Issue 3, 'Antropología y Masculinidades Diversas' (2005); and Issue 4, 'Antropología y Naturaleza' (2006). Note that the third and fourth issues were published together under the same cover. Also, some articles in each issue address topics other than the chosen theme.

"*Mirada antropológica* is not a Nahua studies journal *per se*. Each issue, however, contains one or more articles about Nahuatl and Popoloca-speaking populations in the state of Puebla. Moreover, the contributors represent various institutions at home and abroad. *NN* readers will probably recognize the names of some authors such as Elio Masferrer Kan (Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia) on religion, and Matthew C. Gutmann (Brown University) on masculinity.

"Regardless of one's research interests, some articles in *Mirada antropológica* are just plain fun to read. A case in point is 'Ritual de fertilidad en un baño de vapor urbano de Puebla' by Leticia Villalobos Sampayo (Issue 2, pp. 89-129, 2004). Many *NN* readers are familiar with the native temazcal steam bath. Its functions can include postpartum purification as well as other healing rituals and routine hygiene. Temazcal use in the Puebla Valley has waned in recent decades with the spread of indoor plumbing and a growing preference for in-hospital birthing (versus midwife-assisted, at-home delivery). Who would have guessed, then, that temazcal-style rituals for new mothers now occur in public bathhouses in the city? Villalobos Sampayo does a fine job of analyzing this fascinating phenomenon.

"For more information on *Mirada antropológica*, including editorial requirements for authors, contact Dr. Ernesto Licona Valencia, Coordinador del Colegio de Antropología Social, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras,

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), Av. San Claudio y 24 Sur, Col. San Manuel, Puebla, Puebla, México 72570 / tel. 1-52-222-229-5500, ext. 5490 / e-mail: liconal23@yahoo.es."

Table of contents for *Mirada antropológica: Revista del cuerpo académico de antropología de la facultad de filosofía y letras de la BUAP* (publicación semestral, nueva época):

Número 1, enero-julio de 2003, "Antropología y ciudad" (271 pages) —

Presentación, p. 2

La ciudad de Puebla desde el tranvía [1881-1942], by Gloria A. Tirado Villegas, pp. 3-10

Cholula a través del estudio de género del espacio urbano, by Mauricio List Reyes, pp. 11-18

Dibujo, etnografía y la ciudad, by Ernesto Licona Valencia, pp. 19-39

El fanzine, imaginando la ciudad, by Aída Analco Martínez, pp. 40-55

Imágenes poéticas de una ciudad, by César Abilio Vergara Figueroa, pp. 56-76

El taco árabe como elemento de identidad poblana, by Silvestre Angoa y Francisco Flores Cuautle, pp. 77-92

Sonidero poblano, by Eduardo González Castillo, pp. 93-116

Los ritos del ciclo de vida entre los nahuas de Atla (Pahuatlán, Puebla), by Areli Díaz Mercado, pp. 117-24

Morir para hacer vivir: La occisión ritual en la antigua Cholula, by Sergio López Alonso and Eduardo Corona Sánchez, pp. 125-40

Hacia una pragmática de las narraciones orales: El caso de las lenguas indígenas, by Raymundo Mier, pp. 141-51

La antropología física mexicana en las postrimerías del siglo XX, by Zaid Lagunas Rodríguez, pp. 152-70

La Sierra Negra y el valle de Tehuacán: Integración agrícola y laboral, by Ricardo F. Macip Ríos, pp. 171-90

Hacia la búsqueda de los popolocas arqueológicos, by Alejandra Gámez Espinosa, pp. 191-229

Paisaje, territorio y sociedades agrícolas: Una visión antropológica de región, by Francisco Castro Pérez, pp. 230-61

El concepto de poder en Foucault, by Rodolfo García Cuevas, pp. 262-71

Número 2, enero-julio de 2004, "Antropología y religión" (304 pages) —

Presentación, by Alejandra Gámez Espinosa y Luis Arturo Jiménez Medina, pp. 2-4

Postulados frecuentes en análisis antropológicos sobre religión, by Felipe R. Vásquez Palacios, pp. 5-16

La antropología de las religiones en México: Problemas y perspectivas, by Elio Masferrer Kan, pp. 17-40

La religión de los popolocas prehispánicos: Un estudio preliminar, by Alejandra Gámez Espinosa, pp. 41-60

Cultos prehispánicos y coloniales de la región suroeste del Popocatepetl (Yecapixtla, Totolapan y Ocuítuco, Morelos), by Druzo Maldonado, pp. 61-74

Huejónapan: Un universo sacralizado, by Norma Barranco Torres, pp. 75-88

Ritual de fertilidad en un baño de vapor urbano de Puebla, by Leticia Villalobos Sampayo, pp. 89-129

Perspectivas transculturales sobre la condición femenina y su relación con los cultos religiosos en los aparatos estatales, by Marla J. Rodríguez, pp. 130-37

Los mormones: surgimiento, expansión, crisis y asentamiento en México, by Amelia Domínguez Mendoza, pp. 138-47

La pluralidad en el interior del catolicismo: El Santuario y el Movimiento de Schoenstatt en México, by Luis Arturo Jiménez Medina, pp. 148-62

- La Ciudad de Puebla como espacio de diversidad cultural, by Ernesto Licona Valencia, pp. 163-204
 Cholula: Formas diversas de habitat el espacio urbano, by Mauricio List Reyes, pp. 205-28
 'La tierra es nuestro granero': La relación hombre-naturaleza en San Marcos Tlacoyalco, Puebla, by Rosalba Ramírez Rodríguez, pp. 229-42
 Violencia simbólica en el territorio maquilador fronterizo, by Luis H. Méndez, pp. 243-67
 Notas para una antropología de la pregunta, by Célida Godina, pp. 268-71
 La entrada triunfal en la ciudad en los siglos XVI Y XVII: Fiesta, by Ma. Marcelina Arce y Sáinz, pp. 272-86
 Aplicación del conocimiento antropológico: Experiencia de los profesionales y visión de los aprendices, by Francisco Castro Pérez, pp. 287-302

Número 3, 2005, "Antropología y masculinidades diversas" (160 pages, bajo la misma cobertura que número 4, 2006) —

- Presentación, p. 2
 Que es Y para que sirve la antropología sexual? Del exotismo sexológico a la deconstrucción de la sexualidad, by Joan Vendrell Ferré, pp. 3-27
 La construcción social de la(s) masculinidad(es) desde la perspectiva de genero y sexualidad masculina desde una perspectiva relacional, by Ma. Lucero Jiménez Guzmán, pp. 28-36
 Cuerpo andrógino: De la incertidumbre a investigación a la trasgresión, by Elsa Muñiz, pp. 37-45
 Ensayo sobre la masculinidad gay: El caso catalán y español, by Óscar Guasch Andreu, pp. 46-60
 Él es esos: Apuntes para una investigación sociológicas de la homosexualidad masculina, by Ernesto Meccia, pp. 61-75
 De homofobia y otras fobias, by Mauricio List Reyes, pp. 76-89
 Iniciación juvenil y la salud reproductiva entre adolescentes en Oaxaca de Juárez, México, by Matthew C. Gutmann, pp. 90-104
 El activismo del grupo Unigay en eventos pro diversidad sexual y antisida en los noventa en la ciudad de México, by Porfirio Miguel Hernández Cabrera, pp. 105-42
 De los estudios lésbicos-gay, by Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale y David M. Halperin, pp. 143-47
 Plan de estudios de la carrera de Antropología Social de la BUAP, pp. 148-60

Número 4, 2006, "Antropología y naturaleza" (144 pages; bajo la misma cobertura que número 3, 2005) —

- Presentación, pp. 2-8
 Participación, cultura y política: Reflexiones sobre la acción colectiva en el corredor biológico Chichinautzin, by Morelos María Fernanda Paz, pp. 9-24
 La expropiación ecológica de los territorios indios: una visión etnográfica de la política gubernamental para el manejo del Parque Nacional 'La Malinche', by Francisco Castro Pérez, pp. 25-46
 La comprensión local del ambientalismo en la Sierra de Santa Marta, Veracruz, by Leticia Durand, pp. 47-67
 El desarrollo sustentable en territorios indios: a proposito de los problemas étnicos, campesinos y ambientales en el estado de Puebla, by Benjamín Ortiz Espejel, pp. 68-73
 La gestión territorial y comunitaria del agua: una experiencia en un municipio indígena del sur de Veracruz, by Luisa Pare y Carlos Robles, pp. 74-102
 La comunidad de Capulalpan de Méndez, by Leticia Merino Pérez, pp. 103-22
 Lucha agraria, identidades locales y cambia social en el establecimiento de la industria textil en el centro-oeste de Puebla, by Guillermo Paleta, pp. 123-39
 El Colegio de Antropología Social y los horizontes de su desarrollo: Notas sobre la acreditación, by Francisco Castro Pérez, pp. 142-44



Photo 1. Helpers prepare 5,000 palm and marigold adornments before pilgrimage to the sacred mountain Palaxtepetl.



Photo 2. Woman places cloth dress on cut-paper figure of seed spirit before offering to the new year (*yancuic xihuitl*). Three sacred corn bundles are in foreground.



Photo 3. Man holds sacred walking stick during offering that is part of the *yancuic xihuitl* ritual.



Photo 4. Woman on left carries sacred walking stick while other women dance before altar holding paper images of seed spirits wearing tiny cloth dresses. Photograph taken in the shrine (*xochicali*) before pilgrimage at dawn to Palaxtepetl.

BOOK REVIEW

The Aztecs: New Perspectives. By Dirk R. Van Tuerenhout. Understanding Ancient Civilizations Series. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO. \$75.00 (paper). ISBN 1-57607-921-X.

The Aztecs: New Perspectives is a recent book in the series *Understanding Ancient Civilizations*. Books in this series are geared toward nonspecialists (including general readers and students), and focus on individual civilizations of the ancient world. According to the preface by the series editor, John Weeks, the intent of these volumes is to offer "an interpretation of each civilization that will express its culture and place in the world, as well as qualities and background that make it unique" (p. xiii). In terms of this offering on the Aztecs, then, it is reasonable to ask if this goal is accurately and effectively achieved. In addition, I was encouraged by the subtitle "New Perspectives," and eager to see what new perspectives would be presented.

In keeping with the series goals, this book is written at a level appropriate to a general readership, and does not belabor jargon. Nonetheless, this style sometimes results in rather choppy prose, and there are noticeable repetitions in the presentation of information.

In terms of content, the book draws on much recent archaeological and ethnohistoric work on the Aztecs. Its 11 chapters cover topics characteristic of a general book of this genre: Introduction (providing a general overview); Location of the Aztec Civilization and Environmental Setting; Historical and Chronological Setting (including a section on sources); Origins, Growth, and Decline of the Aztec Civilization; Economics; Social Organization and Social Structure; Politics; Religion and Ideology; Material Culture; Intellectual Accomplishments; and The Aztecs: Bloodthirsty or People Like Us? Overall, I'm sorry to say that I was disappointed at the presentation of some of the content. I group these concerns into three areas: (1) use of sources, (2) accuracy and clarity, and (3) range of coverage and organization. Before broaching these areas, I feel it fair to note that this Aztec book was written by a Mayan specialist.

(1) Sources. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, there are many readily available, excellent, and recent editions of prehispanic codices and colonial textual documents (such as the Florentine Codex, the Codex Mendoza, the "True History" by Bernal Díaz del Castillo, and so many others). Yet, one rather surprisingly finds in this book that information and even quotes from these and similar sources have been derived from dated or secondary sources. This is somewhat unexpected since the most modern and accepted editions of the primary sources are included in the bibliography at the end of the book. It remains something of a mystery to me why the original sources, in their most current translations, were not used.

Included in this "secondary" approach is a beguiling (if rather imaginative) and backward rendering (on page 134) of the bottom half of the Codex Mendoza's folio 61r, while on pages 71, 90 and 108 images are derived directly from that codex itself (though a derivative drawing from the Codex Mendoza is also found on page 39). One wonders a bit about the lack of consistency in these illustrations (as well as the inclusion of a Mayan girl on page 103). A general related concern is the matter of figure captions throughout the book, which only occasionally indicate the actual source of the image. This could be quite frustrating to the reader who may wish to learn more about the objects and images portrayed.

A third concern about the sources used and referenced is of particular interest to the readership of this publication. This is as much a matter of omission, for the vast corpus of "everyday" colonial Nahuatl-language documents is not mentioned in the book's section on Colonial Documents, nor are these sources used in the text. Consistent with this, while Charles Gibson's classic 1964 work on the Valley of Mexico is cited abundantly, James Lockhart's more recent (and exquisitely superceding) 1992 opus is nowhere to be found.

(2) Accuracy and clarity. While readers of this review would readily identify content errors found throughout this book, I'm somewhat distressed to think that readers from the target audience may not be so well versed in the subject. Just a few little examples: the book includes European-introduced wheat in Aztec markets (p. 102); defines the priestly bag *xiquipilli* as a "bag of cacao beans" (p. 225), mistakenly states that the construction of the Templo Mayor began during the reign of Motecuhzoma Ilhuicamina (p. 42), and misplaces Huaxtepec (as being within the Valley of Mexico, p. 88) although earlier (p. 42) Huaxtepec is accurately placed in Morelos. These are details. Perhaps it is more important to note other matters related to content. For instance, context is sometimes not clearly specified, as in the case where different types of agricultural systems (such as slash-and-burn, p. 104) are discussed but without specification of environmental context, and similarly where sweet potatoes and manioc are mentioned as part of the diet, but in the context of a discussion of highland crops (p. 111). In another vein, there is some confounding of Aztec and Western terminologies which may impede the reader's ability to grasp the emic view: for example, Aztec naming ceremonies are referred to as baptism (p. 130), a monastery is said to exist in Tenochtitlan's sacred precinct (p. 207), and references are made to a god of hell and gods of wine (pp. 204, 208). Also in this sense, a discussion of "blood and gore" and techniques of autosacrifice is pursued, but without explaining the sacred meaning of blood among the Aztecs (p. 266).

There also are some important omissions, such as an understanding of fate (although the *tonalpohualli* is discussed), the role of turkeys and dogs as domesticates, and the presence and place of pulque in Aztec life. And there are some missed opportunities that may leave a reader dangling: for instance, in their seminal encounter, Cortés is mentioned as attempting to embrace Motecuhzoma (p. 77), but his lack of success in this move and the very interesting Aztec response is not; sides to the debate on the adequacy of the Aztec diet are presented, but not further discussed or analyzed (p. 117); and similarly some arguments about the meaning and consequences of human sacrifice are offered, but without presenting an assessment of their pros and cons (pp. 188-91). I would guess that readers unfamiliar with such matters among the Aztecs especially would appreciate some evaluation of these often-conflicting ideas and theories.

(3) Range of coverage and organization. The chapters of this book encompass the major aspects of cultural and social life among the Aztecs. A wide range of topics is covered, although perhaps not as fully or as systematically as the reader would wish. Particularly noticeable are listings without attaching meaning or significance to them. This is the case, for instance, with soil and land use types (pp. 102-4), the Nine Lords of the Night (pp. 233-34), and elite intermarriage (pp. 38-39). In another vein, the reader should anticipate some organizational surprises. For example, only featherworkers and (maybe) obsidian workers are mentioned as full-time artisans (pp. 88-89), although quite later (pp. 219-22) mural painting, stone sculpture and metallurgy (copper and bronze only) are discussed. Some fine artistry was still missing, however, and I was heartened to later yet encounter feather work (p. 254-55), and a brief mention of jade and turquoise mosaics, these latter under "other art forms" (pp. 256-57); however, precious metals are given almost no ink. This dispersed discussion of crafts throughout the book is echoed in other areas: for instance, human sacrifice has its own subsections in chapters 8 and 11, the section on Aztec Cosmology (in chapter 10) repeats material presented in Belief in Heavens and Underworld (in chapter 8), and education is covered twice (in chapters 6 and 10). Somewhat unexpectedly also, Crime and Punishment appear in the chapter on Intellectual Accomplishments (pp. 243-44), where also appear a list and description of the 18 monthly ceremonies (pp. 229-33); the latter might better fit into the Aztec Religious Ceremonies section of the Religion and Ideology chapter. All of these can be considered achievements, but perhaps would be more neatly mated with related topics (i.e., social organization, religion). Quite considerably, the book provides a list of references for each chapter. Referencing inconsistencies are offset by a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the book. Overall, I would consider the statement on the back cover that this is "...the first balanced and complete account of one of the great New World cultures" as hyperbole.

Throughout the book several timely questions are asked: for instance, how many Aztecs were there, did the Aztecs have enough to eat, was craft production nucleated or dispersed, why human sacrifice, how typical was Tenochtitlan, what remains of Aztec life with today's descendants? The area of Future Directions noted at the end of the book supports a greater focus on unraveling Aztec rural life (a la Mike Smith's insightful work in Morelos). These questions engage current researchers in Aztec archaeology and ethnohistory, and perhaps reference to these is what is meant by the subtitle, *New Perspectives*. However, being a general summary, this book does not particularly add its own new perspectives to the study of Aztec society (and therefore the subtitle may be a bit too ambitious). Nonetheless, as a synthesis geared toward a nonspecialist readership, the reader should expect a higher degree of accuracy, more thorough explanations, clearer organization, and more attention to editorial details. It is hoped, if a second edition of this book is prepared, that issues such as these will be addressed.

Frances Berdan
California State University San Bernardino

COMMENTARY

"Lay Piety and the Rosary in Post-Nahua Catholicism"

By Eileen M. Mulhare

The editor of the *Nahua Newsletter* asked me to file this report on rosary practices and lay prayer leaders in the formerly Nahuatl-speaking town of Totimehuacán (Puebla, Mexico). My data sources include: (1) participant observation during 37 field stays in the community, January 1978 to November 2006; (2) focused interviews with a total of 17 prayer leaders in 1978-1979, 1999, and 2002-2006; (3) videotapes of 12 rosary events I filmed from January 1997 to June 1999; (4) an informal apprenticeship with an experienced female prayer leader, 2002-2006; (5) more than three dozen rosary manuals published in Mexico between 1912 and 2004; and (6) other devotional literature published in English and Spanish.

I. The Town

The rural-industrial town of San Francisco Totimehuacán, with a population of 9,350 in 2000, is located in the Puebla Valley of central Mexico. Eight kilometers to the north is the city of Puebla, the state capital, a sprawling metropolis of 1.4 million residents. Legally, Totimehuacán is a dependency of the city government. It is the head town of a rural ward or *junta auxiliar* with its own auxiliary mayor and governing council. Prior to 1962 Totimehuacán was the seat of an autonomous *municipio* (township).

Totimehuacán is an ancient settlement whose history spans 2,700 years (Mulhare 2001:45-114). The native inhabitants say they are neither "Indians" nor "mestizos," but Totimehuacanos, a micro-ethnic group. At the end of the 19th century, their ancestors spoke Nahuatl, wore distinctive native costumes, and earned their living as smallholder agriculturalists. As late as the 1970s, maize cultivation and dairy farming occupied about half the economically active population on a full-time basis (Mulhare 2001:148). Today the Totimehuacanos mainly work in commerce and services (46%), and industrial jobs (43.4%); a few pursue agriculture full-time (10.6%) (INEGI 2001). They speak Spanish exclusively, wear store-bought clothes, live in sturdy brick homes, and own cell phones. Even so, they use Nahuatl colloquialisms in everyday speech, add rustic touches to their apparel (e.g., cowboy hats, aprons, shawls), and raise barnyard animals in the patio. Totimehuacán's seven customary subdivisions, known locally as *barrios*, are rooted in pre-Conquest forms of social organization (Mulhare 2001:59-60). There is an active and growing system of unranked religious

cargos called *mayordomías*. Of the residents over age five, 95.8% are at least nominally Catholic, down slightly from 97.3% in 1990 (INEGI 2001; Mulhare 2001:152).

I call the Totimehuacanos "post-Nahuas" due to their combination of cultural heritage and life style. They are people of indigenous Nahua ancestry who adopted a new way of life beginning in the 20th century (see Mulhare n.d.). Note that persons born elsewhere constitute only 5.8% of the town population (INEGI 2001). Some of them are *gente ajena*, meaning people of urban origin who reject local customs. Others are *gente como nosotros*, referring to people whose ancestry and cultural values resemble those of native-born Totimehuacanos. In either case, non-native residents are in the minority.

II. The Rosary

The Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, known colloquially as "the rosary," is probably the most popular lay devotion among Roman Catholics worldwide (Dominican Friars 1990:2). It is one of dozens of Catholic devotions that involve reciting specific prayers while counting the repetitions on a circlet of beads and meditating on "Mysteries," selected events in the life of Jesus of Nazareth and his mother, Mary (e.g., Shaughnessy 1984[1954]). Standard rosary beads contain a total of 60 beads (see Figure 1). There are 55 beads in the circlet, arranged in five groups, plus a pendant of five more beads with a cross or crucifix. The circlet is a memory aid for performing the obligatory prayers and meditations. The pendant is available to tally optional prayers.

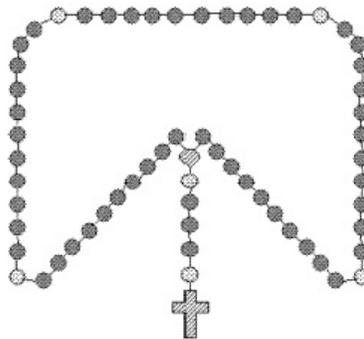


FIGURE 1: Standard rosary beads.
Drawing: E.M. Mulhare, 1997.

The Church specifies only two obligatory prayers: the Our Father (*Pater Noster* or Lord's Prayer); and the Hail Mary (*Ave Maria*). The devotee prays one Our Father and ten Hail Marys for each Mystery. From the sixteenth century until 2002, there were fifteen Mysteries, grouped into three sets of five events: Joyous, Sorrowful and Glorious. Recently, the Church added a fourth set of five meditations, the Luminous Mysteries (Pope John Paul II 2002). Additional prayers are customary in particular nations, regions or communities, but they are optional from the standpoint of the Church. The typical Mexican rosary pamphlet lists more than a dozen prayers as customary (see Mulhare 2002).

There is a wealth of non-ethnographic literature on the rosary, principally in the form of prayer manuals, pious tracts, and historical research on the rosary's origins (e.g., Winston-Allen 1997). Notably absent are focused ethnographic studies. According to Eriberto P. Lozada (personal communication, 1998), ethnographers studying Catholicism address the rosary briefly, if at all. For example, John Ingham's otherwise fine study of popular ("folk") Catholicism in central Mexico notes the rosary only in passing (1986:123).

The lack of ethnographic attention may stem from a mistaken assumption — that rosary practices are uniform cross-culturally. In fact they are not. The Church dictates the obligatory content of the rosary: the required prayers; the authorized themes (Mysteries) for meditation; and the order of their performance. Ancillary content, if any, is left to "local custom" (Peyton 1996:23). Among the sources of cross-cultural variation in the rosary are the recommendations of bishops, parish priests, missionaries and other clergy, the texts of popular manuals, community traditions, and personal preferences.

III. Colonial Nahuas and the Rosary

Sixteenth-century missionaries taught Nahuas various bead prayers, including the rosary, in Nahuatl fairly soon after the spiritual conquest of Mexico began. Bead prayers were useful for conveying Christian doctrine and as a substitute for prohibited pre-Conquest rituals (e.g., Mulhare and Sell 2002). The most ardent promoters of the rosary, both in Europe and the Americas, were the Dominicans (Burkhart 2001:122-23; Winston-Allen 1997:66,77-78).

The earliest Nahuatl rosary manual extant is a set of instructions in a 1565 bilingual catechism by Dominican friar Domingo de la Anunciación (Burkhart 2001:123-27). The only prayers he requires are the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and a short text for each Mystery. The friar translates the term "rosary" into Nahuatl as "golden flower necklace" (Burkhart 2001:123). This mirrors the flower imagery long-associated with the rosary in Europe, but also fits well with pre-Conquest Nahua spirituality. Preachers on both continents likened rosary prayers to weaving a circlet of spiritual roses. Rosary enthusiasm spread among the Nahua via printed manuals, oral transmission, and formal prayer clubs known as confraternities. By the 1570s it was common for Nahua men and women to carry or wear rosary beads regularly (2001:Burkhart 121-23).

When did the Totimehuacanos first learn to pray the rosary? I suspect before 1580, but I have no direct evidence. Colonial Puebla was a center of rosary fervor (e.g., for a description of the famous Capilla del Rosario, see Centro Virtual Cervantes n.d.). The Dominicans arrived in 1534 and founded the city's archconfraternity of the rosary in 1555. They unveiled Puebla's finest baroque sanctuary, the Capilla del Rosario, in 1690 (García and Cortés 1914:6). Totimehuacán was a *Franciscan* mission town, however (Mulhare 2001:76,94). While only Dominicans could authorize the formation of rosary confraternities, Franciscans and Augustinians promoted the rosary when it suited their purposes. Burkhart (2001:130) indicates that a Franciscan linguist, fray Alonzo de Molina, produced a Nahuatl translation of a Dominican rosary manual in 1572.

IV. Post-Nahuas and the Rosary

Public recitation of the rosary figures prominently in the socioreligious life of Totimehuacán today. By "public recitation" I mean any occasion where people gather to pray and the organizers allow anyone to attend, even strangers. I calculate that more than 2,000 public rosaries take place in Totimehuacán annually. These events occur in the parish church, the town's seven barrio chapels, private homes and, occasionally, outdoors as part of religious processions.

Rezanderos and *rezanderas*, self-appointed lay prayer leaders, embellish the requisite prayers with hymns, invocations, litanies, and actions involving holy images or objects. The result is the vernacular rosary, a complex ceremonial with many variations. The majority of prayer leaders are women. Over the last thirty years male prayer leaders have virtually disappeared (for the reasons, see Mulhare 1999). Elderly prayer leaders, who often are illiterate, developed their skills through apprenticeship, memorization, and experimentation. With the growth in literacy, formal catechism training, and closer vigilance by parish

priests, younger prayer leaders rely increasingly on printed manuals. These guidebooks are not standardized, however, and frequently incorporate regional customs.

Totimehuacán prayer leaders recognize four general categories of public rosaries (for more detailed descriptions than given below, see Mulhare 1999:16-21).

Rosario diario. This is the rosary held daily at 5:00 p.m. in the parish church, except on the days when a patron-saint rosary or seasonal rosary is held instead (see below). The prayer leader is one of the parish catechists. Only people authorized by the pastor can lead rosaries in the parish church. The pastor does not select or approve the prayer leader when a rosary occurs in a barrio chapel, private home or elsewhere.

Rosario de mayordomía. This rosary honors a patron saint of the town or one of its barrios. It is sponsored by committee of cargo holders in charge of the festivities. There are four variants of this devotion. *Rosarios de octavo* are eight afternoons of rosaries preceding the feast day, held in the chapel of the host barrio. (Barrios take turns sponsoring town religious cargos.) A *rosario de aurora* is performed at dawn in procession around the parish church, but only on certain occasions. The *rosario de mañanitas*, likewise at dawn, occurs inside the parish church or barrio chapel, as appropriate, after those present sing "good morning" hymns to the saint. The *rosario de función* is performed in the afternoon of the feast day, in whichever sanctuary (church or chapel) is home to the honored holy image. It marks the official end of the celebration.

Rosario de hermandad. This rosary honors the patron saint of an all-volunteer, parish-sponsored sodality or an informal prayer group. If the rosary is held in a private home, the host family provides refreshments or a light meal afterward. The Virgen del Carmen sodality holds its rosary annually on July 16 in the parish church. The Sagrado Corazón sodality also uses the parish church; its rosary occurs on the first Friday of every month. The Virgen de Juquila group meets for prayer on the eighth of each month; members take turns hosting the event at home. There are two Divina Misericordia prayer groups. The original group performs its rosary every Tuesday evening at the home of one or another member. The new group holds a rosary in a private home every night for two weeks in one barrio, then moves to another home in a different barrio for the subsequent two weeks. There are probably many more prayer groups in the community than I have identified so far.

Rosario de temporada. This is any rosary connected with a specific season in the religious calendar. The *rosario mariano*, honoring the Virgin Mary, replaces the daily rosary in the parish church every afternoon in May. *Rosarios del Niño Dios*, honoring the Infant Jesus, take place in private homes, barrio chapels, and the parish church as follows: *rosario de Posada*, any time between December 16 and December 23; *rosario de Acostada del Niño Dios*, anytime between December 24 and January 5; and *rosario de Levantada del Niño Dios*, anytime between January 6 and February 1. The rosary is not the main, lay-organized ritual on these occasions (for details, see Nutini and Bell 1980:101-22). After 1987, the present pastor extended the *rosario mariano* to all the barrio chapels. Then he added three more seasonal rosaries for the parish and the barrios. The *rosario del Sagrado Corazón* takes place daily in June. The *rosario de la Virgen del Carmen* occurs daily in July. The *rosario de la Virgen del Rosario* is observed daily in October. For four months out of every year, then, barrio mayordomos (cargo holders) must recruit: prayer leaders to guide the rosary daily in the barrio chapel; and host-couples to donate the customary flowers and after-prayer candy or snacks. I have seen girls as young as age 10 lead prayers when older women were not available. The May and June rosary seasons end with a major religious service in the parish church to crown the related the holy image.

Rosario de difunto. Catholics believe that prayers for the dead reduce the time that deceased loved ones spend suffering in Purgatory. The rosary for the dead as practiced in Totimehuacán is the most complicated form of the devotion I have encountered. It involves more customary prayers, paraphernalia, and ritual actions than other rosary types. There are five variants, each connected to stages in the mourning cycle. The *rosario de entierro* occurs when the corpse is interred, normally the day after the death. The prayers are performed at the cemetery. The *novenario de difunto* is a novena (nine days) of rosaries held at night at the home of the deceased. There is one prayer format for the first night following the person's death, repeated on the second through seventh nights. On the eighth night, also at home, there is a rosary to "raise the cross" — the *rosario de Levantada de Cruz* — referring to the new grave marker. On the ninth day, at the cemetery, there is a rosary to "set-up the cross" — *rosario de Parada de Cruz* — to install the marker at the grave site. It is the first of three memorial crosses, as explained below. On all these occasions the family of the decedent offers the mourners something to eat. At evening rosaries the snack consists of coffee and tamales or atole and pastries. On the day of the burial and when each of the three memorial crosses is installed, the usual fare is a ceremonial banquet. In subsequent months two additional burial crosses are placed on the grave, each requiring a rosary to be performed at the cemetery, plus an at-home rosary with cross-raising ceremony the night before. The second cross is scheduled for the saint's day of the deceased. The third cross commemorates the first anniversary of the death. With this ceremony the customary mourning period is completed.

V. Prayer as Performance Art

Leading the rosary is a performance art in Totimehuacán. Due to space constraints, I cannot detail here the many components — prayers, hymns, paraphernalia and ritual actions — that prayer leaders combine to make each rosary a unique experience. Totimehuacanos admire prayer leaders with an ample repertoire, since townspeople attend so many rosaries throughout the year. The use of prayer books and pamphlets, instead of encouraging standardization, has spurred prayer leaders' creativity. They no longer have to limit prayers and hymns to ones they learned via oral tradition. They can consult religious publications to extend their repertoires. At the same time, a prayer leader cannot diverge too much from the material the laity already knows. Everyone present at the rosary should participate in praying and singing. For this reason prayer leaders often rehearse new details with a few volunteers before the event. Several groups offer the community opportunities to learn new prayers and songs, including the sodalities and parish personnel (pastor, vicar, catechists, youth choir), plus visiting seminarians and missionaries.

When I first encountered the rosary in Totimehuacán in 1978-1979, community elders told me that soon everyone would pray "only by the book." Praying from memory, and the variety of rosaries so typical of the town, would disappear in favor of a simple, uniform rosary. It turns out the elders were mistaken. The formation of new prayer groups has encouraged more rosary diversity than ever before. Rarely do prayer leaders perform exclusively from printed material. Many, even the youngest, know several types of rosaries entirely by heart, or at least the complex formula for the daily rosary.

What *has* changed is the attitude towards the printed word. Most of prayer leaders know how to read. Before and during a performance, they consult rosary manuals and pamphlets, prayer-leader guidebooks, hymnals, and their own handwritten notebooks. Literacy has democratized the art of prayer. Publications do not teach everything necessary to perform a vernacular rosary properly. But they have paved the way for many individuals who in earlier times could not have become prayer leaders otherwise, specifically, people with no aptitude for the memorization or no time to serve as apprentices. In an era when few people knew how to read, only people with talent for the memorization managed to become prayer leaders. They spent years observing, imitating and memorizing what the experts did. There were no other options. Now publications provide an alternative.

VI. Conclusions

I probably have sufficient ethnographic data on this subject to prepare a book manuscript. What I require is more historical and comparative material. Much remains to be discovered about: (1) the origins and diffusion of the rosary in Nahuatl; (2) how Totimehuacán prayer leaders compare with Mexican shamans; (3) whether other Nahua or post-Nahua communities are equally active rosary devotees; and (4) how the details of rosary practices differ from one place to the next.

The Totimehuacanos have chosen the rosary, among all the lay devotions authorized by the Church, as their favorite way of expressing religious fervor. In their view of the world, truly virtuous human beings are few, but all can acquire divine favor through proper attention to ritual. Burkhart makes an astute observation on the significance of the rosary for colonial Nahuas: "It was something in which everyone could participate, including and perhaps especially women, without direct oversight of priests" (2001:122). The same is true for the Totimehuacanos today.

References Cited

- Burkhart, Louise M. 2001. *Before Guadalupe: The Virgin Mary in Early Colonial Nahuatl Literature*. Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, Monograph 13. Albany: State University of New York at Albany.
- Dominican Friars. 1990. *Dominican Rosary Novena Book*. New York: Dominican Rosary Apostolate.
- Centro Virtual Cervantes. n.d. "Templo de Santo Domingo (Capilla del Rosario)." Madrid: Instituto Cervantes. Retrieved December 6, 2006, from <http://cvc.cervantes.es/actcult/ciudades/puebla/paseo/templodomingo.htm>.
- García, Genaro, and Antonio Cortés. 1914. *La arquitectura en México*. Mexico City: Museo Nacional de Antropología, Historia y Etnología.
- INEGI. 2001. "Unidad geográfica, Localidad urbana 211140001, Heroica Puebla de Zaragoza," *XII Censo general de población y vivienda, estado de Puebla, Resultados definitivos*. Aguascalientes, Ags., Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática.
- Ingham, John M. 1986. *Mary, Michael and Lucifer: Folk Catholicism in Central Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Mulhare, Eileen M. 1999. "Círculo de devoción: alfabetismo y el rosario en el catolicismo popular mexicano." First International Colloquium on Religion and Society: Religions in Multicultural Context, May 31-June 4, Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City.
- _____. 2001. *Totimehuacán: Su historia y vida actual*. 2nd ed., revised and updated. Prologue by Herón García-Martínez. Puebla, Mexico: H. Ayuntamiento del Municipio de Puebla, Programa de Atención a la Cultura Popular.
- _____. 2002. "Quick Guide to the Rosary: Mexico." Available online at <http://www.ixeh.net/faith/Treasure/Prayerbook/mxrosary.html>.
- _____. n.d. "El concepto de la sociedad pos-indígena." *Mirada antropológica* (Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico), forthcoming.

- Mulhare, Eileen M., and Barry D. Sell. 2002. "Bead-prayers and the Spiritual Conquest of Nahua Mexico: Gante's 'Coronas' of 1553." *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* 33:217-52.
- Nutini, Hugo G. and Betty Bell. 1980. *Ritual Kinship, Vol. I: The Structure and Historical Development of the Compadrazgo System in Rural Tlaxcala*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Peyton, Patrick, ed. 1996. *Father Peyton's Rosary Prayer Book*. Albany, New York: The Family Rosary, Inc.
- Pope John Paul II. 2002. *Apostolic Letter "Rosarium Virginis Mariae" of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful on the Most Holy Rosary*, October 16, 2002. Retrieved November 25, 2002, from <http://www.vatican.va/>.
- Shaughnessy, Patrick. 1984[1954]. *Twenty-four Rosaries and Chaplets*. St. Meinrad, IN: St. Meinrad Archabbey; reprinted Louisville, KY: Our Lady's Rosary Makers
- Winston-Allen, Anne. 1997. *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University.

"Aztec Cannibalism"
By Michel Graulich
Université Libre de Bruxelles

In the November 2005 issue of the *Nahua Newsletter*, Barry L. Isaac presents an abstract of his paper "Aztec Cannibalism: Nahua Versus Spanish and Mestizo Accounts in the Valley of Mexico" published in 2005 in *Ancient Mesoamerica* in which he explains what he would conclude should he investigate on this subject. Fundamentally, he suggests "the possibility that the idea of customary cannibalism originated in Spanish culture and was then transmitted to the indigenous population during post-Conquest religious conversion and Hispanicization [sic]." He argues that institutionalized Aztec cannibalism is absent in the major Aztec writings, and even, that "no eyewitness accounts of Aztec cannibalism exists," rejecting with good reason a passage in Bernal Díaz who couldn't see much while he stood "several hundred yards away" (actually, he probably wasn't even in Mexico-Tenochtitlan at that time, but in Veracruz).

There was a time when historical and other research consisted first in collecting all the relevant sources on a subject, then to examine and submit them to historical criticism before drawing conclusions. Nothing of the sort in this article: Isaac chooses some sources which seem to confirm a preconceived idea.

It is true that the Aztec do not often mention ordinary cannibalism, but the author should have taken into account that they had good reasons not to do so since under the Spanish rule cannibalism was regarded as barbarian and horrible and punished by law, as illustrated for example by several trials by the Inquisition. Nevertheless, there are more Aztec sources than Isaac suggests. For example, in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* (Bierhorst's translation, p. 25): "When it was Toxcatl, the Colhuaque... came and made human sacrifices. As yet the Chichimecs were not doing this, not making sacrifices before their gods. Although they were taking captives and would eat them, they just killed them. It wasn't before their gods." Threats of eating the enemy are frequent, for instance in Tezozómoc (*Crónica mexicana* 1878:243): "luego de muertos hemos de comer vuestras carnes, porque cuando venimos y salimos de nuestras tierras, no trajimos deudos ni parientes" — a passage which also shows that endocannibalism was prohibited.

No eyewitness accounts, says Barry Isaac. But the *Información de Velázquez contra Hernán Cortés* in 1521 (published in *Documentos cortesianos* 1), contains long and detailed testimonies of soldiers of Cortés who returned to Cuba and sued him for letting his Tlaxcaltecan allies eat thousands of enemies during the punitive expedition against Tepeaca, after the Noche Triste. Of course, in his second letter to Charles V, Cortés does not mention this cannibalism by his allies, but he does mention the cannibalism of the Tepeacans. But in his third letter (May 15, 1522), in which he relates the siege of Mexico by his troops and his Indian allies, this time yes, he mentions the cannibalistic behavior of his allies, and he does so because he cannot do otherwise, knowing about the information against him in Cuba — information that will cost him the vice-royalty of New Spain. And so we read in his third letter (1963:179,180,184): "y aquella noche tuvieron bien que cenar nuestros amigos, porque todos los que se mataron [more than 500] tomaron y llevaron hechos piezas para comer"; "y así, nos volvimos a nuestro real con [many prisoners] harta presa y manjar para nuestros amigos [800 prisoners and dead]"; "y fué tanta la mortandad que se hizo en nuestros enemigos, que muertos y presos pasaron de 12000 ánimas, con los cuales usaron de tanta crueldad nuestros amigos que por ninguna vía a ninguno daban la vida, aunque más reprendidos y castigados de nosotros eran." No wonder that in 1523, the king of Spain issued an *Instrucción* to import cattle in order to avoid further anthropophagy (*Documentos cortesianos* 1:266).

No eyewitness accounts? No cannibalism? An idea of customary cannibalism originated in Spanish culture? Isaac quotes Cortés and other texts but not the relevant passages.

"Reply to Michel Graulich"
By Barry L. Isaac
University of Cincinnati

The article to which Michel Graulich refers was published in *Ancient Mesoamerica* 16:1-10 (2005), and the abstract of it was republished in *NN* no. 40:3 (2005). The article compared the accounts of cannibalism — especially, cannibalism by trickery — in the major post-Conquest chronicles from the Valley of Mexico, grouping the authors by ethnicity: Nahuatl (Tezozómoc and Chimalpahin), mestizo (Ixtlilxochitl and Pomar), and Spanish (Durán, Motolinía, and Sahagún). In other words, the article was explicitly restrictive in its coverage. Its final paragraph, though, began with a general statement, "It is important to remember... that no eyewitness accounts of Aztec cannibalism exist." Of course, I was referring to the lack of *credible* Spanish assertions about Aztec cannibalism, as there certainly is no shortage of Spanish assertions that falsely imply first-hand knowledge of it. In a future work, I plan to compile all of these colonial Spanish assertions about Aztec cannibalism and dissect them line by line to demonstrate their lack of credibility. In the article at issue here, I analyzed only the most frequently cited of the Spanish statements claiming eyewitness authenticity, that of Bernal Díaz del Castillo, which Graulich agrees is not credible. In fact, Graulich goes farther than I did in discrediting Díaz's statement, suggesting that Díaz was not even present at the scene he purported to have witnessed!

More importantly, Graulich's critique points out an oversight on my part with reference to Alvarado Tezozómoc's *Crónica mexicana*, in which I failed to spot a passage mentioning cannibalism near the beginning of Chapter 7 (p. 243 of the Porrúa edition). Its context is the build-up to the 1428-30 war between Tenochtitlan and Azcapotzalco, which resulted in the founding of the so-called Aztec Empire. The crux of the passage is: "y luego de muertos os hemos de comer vuestras carnes" ("and after you are dead, we will eat your meat"). It is important to note that this statement is merely a threat, *not* an account of an act that had actually taken place. We should also note a short statement three lines earlier, prefacing the threat: "y tal muerte que sea espantosa" ("and such a death as will be horrible"). This line is interesting because it clearly

imputes a negative view of cannibalism on the part of Tezozómoc's Mexica ancestors. At any rate, the inclusion of this omitted material in my article would not have changed it much, but I am grateful that Mr. Graulich has brought it to my attention.

ILLUSTRATIONS IN THIS ISSUE

The illustrations appearing in this issue are photographs taken by Alan R. Sandstrom and Pamela Effrein Sandstrom in February and March 2007 while conducting ethnographic field research among Nahua people in the *municipio* of Ixhuatlán de Madero, Veracruz, Mexico.

Editor's note: The original PDF listed the mailing list & directory in this section of page 22. For privacy reasons, that list is only visible on the print version. If you have any questions, please contact the editor at sandstro@ipfw.edu.



Photo 5. Altar constructed in *xochicali* for Palaxtepetl pilgrimage.



Photo 6. Person of knowledge (*tlamatiquetl*) prepares folded-paper "bones" for a cut-paper seed spirit before outfitting it in a cloth dress.



Photo 7. Two *tlamatiquetl* chant before altar to dedicate offerings at summit of Palaxtepetl.



Photo 8. *Tlamatiquetl* lays out more than 1,200 sacred cut-paper figures on altar at Palaxtepetl.



Photo 9. The decorated altar at the summit of Palaxtepetl.



Photo 11. Dressed paper image of the water spirit *apanchanej* placed in water pot for pilgrimage to Tres Positos.



Photo 10. Blood-spattered paper images that will be incorporated in altars at the summit of the sacred mountain Tres Positos.



Photo 12. Participants dance before circular altar dedicated to the sun on the summit of Palaxtepetl. Paper streamers represent the light rays emanating from the solar disk.