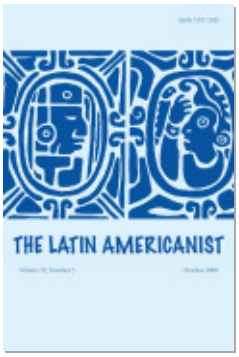
Yucatán in an Era of Globalization ed. by Eric N. Baklanoff, Edward H. Moseley (review)



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YUCATÁN IN AN ERA OF GLOBALIZATION. **Eds. Eric N. Baklanoff and Edward H. Moseley. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2008, p. 192, $26.95.**

This interdisciplinary collection by SECOLAS colleagues explores multiple dimensions of change taking place in Mexico's southeast region. The work represents a follow-up on *Yucatán: A World Apart* (edited by Edward Moseley and Edward D. Terry, University of Alabama Press, 1980): a collaborative work rooted in the idea that the Yucatán constitutes a unique and "separate society" (i). As such, it raises the question of whether the state, the region, the communities, or the people have been able to maintain that uniqueness.

The Yucatán is clearly a laboratory for studying the impact of globalization. As occurred to varying degrees throughout Mexico, since 1982, as co-editor Eric Baklanoff details in the introduction, the Yucatán has undergone dramatic economic and social changes. Triggered by the decline of the state-supported monocrop (henequen) economy, the debt crisis and neoliberal reforms, the state's economy has diversified into the production of poultry and pork in the countryside, commerce and cruise ships through the modern port of Progreso, a booming tourism industry capitalizing on the region's great archaeological patrimony, and Mexico's second maquiladora frontier producing largely textile goods for the US market.

Before examining the pattern and the impact of these changes at various levels, historians Edward Moseley and Helen Delpar offer the reader historical context, brilliantly summarizing in just a few pages hundreds of years of history, detailing the nature of the social and economic structure rooted in henequen production, the state's ties to the rest of Mexico, and the impact of the Revolution. In a fine, yet rare example of interdisciplinary scholarship, the following studies by anthropologists, economists, geographers, and historians go on to explore the various dimensions of change. Geographer Michael Yoder examines the changing landscape of the Port of Progreso, documenting "the spatial effects of capital accumulation through time" (64). The economist Baklanoff traces the development of the maquiladora industry, "the most dynamic component of Yucatán's economic expansion during the 1990s" (101). The historian Moseley takes up this theme later on in a short, yet imaginative essay that juxtaposes the community of Tixkokob in the Yucatán with a small town on the Tallapoosa River in Alabama. Brought together by the downsizing of the Russell textile industry in Alabama and the opening of its maquiladora operation in Mexico, the chapter highlights the variable impact of globalization on the two sides of the border.

Complementing and deepening these historic and economic assessments of change, the remaining chapters by anthropologists and cultural experts explore the impact of these changes on the people and the communities. Luis Alfonso Ramírez traces change among the state's

entrepreneurial elite, highlighting in particular how "the position of Yucatecan enterprises began to deteriorate as national corporations sought to advance to the southeast, integrating their operations into national markets" (86). Paula Heusinkveld and Alicia de Cruz shift the attention to the impact of these multiple economic changes on local communities and people's identities. Drawing on extensive interviews with the local Maya community in Tinum, Heusinkveld assesses the impact on local customs arising from the shifting employment patterns and the wages brought into the community by mainly males working in Cancún. De Cruz similarly analyzes the impact of tourism on social fragmentation in the community of Chom Kom's, detailing the conversion of the Maya culture into a commodity that "can be sold, negotiated, advertised, promoted, and packaged" (143). Kathleen Martín and William Martín González further explore the troubling impact of tourism on local communities. Noting that "Maya people have had no voice in the development of a tourism in which they and their ancestors are marketed as the central attraction" (177), they develop an alternative model that is "locally based, locally planned, and locally managed" (176).

Yucatán in an Era of Globalization is both rich in detail and broad in its approach. Its interdisciplinary focus brilliantly captures the multiple strands of globalization, blending both top-down and bottom-up approaches to the study. Moreover, the book is strikingly balanced, highlighting both the disruptions stemming from global forces and the adaptations by local communities. From a somewhat more critical posture, the collaborative effort lacks: a) an analysis of the state's interesting political developments; b) explicit attention to whether the region truly maintains its uniqueness (the chapters seem to suggest that it does not); and c) a concluding chapter that seeks to integrate the multiple approaches. Despite these shortcomings, the study's fine interdisciplinary focus makes the book an excellent complement for any course on Latin America.

Sadly, this book also represents perhaps the last published work of two distinguished colleagues: William Martín González and Edward Moseley. Guillermo Martín was a Mexican architect and urbanist with a "long trajectory of expertise in university teaching, research, and project design. . .citizen participation, and community development" (186), a doctoral candidate in Educational Philosophy at the Jesuit University of Guadalajara, and a warm and caring person whose career and contributions to the study of Mexico were tragically cut short. Edward Moseley enjoyed a long and distinguished career serving as the Director of the Capstone International Center at the University of Alabama and president of SECOLAS. The quintessential gentleman-scholar, Moseley's contributions reach well beyond the field of Latin American studies. He taught and inspired thousands of students and colleagues, forged strong collaborative ties with scholars abroad, and played an instrumental role in facilitating cross-border community relations. In so doing, he

nurtured understanding and an intense fascination and appreciation of our differences.

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Cycles of Time and Meaning in the Mexican Books of Fate. **By Elizabeth Hill Boone. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007, p. 338, $55.00.**

Art historians, linguists, anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians interested in Pre-Columbian Mexico will find a much needed resource in Elizabeth Hill Boone's most recent book, *Cycles of Time and Meaning in the Mexican Books of Fate*, a comprehensive overview of pre-Hispanic and early Colonial Mexican divinatory manuscripts from Central Mexico and the greater Tlaxcala-Puebla-Mixtec zone. In addition to serving as an excellent resource for specialists, Boone's clarity and her well-organized and systematic approach make this an ideal textbook for undergraduate and graduate courses on Mesoamerican culture, especially when used in tandem with her pendant publication, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (University of Texas Press, 2000), a study of the painted histories of central and southern Mexico.

While many detailed studies of individual painted divinatory manuscripts exist, this synthetic work provides a basic understanding of the genre as a whole. The author discusses the function and social context of the documents, presents the graphic vocabulary, explains how the manuscripts relate to ritual use, analyzes the narrative portion of the Codex Borgia, and treats the controversial topic of provenience. Throughout the book, the author offers many insights and a selected historiography that contextualizes and refines our current understanding of the Mesoamerican calendrical manuscripts and their use. In her concluding chapter, she suggests that despite the great variation in these manuscripts, a single divinatory system seems to have operated widely across central and southern Mexico. Boone succeeds in her goals to make these complex manuscripts more accessible and to conceptualize the Borgia group codices within the entire corpus of Mesoamerican manuscripts.

After an introduction to the surviving corpus of divinatory codices in Chapter 1, "Containers of the Knowledge of the World," the initial chapters of the book discuss general use and begin to break apart the dense and complex imagery. Chapter 2, "Time, the Ritual Calendar, and Divination," contains clear and concise overviews of the calendar counts and the origin and significance of the different Mesoamerican cycles of time. Chapter 3, "The Symbolic Vocabulary of the Almanacs," catalogues the various components of the almanacs (calendrical elements, actors and actions, scenes, accoutrements and instruments, symbols) and provides a brief discussion