to the Archaeological Record," touting Peregrine's research while ignoring the most important comparative archaeological studies of recent years: Blanton and Fargher's study of premodern polities (*Collective Action in the Formation of Pre-Modern States*, Springer, 2008) and Peter Turchin's SESHAT project (Turchin et al. 2015 in *Cliodynamics* 6:77–107). These and other systematic comparative analyses based on rigorous coding are now generating exciting new advances in understanding past societies, and I wish the book had at least mentioned the relevant projects.

This book may fall short as an overall guide to the value of complexity approaches to early complex societies; it omits topics such as networks, resilience, and settlement scaling. Nevertheless, it is a good showcase for much of the recent work by archaeologists and associated scholars at SFI. In brief introductory and concluding chapters, the editors make eloquent pleas for the value of complexity science in studying early societies and their social and cultural evolution. I hope that more archaeologists can be persuaded to take up the call. But even readers who don't get excited about complexity science will find lots of promising new ideas in these chapters.

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Pueblos within Pueblos: Tlaxilacalli Communities in Acolhuacan, Mexico, ca. 1272–1692. Benjamin D. Johnson. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2017, 253 pp. $63.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-60732-690-8.

This is a book about relationships and connections, about hierarchical authority and community identity. And change. And resilience. These are the central themes in a history that is restricted to one geographic locale in central Mexico, spans more than four centuries, and focuses on a single institution, the *tlaxilacalli*. The region lies in the eastern sector of the Basin of Mexico, encompassing a set of polities forged in pre-Spanish times (antedating the Triple Alliance empire), with many retaining their community identities through colonial times and, indeed, to the present day.

Pueblos within Pueblos focuses on tlaxilacalli, an institution frequently conflated with *calpolli* (prehispanic) and *barrios* (colonial/postcolonial). Whatever these units are called, they are usually considered to be constituent residential units of larger communities, such as *altepetl*, *pueblos*, or *ciudades*. Convenient as this is, Johnson's closer look at this institution, revealing its diversity, complexity, and agency, leaves equivalencies such as "districts," "neighborhoods," or "subunits" imprecise and even misleading. Johnson suggests (and offers compelling support for) a more analytical look at these local-level institutions—he contends that they were more than just neighborhoods, and they were not always as subservient to a larger entity as "subunit" suggests.

This book is part historical reconstruction, part engaging stories, and part documentary analysis. It presents a sensible and well-grounded discussion of the various sources applied to this study, especially their scope, value, and limitations. The main reliance on documentary sources is supplemented with relevant archaeological findings.

Pueblos within Pueblos pursues several related goals. First, it examines tlaxilacalli in the context of both Aztec and Spanish imperial domains, employing a useful and revealing comparative perspective. This approach offers incisive insights into the nature and dynamics of local-imperial relations, highlighting the proactive capabilities of tlaxilacalli structures, ties, and activities in contrasting imperial settings. Second, tlaxilacalli not only survived the trauma of a violent conquest and massive demographic and cultural change but managed to thrive and promote agency in an uncertain colonial setting: Johnson views this institution as "an ignored causal engine in Mexican history" (p. 5). Third, operating at a local, even individual level, this book at times connects persons and households to exact landscapes and political hierarchies, at the same time offering insights into the internal workings of diverse tlaxilacalli throughout this region, especially in Spanish colonial times. These goals are pursued with scholarly rigor throughout the book.

The book has some special highlights. In unraveling the hierarchical complexities of Hispanic tlaxilacalli, Johnson details the different statuses, duties, and privileges of resident commoners. Commoners were not a homogeneous category. Scholars have recognized this in other contexts, for example by detecting economic variation archaeologically; this study offers up a well-crafted discussion of commoner differences in a hierarchical political arena.

Another highlight focuses on conflicts and how they played out within changing political situations in colonial Acolhuacan. Johnson selects specific contentious events to reveal the inner workings of tlaxilacalli and their relations with more encompassing political levels. His detailed and relevant stories are captivating.

A further highlight is the integration of religious structures into the discussion of the tlaxilacalli. In both prehispanic and colonial Mexico, politics and religion were intricately intertwined. These fascinating complexities have been widely documented at levels from state to households; Johnson directs attention to tlaxilacalli in unravelling these relationships across the chasm of the conquest.

Particularly notable is Johnson's repeated and persistent point that tlaxilacalli had agency and were forces to contend with in the to-and-fro of political life over four centuries. They took advantage of complex dynamics, relationships, and uncertainties involving land and labor, contested hierarchies, and religious institutions to promote their own agendas. Overall, Johnson proposes that tlaxilacalli played key roles in Acolhua politics and religion—key not just in the sense that these units were pervasive across the political landscape, but that they also acted in proactive, strategic, and instrumental ways within their larger world. He makes the case for a closer consideration of the dynamics, resilience, and agency of local institutions. This interesting and thought-provoking scholarly work is full of abundant notes that will benefit others wishing to

pursue this line of research. *Pueblos within Pueblos* demonstrates the value of integrating local-level institutions into studies that deal with broader levels of political life.

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Smoke, Flames, and the Human Body in Mesoamerican Ritual Practice. Vera Tiesler and Andrew K. Scherer, eds. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018, 480 pp. $75.00, cloth. ISBN 9780884024262.

This splendid volume, authoritatively researched, elaborately illustrated, and elegantly produced, includes chapters first presented as essays during a two-day symposium held at Dumbarton Oaks, October 9–10, 2015. The excitement ignited by that profoundly interdisciplinary event led to this series of essays, centered on the study of fire, smoke, and the body, developed through investigations by archaeologists, bioarchaeologists, iconographers, ethnohistorians, and ethnographers. The rich archaeological, historic, and ethnographic records of the Maya facilitate the exploration of both ancient and modern contexts.

Both the symposium and the volume were in part stimulated by recent, renewed bioarchaeological emphasis on burned human remains, which in many contexts are simply described and categorized without reference to deeper meanings that pervade myths, monuments, and traditional ritual practice. The ancient and modern Maya afford the authors a remarkable opportunity to move beyond descriptive detail and explore meanings that may extend across millennia. The first six chapters explore rituals related to fire and heat. Chapters 8–14 embody rites of veneration, profanation, and sacrifice, many exploring specific mortuary contexts. The closing chapter (chapter 15), by John Verano, reflects authoritatively upon the volume content.

This book should be of interest to a general readership, as well as those specializing in studies of ancient and/or modern Maya. The editors begin (chapter 1) with a useful introduction that provides basic background information on fire and the sun in cosmic cycling; fire, steam, and smoke in traditional contexts; the embodiment of heat, smoke, and flames; bodies and worship by fire; and narratives and images from portable and nonportable art useful in interpreting the archaeological record. A glossary of fire-related terms is also included, helpful for specialist and nonspecialist alike.

This brief review cannot hope to fully represent the exquisitely detailed scholarship reflected here. The authors move skillfully between larger questions, such as the existence of symbolic associations between mythic fires and specific archaeological contexts. For example, in chapter 2, Chinchilla Mazariegos considers the godly immolation of lunar or solar heroes, and the death of an old goddess burned in a sweat bath.