

While this is an admirable approach, these essays cannot fully deliver on their enormously ambitious promise. Beyond the exegesis of texts and their conceptual lineages, we would need to learn more about the ideas and practices of broader and diverse social groups to accept that they constituted “collective beliefs.” Moreover, while Chiaramonte acknowledges that not every political figure during the early post-independence decades in the Río de la Plata or elsewhere in Latin America shared that insistence on an ancient constitution, his language at times seems to essentialize this position. Still more helpful to grasping the complexity of postindependence Latin American political cultures remains the notion that they constituted extraordinary laboratories of constitutions, imaginaries, notions of citizenship and sovereignty, and rights and obligations in which an unusually broad range of ideas, practices, and legal and political concepts could be discussed.

It is Chiaramonte’s merit, together with a growing number of historians, to have rejected the idea that liberalism and perhaps even republicanism were automatically victorious in Latin America’s postindependence political cultures, a stance closely connected to his convincing portrayal of revisionism in Argentine history.

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Colonial Period

Insignia of Rank in the Nahua World: From the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century. By JUSTYNA OLKO. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2014. Figures. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xxii, 492 pp. Cloth, \$80.00.

Justyna Olko, an associate professor of Artes Liberales at the University of Warsaw, has written the definitive work on dress, jewelry, and all other accompanying symbols of rank in the late pre-Hispanic and early colonial Nahua eras. Building upon her earlier book, *Turquoise Diadems and Staffs of Office: Elite Costume and Insignia of Power in Aztec and Early Colonial Mexico* (2005), she examines a wide array of insignia of rank, by which she means “all components of elite dress and certain portable items . . . such as seats, mats, staffs, and weapons” (p. 2). Olko covers a lengthy period of time and a broad swath of central Mexico that included multiple ethnic and linguistic groups (beyond those who spoke Nahuatl) but that roughly coincided with the Triple Alliance or Aztec empire.

Analyzing an exhaustive array of sources that moves beyond those used by earlier scholars working on themes of Nahua clothing and accoutrements of rank, including Eduard Seler, Patricia Anawalt, and Carmen Aguilera, Olko uses textual, pictorial, and material evidence, with a heavy emphasis on Nahuatl-language codices from all over the region studied, some of these being relatively unknown. Her assembling and analyzing of such a vast array of sources is impressive. The interpretations that arise out of Olko’s painstaking reconstruction of the pre- and postconquest elite apparel and descriptions and images of rank, featured in the second and third chapters of the book, are then

developed into arguments about the purposes to which costuming was put and the meanings attached to the vast array of insignia used by rulers, nobles, soldiers, and bureaucratic functionaries, covered in the fourth and fifth chapters.

Among the most significant arguments and historiographical contributions that Olko makes are the following. First, she shows that Mexica regal insignia have a deep connection to symbols of power dating back not just to Tula and the Tolteca but to Teotihuacan and the Classic period Maya. Second, she convincingly demonstrates varieties of dynastic ornamentation among the rulerships of a variety of places, showing how the rulers of Texcoco and the ruling houses of Tlaxcala sought to differentiate their sources and images of power from those of the Mexica. An important way that these dynasties did this was by stressing their Chichimeca origins, a third major point. Scholars typically explain the ethnic and cultural history of the late Postclassic period in central Mexico as the result of the coming together of remnant Tolteca peoples and less sophisticated hunting-and-gathering migrants, Chichimeca, from the northern reaches of Mesoamerica, whom later Postclassic Nahua groups disparaged. But Olko demonstrates that visual imagery associated with Chichimeca identity could indicate the highest levels of prestige. This phenomenon is represented especially in Texcoco- and Tlaxcala-associated codices and suggests that the binary opposition that ethnohistorians draw between civilized and uncivilized, sedentary and nomad—also questioned by earlier scholars such as Rudolph Van Zantwijk and Nigel Davies—is too simplistic and does not fully capture how Nahuas thought about ethnic identity, power, and prestige.

A fourth point that Olko emphasizes is that while it is difficult to reconstruct local iconographic traditions beyond those of Texcoco and Tlaxcala for representing rank given the increasing influence of Mexica styles as the Triple Alliance domain of economic and political influence spread, it is indeed possible to find such localized visual representations. These emanate especially from areas east and south of Tenochtitlan, where political imagery illustrates forms of sociopolitical organization within the *altepetl* (kingdoms) of that area that differ from Tenochtitlan and regions to the west. Because evidence of the persistence of local repertoires of insignia of rank often comes from manuscripts produced in the colonial period, the fifth of Olko's arguments about the persistence of such symbolism into the colonial era finds strong support. Emblems of rulership, dynastic identity, and even military achievement continued to appear in visual representations of colonial officials and to be used in celebrations such as viceroys' entries or oaths to the king.

The book concludes with a brief chapter summarizing the author's main arguments, focusing particularly on the political implications of the construction and uses of costume imagery. It will remain for other scholars to tease out the economic implications of the amounts and types of production as well as trade and tribute patterns required to produce, transport, and distribute this vast array of goods. However, the actual ending to the book is its appendix, the "Dictionary of Insignia and Accouterments," which provides names of all items discussed, a brief description of each item's use, and a quotation about the item from a primary source. At once a reference work and analytical study, Olko's book as a whole could only be useful in highly specialized classes covering

Mesoamerican themes, particularly those relating to Nahua peoples and cultures. But it will serve as the standard work on items and imagery of rank and nobility for decades to come, and both the author and the University Press of Colorado deserve plaudits for its publication.

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Maya Ideologies of the Sacred: The Transfiguration of Space in Colonial Yucatan. By AMARA SOLARI. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013. Photographs. Plates. Illustrations. Maps. Figures. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xi, 212 pp. Cloth, \$55.00.

Amara Solari focuses on space as a critical dimension of negotiation and transformation in colonial Yucatan. She addresses the ways in which pre-Columbian Maya spaces became part of Christian ritual space but also explores the influence that Maya concepts of space and sacredness exerted on Franciscan strategies and Spanish administrative aims. Through early colonial Maya documents and information on construction of early churches and monasteries at Maya sites, particularly Itzmal, she succeeds in her goal of expanding awareness of how Maya actions contributed to the character of the post-Columbian landscape of Yucatan, both sacred and profane.

Space, transfiguration, and Maya cultural production tie the volume together, but each chapter is distinctive. The first two chapters discuss the Franciscan strategy of constructing churches in Maya sacred precincts and the policy of concentrating people in towns reconfigured to European grid patterns. Although this seems to underscore the dominance of Iberian culture, Solari shows how pre-Columbian ritual circumambulation lived on in Christian processions, which, like earlier Maya counterparts, involved movement through ritual space and interaction with effigies and painted scenes. Chapter 3 turns to visual sources, mainly from the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, to argue that the Maya conceived of the landscape as animate and linked to world creation. Her arguments also support the idea that early Maya maps or schema represented not strict spatial layouts but metaphorical relationships among political locales.

Chapter 4 discusses the relationship between land and history. The source is the Hunac Ceel epic in the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, which covers ninth- and thirteenth-century Itza lineage events. The Chumayel narrator treats Yucatan as unpopulated prior to Itza arrival and attributes to the Itza the naming of towns purportedly established as they moved through northern Yucatan. Solari describes the Itza's roughly circular counterclockwise route and cites other evidence to support the idea that the counterclockwise direction was the standard for Maya recollection of creative and foundational acts. Space and not time is the ordering principle. In addition, "the atemporal Maya chronology . . . focused on the spatial vacancy of the peninsula's geographic expanse provided legitimization for the Itza" (p. 89). Thus the narrative justifies Itza dominance as the story becomes a tale of creation.

Chapter 5 turns to early colonial Maya maps. Solari argues that the Maya used traditional spatial ideologies (such as the maps' circular format) to position themselves