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Anthropology

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Stresser-Péan, Guy. **The sun god and the savior: the Christianization of the Nahua and Totonac in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, Mexico.** University Press of Colorado, 2009. 627p bibl index afp DVD ISBN 9780870819322, \$75.00

It is uncommon to encounter a work that evokes the days of early ethnography, when researchers assiduously salvaged remnants of presumed disappearing worlds. Stresser-Péan's longitudinal study of religious practice in the northern Sierra region of Puebla in central Mexico is therefore a rich, rewarding find that begins with his 1947 doctoral study of the famous Volador Dance, where dancers descend from a pole in a dangerous spiral, and ends by contemplating the enduring significance that sacred practices hold today for lives affected by migration, economic uncertainty, and violence. Although the author develops no strong theoretical framework, the ethnographic and historical precision--bolstered by excellent photos, as well as a brief film focused on rituals featuring blood sacrifice, corn fecundity, and the living presence of male and female drum deities--leaves little room or necessity for theoretical diversion. Twenty chapters spanning nearly six centuries present fascinating studies of pilgrimages, divination, individual indigenous intellectuals, cosmogony, eschatology, and, above all, dances that keep the central Mexican cosmos in prayerful motion and its communities connected to a sacred landscape that readers are fortunate to view through Stresser-Péan's decades of respectful, sympathetic, and precise observations. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. All levels/libraries. -- *K. S. Fine-Dare, Fort Lewis College*