

Tezcatlipoca: Trickster and Supreme Deity. Ed. Elizabeth Baquedano.

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These seven essays originated with the Tezcatlipoca Symposium at London's Birkbeck College in November 2005. Tezcatlipoca, whose English name is widely accepted as "Smoking Mirror," is regarded by the collection's contributors as "the supreme deity of the Late Postclassic [ca. 1200–ca. 1521 CE] Aztec pantheon" (1). Tezcatlipoca's domains, along with the political uses of his iconography and nature, touched many aspects of daily life and religious culture over the period, and work on Tezcatlipoca has theorized the deity's suite of attributes and material objects as represented in contemporary sources. Guilhem Olivier's "comprehensive" (Susan Milbrath, "The Maya Lord of the Smoking Mirror," 171) examination of the god's layered nature, associations, and symbols in *Mockeries and Metamorphoses of an Aztec God: Tezcatlipoca, Lord of the Smoking Mirror* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2003) forms a point of departure for the present collection (Michael E. Smith, "The Archaeology of Tezcatlipoca," 8).

The book's contextualizing introduction, coauthored by archaeologist Nicholas J. Saunders and editor Baquedano, surveys Tezcatlipoca's complex nature and the related critical literature, and its chapters treat distinct but complementary topics: archaeology relevant to Tezcatlipoca (Smith); iconography associated with Tezcatlipoca's representations (Juan José Batalla Rosado); cosmic oppositions expressed and implied in Mexico's twin gods, Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcóatl (Feathered Serpent) (Olivier, trans. Michel Besson); Tezcatlipoca's and Huitzilopochtli's (Blue Hummingbird on the Left's) changeable imagery viewed in political contexts (Emily Umberger); sociopolitical adoption by the elite ruling-warrior class of Tezcatlipoca's gold objects (Baquedano); transcendent significance of the Tezcatlipoca impersonator's gender ambiguity in the Toxcatl sacrifice (Cecelia F. Klein); and Tezcatlipoca's Mayan metamorphosis and counterpart (Milbrath). Generous visual and graphic aids support the commentary: maps, tables of museum holdings and other data, sketches from codices and carvings, Christian-era images, and photographs and artistic reconstructions of material objects and fragments. A cumulative bibliography ("References") serves the reader well, as do endnotes attached to each chapter. The topical index would be even more serviceable were the names of scholars cited in the text included.

In the first chapter, Smith outlines the limiting effects of scholars' avoidance of archeological materials in work on religious studies in early Mexico, with the exception of the Templo Mayor project at Tenochtitlán. Smith cites inadequate documentation of museum collections, resulting in lacunae for some holdings and doubtful provenances assigned to others. Unsystematic records, then, along with the absence of a data corpus, hamper research on archeological finds. Smith assays a "preliminary" examination of the archeological evidence of "the Tezcatlipoca cult" (9) based on his close study of three associated objects (obsidian mirrors, the "flower flute," and stone platforms as altars) to theorize about the cult's origins and dissemination. Batalla Rosado looks past Tezcatlipoca's iconographic mirror and missing foot to examine the *ezpitzal* associated with Tezcatlipoca images in, for example, the Codex Borbonicus. Batalla Rosado notes the eventual corruption of the emblem's detail and its loss of significance in postcontact renderings.

Olivier probes layers of cultural and linguistic meaning attached to Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcóatl, nuancing traditional criticism's "stark" oppositions between the twin gods to theorize a convergence of oppositions grounded in their "twin-ness" (59) that acts as the force propelling nature's incessant creative process. Next, Umberger's critical treatment of Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli (and Painal) in painted and carved representations breaks from criticism's iconographical standards to favor a contextualized and open-ended approach to identifying and interpreting the signs. Umberger's historically contextualized criticism probes the metamorphosing identities of deities whose moveable markers at particular periods have tended to conflate their characters and confuse exact identification. Baquedano continues to probe the victorious "warrior god" aspect of Tezcatlipoca, tracing the deployment of his attributes as a rhetoric of imagery for political purposes. She examines the privileged use of gold in the late postclassical warrior culture as alluding to Tezcatlipoca's representations with gold and metal objects and corrects earlier ideas of gold's use and valorization at the period.

Using a long-window comparative approach involving text and images dating from the first century to the twentieth, Klein examines representations of Tezcatlipoca in the guise of the Toxcatl sacrificial double, androgynously represented but clearly male before and after the ceremony, with similar depictions of Christ. Klein probes the implied merging of the Toxcatl figure and sacrifice with Christ's and achieves an important critical distinction in the significance of the Toxcatl sacrifice. Milbrath's essay, likewise, extends beyond the internal uses and significance of Tezcatlipoca to argue that the Mayan classic-period deity Kawil forms Tezcatlipoca's Mayan counterpart; Chac has been proposed by other scholars. Milbrath's comparative treatment admits distinctions between Kawil and Tezcatlipoca but emphasizes their prominent thematic and representational convergences: both are linked with maize, each has an unusual missing foot, each wears a smoking mirror at the brow (Tezcatlipoca, in some renderings) or on the headdress (Kawil), and each has a connection with celestial cycles.

Tezcatlipoca: Trickster and Supreme Deity is a visually rich, critically grounded, well-balanced, and useful gathering of perspectives and essential data that will support the work of those new to the fields of early Mexico's religious studies, iconography, and Tezcatlipoca; likewise, it contributes to the present efforts of experienced scholars working in indigenous and colonial history and religious practices. For students, it offers historical perspectives of criticism, models of sound disciplinary methodologies, and suggestive interdisciplinary approaches; for experienced scholars, these chapters present new studies and developing perspectives and suggest questions for further investigation. Research into the competing and coexistent social structures and stratification of the period can benefit from these studies, and the book may prove a useful reference for literary and film critics whose objects of study reflect this period of Mexico's civilization. Page layouts are polished and readings are generally smooth, but further editorial efforts in some places would have been welcome; where a book released in 2014 admits the exculpatory note, "I wrote this chapter in 2007–8, so relevant recent references have not been included," a clarification justifying the omission of such a basic editorial-critical obligation is warranted. These matters aside, every chapter offers a rich source of images, data, and earnest, deeply informed critical thinking about the tantalizing complexities and problems inherent in the subject and its sources.