

tuguese local feminisms. For example, in a 1997 “Feminist Studies” article, the North American anthropologist Sharon Roseman contributes a close ethnographic read to the Galician feminist cultural review “Festa da Palabra Silenciada” (Celebration of Silenced Words), published since 1983 by the Feministas Independentes Galegas (Independent Galician Feminists) who, contrary to the dominant, androcentric portrayals of Galician nationalism, take the unrecognized voices of Galician women and make them visible and valuable additions to its continually changing story.

There are minor yet bothersome editorial mistakes like authors listed in the text and notes that fail to make into the “Bibliography.” The price is also prohibitive to add this fine book to private collections – and even – libraries.

“Two Sides of One River” is an important book and should have a wide audience outside of Iberian and European specialists. Paradoxically, in the end, despite the two nations being divided by a common river, if not a common language, Medeiros goes a long way in building an ethnographic bridge worthy of continued scholarly crossing.

Heidi Kelley

**Milbrath, Susan:** Heaven and Earth in Ancient Mexico. Astronomy and Seasonal Cycles in the Codex Borgia. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013. 190 pp., photos. ISBN 978-0-292-74373-1. Price: \$ 60.00

Susan Milbrath’s recent volume provides a new interpretation of pages 29–46 of the pre-Hispanic Codex Borgia, placed within the context of central Mexican cosmology and astronomical studies. Its five chapters consider “Context and Calendars in the Codex Borgia”; “Seasonal *Veintena* Festivals in Central Mexico”; “The Sun, the Moon, and Eclipses in the Borgia Group”; “Planetary Events in the Codex Borgia”; and “Astronomy and Natural History in the Codex Borgia.” The text is supplemented by a preface, 18 “synoptic” plates detailing Milbrath’s interpretations of the iconography and calendrical significance of pages 29–46, a glossary, and a series of color plates at the end of the book that illustrate pages 29–54 of the codex. Readers will appreciate the generous use of illustrations as they make their way through what is, by virtue of the subject matter, a complex line of argumentation.

One of the strengths of Milbrath’s study is the contextualization she provides, in the form of discussions of highland Mexican calendars, the likely provenience of the codex, and a detailed examination of central Mexican deities that play celestial or astronomical roles. She presents persuasive evidence that the codex was painted in Tlaxcala, although I find her claim to have “proved” this connection based on a comparison to murals from the site of Ocotelolco in Tlaxcala (xii) a bit overstated.

Using data drawn from the fields of ethnohistory, anthropology, art history, and archaeoastronomy, Milbrath proposes that the events portrayed on Borgia pages 29–46 serve as “an astronomical narrative detailing noteworthy events over the course of a year in the context of the Central Mexican festival calendar” (xi). Despite the fact that this section of the codex lacks dates in either the year

or day count (and, like all of the codices in the Borgia Group, it contains no hieroglyphic texts), Milbrath nevertheless presents a well-reasoned case for interpreting the sequence of pictures as showing Venus’ transformation from an evening star to a morning star and back again. Based on what she determines to be eclipse iconography on page 40, she relates these events to the year 1496.

Milbrath’s repositioning of the ending date of the festival calendar, which she associates with the “month” *Izcalli*, in accordance with Nicholson’s proposal (in place of *Tititl*, as Caso proposed in the same volume), may give pause to some readers. She also notes that “[s]hifting the *veintena* festivals one day earlier than the arrangement proposed in the 1971 articles by both Caso and Nicholson would position the yearbearer as the first day of the last *veintena* festival” (6), which she argues could be accounted for if the *veintena* festivals began on a different time of day than the 260-day *tonalpohualli* cycle with which it was paired. By making these adjustments, Milbrath is able to tie each of the 18 pages of the Borgia pages 29–46 narrative to a particular 20-day *veintena* festival and to suggest associated astronomical events that correspond with dating them seasonally.

As Milbrath notes, Borgia pages 29–46 have received considerable attention in previous discussions of the codex. They are addressed extensively in Elizabeth Boone’s book “Cycles of Time and Meaning in the Mexican Divinatory Codices” (Austin 2007). The two authors approach this section from very different perspectives – Boone interprets it as a cosmogonic narrative, whereas Milbrath views these pages as an astronomical and seasonal narrative that “can be tested against real events” (17). It does not seem incongruous that these two scholars could have reached such different interpretations of the material, however, as the recording of astronomical events was often based on a mythological foundation. In the Dresden Venus table, for example, Venus’ heliacal rise is linked to one or more previous eras and to battles between underworld and celestial deities, as discussed by Gabrielle Vail and Christine Hernández in “Re-Creating Primordial Time” (Boulder 2013).

Milbrath’s dating of page 40 is based on her interpretation that the iconography depicts a solar eclipse visible in Central Mexico, similar to observed eclipses recorded in the Aztec historical annals. Based on other lines of evidence suggesting that Codex Borgia dates to the latter part of the 15th century, Milbrath correlates the proposed eclipse with a solar eclipse recorded for 1496 in the Aztec annals. The scene in question shows a black-painted deity in a squatting or birthing position with its head thrown back. Nine solar disks are arranged on its body – two on each arm, two on each leg, and a large one in the region of the torso. Each is shown being gouged or cut by various figures that Milbrath interprets as different manifestations of the Venus deity Quetzalcoatl. The black coloration of the central figure is interpreted as the darkened sun, whereas the eclipse glyphs with cuts are believed to depict the sun being eclipsed. Drawing comparisons with the iconographic program from the Aztec Bilimek vessel, which shows Venus gods attacking the eclipsed sun, Mil-

brath offers this as evidence in support of her interpretation of the Borgia scene as likewise portraying a solar eclipse.

Studies by other codical scholars have suggested different interpretations of the iconographic component. Boone, for example, describes the central image as the birth of Nanahuatzin, a pustule-covered deity who immolated himself to become the sun. She interprets this scene in purely cosmogonic terms, as part of a creation narrative. In contrast, Milbrath's model of the Borgia pages as an astronomical narrative based on events that were actually witnessed challenges the prevalent view of the Borgia Group codices as being essentially prognosticatory or predictive in nature.

Milbrath provides additional data to support her astronomical model, suggesting that each page of the Borgia narrative can be associated with significant events in Venus' cycle. For example, she interprets page 29 as showing Venus-Quetzalcoatl's immolation, an interpretation suggested by the presence of ashes in a greenstone bowl designed to hold the hearts of sacrificial victims. Drawing on a description from the colonial period *Anales de Cuauhtitlán*, Milbrath relates this imagery to the death of the Evening Star during inferior conjunction (Venus' disappearance from view when it travels in front of the sun). According to the *Cuauhtitlán* account, Quetzalcoatl undertook a final journey, leading him from the west to the east, where he set himself on fire and spent eight days in the underworld before emerging as the Morning Star deity.

While I find Milbrath's astronomical interpretations appealing, this volume is certain to engender considerable discussion concerning how pre-Hispanic codices were used and the role of astronomical narratives in the everyday and ritual lives of Late Postclassic Mexican populations. As a note of caution to those interested in pursuing these questions, "Heaven and Earth in Ancient Mexico" contains a number of errors that were not corrected prior to printing. The author is happy to provide a list of corrections to anyone requesting them, but it is unfortunate that these errors appear in the hardcover edition. I strongly urge the press to provide a corrected version, in either paper or ebook format, at the earliest opportunity. An ebook with links between the text, illustrations, and schematics would greatly enhance the reading experience and allow readers to more quickly grasp the basics of Milbrath's novel approach to interpreting the Borgia 29–46 narrative.

Gabrielle Vail

**Moberg, Mark:** *Engaging Anthropological Theory. A Social and Political History.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2013. 360 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-69999-0. Price: £ 80.00

Many undergraduate, and most graduate, academic programs in anthropology require that students complete a course in the history of anthropological theory. The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the intellectual legacy to which they, as newcomers, are heir. The course also serves as a systematic introduction to theory, in case students have missed it elsewhere in their curriculum.

Mark Moberg has written "Engaging Anthropologi-

cal Theory" as a textbook for such a course. His textbook embeds theory in the context of social and political trends, thereby anchoring it in the real world. The textbook is also written in accessible – and opinionated – prose, so that it should engage students and belie their common preconception that learning theory is irrelevant or boring.

Moberg begins with a discussion of various issues in the history and philosophy of epistemology, focusing on the nature of science and the difficulties of applying it to anthropology. He starts with the historical origins of empiricism, David Hume's philosophical challenge to it, and Karl Popper's resolution of the challenge in the form of logical positivism, to which Moberg juxtaposes Thomas Kuhn's concept of paradigms. Moberg then shows how these issues apply to anthropological fieldwork, citing as examples controversies surrounding the early-twentieth-century fieldwork of Bronisław Malinowski and Margaret Mead as well as the postmodern critique of scientific fieldwork that overtook anthropology in the 1980s. This organizational approach sensitizes students to theory and allows them to read his historical narrative more critically.

That narrative begins with what Moberg calls the "prehistory" of anthropology, by which he means anthropology before the mid-nineteenth century, ranging from Classical ideas through Enlightenment thinking to the sociology of Auguste Comte, which Moberg situates in the context of a backlash to Enlightenment-inspired Napoleonic wars. He then moves on to an exposition of Marxism, not only the formal theory of dialectical materialism but also the increasing political awareness of the plight of industrial factory workers, manifest, for example, in the Luddite rebellion of 1811–12. Interesting here is his analysis of how the New Deal policies of US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt staved off more radical reactions to the failures of capitalism in the Great Depression, helping set the stage for the overt political repression of Marxism, including Marxist anthropologists, in the early years of the Cold War. It is important to Moberg that students understand capitalism, because capitalism figures prominently in his analysis of numerous anthropological theories. At the end of the book he explains the rise of postmodern theory in part as a reaction to structural changes in global capitalism.

Moberg's presentation of the theories of Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, next of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin, and then of Edward Burnett Tylor and Lewis Henry Morgan, is essentially traditional. Both Durkheim and Weber reacted to Marx, with Durkheim stressing social solidarity rather than conflict and Weber stressing individual agency rather than external forces as the engine of social change. Spencer and Darwin were both evolutionists, with Spencer the original "Social Darwinist" and champion of competition among individuals as the best way to eliminate the weak and improve the human race. This discussion allows Moberg to link social Darwinism to wide range of social philosophies, including racism, laissez-faire economics, and the libertarian philosophy of Ayn Rand. Moberg, like most historians of anthropology, sees Tylor and Morgan as the first generation of recognized anthropologists, and he uses his discus-