

Indigenous Cultures of Latin America: Past and Present

This book explores a seminal topic concerning the Mesoamerican past: the religious festivals that took place during the eighteen periods of twenty days, or *veintenas*, into which the solar year was divided. Pre-Columbian societies celebrated these festivals through complex rituals, which involved the priests and gods themselves, embodied in diverse beings and artifacts. Specific sectors of society also participated in the festivals, while city inhabitants usually attended public ceremonies. As a consequence, this ritual cycle played a significant role in Mesoamerican religious life; at the same time, it informs us about social relations in pre-Columbian societies. Both religious and social aspects of the solar cycle festivals are tackled in the twelve contributions in this book, which aims to address the entire *veintena* sequence and as much of the territory and history of Mesoamerica as possible. Specifically, the book revisits long-standing discussions of the solar cycle festivals, but also explores these religious practices in original ways, in particular through investigating understudied rituals and offering new interpretations of rites that have previously been extensively analyzed. Other chapters consider the entire *veintena* sequence through the prism of specific topics, providing multiple though often complementary analyses. In light of these myriad topics, this book will attract the attention of scholars and graduate students with interests in Mesoamerica and early Latin America, as well as ethnohistory, cultural history, history of religions, art history, archaeology and anthropology.

“This insightful and innovative volume probes and thus recovers more fully some of the meanings and functions of Mesoamerican month festivals. It should be of interest to all Mesoamericanists as well as scholars interested in the role of indigenous ritual in general.”

Cecelia Klein, Professor Emerita, Department of Art History, UCLA

“This timely volume pays tribute to the Belgian scholar Michel Graulich (1944–2015), who revolutionized our knowledge of the religious life of Tenochtitlan and its neighboring cities by interpreting the great collective rituals in light of mythology. Inspired by his work, researchers from a variety of disciplines provide novel interpretations of the eighteen 20-day festivals of the Mesoamerican solar calendar. This innovative collection includes essays that focus on Central Mexican communities during the Late Postclassic period, while others draw lucid comparisons with societies such as the Maya and analyze transformations resulting from the Spanish Conquest.”

Leonardo López Luján, Director of the Templo Mayor Project,
Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia

“This volume is an innovative analysis of the Mesoamerican *veintena* festivals and the gods to whom they were dedicated. Each chapter is authoritative, very well written, and easy to follow. Readers will appreciate the multi-disciplinary focus that also draws on studies of colonial and contemporary indigenous beliefs and performances to demonstrate a remarkable continuity with the Pre-Columbian past. The volume is provocative and will surely stimulate new debate on the relationship of the fixed and moveable feasts of ancient Mesoamerica calendars that is long past due.”

John M.D. Pohl, Department of Art History, UCLA

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Mesoamerican Rituals and the Solar Cycle

New Perspectives on the *Veintena* Festivals

Élodie Dupey García & Elena Mazzetto, Editors