tential are a second theme dealt with in several papers. Again this is an issue Watanabe identified some years ago, in a paper that is reprinted here. All these studies come to the conclusion that vigorous skilled workers are more proficient than their young unskilled or aged counterparts. This conclusion is hardly counterintuitive, but the studies now give it explicit substantiation.

The group most likely to find *Human Activity System* useful and interesting is "ethnoarcheologists" who realize that an understanding of the archeological record requires in-depth knowledge of primitive artifacts and technical knowledge. Their goals are unlike those of Watanabe and his colleagues, but they will find the data and techniques presented in these papers worthy of study.

PETER BLEED
*Department of Anthropology, University of Nebraska, Lincoln 68508*

## Oaxacans

**The Zapotecs**. Princes, Priests, and Peasants. JOSEPH W. WHITECOTTON. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1977. xiv, 338 pp., illus. $14.95. The Civilization of the American Indian Series.

Joseph Whitecotton has undertaken the ambitious task of providing a coherent culture history of the Zapotecs of Oaxaca, south central Mexico. The book is the first comprehensive culture history of the Zapotecs in the English language and a worthy successor and companion to the collection of papers entitled *Los Zapotecos*, edited by Lucio Mendieta y Nuñez, which appeared in 1949.

The book reflects the approach of Mexican "anthropological history," wherein all types of data—archeological, historical, ethnographic, and linguistic—are utilized. The author has relied on several dozen modern studies, in particular the researches of Oaxacanists Alfonso Caso, Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, Ignacio Bernal, and John Paddock, as well as numerous published documents, among them native pictographic manuscripts, the geographical *relaciones* commissioned by King Phillip and completed between 1579 and 1581, the great Cordova *Vocabulario* of 16th-century Zapotec, and the *Geográfica descripción* of Fray Francisco de Burgoa. He has made little use of unpublished material. The book is more a synthesis of existing studies than a marshaling of new evidence or a new analysis or reinterpretation of the evolution of Zapotec culture.

The story begins about 1000 B.C., in the Formative period, and concludes with a brief consideration of the Zapotec as modern Mexican peasants. The first two chapters deal with the early settlement and origins of agriculture in the Oaxaca Valley and with the Classic period of state building and urbanization. The Classic period was the time of the florescence of Monte Albán, and the author discusses what can be inferred about the social and political organization of that center. The Post-Classic period, when Monte Albán was abandoned and smaller communities and towns proliferated in the valley, is then considered, with sections on documentary sources, Mixtec-Zapotec relations in the valley, the Aztec conquest of the valley, and the Zapotec tributary state. This is followed by a detailed chapter, probably the best and most useful part of the book for the social anthropologist, on Zapotec social organization on the eve of the Spanish conquest. This chapter contains the best description of the Prehispanic Zapotec class system available in any language. Religion is briefly considered.

In the chapter "Zapotec elites and peasants in New Spain" Posthispanic developments in technology, population, the cacique class, local political organization, colonial administration, land tenure, tribute and labor, and church organization are considered. Unfortunately, the attention given to social organization in Prehispanic times is not matched in the account of the Colonial period. Rather, the author presents an all too brief account derived from the Oaxaca studies of William Taylor and the more generalized historical works of Charles Gibson and François Chevalier and makes little or no use of the abundant archival resources from Mexico and Spain that would shed light on such topics as class structure, intergroup relations, marketing and trade networks, multilevel political organization, and law.

The concluding chapter, "The Zapotecs in modern Mexico," is overly brief and overly general and places too much emphasis on events and rhetoric from the national political scene during the 19th century. The reader is left with the impression that nothing much happened in Oaxaca or that as the nation went so went Oaxaca. A lot did, in fact, happen in Oaxaca in the 19th century. It was the most important period of reformulation of Oaxaca society since the decades immediately following the Spanish conquest and was a truly formative period for modern Zapotec society and local and regional economic development. To deal with the tumultuous and climactic period from 1800 to 1930 by brief references to La Reforma, the pronouncements of Benito Juárez, the deeds of Porfirio Díaz, or the "social movement" ideology of the early-20th-century Revolution (much of it ex post facto) simply does not do justice to the intricate dynamics of social change in Oaxaca during those momentous years. In this, however, the author is simply following accepted practice in the anthropological literature of Mexico.

I would have preferred that the author take a stand on some of the existing controversies, that he examine fresh documentary sources, that he get involved in the archeology of the area, that he do extended ethnographic research in Oaxaca, that he examine such topics as evolving patterns of social stratification, multilevel politics, intergroup relations, trade, ceremonialism, or ideology—in short, that he move us beyond our present state of knowledge and understanding of this great, dynamic, and adaptively persistent culture. But the requirements of a single reviewer do not reflect the needs of the world at large. *The Zapotecs* is a fine book for most readers with an interest in Mexican, Oaxacan, and Zapotec culture history. It is well written, well documented, well illustrated, and, as has come to be expected of University of Oklahoma Press books on American Indians, beautifully produced. It can be recommended for classroom use, and it stands as an example of the kind of long-term or regional culture history that anthropologists and historians should be doing. One hopes it will provide impetus for regional and local culture histories for other areas of Mexico and Latin America and elsewhere.

RONALD SPORES
*Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235*

## A Region of Recent Interest

**Nubia under the Pharaohs**. BRUCE G. TRIGGER. Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1976. 216 pp., illus. $18.75. Ancient Peoples and Places, vol. 85.

**Nubia: Corridor to Africa**. WILLIAM Y. ADAMS. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1977. xxvi, 798 pp., illus. + plates. $35.

Neither fully Mediterranean nor African in its geography, culture, or ethnic relationship and only occasionally independent of strong outside influences, Nubia—that land lying above Aswan and extending southward along the Nile to the Fourth Cataract in the Sudan—has

Neolithic rock pictures at Abka, a site near the Second Cataract of the Nile. "Hundreds of individual drawings were engraved on a group of granite boulders scattered over several acres. . . . Identifiable fauna among the . . . pictures include giraffe, oryx, gazelle, hartebeeste, wild ass, elephant, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, ostrich, and hare. . . . There are also hunters with bows and arrows and with dogs, and various other human figures. . . . There are in addition a large number of purely abstract designs. . . . The occupations at Abka are dated between 7000 and 4000 BC. Since the drawings here seem to be of the earliest type found in Nubia, this probably also fixes the date for the introduction of rock art into the Nile Valley." [Photograph by Rex Keating, reproduced in *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*]

The "castle" at Karanog, one of the four "metropolitan" centers of the Meroitic province of Lower Nubia. Karanog differs from the other centers in that "its rather scattered cluster of houses was defended not by a girdle wall but by [this] massive, three-storey castle of mud brick which dominated the surrounding buildings and countryside. It cannot be dated with absolute certainty to Meroitic times, for nothing distinctive was found within it. . . . However [its] smooth, whitewashed walls and round, brick vaults . . . are much more in character with the best Meroitic houses . . . than they are with any later structures." The recent destruction of Meroitic towns "has been one of the greatest misfortunes of the Nubian archaeological campaign, for none of the four was investigated as thoroughly or as systematically as its importance warranted." [Photograph from the University of Pennsylvania Museum, reproduced in *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*]

traditionally been considered only a minor province of much more interesting people: Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Christians, Moslems, nomads, and others. The ancient Egyptians called the people of Nubia "miserable," "lesser breeds." They exploited its raw materials, conscripted its men, and generally left it at that. Others, who had never been there, first thought Nubia to be a land of monsters or gods. Some thought it the home of Prester John. Later, it was viewed as a dismal cultural backwater, deserving only of being ignored.

Until recently, few scholarly disciplines have wanted anything to do with Nubia. Because Nubia borrowed cultural elements from so many directions, because it has, as William Adams says, lain "upon the frontier of civilization without ever fully moving across it," because it has managed to appear different from anything scholars were accustomed to, and because it has a span of occupation covering many thousands of years, it has been impossible to decide to whom the study of the region rightly belonged. Historians of northeastern Africa have ignored it, concentrating instead upon developments to its north and south. Anthropologists have ignored it, too, as indeed they have ignored nearly everything north of Khartoum. Egyptologists did take some interest in Nubia after the late 19th century, but it was only indirect. To them, Nubia was a barren stretch of desert in which an occasional Egyptian temple or fort or quarry inscription might provide a few more details to embellish the study of Egyptian imperialism. Practically no one believed that Nubia could ever produce data of more than such tangential value.

It was the enlargement of the first Aswan Dam in 1908–10, its second enlargement in 1934, and the consequent flooding of much of Lower Nubia that first prompted archeological surveys of the area. The surveys revealed evidence of a fascinating indigenous culture as well as further evidence of foreign activities. But little was done with these data.

It was not until Egypt laid plans for the building of the Aswan High Dam and for a reservoir that would flood nearly all the inhabited parts of Nubia that a systematic study of its archeological record seemed important. Even then, the emphasis was upon the dismantling and reestablishment of monuments that the dynastic Egyptians had built (such as Abu Simbel). But thanks to the work of over 60 expeditions from over a dozen countries, which surveyed the areas to be flooded and made test excavations of

sites considered especially significant, it now is possible to do more with Nubia than simply to relegate it to a footnote in an Egyptian history book. It also seems an appropriate time to do so. The material now available to us is fresh in our minds, and it is very likely all we will ever have: today, Nubia is under tens of meters of water.

Two of the most recent books to discuss Nubia in detail are Bruce Trigger's *Nubia under the Pharaohs* and William Adams's *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*.

In spite of the fact that Egyptologists have often ignored Nubia, they have considered it their special domain, and Egyptologists have been responsible for most of the excavations conducted there and for practically all syntheses of Nubian history. Trigger and Adams, however, are anthropologists. Trigger was one of the first to deal with Nubian culture in an anthropological fashion and to treat it as a subject to which current archeological theory might be applied. His *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia* has rightly become a classic because of this approach. Adams, formerly director of archeological salvage operations for Unesco and the Sudanese government, spent seven years excavating in Nubia and was one of the first to bring modern archeological techniques to Nubian sites. His work at such major sites as Meinarti put Nubian archeology on a scientific footing and helped to make Nubia one of the world's best-documented archeological regions.

Both books, as might be expected given the authors' backgrounds, deal extensively with archeological data, and they are almost the first publications in which the textual records of an ancient Nile culture have been given only equal, rather than exclusive, billing. But here the similarities end.

Trigger suggests that his present book might have been subtitled "the archeology of an ancient imperialism." He restricts his study to the period prior to Egypt's 25th Dynasty in 656 B.C. and concentrates almost exclusively on the evidence of Egypt's activities in Nubia. In doing so, Trigger has produced a very traditional kind of "Nubian" history, similar (although much better documented) to what Egyptologists have been doing for decades. In spite of the acknowledged vitality and longevity of Nubia's own cultural development, evidence of it is often subordinated to evidence of the Egyptian presence.

The Kerma Culture shows that the Nubians had developed a wealthy and powerful society before 1600 B.C. This culture borrowed and adapted many Egyptian cultural elements as its own, but it also rejected some, favored its own indigenous traditions, and remained distinct from its neighbors.

The greatly increased Egyptian military presence during the New Kingdom prevented the development of a fully independent Nubian society. But Egypt's presence was relatively short-lived, and after about 800 B.C. an alliance of Egyptian and Nubian priests, both groups dedicated to the god Amon, created a Nubian monarchy whose power extended into Egypt itself. Under Piankhi (751–716 B.C.), the most powerful of these monarchs, Nubian control was pushed north into the Egyptian Delta. Here, too, there is ample evidence that Nubia retained many of its independent ways, even in the face of heavy cultural pressure.

The period following this expansion has been called by Adams the "golden age of dynastic civilization in Nubia." Nubia returned to its former borders and, from about 400 B.C. to A.D. 400, in what is called the Meroitic Empire, it produced a rich and vital civilization, partly borrowed but nevertheless basically Nubian in character. It survived until the coming of Christianity to the region, and then too it borrowed selectively.

Whereas Trigger has emphasized the borrowed culture elements, the loans, and the ties between Egypt and Nubia Adams has tried to place them in cultural perspective and has emphasized the indigenous cultural strands that serve to bind the earliest periods of Nubian history to the most recent. He traces the history of Nubia from the earliest Paleolithic to the Nubian resettlement programs of 1964, with emphasis upon our knowledge of indigenous developments and with excellent summaries of the Napatan and Meroitic periods. Such a survey is not easy: it must cover over 40,000 years of human history, trace a multitude of diverse foreign influences, and yet paint a picture of a single people who, throughout, managed to preserve their own cultural identity. The result, as one would expect of so ambitious a task, is sometimes superficial. But it works. No one who reads Adams's book can escape the conclusion that Nubia must be treated as a coherent entity rather than as a collection of disparate and unrelated episodes, that its internal continuity is at least as important as the foreign impositions it has seen.

The epilogue of Adams's book, in which he attempts to show how such a reconstruction of Nubian history might affect general historical theory, should be ignored; it does not belong here. But its inclusion is a minor failing. *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* is the best study of Nubia available. It stands as solid proof that anthropological data can make major contributions to fields of history, that "new" archeology can contribute to Egyptology.

In some ways it is unfair to compare the books of Trigger and Adams. They have proclaimed different goals and consequently have selected and weighed their sources differently. Trigger has done a good job of tracing Egypt's role in ancient Nubia. But if one wants a thorough survey of the history of Nubia and buys only one book it should be Adams's comprehensive study.

KENT R. WEEKS
*Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley 94720*

## A Peruvian Burial

**The Art and Archaeology of Pashash**. TERENCE GRIEDER. University of Texas Press, Austin, 1978. viii, 268 pp., illus. $22.50.

Around A.D. 500 the body of a high-status individual, along with three separate offertory caches containing at least 277 items, was buried at the ceremonial and political center of Pashash in the northern highlands of Peru. This grave, unearthed in 1971 and 1973, is the most elaborate Peruvian burial that has been scientifically excavated and recorded in minute detail. The description of the funerary offerings and the study of their symbolism form the focus of *The Art and Archaeology of Pashash*.

There are several minor flaws in Grieder's account. The personification of grave goods as "male" or "female" should depend on the analysis of skeletal material, not vice versa, but here the poorly preserved skeletal remains are identified as those of a woman on the basis of accompanying artifacts. In addition, the contention that some similarities between Pashash Recuay ceramics and earlier south coastal styles indicates domination by a foreign elite is an example of the invasionism that occasionally threatens to swamp Peruvian archeology. However, in complaining about these interpretations I do not want to overemphasize them; they are advanced tentatively and pertain to matters that are peripheral to Grieder's main arguments.