

predate his own study, were not trying to confine these dialects geographically or demean them intellectually. Instead their regional approach led them properly to the two areas, the Caribbean and the Carolina coast, where North American black speech had its most formative development among the most concentrated groups of Afro-Americans at the earliest period in time. Dillard evidences too little awareness of these demographic realities.

If Dillard's book is widely discussed, as it should be, American historians may be prodded to give linguists and others a sharper picture of the distribution and movement of black Americans over time and to demonstrate that the primary sources containing relevant linguistic data have scarcely been scratched. When this is done, unduly hostile schools of language history may become reconciled in their common pursuit of further knowledge. And the phenomenon of black English may become understood before it can be buried. Ya dig?

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Early Mesoamerican Culture

The Aztecs, Maya, and Their Predecessors. Archaeology of Mesoamerica. MURIEL PORTER WEAVER. Seminar, New York, 1972. xvi, 348 pp., illus. \$11.95. Studies in Archeology.

Archeologists wishing to recommend a basic introduction to the culture history of ancient Mesoamerica have been required to specify several books, sections of specialists' summaries such as *The Handbook of Middle American Indians*, or portions of monographs devoted to larger geographical areas. With the appearance of *The Aztecs, Maya, and Their Predecessors* the need for a single introductory volume has been more than adequately met. Technically well produced and profusely illustrated, this synthesizing volume traces "... a history of culture events in Mesoamerica ..." (p. 2). Relatively brief chapters are devoted to geography and linguistic relationships, early population movements, and the process of domestication. The major emphasis is on the evolution and historical development of complex societies in both Highland and Lowland zones. Weaver has chosen to use the more traditional divisions of Preclassic, Classic, and Early

and Late Postclassic, rather than a sequence of developmental stages, in presenting her data. This would seem to be a wise choice since the older, basically chronological, divisions are more useful in presenting the disparate rates of evolutionary growth in the various subregions of Mesoamerica.

Weaver has attempted to present a unified picture of cultural development in Mesoamerica. How well does she succeed? Looking first at the strengths of the volume (and these are considerable), one is struck by the author's obvious familiarity with the basic resources in both Spanish and English. Current research, including work still in progress, is skillfully worked into the narrative presentation. In theoretical orientation, the book is frankly syncretic. The presentation of data on regional sequences or site development is interlarded with both small- and large-scale explanatory theories and hypotheses. Although an attempt is made to choose one or another of these explanations as more probable, the lack of a single guiding theoretical orientation or explanatory framework is evident. Ecological, materialistic, structural, and "historical" explanations are all invoked at differing times. However, although this theoretical pluralism may be uncomfortable to some researchers, it is in part because of it that the text has a richness of texture and content unmatched in single-framework or explanation-oriented works.

This volume appears at a time when regional syntheses are appearing for many portions of the New World. The increasing quantity and scope of archeological research in the Americas has been one factor involved in a shift in research priorities. In a sense, the publication of these regional syntheses marks the end of a stage of archeological research concerned with the rapid delimitation of regional cultural sequences. Building on these sequences, an increasing number of archeologists are turning to problem-oriented research concerned with reconstructing the internal structure of settlements, regions, and large-scale economic systems. More detailed questions, based on models derived from cultural ecological theory, general systems theory, and a variety of other disciplines, are being posed for testing with archeological data. Weaver is aware of these developments and devotes a whole chapter to the new explanatory frameworks and research orientations. That these approaches are not so fully integrated in her presenta-

tion reflects their relatively recent emergence in Mesoamerican archeology.

Weaver's book is an outstanding example of archeological regional integration presented in a narrative fashion. In the preface, she reports the hope expressed by a Mexican colleague that the book will be understandable. For both the nonspecialist and the Mesoamerican archeologist this goal has been admirably achieved.

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Environmental Physiology

The Effects of Pressure on Organisms. A symposium, Bangor, North Wales, Sept. 1971. MICHAEL A. SLEIGH and ALISTER G. MACDONALD, Eds. Published for the Society for Experimental Biology by Academic Press, New York, 1972. xii, 516 pp., illus. \$24.50. Symposia of the Society for Experimental Biology, No. 26.

The breadth of interest in the effects of hydrostatic pressure on biological function is admirably represented in this compendium. The efforts of the symposium organizers, the editors, and the contributors have resulted in a book which should be a stimulus to research with high pressures.

The contributors to the first quarter of the book give an overview of the effects of pressure on molecular structure and function. Their chapters are judiciously referenced so that a reader can delve more deeply into the molecular effects of pressure that are discussed. It is possible to find out from these chapters what, for example, pressure does to a solubility, to a pH, to a hydrogen bond, or to a hydrophobic bond. A knowledge of the physical and chemical effects of pressure discussed in these chapters is essential for the formulation of hypotheses concerning some of the biological phenomena discussed in subsequent ones.

The remainder of the book deals with manifestations of the actions of high pressures on biological functions ranging from the activity of bacterial and fish enzymes to the behavior of large vertebrates. The motivation for most of these studies is to increase our understanding of the effects of naturally occurring hydrostatic pressures, up to about 1100 atmospheres in the deepest parts of the oceans. The articles in this book clearly indicate that there is