TEMPLE IN SOCIETY

edited by
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Contents

Michael V. Fox: Preface  v  
Samuel Noah Kramer: The 1  
The Eninnum  2  
The Ekur  7  
The E'engurra  12  
The Eanna  13  
Menahem Haran: Temple ar  
Israel  17  
Houses of God and Priesthood  
Synagogue and Prayer  21  
Offerings, Prayer, Prostration  
Conclusion  24  
Walter Burkert: The Meaning  
Classical Greece  27  
The Idea of a Temple  29  
The Use of Temples in Cult  
Temple and Polis System  31  
Conclusion  44  
C. J. Fuller: The Hindu Ten  
Architecture and Worship  5  
Brahmanical and non-Brahm  
Temples and Kings  55  
Kingship, Sacrifice, and Gifts  
Local Temples and “Little Ki  
Community and Deity Festiv  
Conclusion  65  
Gary M. Feinman: Mesoam  
The Plan of the Temple  68  
Evolution of the Temple  70  
The Temple as Symbol  71  
The Priesthood and the Activ  
Economics and the Temple  
Conclusion  78
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Mesoamerican Temples

GARY M. FEINMAN

RECENTLY, RICHARD BLANTON AND I (1984) argued that pre-Columbian Mesoamerica was in large part defined and interconnected by the trade and movement of luxury items and precious materials. This interpretation contrasts with Wallerstein’s (1974) conception of pre-industrial Europe as a macro-region linked by the utilitarian exchanges of food and fuel. We also suggested that in ancient Mesoamerica many of these exotic raw materials and labor-intensive finished goods, such as cotton and textiles, shell, cocoa, gems, metal, and decorated ceramic vessels, were recognized as making symbolic statements about the purity and power of their owners (Blanton et al. 1981: 245–46). Furthermore, we noted that many sacred concepts, their physical representations, rituals, and cult figures (such as the feathered serpents, lords of the underworld, and spirits of rain-lightning; Blanton et al. 1981: 247–48), as well as blood-letting, human sacrifice, ancestor veneration, and funeral rituals, were pan-regional, understood by the elite across Mesoamerica. Thus, as I developed an interest in understanding what defined the spatial extent of ancient Mesoamerica (interconnecting the diverse polities and peoples of the Mesoamerican world), I grew to accept Thomas A. Lee’s (1978: 2) statement that “since one of the characteristics of Mesoamerica is its surprisingly uniform religion it might be expected that religion could have been important in the establishment and maintenance of communication and cultural contact throughout the area.”

During the last decade, interest and information about pre- Columbian religion, and particularly temples, also has been fostered by significant excavations at the Aztec Templo Mayor in downtown Mexico City by Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History. Begun in 1978 after the chance discovery (by an electrical worker) of a carved stone two meters below the street, the major horizontal uncovering of ancient Tenochtitlan’s Great Temple has provided archaeologists with a basic plan of the edifice, how it was
enhanced during the years prior to the Conquest, as well as additional insight into temple activities and ritual (Matos Moctezuma 1984a). Since archaeological findings have been complemented by 16th-century Spanish narratives describing the temple, our picture is more complete than that from most other Mesoamerican temples for which we are dependent on the archaeological record alone. Yet compared to the wealth of information on ancient Old World temples, even data on 16th-century Mesoamerican temples remain relatively sparse. The quality of the ancient Mesoamerican record cannot match the detailed richness that we have from regions where more voluminous historical materials have survived.

Clearly, the Templo Mayor, whose twin sanctuaries towered over the Central Precinct of Mesoamerica's largest and most powerful Conquest-era city, was not typical of pre-Columbian temples in size, grandeur, or importance. And indeed, it is somewhat deceptive, and troublesome, to present a single picture of the temple from any region. Yet through contextual comparisons of this relatively well-documented Central Mexican case with a broader spatial and temporal sample of Mesoamerican temples, more general properties of this pre-Hispanic institution can be seen. On a similar theme, Joyce Marcus (1983: 232) has noted previously "that the plan of the temples is one of the least varied and most conservative of all Mesoamerican features from region to region, being far more predictable than the form of the palace, the plan of the city, or the degree of urban concentration of craft specialists." Although space/time variation in Mesoamerican temples will not be ignored, the principal focus here is on general features, to facilitate a comparison of this pre-Columbian institution with the temple in other pre-industrial domains.

**The Plan of the Temple**

Archaeologists too often have tended to identify as a temple any structure that is both non-residential and incompletely understood. I have tried to avoid this trap by adopting a rather conservative definition of the Mesoamerican temple, guided by 16th-century ethnohistoric accounts (see Marcus 1978; Nicholson 1971: 438). According to these descriptions, the Mesoamerican temple was generally a rectangular structure with a single opening entering into one of its long sides. Temple structures normally were elevated on truncated pyramid mounds. Most frequently, they were composed of at least two rooms, an outer chamber and a slightly raised, inner, more sacred sanctuary.
As early as 1913, Herbert Spinden (99), writing about the Maya, suggested that a simple room with a door in the center of one of its long sides, was the starting-point for the temple (as well as for Maya palaces) and that this simple room was modified by interior partitions until there was a clear development of the sanctuary or inner sacred chamber. More recently, Joyce Marcus (1983: 230–31) has observed that this basic temple plan is remarkably standard across Mesoamerica, with two-room temples known from major Classic period cities in the Peten (Tikal), the Valley of Oaxaca (Monte Alban), and Central Mexico (Teotihuacan). At Monte Alban, Jorge Acosta (1965) noted that Classic period temples had the same basic plan as those from 200 B.C., and Marcus (1983) and Flannery (1983: 132) have described comparable temple layouts at secondary centers in the Valley of Oaxaca from both epochs. Marcus (1978: 174) also has traced the two-room temple to 16th-century Oaxaca where, as with earlier Oaxacan temples, they generally were positioned in elevated locations. Based on her reading of ethnohistoric accounts, Marcus (1978: 174–75) found that worshippers could enter only the outer room of the temple, while the slightly raised, more sacred, inner chamber was restricted to priests.

Maya temples, at times composed of one or three rooms rather than the more common two, were in general somewhat less homogeneous than those in the Valley of Oaxaca (Pollock 1965; Andrews 1975; Marcus 1978, 1983). Yet as in Oaxaca, these rectangular Maya temple structures (containing relatively little interior space and a single entryway) were normally elevated on pyramidal substructures or platforms. Harry Pollock (1965: 406–11) has described Maya temples as intermediate compared to shrines and palaces in size and elaboration, as well as more regular in form than the latter.

In Central Mexico, the dual sanctuary plan, found at the Templo Mayor, may extend back roughly 1500 years to Teotihuacan (Millon 1976: 238). At the Templo Mayor, each sanctuary had a single room with altars along the back wall, a plan basically similar to one-room temples elsewhere in Mesoamerica (Matos Moctezuma 1982). During Aztec times, a twin temple was also built at Tenayuca in the State of Mexico (Marquina 1951: 164–80). As noted previously by Marcus (1983: 232), the earliest sanctuaries at Tenayuca had only one room with a small altar along the rear wall. Yet following several rebuilding episodes, two standard two-room temples were constructed. Although we do not understand the meaning of the Central Mexican dual temple plan as compared to the single temples found in the Maya region and the State of Oaxaca, it would seem significant that the basic sanctuary plan was followed in each region (Nicholson 1971: 438).
Evolution of the Temple

Although truncated pyramids and more generalized ceremonial structures (e.g., Flannery and Marcus 1983) are almost as old as sedentary farming villages in Mesoamerica, the earliest definitive masonry temples were not constructed until the last centuries B.C. In the Valley of Oaxaca, sequentially rebuilt rectangular two-room temples dated to Monte Alban II (200 B.C.-A.D. 200) have been found on Mound X (just off the centrally-situated Main Plaza) at Monte Alban (Caso 1935; Flannery and Marcus 1983; 82; Flannery 1983: 104) and atop Mound I at the secondary center, San Jose Mogote (Flannery and Marcus 1983: 111–12). In the Maya lowlands at Uaxactun, stone masonry two-chambered temples have been dated to the Tzakol phase (A.D. 250–500); however, perishable temple structures on platforms may have been constructed several centuries earlier (Marcus 1978: 183–84). While the evolutionary history of Central Mexican monumental buildings is generally less well known, Classic period Teotihuacan temples have a plan basically similar to those in the Peten and the Valley of Oaxaca. As at Maya Uaxactun where the Ricketsons (Ricketson and Ricketson 1937) found a Preclassic era pole-and-thatch dwelling constructed around an altar atop a platform, Cummings (1933) found a Preclassic altar on one of the large oval mounds at Cuicuilco in the Basin of Mexico. Thus, temples built of perishable materials, possibly contemporaneous with the Monte Alban II masonry buildings, may have been constructed in each region.

Thus, as Spinden (1913) and Marcus (1983: 232) have suggested previously, the more formal masonry two-room temple may have evolved from less elaborate structures made from perishable materials. For the Valley of Oaxaca, Flannery and Marcus (1983: 82) see the development of the stereotyped temple plan as a possible indicator of the process of linearization, the usurpation of certain household tasks (rituals) by a central religious authority. They note that the handmade clay figurines, found in earlier houses and possibly used to create ritual scenes, disappear from the archaeological record by Monte Alban II. Certainly, similar processes may have been associated with the development of formal temples at Teotihuacan and in the Early Classic Peten. Thus the development of the temple seems to have been correlated with the rise of an increasingly urbanized, internally differentiated, hierarchical social system in each region. The importance of the latter relationship is supported indirectly by 16th-century ethnohistoric accounts, which document the frequent use of rather modest houses and huts for ritual in the Northern Yucatan, where the

Mesoamerican Temples

polities were less hierarchical further intriguing clue to the institution comes from an acta "temple". In Nahuatl (teocalli, 1966: 144), Zapotec (yohopee, Marcus 1983: 346), and Maya (181), the word for "temple" can be "life spirit", or "sacred" to the wor

The Te

Eduardo Matos Moctezu

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Tlaloc (the god of water and deity of the Mexica, the solar reflection of Tenochtitlan's eco and war tribute. Consequently, "the whole archaeological core of Teotihuacan temple, sacrifices, rituals, and religious-political control Ten other groups." Furthermore, rituals are interpreted as inseparable of the myth of the god's Huitzilopochtli, the patron deity is born fully formed and rises to do battle in 184b: 135–36).

Although Matos Moctezu

details of his model, there do not imply that pre-Hispanic tem

due to those who built and Postclassic period place-names specific temples in the identi regional centers (Teotihuacan), generally contained many more Archetypically, no Mesoamerican regional hinterland to a great (more than 100,000 people or religious structures than anything else in 1973; Marcus 1983: 222). Not
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Mesoamerican Temples

polities were less hierarchical at Contact (Tozzer 1941: 152-53). A
urther intriguing clue to the modest origin of this Mesoamerican
stitution comes from an analysis of the indigenous words for
'temple'. In Nahuatl (teocalli, Dibble and Anderson 1963: 269; Vaillant
6: 144), Zapotec (yohopee, Marcus 1978: 174), Mixtec (huahi nahu,
Marcus 1983: 346), and Maya (kina, Tozzer 1921: 299; Marcus 1978:
81), the word for 'temple' can be derived by affixing either 'divine',
'life spirit', or 'sacred' to the word for 'house'.

The Temple As Symbol

Eduardo Matos Moctezuma (1984b) has suggested that the
Templo Mayor was the place where the power of the Mexica was
uctually or symbolically established. He interprets the twin temples of
Tloc (the god of water and rain) and Huiztilopochtli (the patron
deity of the Mexica, the solar god, the war deity) as an ideological
reflection of Tenochtitlan's economic foundation, based on agriculture
and war tribute. Consequently, for Matos Moctezuma (1984b: 135),
"the whole archaeological context associated with the Templo Mayor
(offerings, sculptures, rituals, etc.) in some way indicates the economic-
religious-political control Tenochtitlan had over its own people and
other groups." Furthermore, the Great Temple and its associated
rituals are interpreted as inseparably integrated with and a reflection
of the myth of the god's Huiztilopochtli's birth, an account in which
the patron deity is born fully armed from his mother's (Coatlicue)
womb and rises to do battle with his siblings (Matos Moctezuma

Although Matos Moctezuma has not substantiated all the specific
details of his model, there do seem to be sufficient evidential threads
to imply that pre-Hispanic temples were symbolic of the communities,
people, or elite who built and occupied them. In the Mixteca Alta,
Postclassic period place-signs incorporated depictions of seemingly
specific temples in the identifying glyphs that are thought to name
particular towns (Smith 1973: 246). During the later (Classic and
Postclassic periods) history of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, the great
regional centers (Teotihuacan, Tikal, Monte Alban, Tula, Tenochtitlan)
generally contained many more and larger temples than lesser sites.
Archetypically, no Mesoamerican city ever dwarfed the settlements in
its regional hinterland to a greater degree than Classic era Teotihuacan
(more than 100,000 people estimated), and the site also had more
religious structures than any other Middle American center (Millon
1973; Marcus 1983: 222). Not only did each of the more than 2,000
multi-family apartment compounds (housing an estimated 60–100 people) have at least one temple, but 100 religious structures were constructed along the city’s central “Street of the Dead” (Millon 1976, 1981). The great sanctity of Teotihuacan and its main street also is implied by the use of the Tablero-talud facade (the architectural symbol for temples at Teotihuacan) on virtually all platforms, including residential compounds and administrative structures, for roughly two continuous kilometers along the “Street of the Dead” (Millon 1981: 228–29).

The argument for the temple as a symbolic representation of place is perhaps even more convincingly supported by the pattern of destruction and depopulation at Teotihuacan. The city was never abandoned or destroyed completely, and evidence for combat and bloodshed are lacking. Yet during the 7th and 8th centuries A.D., the decline of the great center was marked by the systematic burning of the monumental architecture along the “Street of the Dead,” as well as by the selected destruction of other temples and public buildings across the site. While most of the city remained intact, civic and ceremonial structures were deliberately set on fire and ritually destroyed. The most concentrated damage was directed at the sanctified center of the city (Millon 1981: 235–38). Furthermore, Millon (1981: 238; see also Adams 1966: 148–49) notes that the ritual destruction of monumental symbols and structures was a recurrent process in ancient Mesoamerica, associated across time and space with the demise of great centers.

Although the importance of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican communities seems well correlated with the size and grandeur of their temples, the mechanism for this relationship is understood imperfectly. Clearly, the amount of labor that could have been called on and organized must have been one significant factor. For example, when the Templo Mayor was reconstructed during the reign of Moctezuma Ilhuicamina (A.D. 1440–1453), workers from newly conquered city-states under Aztec control were recruited to do the job (Carrasco 1982: 186). Tozzer (1941: 151–52) has suggested that these periodic renovations and rebuildings, seen in the archaeological record of ceremonial structures, may pertain to the purification rituals conducted at the end of the 52 year cycle. Yet the eleven rebuildings of the Templo Mayor, completed over less than two centuries (Matos Moctezuma 1984a), indicate that in at least certain cases renovations and expansions were enacted more often than every 52 years. Prosperity and conquest may have prompted and been symbolized by the rapid growth and elaboration of the Great Temple of Aztec Tenochtitlan.

Mesoamerican Temples

The Priesthood and

Documentary accounts of recounted during the Contact period, still provide the most detailed information on the religion in Mesoamerica. Yet it has been supplemented through a significant number of interpretations that have been drawn largely from art, iconography, and inscriptions, in addition to support for the belief in sacrifice (often though not always central to many Mesoamerican rituals, as has been known for centuries) that first involves the late prehispanic ancestors. The highest priestly training generally requires frequent from high-status family (e.g., Marcus 1978: 175), and is based on a variety of traditions and devotion).

Mesoamerican priests, as with a suite of generally similar and ethnic divisions. In addition to ceremonies and rituals, they have the young, divination, ancestor calendar. Aztec and Postclassic cultures, for instance, were not” idols” of deities (matemecals, and 16th-century Spain among the Contact-era Zapotec and Mixtec. However, Marcus (1978: Spanish clerics, swayed by their beliefs in the Greco-Roman pantheon, receiving Oaxacan ancestor worship
Mesoamerican Temples

The Priesthood and the Activities of the Temple

Documentary accounts of temples, priests, and their activities, recounted during the Contact period by European clerics and conquistadors, still provide the most detailed information on pre-Columbian religion in Mesoamerica. Yet in recent decades, these findings have been supplemented through archaeological research, as well as by significant new interpretations of ancient Mesoamerican ritual that have been drawn largely from recent analyses of Classic period Maya art, iconography, and inscriptions. These breakthroughs have yielded additional support for the belief that blood, and hence various kinds of sacrifice (often though not exclusively conducted in the temple), was central to many Mesoamerican religions, and not merely to the Aztecs, as has been known from 16th-century accounts. This discussion first reviews the late pre-Hispanic historical materials and then gradually moves to a consideration of relevant archaeological data.

Several recurrent themes concerning the priesthood and temple organization can be drawn from contemporary syntheses of late pre-Hispanic religion in Central Mexico (Nicholson 1971; Berdan 1982; Carrasco 1982), the Maya region (Tozzer 1941; Roys 1943; Thompson 1970; Marcus 1978), and the Valley of Oaxaca (Spores 1965; Marcus 1978; Flannery and Marcus 1983). In each area, temples were associated with a priesthood that was hierarchically structured and internally specialized (Thompson 1970: 167–70; Carrasco 1971: 358; Marcus 1978: 174, 181). The highest priestly positions were full-time, and years of training generally were required to reach that status. Young children, frequently from high-status families, were recruited into the priesthood (e.g., Marcus 1978: 175), with advancement through the priestly hierarchy based on a variety of factors (including birthright, training, and devotion).

Mesoamerican priests, as described at Contact, were involved with a suite of generally similar activities that crosscut both political and ethnic divisions. In addition to their close involvement with ceremonies and rituals, they had important roles in the education of the young, divination, ancestor worship, and the keeping of the ritual calendar. Aztec and Postclassic Maya priests also tended anthropomorphized “idols” of deities (made of wood and stone) inside their temples, and 16th-century Spanish accounts describe a similar practice among the Contact-era Zapotec priests of Oaxaca (see Spores 1965: 970). However, Marcus (1978: 174) has argued that 16th-century Spanish clerics, swayed by their classical education and knowledge of the Greco-Roman pantheon, misunderstood Zapotec religion, misconceiving Oaxacan ancestor worship for “idolatrous” behaviors honoring
a pantheon of anthropomorphized deities. Marcus (1978: 180) also suggests that the Classic period Maya were not image worshippers, and that it was the Nahua speakers of Central Mexico who introduced idolatry to the Yucatan Maya during the later Postclassic period (see also Roys 1943: 72; Thompson 1970: 187; Morley, Brainard, and Sharer 1983: 461–62).

Most scholars agree that ceremonial and civic activities were very closely intertwined in ancient Mesoamerica. As Berdan (1982: 130) has suggested, perhaps this distinction was not even made in the Mesoamerican world. At Conquest in Central Mexican Cholula, the two ruling offices were filled by priests from the cult of the town's patron god, Quetzalcoatl (Carrasco 1971: 372). In Aztec society, the children of nobles were educated by priests (Carrasco 1971: 356). In addition, Aztec rulers took a very active role in rituals and ceremonies, and various rituals (including sacrifices) were associated with political events such as coronations (e.g., Berdan 1982: 132). Priestly divinations were used to select the appropriate days for important political events (Hodge 1954: 22). Senior and "retired" priests also were given very important advisory roles in the councils of Aztec rulers (Carrasco 1971).

For the 16th-century Yucatan, Landa recorded the close association between high priests and lords; the priests used their knowledge to give advice to (and foretell the future for) political rulers (Tozzer 1941: 27). The second sons of lords were educated by priests (Tozzer 1941: 27). Regarding the Contact period Zapotecs, Flannery and Marcus (1983: 82) note: "church and state were united to the extent that priests were recruited from the sons of nobility, and the Zapotec lord himself underwent a year of religious training before he took office. After all, his royal ancestors were semi-divine interceders between his community and the great supernatural forces whose favor the Zapotec sought to incur."

Although the variety of calendric and non-calendric activities and festivals was enormously diverse across Mesoamerica, there was a series of activities and themes that permeated 16th-century Mesoamerican ritual performance. Significantly, these key ideological behaviors also seem to have had a long history in religious practice. As cited in the previous paragraph, communication with revered ancestors, spirits, and gods was central to the ritual activities of Mesoamerican priests (see also Tozzer 1941: 129–31; Nicholson 1971: 409; Marcus 1978: 175, 182–83). A key mechanism for these contacts was through offerings and sacrifice.

The centrality of offerings and sacrifice to Aztec ritual and ceremony has long been known (if not always completely understood). In his overview of Central Mexican religion, Nicholson (1971: 431–32) noted that "nearly every ceremony common gifts for the sacred inc papers, clothing, and incense. Included some kind of death sacrifice, particularly birds, was the Aztec custom of hun at a magnitude not approach (Nicholson 1971: 432; Anawalt 1984).

Based on 16th-century account of Tenochtitlan considerere sun or chosen person, respons They believe that the continu- only could be achieved by of and hearts (Anawalt 1982). Alt means uniform, the rituals get temple with certain classes of victims (frequently, though blood was "precious water" immolation also was an impor (Nicholson 1971: 433). Priests sacrifice, drawing their blood f with maguey spines or blades it to the gods.

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Gary M. Feinman

Mesoamerican Temples

noted that “nearly every ceremony featured offerings” with the most common gifts for the sacred including food, flowers, rubber-spattered papers, clothing, and incense. Important Aztec rituals normally included some kind of death sacrifice. Even though the execution of animals, particularly birds, was most common, scholars have recognized the Aztec custom of human sacrifice as having been practiced at a magnitude not approached by other Mesoamerican peoples (Nicholson 1971: 432; Anawalt 1982; Conrad and Demarest 1984; Ingham 1984).

Based on 16th-century accounts, scholars have known that the elite of Tenochtitlan considered themselves to be the children of the sun or chosen people, responsible for keeping the cosmos in order. They believed that the continued existence of the sun and the earth only could be achieved by offering the deities a regular diet of blood and hearts (Anawalt 1982). Although Aztec sacrificial rites were by no means uniform, the rituals generally were enacted in or near the temple with certain classes of Priests charged with dispatching the victims (frequently, though not always, prisoners). To the Aztec, blood was “precious water” (Ingham 1984: 391), and ritual self-immolation also was an important aspect of offerings and penitence (Nicholson 1971: 433). Priests were the usual practitioners of autosacrifice, drawing their blood from ear lobes, tongues, legs, or genitals with maguey spines or blades made from obsidian, and then offering it to the gods.

Although Aztec human sacrifice, particularly during the last century before Contact, was carried out at a scale probably never seen before in the Mesoamerican world (Berdan 1982: 116), the basis for this sacrificial tradition, including blood offerings, the ritual importance of blood, and self-immolation, are understood now to be much deeper in time and more widespread in space (Anawalt 1982: 42). Human sacrifice and bloodletting implements have an apparently much longer history in Mesoamerica than the masonry temple (Flannery and Marcus 1976; Flannery, Marcus, and Kowalewski 1981; MacNeish 1981). As with 16th-century Aztec priests, principal duties of late pre-Conquest priests in Oaxaca and Yucatan included temple sacrifices of animals and humans, the self-extraction of blood, and the offering of blood to supernatural elements (Tozzer 1941; Roys 1943: 80–82; Marcus 1978: 175, 182). Sacrifice also was a recurrent event in surviving pre-Hispanic codices (bark paper or animal skin books), including pictorial documents not written by the Aztec.

Bloodletting and, to a lesser degree, human sacrifice were significant themes in the carved stone stelae, temple murals, cave paintings, and polychrome pottery of the Classic Maya (A.D. 300–900) (Joralemon...
1974; Marcus 1978: 185–86; Schele 1984; Stone 1985). In Classic Maya stelae, lords or priests as well as their consorts frequently were depicted holding bloodletters and taking their blood, while on other monuments women are shown holding vessels of blood-spattered paper (e.g., Proskouriakoff 1960). Insight into this entire Mesoamerican tradition perhaps can be gleaned from Maya languages, where a linguistic relationship has been noted between the word for bloodletting and that for the nurturing or breast feeding of a child by its parent (Schele 1984: 33; Stone 1985: 25). Thus, as a mother’s milk provides sustenance to a child, a bloodletter could have nurtured the supernatural world, maintaining the earth’s natural order and fertility. Blood rituals can be seen as sacrificial practices that affirmed and established the unequal access to power and status in Mesoamerican societies (Marcus 1978; Conrad and Demarest 1984), while blood producers (e.g., bloodletters, captive takers, sacrificial priests) were positioned as the insurers or sustainers of a people’s or a community’s well-being (Schele 1984).

Archaeological excavations of Mesoamerican temples have supported and confirmed the historical accounts of key temple functions and activities. Matos Moctezuma’s (1984a: 83) Templo Mayor excavations revealed a slab of black volcanic rock in front of the sanctuary of Huitzilopochtli. The stone’s dimensions and placement conform with those described for a sacrificial altar by the 16th-century Spanish. Decapitated skulls (though no complete bodies) and large, often decorated stone knives also have been found in quantity during the excavations. At Late Postclassic Mayapan, a key Maya site in Northern Yucatan, most of the large chert and flint, “sacrificial” knives uncovered were associated with the site’s ceremonial precincts (Pollock et al. 1962: fig. 28). Many remains of burned copal incense also were found on temple floors (Pollock et al. 1982: 404–5). Circular burned areas on the floor of a Monte Alban II Oaxacan temple at San Jose Mogote suggest that incense burners were lit there as well (Marcus 1983: 222). Inner rooms of San Jose Mogote temples also yielded ripple-flaked “sacrificial” obsidian knives, as well as dozens of razor-sharp obsidian blades that likely were employed in bloodletting rituals (Marcus 1983: 222).

**Economics and the Temple**

In his paper, Winston Davis mentions that through history great market and trade centers in Japan often were associated with important temples and shrines. Thomas Lee (1978: 2) has noted that this interdependence also held in ancient Mesoamerica, where there was a frequent spatial correspondence between important religious sanctuaries (e.g., pilgrimage destination Xicalango, Chetumal, and C Rathje 1975). Other key civic centers (e.g., Teotihuacan, Tlaxcallan) were known as very important, and often described the close proximity of the temple precinct in late pre-Columbian times. At Contact, the temples of Texcoco, and Tlacopan) receive recurring levies were used to lands were yielded to provide Symbolic tributary offerings, gems, and an array of other goods incorporated into each stage of in at least 90 dedicatory each suggested that these items, 80% under the dominion of the Aztec, and the expansion c Aztec temples, the 16th-century specified allotments of tribute extractions also were not significant on site. Although Berdan (1982: periodically in and near 16th-c is no evidence to suggest the temples engaged in the storage the scale practiced by certain 18th-century activities in important Mesoamerican suggest that the pre-Hispanic commodity production. An except of the Moon complex at Tlatelolco, obsidian blades, cores, and bifaces, the 16th-century document one of the principal uses for metal tools: that auto-sacrifice wood was superior to flint). As exchanged great distances, too of the largest temples in this area bloodletting across Mesoamerica A general comparison of 1 and the Near Eastern temple the comparatively lesser ecor.
Stone 1985). In Classic Maya consorts frequently were depurated, their blood, while on other occasions vessels of blood-stattered into this entire Mesoamerican Maya languages, where a between the word for blood—east feeding of a child by its 5. Thus, as a mother’s milk secretor could have nurtured the h’s natural order and fertility. Practices that affirmed and rendered status in Mesoamerican (e.g., Teotihuacan, Tula, Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco, Mitla) also were known as very important locations for production and exchange. In addition, many of the early Spanish chroniclers (Duran 1971: 275) described the close proximity between the plaza or marketplace and the temple precinct in late pre-Hispanic centers (Lee 1978: 2).

At Contact, the temples of the Aztec Triple Alliance (Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan) received tribute from surrounding towns. Recurring levies were used to fund special ceremonial events, while lands were yielded to provide daily sustenance (Berdan 1982: 40). Symbolic tributary offerings, including shells, swordfish, crocodiles, gems, and an array of other goods exotic to Central Mexico also were incorporated into each stage of construction fill at the Templo Mayor in at least 80 dedicatory caches. David Carrasco (1982: 182–83) has suggested that these items, 80% of which came from distant provinces under the dominion of the Aztec empire, served to sanctify those conquests and the expansion of the Aztec tribute domain. Yet unlike Aztec temples, the 16th-century Yucatan Maya temples did not receive specified allotments of tribute (Roys 1943: 80), and formal temple extractions also were not significant in other parts of the Mesoamerican world. Although Berdan (1982: 40) has noted that produce was stored periodically in and near 16th-century Central Mexican temples, there is no evidence to suggest that any pre-Columbian Mesoamerican temples engaged in the storage or redistribution of goods at or near the scale practiced by certain temples in the ancient Old World.

Despite the spatial co-occurrence of key trade and religious activities in important Mesoamerican cities, there is relatively little to suggest that the pre-Hispanic temple was involved directly in commodity production. An exception is within and adjacent to the Temple of the Moon complex at Teotihuacan, where the production of obsidian blades, cores, and bifaces was carried out (Millon 1981: 224; Spence 1981). This seemingly aberrant case makes more sense if we consider 16th-century documents which describe ritual bloodletting as one of the principal uses for obsidian (Marcus 1983: 223 has commented that auto-sacrifice would be one activity for which obsidian would be superior to flint). As obsidian worked at Teotihuacan was exchanged great distances, tools produced under the auspices of one of the largest temples in this sacred city may have been used in ritual bloodletting across Mesoamerica (Marcus 1983: 223).

A general comparison of the Mesoamerican bark paper codices and the Near Eastern temple tablets provides a final indicator of the comparatively lesser economic role played by the temple in
Mesoamerica compared with religious institutions in the ancient Old World. Whereas the majority of the former, written by Mesoamerican priests, pertain to divination, sacred knowledge, astronomy, and ritual, many of the latter detail economic transactions.

Conclusion

Although the direct economic role of the temple does not seem to have been great, religion (including the temple) was critically important in the Mesoamerican world as a mechanism of social cohesion, control, integration, and communication. So many key Mesoamerican ideological conceptions (e.g., the 260-day ritual calendar, the feathered serpent, supernaturals associated with rain and lightning, blood sacrifice, and the basic temple layout) were widespread in space and time that these symbols must have been shared broadly and of great significance. Temple ritual and religion clearly was an important means for binding Mesoamerica's ethnically and linguistically diverse peoples both within and across polity boundaries (Nicholson 1971: 433–34).

The Mesoamerican world lacked wheeled transport, beasts of burden, major road systems, as well as metal implements and weapons (although metal ornaments were made), yet towns of 10,000 were commonplace, and cities larger than 100,000 people were built more than once. A tributary domain, constructed by the Aztec, stretched from Central Mexico to Guatemala, and another large, hierarchically interconnected network was centered at earlier Teotihuacan. Mesoamerican polities generally were organized hierarchically, and diverse economies were integrated despite transportation limitations. Impressive architectural construction programs, requiring enormous labor forces, were implemented. How else, but through the development of powerful and highly sophisticated systems of religion and statecraft, can we account for the maintenance and survival of these large, complex Mesoamerican cities and polities, for hundreds and perhaps even thousands of years?

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**Temple and Shrines: Their Social Function**

Winston Davis

In a collection of papers dealing with the ancient and modern religious practices of various cultures, it may seem odd to introduce the temple in Japan. The temple in Japan is a thoroughly syncretic and revered space, but generally a special place of worship (cf. Usener's way to the primitive hunters and gatherers) during the Yayoi Period, the temple was a permanent place of worship for the rice granaries introduced into the world. Today, the temple can still be seen in the Grand Shrines of Ise.

With the coming of Buddhism, the indigenous religions to the Kyushu and Okinawa, they also used special words for the Buddhist temple. The Kamakura period, they developed a curious custom. The Shinto shrine was torn down and rebuilt in the same way the first millennium A.D.

1. Such deities can still be found in Japan, described in my essay "Pilgrimage and Values in Tokugawa Japan, Part II," H.
2. Throughout the centuries, the shrine has been preserved by a curious custom. The Shinto shrine was torn down and rebuilt in the same way the first millennium A.D.