point for comparisons with other regions.

Altogether I have enjoyed reading this book immensely. It has opened my eyes to many
inspiring case studies I was unaware of and has guided me to their source material. *Maya
Pilgrimage to Ritual Landscapes* is an indispensable asset to the field of landscape studies.

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**Insignia of Rank in the Nahua World: From the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century.**

The trappings of indigenous royalty in early Nahua Mesoamerica were by design. Generations
of authors codified the manifestations of authority by means of graphic images on paper,
ceramics, hide, wood, and stone. Thousands, or more, of such representations were produced
over many years, and although few are extant today, enough remains to reveal an extraordinary
amount about Nahua rulership and how the kings and their wives were perceived.

Nahua Mesoamerica largely comprised *altepetl*, “ethnic states,” each of which
considered itself unique and autonomous. Each polity, it is now understood, had its own
record keepers who maintained their polity’s accounts, beginning from the founding years and
including images of the births, marriages, and deaths of the rulers, military conquests, deities,
celebrations, and celestial and environmental phenomena. Much of this information was
recorded on native paper, typically adhering to an annals format following their reckoning
of the Mesoamerican calendar, and each altepetl could have several individuals painting and
updating their pictorial manuscripts, resulting in occasional discrepancies in dates, content,
and style. Native kings were a paramount theme, and those of the capital, Mexico-Tenochtitlan,
are infamous for their leadership as well as their accomplishments.

Justyna Olko’s purpose in *Insignia of Rank* is to identify and analyze the insignia
of Nahua privilege. She meticulously assembles a splendid catalog of all that the native
sovereigns wore and used. There were also close associations with particular divinities in
some instances. Woven reed backrests are particularly distinguishing as thrones for the Mexico
Tenochca: bendaddresses; capes (especially ones with a turquoise-colored pattern or inlaid with
the stones themselves); turquoise diadems; nose, lip, neck, and chest ornaments; gold arm
and leg bands; warrior suits, shields, and weapons; banners, staffs, tobacco gourds, incense
pouches, or flowers and the like in their hands were their visual repertoire of rulership. Olko
identifies all articles exactly and philologically by their Nahautl terminology, with details
about appearance as well as the relevant sources. In her extensive appendix there are close to
two hundred entries for *tilmatl*, “cape,” alone.

But *Insignia of Rank* is not a simple listing of imperial kingly display. One primary
concern is the illusiveness of representation as noted in the manuscripts. Were conquered altepetl
required to assume the regalia of their overlords, or was the new outfit a perquisite of a favorable
marriage alliance, albeit political; or was the look merely fashionable and available to all?

Total affectation of apparel by non-Mexica Tenochca, although still in their dominions,
seems not to have been the rule, as subordinate polities retained some aspects of local tradition
when practicable. Moreover, some altepetl, whether the renowned Tetzocca, who were second
in rank to the Tenochca, or the Tlaxcalteca, who were their archenemies, patriotically wore
only their personal stately appurtenances. Yet other altepetl, and admittedly those of minor
standing, such as the Tepechpaneca, ostensibly aped the finery of the Mexico Tenochca kings
to portray themselves as equals.

The bulk of the surviving manuscripts is from the colonial era, which raises the question:

How can we be certain of their accuracy in reference to Nahuel life in precontact times? Many were drafted by or under the auspices of religious, whose European influence greatly affected the content and style of the native artists and amanuenses. Others were generated for the benefit of the Spanish crown, and many were produced to settle old territorial disputes. But credit must also be given to the individual Nahua authors, whose education, experience, and agenda resulted in the writing and painting of works that furnish an invaluable personal perspective. And by all the evidence, since there were many ancient manuscripts in circulation at the end of the sixteenth century, authorial authenticity mattered.

Oloko has asked a large question, bringing to the forefront issues of status, prestige, and, probably, pedigree. The depth of her knowledge of early Nahua accoutrements and prerogatives across a broad spectrum of peoples is exceptional. By the time the great Mexica Tenochecha kings were in power their empire was vast, with such an abundance of luxury goods that there was no reason not to have an ostentatious show of it all. When the Nahua leaders incorporated Spanish accoutrements of influence into their outfits after the conquest, they were then twice great. Being seen and remembered was important in both precontact and colonial times. Oloko has written an erudite, meaningful work to ensure that the argot of the Nahua visual canon is carried forward.

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When the Spanish first arrived in south-central Chile they set in motion both centuries of conflict and the gradual formation of a new polity. Some communities in the Nahuehuehuia region moved inland to safety, while others formed alliances with or against the Spanish. As resistance to the foreigners increased, public ceremonialism and ethnic consciousness intensified. A composite group of populations across several territories coalesced into a new sociopolitical formation, the Aucanican polity, with a new class structure of warriors, sorcerers, and economic leaders. This proto-state lasted for nearly 350 years, but it never achieved full statehood owing to participants’ inability or unwillingness to consolidate power.

Tom Dillehay has studied the material practices of the Aucanican polity and their Mapache descendants for more than thirty years. He has published a fascinating ethnographic and ethnohistoric study of the kuel ceremonial mounds, a descriptive monograph on the ceramics, and a co-authored monograph on the settlement patterns. In this volume he develops the concept of a “telescopic polity,” explores the role of “patrarchal material culture” in constituting the Aucanican polity, and provides descriptive detail on a range of specialized archaeological data collected from this long-term archaeological project.

The “telescopic polity” refers to the particular form of the Aucanican polity, a structure that allowed for growth from local multilinear communities to overlapping and united regional/supraregional groups of patrarchal units. In Chapters 1 and 2, Dillehay argues that the polity was created by the coalescence of a notion of patrarchal family and community interests and political security, the emergence of a new ceremonial and ethnic consciousness, and the material sedimentation of ceremonial practices in the kuel mounds and rohokul ceremonial fields. He describes the patriotic defense and resilience of the newly formed political territory as an example of “anticolonialism.” He critically evaluates recent studies of Andean states, explores the role of ritual and public ceremonialism in state cohesion, and argues (drawing on Scott, Yoffee, and Appadurai) for a more nuanced understanding of political processes in emerging state societies.