



The Fifth Sun: Aztec Gods, Aztec World (Texas Pan American)

Burr Cartwright Brundage

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The ancient Aztecs dwelt at the center of a dazzling and complex cosmos. From this position they were acutely receptive to the demands of their gods. The Fifth Sun represents a dramatic overview of the Aztec conception of the universe and the gods who populated it—Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent; Tezcatlipoca, the Smoking Mirror; and Huitzilopochtli, the Southern Hummingbird. Burr Cartwright Brundage explores the myths behind these and others in the Aztec pantheon in a way that illuminates both the human and the divine in Aztec life.

The cult of human sacrifice is a pervasive theme in this study. It is a concept that permeated Aztec mythology and was the central preoccupation of the aggressive Aztec state. Another particularly interesting belief explored here is the "mask pool," whereby gods could exchange regalia and, thus, identities.

This vivid and eminently readable study also covers the use of hallucinogens; cannibalism; the calendars of ancient Mexico; tlachtli, the life-and-death ball game; the flower wars; divine transfiguration; and the evolution of the war god of the Mexica. A splendid introduction to Aztec religion, The Fifth Sun also contains insights for specialists in ethnohistory, mythology, and religion.

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