



Lord Eight Wind of Suchixtlan and the Heroes of Ancient Oaxaca: Reading History in the Codex Zouche-Nuttall (The Linda Schele Series in Maya and Pre-Columbian Studies)

Robert Lloyd Williams

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In the pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican world, histories and collections of ritual knowledge were often presented in the form of painted and folded books now known as codices, and the knowledge itself was encoded into pictographs. Eight codices have survived from the Mixtec people of ancient Oaxaca, Mexico; a part of one of them, the Codex Zouche-Nuttall, is the subject of this book. As a group, the Mixtec codices contain the longest detailed histories and royal genealogies known for any indigenous people in the western hemisphere. "The Codex Zouche-Nuttall" offers a unique window into how the Mixtecs themselves viewed their social and political cosmos without the bias of western European interpretation. At the same time, however, the complex calendrical information recorded in the Zouche-Nuttall has made it resistant to historical, chronological analysis, thereby rendering its narrative obscure. In this pathfinding work, Robert Lloyd Williams presents a methodology for reading the "Codex Zouche-Nuttall" that unlocks its essentially linear historical chronology.

Recognizing that the codex is a combination of history in the European sense and the timelessness of myth in the Native American sense, he brings to vivid life the history of Lord Eight Wind of Suchixtlan (AD 935-1027), a ruler with the attributes of both man and deity, as well as other heroic Oaxacan figures. Williams also provides context for the history of "Lord Eight Wind" through essays dealing with Mixtec ceremonial rites and social structure, drawn from information in five surviving Mixtec codices.

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