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as an advocate of electoral reform resisted by his own party. Between 1901 and 1946 fraud evolves from less severe to more severe and from predominantly a peripheral-province phenomenon to a central-province one. Ironically the success of early reforms, especially direct elections and the secret ballot, contributed to higher stakes and less local vote control for parties and thus intensified and centralized election fraud by the 1940s.

The book summarizes its well-established points so well at chapter end and again in the conclusion that it becomes somewhat repetitive. The authors err, I believe, in evaluating fraud's intensity by dividing the number of fraud reports by the size of the electorate, rather than using a better denominator like the number of relevant electoral subdivisions. More extensive reference to contemporary social movements and pressures might have presented a better-rounded history. But these are minor flaws in an otherwise masterful study of electoral development. Anyone interested in the foundations of Costa Rica's contemporary democracy should read this fine book. One hopes that Lehoucq and Molina succeed in goading others to more systematic and comparative study of electoral fraud and reform.

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Mesolore: Exploring Mesoamerican Culture. CD-ROM created by Liza Bakewell and Byron Hamann. Providence: Brown University, 2001. 2CDs. \$39.95.

Although there are a growing number of resources such as this available to scholars and students, the genre has yet to reach sufficient critical mass to permit the full evaluation of *Mesolore* in a historiographical context. Nevertheless, one only needs ten minutes with this double-CD multimedia project to see how useful it could be as a didactic tool—while one can easily spend an hour with it and still be finding new material. The program takes but a few minutes to install and its system requirements are modest, a mere 32MB of RAM and nothing older than Windows 95 or Mac OS 8.1. Advanced computer literacy is not needed either to load or use the program.

Once into *Mesolore*, one is presented with six options. "Atlas" takes one to a selection of maps. "Library" takes one on-line (and with ethernet the transition is immediate) and into the *Mesolore* website, which contains about a hundred articles. The other four options all link the reader to professional Mesoamericanists. "Mentors" introduces one to 10 scholars of Mesoamerica, half at Mexican universities, half at U.S. or Canadian ones, each presented through brief biographies and video presentations of various aspects of their work and personal experiences. "Lectures" presents several additional scholars who offer longer video-and-text lectures on key historical and cultural topics; as with most of the program, these are available in Spanish and English versions, and provide an effective balance of the visual and aural. The overall tone and pitch of the lectures is appropriate to undergraduates,

although perhaps not entry-level students. “Tutorials” expands one of the features in the “Lectures”—pop-out windows with definitions of highlighted terms—to offer a wide array of illustrated definitions and explanations of such topics as writing systems and concepts of time. Finally, “Debates” presents the work and views of yet a third set of scholars, who offer opinions on such topics as gender, political correctness and scholarly trends, and indigenous rights. There is no video on this branch of the program, but there is an audio track, enabling one to sit back and listen or to bounce around the topics and scholars as fast as one can read.

In general, the editors are to be congratulated on the thoroughness of their research and the skill with which the project has been compiled. The program is beautifully and elegantly designed and extremely easy to use. It seems very much up to date in terms of the scholarly development of the field, and an impressive roster of scholars has contributed to its depth and variety. The only critical response I had to the program related to its focus. The title and introductory segments of *Mesolore* led one to expect a broader geographical and temporal coverage, when in the end its coverage is uneven. Although all regions and time periods are given some attention, there is an overwhelming emphasis on the ancient or pre-Columbian era and also a heavy leaning towards the Mixtecs. The temporal bias is perhaps not so odd; it is certainly defensible and not unusual. The emphasis on the Mixtecs is stranger—not because they are undeserving (on the contrary, the Mixtecs make for a fascinating case study), but because the emphasis does not appear to be explained or signaled up front. Students may be left wondering why the “Atlas” offers close-up maps only of the Mixtec area, for example, and instructors unfamiliar with Hamann’s own work (he’s a Mixtec specialist) may be equally mystified.

To be fair, many users of the program may not notice these leanings, and others may actually find they add to the utility of the project. This would be an indispensable teaching tool for a Mixtec scholar teaching a class on Mesoamerica, for example; and indeed specialists of many kinds will want to own and use in various ways this superb multimedia contribution to Mesoamerican studies.

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Maya Palaces and Elite Residences: An Interdisciplinary Approach. Edited by Jessica Joyce Christie. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003. Pp. x, 340. Illustrations. Notes. References. Index. \$50.00 cloth.

This important collection of essays was first presented during a symposium, “Maya Palaces and Elite Residences,” at the annual conference of the Society for American Archaeology in 1998. Christie’s goal in publishing the results is to bring together scholars from the fields of archaeology, anthropology, art history, ethnography, and epigraphy, to address in a focused way issues related to royal palaces and other types of elite structures. Certainly a study of this type is long overdue and the results are in