The fourth volume of UCLA’s Ideas, Debates, and Perspectives series, *Blood and Beauty: Organized Violence in the Art and Archaeology of Mesoamerica and Central America*, tackles an ambitious agenda: the cultural contextualization of violent acts from 1200 B.C.E to the sixteenth century. The work grew out of a symposium session at the seventieth meeting of the Society of American Archaeologists, and the two editors, Heather Orr and Rex Koontz, are also authors. They explain in their introduction that they and their seventeen other contributors all focus on the encoded record of violence in the Ancient Americas. This reliance on the visual record brings up an interesting analysis of the power of artwork and how culturally based iconography of violence, with the aid of imagination, can create terror and, ultimately, maintain social order.

The relationship between organized violence and political power is illuminated, and the views of gender roles, from warrior queens in Mayan Cobá to female shamans in Costa Rica, are updated. While contributors often strive to revise previous assumptions, they remain firmly grounded in the scholarly and theoretical discourse of the study of the Ancient Americas. Essays are divided into 4 sections: warfare, ballgames and boxing, trophy-head taking, and pain and healing, with the most successful essays providing careful analysis of local archaeological and iconographic data.

For example, Joyce and Workinger reconsider the variety of warfare types by examining building carvings from Monte Albán in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. Koontz analyzes the Cacaztla Battle Mural as a strategic public statement. Taube and Zender highlight the little-studied competitive sport of boxing in Mesoamerica, and Orr opens the door for further study of the Diquís stone balls in Costa Rica as they may relate to Trophy-head cults. Hoopes and Mora-Marín examine the shaman/warrior roles in violent curing, while Houston concludes with an essay on the meaning of pain.

Scholars will be impressed with the extensive notes and references cited sections for each chapter, as well as the comprehensive twenty-one page index that provides entry into the wealth of research presented in *Blood and Beauty*. This book has 145 illustrations (e.g. photos, diagrams, and maps) which highlight the strict adherence to the visual record supported by the fields of anthropology, archaeology, and art history.

This book is recommended for any academic or museum library that supports research in the art and archaeology of Mesoamerica and Central America.

Kim Collins, Art History Librarian, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, kcolli2@emory.edu