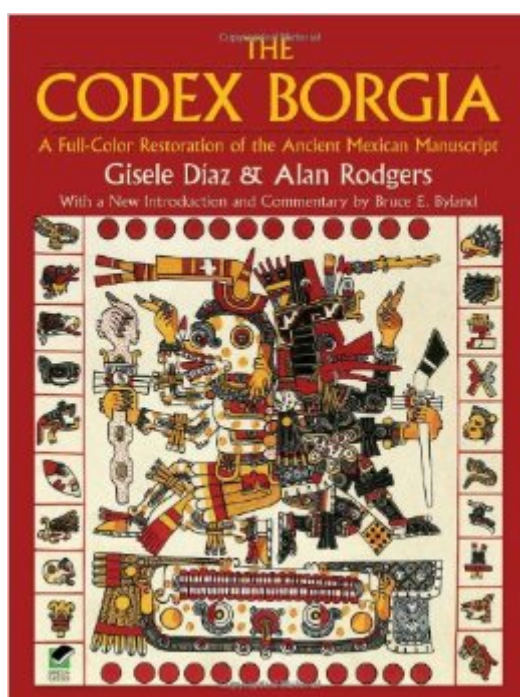


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The Codex Borgia: A Full-Color Restoration Of The Ancient Mexican Manuscript (Dover Fine Art, History Of Art)



Synopsis

Considered by many scholars the finest extant Mexican codex and one of the most important original sources for the study of pre-Columbian religion, the Codex Borgia is a work of profound beauty, filled with strange and evocative images related to calendrical, cosmological, ritual, and divinatory matters. Generally similar to such Mixtec manuscripts as the Codex Nuttall, the Codex Borgia is thought to have its origin (ca. A.D. 1400) in the southern central highlands of Mexico, perhaps in Puebla or Oaxaca. It is most probably a religious document that once belonged to a temple or sacred shrine. One use of the Codex may have been to divine the future, for it includes ritual 260 day calendars, material on aspects of the planet Venus, and a sort of numerological prognostic of the lives of wedded couples. Another section concerns various regions of the world and the supernatural characters and attributes of those regions. Also described are the characteristics of a number of deities, while still other passages relate to installation ceremonies of rulers in pre-Columbian kingdoms. Until the publication of this Dover edition, the Codex Borgia has been largely inaccessible to the general public. The priceless original is in the Vatican Library and previous photographic facsimiles are very rare or very expensive or both. Moreover, the original Codex has been damaged over the centuries, resulting in the obscuration and loss of many images. In order to recapture the beauty and grandeur of the original, Gisele Diaz and Alan Rodgers have painstakingly restored the Codex by hand—a seven-year project—employing the most scrupulous research and restoration techniques. The result is 76 large full-color plates of vibrant, striking depictions of gods, kings, warriors, mythical creatures, and mysterious abstract designs—a vivid panorama that offers profound insights into pre-Columbian Mexican myth and ritual. Now students, anthropologists, lovers of fine art and rare books—anyone interested in the art and culture of ancient Mexico—can study the Codex Borgia in this inexpensive, accurate, well-made edition. An informative introduction by noted anthropologist Bruce E. Byland places the Codex in its historical context and helps elucidate its meaning and significance.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An excellent source book for anyone looking for authentic reproductions of the original that is housed in the Vatican Library. This is a reproduction of an ancient document from the Mixtecs, around 1400 AD, from the area today known as Puebla or Oaxaca. The project took seven years to complete as they painstakingly reproduced the Codex with accuracy and authenticity. The color plates are a delight to the eye as they depict kings, mythical warriors and the Mixtec belief system. Each plate is explained, in great detail, in the beginning of the book for your convenience. The colorful plates are intricate and exact on thick high quality paper. This is great stuff for an artist working in any medium that needs inspiration or just wants to reproduce. A good book for history buffs too.

This is a wonderful resource for those interested in ancient Mexico. Full photographic facsimiles of these codices are hideously expensive, and really, most are not in great shape. After extensive research, we have here a great reproduction of what this important work looked like when it was "fresh off the presses." It is beautiful, and in comparison to Dover's similar Codex Nuttall, this work comes with a MUCH better introduction that explains more of the text, the context, and the ideology. Readers will be able to better understand some of the religious principles of the ancient Mexicans (and there is some debate whether this book was painted by Aztecs or Mixtecs, which I won't bore you with!). It shows gods, ceremonies, the calendar, and other religious iconography which is interesting, and would be a revelation for more the artistically inclined. The visuals are wonderfully presented and all in all this is an astonishing bargain. Those with even a casual interest in New World archaeology or art NEED to get this book.

Be warned that you must compare the images from this reproduction to the original, for three reasons: 1) sometimes the authors of this reproduction use colors that do not match the original codex, 2) sometimes the authors of this reproduction place the wrong imagery in the reproduction,

for example a monkey's head instead of a human's head, and 3) Sometimes the authors speculate as to what might have been on a page and they use their own judgment, which might be wrong. Other than that, this is a great reproduction of the Borgia codex. It is cheap, it is light and it is well made. Another thing to keep in mind, the Borgia codex is read left to right, this reproduction was printed right to left, so it forces you to read the codex in the wrong direction. Look at the "plate number" and the page number in the book, they do not match. Also notice that the plate number is in descending order.

This book gives terrific insight into the ancient Mexicans, their theology and world view, and their way of life. The illustrations are extremely well done, and the interpretation is on the mark. A must-have for anyone interested in ancient Mesoamerica.

A must-have for those interested in the Aztec Calendar. A full-color restoration of one of the few remaining ancient manuscripts. It opens up the fascinating world of Aztec gods and their relation to the calendar. A pity that it doesn't give a full explanation for every page.

This is a very strange and beautiful book in pictures. It reads like a dream if you tune in to it, and reveals very deep meanings about the relation between life and death, the human relation to the forces of nature, and time. Even though there are no words, it is possible to understand. If you get into it the symbols become more and more recognizable, and they begin to speak. The calendrical symbols and the spirit deities are completely recognizable. The sequences are all about times, and there is a big element about sacrifice. It has to do with the consequences of change; there is no life without death. The book has a very powerful image of life and death fused back to back that pretty much is the epitome of all the book is about. It's all about life and death in relation to time.

If you can truly understand the true meanings of the artwork, you are taken back hundreds of years and get inside the minds of the ancient peoples. I suggest getting this book, go over it and then try and find someone who is knowledgeable on the matter. You will be amazed and things will make sense.

I will not go over their 5 star comments except to say that I agree. The amazingly colourful and crisp art in this short book is rivetting. As much as one may credit the renowned author, deep congratulations should also go to the publisher for a masterful print job.

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