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The Mixtec, or the people of *Ñu Savi* ('Nation of the Rain God'), one of the major civilizations of ancient Mesoamerica, made their home in the highlands of Oaxaca, where they resisted both Aztec military expansion and the Spanish conquest. In *Encounter with the Plumed Serpent*, two leading scholars present and interpret the sacred histories narrated in the Mixtec codices, the largest surviving collection of pre-Columbian manuscripts in existence. In these screenfold books, ancient painter-historians chronicled the politics of the Mixtec from approximately a.d. 900 to 1521, portraying the royal families, rituals, wars, alliances, and ideology of the times.

By analyzing and cross-referencing the codices, which have been fragmented and dispersed in far-flung archives, the authors attempt to reconstruct Mixtec history. Their synthesis here builds on long examination of the ancient manuscripts. Adding useful interpretation and commentary, Jansen and Perez Jimenez synthesize the large body of surviving documents into the first unified narrative of Mixtec sacred history.

Archaeologists and other scholars as well as readers with an interest in Mesoamerican cultures will find this lavishly illustrated volume a compelling and fascinating history and a major step forward in knowledge of the Mixtec.