



Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians, Volume 3: Literatures

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The sixteen-volume Handbook of Middle American Indians, completed in 1976, has been acclaimed the world over as the single most valuable resource ever produced for those involved in the study of Mesoamerica. When it was determined in 1978 that the Handbook should be updated periodically, Victoria Reifler Bricker, well-known cultural anthropologist, was elected to be general editor.

This third volume of the Supplement is devoted to the aboriginal literatures of Mesoamerica, a topic receiving little attention in the original Handbook. According to the general editor, "This volume does more than supplement and update the coverage of Middle American Indian literatures in the Handbook. It breaks new ground by defining the parameters of a new interdisciplinary field in Middle American Indian studies."

The aim of the present volume is to consider literature from five Middle American Indian languages: Nahuatl, Yucatecan Maya, Quiche, Tzotzil, and Chorti. The first three literatures are well documented for both the Classical and Modern variants of their languages and are obvious candidates for inclusion in this volume. The literatures of Tzotzil and Chorti, on the other hand, are oral, and heretofore little has been written of their genres and styles.

Taken together, these essays represent a substantial contribution to the Handbook series, with the volume editor's introduction placing in geographic perspective the five literatures chosen as representative of the Middle American literary tradition.

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