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The Mesoamerican codex re-entangled : production, use, and re-use of precolonial documents

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Ludo Snijders

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ASLU 31

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L. Snijders

This 31st volume of the ASLU series is concerned with the study of the less than twenty remaining precolonial Mesoamerican codices. By considering these rare and fragile pictographic and hieroglyphic books from the cultural biography perspective, many different aspects of these books can be studied. The biography of these books begins with their production and continues during their life as sacred objects within Mesoamerican cultures. From the perspective of the late medieval European conquerors, these books had a very different meaning, which caused the destruction or physical alteration of these sacred objects. The few codices still in existence were almost forgotten in the European institutes that kept them in their collections. Only after these documents had been multiplied through the production of facsimiles, could they be reinterpreted by researchers and regain some of their meaning. The biographies of these books continue to grow as they get increasingly entangled with modern technology. A clear example of this is seen in the study of the palimpsest of the codex Anute or codex Selden, which is included in this work.

Ludo Snijders was awarded the position of KNAW Academy Assistant in 2010, which allowed him to lay the foundation for the current project. He works at Leiden University on the interpretation of the recovered palimpsest and the applications of imaging techniques for cultural heritage.

Archaeological Studies Leiden University (ASLU) is a series of the Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University since 1998.

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