

# Mesoamerican Elites An Archaeological Assessment

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**Agency in Archaeology** Marcia-Anne Dobres 2014-06-11 Agency in Archaeology is the first critical volume to scrutinise the concept of agency and to examine in-depth its potential to inform our understanding of the past. Theories of agency recognise that human beings make choices, hold intentions and take action. This offers archaeologists scope to move beyond looking at broad structural or environmental change and instead to consider the individual and the group Agency in Archaeology brings together nineteen internationally renowned scholars who have very different, and often conflicting, stances on the meaning and use of agency theory to archaeology. The volume is composed of five theoretically-based discussions and nine case studies, drawing on regions from North America and Mesoamerica to Western and central Europe, and ranging in subject from the late Pleistocene hunter-gatherers to the restructuring of gender relations in the north-eastern US.

*Social Patterns in Pre-classic Mesoamerica* Dumbarton Oaks 1999

**Classic Maya Politics of the Southern Lowlands** Damien B. Marken 2015-11-21 Classic Maya Politics of the Southern Lowlands investigates Maya political and social structure in the southern lowlands, assessing, comparing, and interpreting the wide variation in Classic period Maya polity and city composition, development, and integration. Traditionally, discussions of Classic Maya political organization have been dominated by the debate over whether Maya polities were centralized or decentralized. With new, largely unpublished data from several recent archaeological projects, this book examines the premises, strengths, and weaknesses of these two perspectives before moving beyond this long-standing debate and into different territory. The volume examines the articulations of the various social and spatial components of Maya polity—the relationships, strategies, and practices that bound households, communities, institutions, and dynasties into enduring (or short-lived) political entities. By emphasizing the internal negotiation of polity, the contributions provide an important foundation for a more holistic understanding of how political organization functioned in the Classic period. Contributors include Francisco Estrada Belli, James L. Fitzsimmons, Sarah E. Jackson, Caleb Kestle, Brigitte Kovacevich, Allan Maca, Damien B. Marken, James Meierhoff, Timothy Murtha, Cynthia Robin, Alexandre Tokovinine, and Andrew Wyatt.

**Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica** Patricia Plunket 2002-07-30 Although the concepts and patterns of ritual varied through time in relation to general sociopolitical transformations and local historical circumstances in ancient Mesoamerica, most archaeologists would agree that certain underlying themes and structures modeled the ritual phenomena of this complex culture area. By focusing on ritual expression at the household level, this volume seeks to compare the manifestations of domestic ritual across time and space in both the cores and peripheries, in the cities and in the villages. The authors explore the ways in which cosmological principles and concepts of the sacred were used in the construction of ritual space and practice, how local landscapes provided templates for the images and paraphernalia recovered from archaeological contexts, how foreign enclaves relied on ritual for social reproduction, and how domestic ritual was related to, and indeed embedded in, institutionalized state religions.

**Human Figuration and Fragmentation in Preclassic Mesoamerica** Julia Guernsey 2020-02-27 Explores the social significance of representation of the human body in Preclassic Mesoamerica.

**Domestic Life in Prehispanic Capitals** Linda R. Manzanilla 2009-01-01

**Oysters in the Land of Cacao** Bradley E. Ensor 2020-09-01 For decades, the Chontalpa region of Tabasco, Mexico, conjured images of the possible origins of the Itzá, who migrated, conquered, or otherwise influenced much of Mesoamerica. In Oysters in the Land of Cacao, archaeologist Bradley E. Ensor provides an important resource for Mesoamerican Gulf Coast archaeology by offering a new and detailed picture of the coastal sites vital to understanding regional interactions and social dynamics. This book synthesizes data from multiyear investigations at a coastal site complex in Tabasco—Islas de Los Cerros (ILC)—providing the first modern, systematic descriptions and analyses of material culture that challenge preconceptions while enabling new perspectives on cultural developments from the Formative to Late Classic periods through the lens of regional comparisons and contemporary theoretical trends. Ensor introduces a political ecological understanding of the environment and archaeological features, overturns a misconception that the latter were formative shell middens, provides an alternative pottery classification more appropriate for the materials and for contemporary theory, and introduces new approaches for addressing formation processes and settlement history. Building on the empirical analyses and discussions of problems in Mesoamerican archaeology, this book contributes new approaches to practice and agency perspectives, holistically integrating intra- and interclass agency, kinship strategies, gender and age dynamics, layered cultural identities, landscapes, social memory, and foodways and feasting. Oysters in the Land of Cacao addresses issues important to coastal archaeology within and beyond Mesoamerica. It delivers an overdue regional synthesis and new observations on settlement patterns, elite power, and political economies.

**From Ritual to Refuse: Faunal Exploitation by the Elite of Chiniikihá, Chiapas, during the Late Classic Period** Coral Montero López 2022-02-17 From Ritual to Refuse explores the faunal exploitation by the Maya elite at the site of Chiniikihá, Chiapas, during the end of the Late Classic period (AD 700-850) by applying zooarchaeological and statistical analyses to a faunal assemblage located in a basurero or midden behind a palatial structure at the core of the site.

**Technology and Tradition in Mesoamerica after the Spanish Invasion** Rani T. Alexander 2019-03-15 This impressive collection features the work of archaeologists who systematically explore the material and social consequences of new technological systems introduced after the sixteenth-century Spanish invasion in Mesoamerica. It is the first collection to present case studies that show how both commonplace and capital-intensive technologies were intertwined with indigenous knowledge systems to reshape local, regional, and transoceanic ecologies, commodity chains, and political, social, and religious institutions across Mexico and Central America.

**Ancient Maya State, Urbanism, Exchange, and Craft Specialization** Kazuo Aoyama 1999 An exhaustive analysis of political and economic change right through the sequence of Maya civilization, based on the direct evidence of chipped stone assemblages from a wide variety of contexts in two regions. The acquisition of raw materials, the production of tools, and the use of tools are all fully considered for what they can tell us about long-distance political and economic relations and local economic organization. An unexpected bonus of the study was information on the use of chipped stone in warfare. The full dataset is provided electronically. Complete text in English and Spanish.

**Pottery Economics in Mesoamerica** Christopher A. Pool 2022-09-06 Pottery is one of the most important classes of artifacts available to archaeologists and anthropologists. Every year, volumes of data are generated detailing ceramic production, distribution, and consumption. How these data can be interpreted in relation to the social and cultural framework of prehistoric societies in Mesoamerica is the subject of this book. Nine chapters written by some of the most well known and respected scholars in the field offer readers an in-depth look at key advances from the past fifteen years. These scholars examine ethnoarchaeological studies and the Preclassic/Formative, Classic, and Postclassic periods and cover geographic areas from eastern to central Mesoamerica. In a series of case studies, contributors address a range of new and developing theories and methods for inferring the technological, organizational, and social dimensions of pottery economics, and draw on a range of sociopolitical examples. Specific topics include the impacts and costs of innovations, the role of the producer in technological choices, the outcomes when errors in vessel formation are tolerated or rectified, the often undocumented multiple lives and uses of ceramic pieces, and the difficulties associated with locating and documenting ceramic production areas in tropical lowlands. A compelling collection that clearly integrates and synthesizes a wide array of data, this book is the definitive text on pottery economics in Mesoamerica and an important contribution to the fields of anthropology, archaeology, ancient history, and the economics of pre-industrial societies.

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**The Archaeology of Mesoamerican Animals** Kitty F. Emery 2013-11-15 Recognition of the role of animals in ancient diet, economy, politics, and ritual is vital to understanding ancient cultures fully, while following the clues available from animal remains in reconstructing environments is vital to understanding the ancient relationship between humans and the world around them. In response to the growing interest in the field of zooarchaeology, this volume presents current research from across the many cultures and regions of Mesoamerica, dealing specifically with the most current issues in zooarchaeological literature. Geographically, the essays collected here index the different aspects of animal use by the indigenous populations of the entire area between the northern borders of Mexico and the southern borders of lower Central America. This includes such diverse cultures as the north Mexican hunter-gatherers, the Olmec, Maya, Mixtec, Zapotec, and Central American Indians. The time frame of the volume extends from the earliest human occupation, the Preclassic, Classic, Postclassic, and Colonial manifestations, to recent times. The book's chapters, written by experts in the field of Mesoamerican zooarchaeology, provide important general background on the domestic and ritual use of animals in early and classic Mesoamerica and Central America, but deal also with special aspects of human-animal relationships such as early domestication and symbolism of animals, and important yet otherwise poorly represented aspects of taphonomy and zooarchaeological methodology. Spanish-language version also available (ISBN 978-1-937040-12-3).

**Mesoamerican Elites** Diane Z. Chase 2003-03-01 In Mesoamerican Elites, Diane Z. Chase and Arlen F. Chase present a wide variety of essays, all of which evaluate current archaeological knowledge of the privileged ruling classes, or elites, in Mesoamerica. Some experts argue that Mesoamerican societies consisted only of elites and peasants, while others argue that considerable intermediate social levels also existed. In light of such diverse opinions, this volume addresses problems in the interpretation of archaeological evidence regarding ancient Mesoamerican social structure.

**Cahokia and the Archaeology of Power** Thomas E. Emerson 1997-10-30 The consolidation of this symbolism into a rural cult marks the expropriation of the cosmos as part of the increasing power of the Cahokian rulers.

**Perspectives on Ancient Maya Rural Complexity** Samuel V. Connell 2003-12-01 Settlement archaeology in the Maya area has focused much of its attention on the polar extremes of the settlement continuum. As a result of this urban/rural bias, a whole range of complex rural settlements remain under-explored. The chapters in this volume highlight the variable quality of these "middle level settlements".

**Politics of the Maya Court** Sarah E. Jackson 2013-06-24 In recent decades, advances in deciphering Maya hieroglyphic writing have given scholars new tools for understanding key aspects of ancient Maya society. This book—the first comprehensive examination of the Maya royal court—exemplifies the importance of these new sources. Authored by anthropologist Sarah E. Jackson and richly illustrated with drawings, photographs, and maps, Politics of the Maya Court uses hieroglyphic and iconographic evidence to explore the composition and social significance of royal courts in the Late Classic period (a.d. 600–900), with a special emphasis on the role of courtly elites. As Jackson explains, the Maya region of southern Mexico and Central America was not a unified empire but a loosely aggregated culture area composed of independent kingdoms. Royal courts had a presence in large, central communities from Chiapas to Yucatan and the highlands of Guatemala and western Honduras. Each major polity was ruled by a k’uhul ajaw, or holy lord, who embodied intertwined aspects of religious and political authority. The hieroglyphic texts that adorned walls, furniture, and portable items in these centers of power provide specific information about the positions, roles, and meanings of the courts. Jackson uses these documents as keys to understanding Classic Maya political hierarchy and, specifically, the institution of the royal court. Within this context, she investigates the lives of the nobility and the participation of elites in court politics. By identifying particular individuals and their life stories, Jackson humanizes Maya society, showing how events resulted from the actions and choices of specific people. Jackson’s innovative portrayal of court membership provides a foundation for scholarship on the nature, functions, and responsibilities of Maya royal courts.

**The Great Maya Droughts in Cultural Context** Gyles Iannone 2014-03-15 In The Great Maya Droughts in Cultural Context, contributors reject the popularized link between societal collapse and drought in Maya civilization, arguing that a series of periodic “collapses,” including the infamous Terminal Classic collapse (AD 750-1050), were not caused solely by climate change-related droughts but by a combination of other social, political, and environmental factors. New and senior scholars of archaeology and environmental science explore the timing and intensity of droughts and provide a nuanced understanding of socio-ecological dynamics, with specific reference to what makes communities resilient or vulnerable when faced with environmental change. Contributors recognize the existence of four droughts that correlate with periods of demographic and political decline and identify a variety of concurrent political and social issues. They argue that these primary underlying factors were exacerbated by drought conditions and ultimately led to societal transitions that were by no means uniform across various sites and subregions. They also deconstruct the concept of “collapse” itself—although the line of Maya kings ended with the Terminal Classic collapse, the Maya people and their civilization survived. The Great Maya Droughts in Cultural Context offers new insights into the complicated series of events that impacted the decline of Maya civilization. This significant contribution to our increasingly comprehensive understanding of ancient Maya culture will be of interest to students and scholars of archaeology, anthropology, geography, and environmental studies.

*Gender in Pre-Hispanic America* Cecelia F. Klein 2001 Gender in Pre-Hispanic America offers rich opportunities for comprehending current trends and considering future directions in research. It is unique in that it puts social theory at the forefront of the discussion. The book has a special intellectual presence and contemporary relevance in its engagement with the social lives and constructs of its authors and readers alike. The consideration of the role of gender in our daily lives, including in our professions, becomes inescapable when reading this book. It is not simply a question of men's roles having been possibly overemphasized and overstudied to the detriment of women's. The fact that genders, as opposed to sexes, are socially constructed categories focuses our attention on the ways in which these and other social constructs have shaped our present understanding of the past and informed past peoples' understand of their present. In various articles in this book, the reader will not find unanimity in what is meant by "gender" or how to go about studying it. What will be found, however, is a collection of interesting, informed, thought-provoking, and often lively essays. It is hoped that this volume will mark a stage in an evolving study of this field and provoke new research in the future.

*Palaces and Power in the Americas* Jessica Joyce Christie 2010-01-01 Ancient American palaces still captivate those who stand before them. Even in their fallen and ruined condition, the palaces project such power that, according to the editors of this new collection, it must have been deliberately drawn into their formal designs, spatial layouts, and choice of locations. Such messages separated palaces from other elite architecture and reinforced the power and

privilege of those residing in them. Indeed, as Christie and Sarro write, "the relation between political power and architecture is a pervasive and intriguing theme in the Americas." Given the variety of cultures, time periods, and geographical locations examined within, the editors of this book have grouped the articles into four sections. The first looks at palaces in cultures where they have not previously been identified, including the Huaca of Moche Site, the Wari of Peru, and Chaco Canyon in the U.S. Southwest. The second section discusses palaces as "stage sets" that express power, such as those found among the Maya, among the Coast Salish of the Pacific Northwest, and at El Tajín on the Mexican Gulf Coast. The third part of the volume presents cases in which differences in elite residences imply differences in social status, with examples from Pasado de la Amada, the Valley of Oaxaca, Teotihuacan, and the Aztecs. The final section compares architectural strategies between cultures; the models here are Farfán, Peru, under both the Chimú and the Inka, and the separate states of the Maya and the Inka. Such scope, and the quality of the scholarship, make Palaces and Power in the Americas a must-have work on the subject.

*The Maya World* Scott R. Hutson 2020-06-17 The Maya World brings together over 60 authors, representing the fields of archaeology, art history, epigraphy, geography, and ethnography, who explore cutting-edge research on every major facet of the ancient Maya and all sub-regions within the Maya world. The Maya world, which covers Guatemala, Belize, and parts of Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador, contains over a hundred ancient sites that are open to tourism, eight of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and many thousands more that have been dug or await investigation. In addition to captivating the lay public, the ancient Maya have attracted scores of major interdisciplinary research expeditions and hundreds of smaller projects going back to the 19th century, making them one of the best-known ancient cultures. The Maya World explores their renowned writing system, towering stone pyramids, exquisitely painted murals, and elaborate funerary tombs as well as their creative agricultural strategies, complex social, economic, and political relationships, widespread interactions with other societies, and remarkable cultural resilience in the face of historical ruptures. This is an invaluable reference volume for scholars of the ancient Maya, including archaeologists, historians, and anthropologists.

**New Approaches to Old Stones** Yorke M. Rowan 2016-04-08 Ground stone artefacts were widely used in food production in prehistory. However, the archaeological community has widely neglected the dataset of ground stone artefacts until now. 'New Approaches to Old Stones' offers a theoretical and methodological analysis of the archaeological data pertaining to ground stone tools. The essays draw on a range of case studies - from the Levant, Egypt, Crete, Anatolia, Mexico and North America - to examine ground stone technologies. From medieval Islamic stone cooking vessels and late Minoan stone vases, to the use of stone in ritual and as a symbol of luxury, 'New Approaches to Old Stones' offers a radical reassessment of the impact of ground-stone artefacts on technological change, production and exchange.

*Royal Courts Of The Ancient Maya* Takeshi Inomata 2018-05-15 The two volumes of Royal Courts of the Ancient Maya provide current archaeological perspectives on Maya courts conceived as vital, functioning social groups composed of lords, courtiers, scribes, priests, and entertainers, among many others. In addition to archaeological data on the architecture and other spatial attributes of courts, the studies in the two volumes bring to bear on the topic the most recent evidence from inscriptions, vase paintings, murals and friezes, and ethnohistoric records in order to flesh out a portrait of the actors and roles that made up Maya courts through time and across space. The attributes of courts are explored in the Maya highlands and lowlands, from the origins of early kingship through the Classic period to the Postclassic and Terminal epochs. Pertinent comparisons are also drawn from the Aztecs and other ancient and contemporary societies. Volume 1: Theory, Comparison, and Synthesis establishes a carefully considered framework for approaching the study of courts and their functions throughout the world of the ancient Maya. Volume 2: Data and Case Studies provides authoritatively current data and insights from key Maya sites, including Cop Tikal, Caracol, Bonampak, and Calakmul.

**The Postclassic to Spanish-era Transition in Mesoamerica** Susan Kepecs 2005 In this volume, thirteen anthropological archaeologists working in historical time frames in Mesoamerica, including editors Susan Kepecs and Rani Alexander, break down the artificial barrier between archaeology and history by offering new material evidence of the transition from native-ruled, prehispanic society to the age of Spanish administration. Taken together, the chapters contained herein cover most of the key Mesoamerican regions that eventually came under Spanish control. The authors bring new empirical information to bear on the problem of how prehispanic social, political, and economic organization were transformed, as independent Maya kingdoms, the Aztec empire (with its client states), the Tarascans, and other more distant polities once linked through the macroregional economic web of the Postclassic period were forcibly incorporated into Spains transatlantic domain. The complex processes of multidirectional interaction and culture contact among Mesoamericans and Europeans are colored by cultural diversity, culture clash, and varied responses ranging from accommodation to resistance to active rebellion. These case studies also illuminate how native organization altered the Spanish imperial process. Ultimately, this volume provides a link between past and present, since Mesoamerican peoples continue to negotiate the effects of globalization on their societies. Susan Kepecs is an honorary fellow in the department of anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Rani T. Alexander is an associate professor in the department of sociology and anthropology at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.Contributors: Thomas H. Charlton is professor of anthropology, University of Iowa, Iowa City. Susan Toby Evans is professor of anthropology, Pennsylvania State University. Patricia Fournier Garca is professor of anthropology, Escuela Nacional de Antropologa e Historia, Mxico, D.F. Janine Gasco is associate professor of anthropology, California State University-Dominguez Hills. Mark T. Lycett is research associate of anthropology, University of Chicago. Cynthia L. Otis Charlton is an independent scholar, Wellman, Iowa. Joel W. Palka is associate professor of anthropology, Latin American and Latino Studies, University of Illinois-Chicago. Helen Perlstein Pollard is professor of anthropology, Michigan State University. Don S. Rice is professor of anthropology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Prudence M. Rice is professor of anthropology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Enrique Rodrguez-Alegra is assistant professor of anthropology, University of Texas-Austin.

**The Political Economy of Ancient Mesoamerica** Vernon L. Scarborough 2007 One of the most culturally diverse regions of the ancient world, Mesoamerica was also one of the fledgling areas for state formation. The case studies in this volume interpret Mesoamerican civilization through the emergence, resilience, and occasional demise of Mesoamerica's early and developing political economies. An exploration of the unique adaptations and approaches taken by Mesoamerican societies to cope with their evolving landscapes provides insight on how these states were organized and the varying ways in which state affairs were conducted between regions and through time. Although several factors are presented and discussed for the rise and fall of the many complex societies, the book maintains a consistent emphasis on the political economy and its transformative effects over labor, land, and water.Inspired by the impact of the annual yearbook "Research in Economic Anthropology" (REA) and its longstanding editor, Barry L. Isaac, the contributors in this volume were assembled to honor Isaac and selected based on their previous association with Isaac and REA as well as their knowledge of particular regions of Mesoamerica."Contributors" Jorge Angulo, anthropology, INAH, Mexico Kimberly A. Berry, archaeology, Boston University Robert D. Drennan, anthropology, University of Pittsburgh Gary M. Feinman, curator, Mesoamerican Anthropology and Archaeology, The Field Museum, Chicago Mikael J. Haller, anthropology, University of Pittsburgh Rhoda Halperin, anthropology, Montclair State University Patricia A. McAnany, anthropology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Linda M. Nicholas, adjunct curator, Mesoamerican Archaeology, The Field Museum, Chicago Heather M. Richards, anthropology, University of New Mexico Robert S. Santley, anthropology, University of New Mexico (deceased) Barbara L. Stark, anthropology, Arizona State University Phil C. Weigand, Centro de Estudios Antropolgicos, Colegio de Michoacn

*Sculpture and Social Dynamics in Preclassic Mesoamerica* Julia Guernsey 2012-07-23 This book examines the functions of sculpture during the Preclassic period in Mesoamerica and its significance in statements of social identity. Julia Guernsey situates the origins and evolution of monumental stone sculpture within a broader social and political context and demonstrates the role that such sculpture played in creating and institutionalizing social hierarchies. This book focuses specifically on an enigmatic type of public, monumental sculpture known as the "potbelly" that traces its antecedents to earlier, small domestic ritual objects and ceramic figurines. The cessation of domestic rituals involving ceramic figurines along the Pacific slope coincided not only with the creation of the first monumental potbelly sculptures, but with the rise of the first state-level societies in Mesoamerica by the advent of the Late Preclassic period. The potbellies became central to the physical representation of new forms of social identity and expressions of political authority during this time of dramatic change.

**The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology** Deborah L. Nichols 2012-09-24 The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology provides a current and comprehensive guide to the recent and on-going archaeology of Mesoamerica. Though the emphasis is on prehispanic societies, this Handbook

also includes coverage of important new work by archaeologists on the Colonial and Republican periods. Unique among recent works, the text brings together in a single volume article-length regional syntheses and topical overviews written by active scholars in the field of Mesoamerican archaeology. The first section of the Handbook provides an overview of recent history and trends of Mesoamerica and articles on national archaeology programs and practice in Central America and Mexico written by archaeologists from these countries. These are followed by regional syntheses organized by time period, beginning with early hunter-gatherer societies and the first farmers of Mesoamerica and concluding with a discussion of the Spanish Conquest and frontiers and peripheries of Mesoamerica. Topical and comparative articles comprise the remainder of Handbook. They cover important dimensions of prehispanic societies—from ecology, economy, and environment to social and political relations—and discuss significant methodological contributions, such as geo-chemical source studies, as well as new theories and diverse theoretical perspectives. The Handbook concludes with a section on the archaeology of the Spanish conquest and the Colonial and Republican periods to connect the prehispanic, proto-historic, and historic periods. This volume will be a must-read for students and professional archaeologists, as well as other scholars including historians, art historians, geographers, and ethnographers with an interest in Mesoamerica.

**Archaeometallurgy in Mesoamerica** Aaron N. Shugar 2012-01-15 "This book will be a basic reference on the topic for many years to come, and will remain an essential source even as new field and laboratory studies develop. It is by far the best reference for metallurgy within the ancient Mesoamerican world system, and will be important for comparative studies between Mesoamerican and other early civilizations."—Phil Weigand, Colegio de Michoacán Presenting the latest in archaeometallurgical research in a Mesoamerican context, Archaeometallurgy in Mesoamerica brings together up-to-date research from the most notable scholars in the field. These contributors analyze data from a variety of sites, examining current approaches to the study of archaeometallurgy in the region as well as new perspectives on the significance metallurgy and metal objects had in the lives of its ancient peoples. The chapters are organized following the cyclical nature of metals—beginning with extracting and mining ore, moving to smelting and casting of finished objects, and ending with recycling and deterioration back to the original state once the object is no longer in use. Data obtained from archaeological investigations, ethnohistoric sources, ethnographic studies, along with materials science analyses, are brought to bear on questions related to the integration of metallurgy into local and regional economies, the sacred connotations of copper objects, metallurgy as specialized crafting, and the nature of mining, alloy technology, and metal fabrication.

*Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica* Rosemary A. Joyce 2009-06-23 Gender was a fluid potential, not a fixed category, before the Spaniards came to Mesoamerica. Childhood training and ritual shaped, but did not set, adult gender, which could encompass third genders and alternative sexualities as well as "male" and "female." At the height of the Classic period, Maya rulers presented themselves as embodying the entire range of gender possibilities, from male through female, by wearing blended costumes and playing male and female roles in state ceremonies. This landmark book offers the first comprehensive description and analysis of gender and power relations in prehispanic Mesoamerica from the Formative Period Olmec world (ca. 1500-500 BC) through the Postclassic Maya and Aztec societies of the sixteenth century AD. Using approaches from contemporary gender theory, Rosemary Joyce explores how Mesoamericans created human images to represent idealized notions of what it meant to be male and female and to depict proper gender roles. She then juxtaposes these images with archaeological evidence from burials, house sites, and body ornaments, which reveals that real gender roles were more fluid and variable than the stereotyped images suggest.

**Southeastern Mesoamerica** Whitney A. Goodwin 2021-03-01 Southeastern Mesoamerica highlights the diversity and dynamism of the Indigenous groups that inhabited and continue to inhabit the borders of Southeastern Mesoamerica, an area that includes parts of present-day Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Chapters combine archaeological, ethnohistoric, and historic data and approaches to better understand the long-term sociopolitical and cultural changes that occurred throughout the entirety of human occupation of this area. Drawing on archaeological evidence ranging back to the late Pleistocene as well as extensive documentation from the historic period, contributors show how Southeastern Mesoamericans created unique identities, strategically incorporating cosmopolitan influences from cultures to the north and south with their own long-lived traditions. These populations developed autochthonous forms of monumental architecture and routes and methods of exchange and had distinct social, cultural, political, and economic traits. They also established unique long-term human-environment relations that were the result of internal creativity and inspiration influenced by local social and natural trajectories. Southeastern Mesoamerica calls upon archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, ethnohistorians, and others working in Mesoamerica, Central America, and other cultural boundaries around the world to reexamine the role Indigenous resilience and agency play in these areas and in the cultural developments and interactions that occur within them. Contributors: Edy Barrios, Christopher Begley, Walter Burgos, Mauricio Díaz García, William R. Fowler, Rosemary A. Joyce, Gloria Lara-Pinto, Eva L. Martínez, William J. McFarlane, Cameron L. McNeil, Lorena D. Mihok, Pastor Rodolfo Gómez Zúñiga, Timothy Scheffler, Edward Schortman, Russell Sheptak, Miranda Suri, Patricia Urban, Antolín Velásquez, E. Christian Wells

**Intermediate Elites in Pre-Columbian States and Empires** Christina M. Elson 2006-02-09 From the Mesoamerican highlands to the Colca Valley in Peru, pre-Columbian civilizations were bastions of power that have largely been viewed through the lens of rulership, or occasionally through bottom-up perspectives of resistance. Rather than focusing on rulers or peasants, this book examines how intermediate elitesÑboth men and womenÑhelped to develop, sustain, and resist state policies and institutions. Employing new archaeological and ethnohistorical data, its contributors trace a 2,000-year trajectory of elite social evolution in the Zapotec, Wari, Aztec, Inka, and Maya civilizations. This is the first volume to consider how individuals subordinate to imperial rulers helped to shape specific forms of state and imperial organization. Taking a broader scope than previous studies, it is one of the few works to systematically address these issues in both Mesoamerica and the Central Andes. It considers how these individuals influenced the long-term development of the largest civilizations of the ancient Americas, opening a new window on the role of intermediate elites in the rise and fall of ancient states and empires worldwide. The authors demonstrate how such evidence as settlement patterns, architecture, decorative items, and burial patterns reflect the roles of intermediate elites in their respective societies, arguing that they were influential actors whose interests were highly significant in shaping the specific forms of state and imperial organization. Their emphasis on provincial elites particularly shifts examination of early states away from royal capitals and imperial courts, explaining how local elites and royal bureaucrats had significant impact on the development and organization of premodern states. Together, these papers demonstrate that intricate networks of intermediate elites bound these ancient societies togetherÑand that competition between individuals and groups contributed to their decline and eventual collapse. By addressing current theoretical concerns with agency, resistance to state domination, and the co-option of local leadership by imperial administrators, it offers valuable new insight into the utility of studying intermediate elites.

**Prehispanic Domestic Units in Western Mesoamerica** Robert S. Santley 1992-11-23 Prehispanic Domestic Units in Western Mesoamerica presents different analytical approaches for interpreting household composition and cultural site formation processes in prehispanic western Mesoamerica. Archaeological data collected using both stratigraphic and reconnaissance methods are combined with and interpreted using a combination of ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and ethnoarchaeological information. The result is a richer and more complete picture of prehispanic household structure than any single analytic approach could produce on its own. The book is organized into several sections based on common theme and geographic area. The first three chapters provide a broad discussion of conceptual and methodological difficulties that archaeologists must resolve in the study of prehispanic households. Subsequent chapters present case studies which examine households from two areas of western Mesoamerica: the Central Mexican highlands and the Gulf Coast of Mexico. Eight case studies from the Central Mexican highlands provide a longitudinal perspective on changing household composition. Four of these examine households during the late Formative, Classic, Epiclassic, and Early Postclassic periods (650 B.C.-A.D. 1200), while four others focus specifically on household structure during the century immediately preceding the Spanish Conquest. Two additional case studies provide comparative information on household organization in the South Gulf Coast region during the Classic period. Prehispanic Domestic Units in Western Mesoamerica: Studies of the Household, Compound, and Residence will be an excellent reference for all anthropologists and archaeologists interested in prehispanic western Mesoamerica.

*Ancient Maya Commoners* Jon C. Lohse 2010-01-01 Much of what we currently know about the ancient Maya concerns the activities of the elites who ruled the societies and left records of their deeds carved on the monumental buildings and sculptures that remain as silent testimony to their power and status. But what do we know of the common folk who labored to build the temple complexes and palaces and grew the food that fed all of Maya society? This

pathfinding book marshals a wide array of archaeological, ethnohistorical, and ethnographic evidence to offer the fullest understanding to date of the lifeways of ancient Maya commoners. Senior and emerging scholars contribute case studies that examine such aspects of commoner life as settlement patterns, household organization, and subsistence practices. Their reports cover most of the Maya area and the entire time span from Preclassic to Postclassic. This broad range of data helps resolve Maya commoners from a faceless mass into individual actors who successfully adapted to their social environment and who also held primary responsibility for producing the food and many other goods on which the whole Maya society depended.

**Maya Palaces and Elite Residences** Jessica Joyce Christie 2010-01-01 Maya "palaces" have intrigued students of this ancient Mesoamerican culture since the early twentieth century, when scholars first applied the term "palace" to multi-room, gallery-like buildings set on low platforms in the centers of Maya cities. Who lived in these palaces? What types of ceremonial and residential activities took place there? How do the physical forms and spatial arrangement of the buildings embody Maya concepts of social organization and cosmology? This book brings together state-of-the-art data and analysis regarding the occupants, ritual and residential uses, and social and cosmological meanings of Maya palaces and elite residences. A multidisciplinary team of senior researchers reports on sites in Belize (Blue Creek), Western Honduras (Copan), the Peten (Tikal, Dos Pilas, Aguateca), and the Yucatan (Uxmal, Chichen-Itza, Dzibilchaltun, Yaxuna). Archaeologist contributors discuss the form of palace buildings and associated artifacts, their location within the city, and how some palaces related to landscape features. Their approach is complemented by art historical analyses of architectural sculpture, epigraphy, and ethnography. Jessica Joyce Christie concludes the volume by identifying patterns and commonalties that apply not only to the cited examples, but also to Maya architecture in general.

**Human Adaptation in Ancient Mesoamerica** Nancy Gonlin 2015-12-01 This volume explores the dynamics of human adaptation to social, political, ideological, economic, and environmental factors in Mesoamerica and includes a wide array of topics, such as the hydrological engineering behind Teotihuacan's layout, the complexities of agriculture and sustainability in the Maya lowlands, and the nuanced history of abandonment among different lineages and households in Maya centers. The authors aptly demonstrate how culture is the mechanism that allows people to adapt to a changing world, and they address how ecological factors, particularly land and water, intersect with nonmaterial and material manifestations of cultural complexity. Contributors further illustrate the continuing utility of the cultural ecological perspective in framing research on adaptations of ancient civilizations. This book celebrates the work of Dr. David Webster, an influential Penn State archaeologist and anthropologist of the Maya region, and highlights human adaptation in Mesoamerica through the scientific lenses of anthropological archaeology and cultural ecology. Contributors include Elliot M. Abrams, Christopher J. Duffy, Susan Toby Evans, Kirk D. French, AnnCorinne Freter, Nancy Gonlin, George R. Milner, Zachary Nelson, Deborah L. Nichols, David M. Reed, Don S. Rice, Prudence M. Rice, Rebecca Storey, Kirk Damon Straight, David Webster, Stephen L. Whittington, Randolph J. Widmer, John D. Wingard, and W. Scott Zeleznik.

**Hidden Among the Hills** Hanns J. Prem 1999

**Archaeology at El Perú-Waka'** Olivia C. Navarro-Farr 2015-08-15 Archaeology at El Perú-Waka' is the first book to summarize long-term research at this

major Maya site. The results of fieldwork and subsequent analyses conducted by members of the El Perú-Waka' Regional Archaeological Project are coupled with theoretical approaches treating the topics of ritual, memory, and power as deciphered through material remains discovered at Waka'. The book is site-centered, yet the fifteen wide-ranging contributions offer readers greater insight to the richness and complexity of Classic-period Maya culture, as well as to the ways in which archaeologists believe ancient peoples negotiated their ritual lives and comprehended their own pasts. El Perú-Waka' is an ancient Maya city located in present-day northwestern Petén, Guatemala. Rediscovered by petroleum exploration workers in the mid-1960s, it is the largest known archaeological site in the Laguna del Tigre National Park in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve. The El Perú-Waka' Regional Archaeological Project initiated scientific investigations in 2003, and through excavation and survey, researchers established that Waka' was a key political and economic center well integrated into Classic-period lowland Maya civilization, and reconstructed many aspects of Maya life and ritual activity in this ancient community. The research detailed in this volume provides a wealth of new, substantive, and scientifically excavated data, which contributors approach with fresh theoretical insights. In the process, they lay out sound strategies for understanding the ritual manipulation of monuments, landscapes, buildings, objects, and memories, as well as related topics encompassing the performance and negotiation of power throughout the city's extensive sociopolitical history.

**Space and Sculpture in the Classic Maya City** Alexander Parmington 2011-03-31 Examines how images, texts and architectural form controlled movement of people through the various precincts in Classic Maya cities.

**Palaces and Courtly Culture in Ancient Mesoamerica** Julie Nehammer Knub 2014-01-19 This volume collects eight recent and innovative studies spanning the breadth of Mesoamerica, from the Early Classic metropolis of Teotihuacan, to Tenochtitlan, the Late Postclassic capital of the Aztec, and from the arid central Mexican highlands in the west to the humid Maya lowlands in the east.

**Ancient West Mexico in the Mesoamerican Ecumene** Eduardo Williams 2020-02-20 This volume presents a long-overdue synthesis and update on West Mexican archaeology. Ancient West Mexico has often been portrayed as a 'marginal' or 'underdeveloped' area of Mesoamerica. This book shows that the opposite is true and that it played a critical role in the cultural and historical development of the Mesoamerican ecumene.

**The Maya of the Cochuah Region** Justine M. Shaw 2015-12-01 In recent years the Cochuah region, the ancient breadbasket of the north-central Yucatecan lowlands, has been documented and analyzed by a number of archaeologists and cultural anthropologists. This book, the first major collection of data from those investigations, presents and analyzes findings on more than eighty sites and puts them in the context of the findings of other investigations from outside the area. It begins with archaeological investigations and continues with research on living peoples. Within the archaeological sections, historic and colonial chapters build upon those concerned with the Classic Maya, revealing the ebb and flow of settlement through time in the region as peoples entered, left, and modified their ways of life based upon external and internal events and forces. In addition to discussing the history of anthropological research in the area, the contributors address such issues as modern women's reproductive choices, site boundary definition, caves as holy places, settlement shifts, and the reuse of spaces through time.