

including the famous wind god ceramic (also known as Ehecatl [1978.412.27.] illustrated on p. 160) at the Met—but Nelson Rockefeller had purchased that very sculpture by 1957, when Lara was 15. It's a fishy story.

There is far more work to be done, both in mapping the big story and in the granular detail. But *The Market for Mesoamerica* takes a new step for others to lean on and to build from as the story comes into sharper focus in the next few years.

An Inconstant Landscape: The Maya Kingdom of El Zotz, Guatemala. THOMAS G. GARRISON and STEPHEN HOUSTON, editors. 2018. University Press of Colorado. Louisville. 470 pp. \$70.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-60732-763-9.

Reviewed by Franco D. Rossi, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

In the preface of *An Inconstant Landscape*, editors Thomas G. Garrison and Stephen Houston describe this innovative edited volume as a kind of reimagining of the increasingly rare archaeological monograph series. Centered on the ancient Maya site of El Zotz within the Buenavista Valley of Guatemala, the book includes contributions from 20 expert scholars associated with the project through the years. The book's organization recognizes the interpretations and perspectives of an intergenerational cohort of researchers while tying together their material findings into a fuller picture of an important, yet long overlooked, geographical zone within Mesoamerica. The work is valuable in part for its rigorous reporting of data that too often are presented in archaeological reports but frequently go otherwise unpublished—including comprehensive radiocarbon, ceramic, lithic, paleoenvironmental, architectural, and bioarchaeological data.

In addition to this update to the conventional genre of archaeological reports, *An Inconstant Landscape* also makes an important thematic contribution to debates about complex and varied interactions between humans and ecology over two millennia. The authors deploy a variety of archaeological techniques and scientific analyses to track how anthropogenic activities affected landscapes within a semitropical microregion of Guatemala. This includes the first comprehensive look at a long-lived but lesser known Maya kingdom centered at El Zotz. More broadly, the volume considers how ever-shifting economic, political, ecological, and social motivations drive diverse human adaptations and interventions throughout history while keeping their consequences,

both intended and unintended, clearly in view. Novel in both its organization and its narrative scope, this volume offers an important contribution to the archaeology of the ancient Maya; it also serves as a model for archaeological projects seeking to more accurately chart and understand the uneven dynamics of human settlement, adaptation, and societal change over time.

The volume consists of 13 chapters (a meaningful number in ancient Maya thought) grouped into two parts: Part 1, "The Culture History of the Pa'k'an Dynasty" (Chapters 1–6), and Part 2, "Technical Analysis at El Zotz" (Chapters 7–13).

In Chapter 1, Edwin Román and editors Houston and Garrison set the scene by presenting project objectives and broader theoretical concerns, as well as briefly describing both the ecological contexts and archaeological profiles of the various sites in and around El Zotz that are discussed within the volume (complete with site maps). The reader learns up front the importance of El Zotz's strategic positioning on an important travel and trade route that passed through the Buenavista Valley and how this location placed the city in the shadow of the much larger Maya center of Tikal, located only 20 km or so to the east. In addition to summarizing the archaeological and epigraphic historiography of the area, the chapter appendix includes a detailed table of the 60 radiocarbon dates generated from the project's collective work, complete with narrative descriptions of the archaeological contexts and motives for each carbon sample or grouping.

The following chapters bring the reader through more than 2,000 years of history at El Zotz and its surroundings. James Doyle and Rony Piedrasanta (Chapter 2) cover the longest period in this framework, the Middle to Late Preclassic (1000 BC–250 AD). They focus on the early site of El Palmar and its E-Group complex—showing that this early "civic" space and its Mamom sphere ceramics were part of a larger cultural network of centers that began appearing across the Maya Lowlands during the Middle Preclassic period (1000–300 BC). The chapter also tracks a Late Preclassic burst of monumental architecture, including triadic groups, alongside related settlement evidence suggestive of increasing populations across the area.

In Chapter 3, Román, Garrison, and Houston take us through the Early Classic period (AD 250–600). They present evidence about a peak in the valley's population during this time, the foundation of divine kingship at El Zotz, and a shift from the valley floor to more defensible upland sites (perhaps in response to threats posed by Tikal and other growing powers). A particularly compelling part of the chapter concerns

the architecture, imagery, and contents of a royal tomb discovered in 2010—one that housed an early member of the El Zotz dynasty. It closes with a discussion of a major political shake-up in the Maya area in the late fourth century (often called the “entrada”), establishing a link between this event and a shift in settlement back to the valley floor—perhaps in response to the period of relative stability that seems to have followed.

Nicholas P. Carter, Yeny M. Gutiérrez Castillo, and Sarah Newman examine the Late Classic period (AD 650–850) at El Zotz in Chapter 4. Relying primarily on architectural data, settlement survey, and epigraphic evidence, the authors contextualize two bursts in elite construction activity at the site in relation to political events and different non-elite populations. The authors also effectively use these data to track the perilous position of El Zotz during the Late Classic, when its dynasty was caught within the turbulent power politics that accompanied the shifting hegemonies of Calakmul and Tikal across the region.

In Chapter 5, Newman, Jose Luis Garrido, and Carter explore the complexities and contradictions that characterize the period known as the Terminal Classic (AD 850–1000). A chronological period long associated with the so-called Classic Maya Collapse, this chapter highlights the many other archaeological features that defined this era, including reuse, modification, and renovation of monumental constructions and elite spaces. The authors describe this period as a kind of “last gasp” of divine kingship and its court-centered politics at El Zotz. They do an excellent job accounting for the complexity and volatility of this brief but important moment in Maya history, petitioning readers to think of this much-discussed period within more nuanced frameworks of political, social, and economic change, rather than as simply “collapse.”

Chapter 6 considers the Early Postclassic period (AD 900–1250/1350) through the lens of household archaeology. Melanie J. Kingsley and Laura Gámez argue that, toward the end of the Terminal Classic period, the decentralization of power at El Zotz was accompanied by a reconfiguration of local populations around self-sufficient household compounds. The chapter authors use architectural, ceramic, and lithic evidence to show how continuities and changes across the material record suggest an increased emphasis on the household as the religious, economic, and political organizing principle during an era they call the “Post Dynastic.” They highlight the importance of the consistent local water source for maintaining these households, even as other cities across the Maya Lowlands were abandoned.

The technical analyses of Part 2 include excellent chapters on soil chemistry and hydrology (Timothy Beach, Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach, Colin Doyle, and William Delgado), ceramic analysis (Ewa Czapiewska-Halliday, Carter, Kingsley, Newman, and Alyce de Carteret), and lithics examination (Zachary Hruby), as well as a close consideration of figurines and figurine whistles (de Carteret and Garrido), architectural stratigraphy and building technology (Cassandra Mesick Braun), and bioarchaeological analysis (Andrew K. Scherer). Data and results presented in these are detailed and thorough, with extensive internal referencing between chapters.

In Chapter 13, Garrison and Houston concisely weave these diverse histories and technical analyses into an easily digestible “Cultural Synthesis of the Buenavista Valley.” In this concluding chapter, Garrison and Houston summarize the salient archaeological features of the chronological periods set forth in the book, contextualize these features within Maya history more broadly, and offer concluding comments and future research directions.

In addition to its use for graduate and upper-level undergraduate teaching, *An Inconstant Landscape* will be exciting for a range of audiences, including specialists across archaeology, anthropology, and environmental studies, as well as anyone interested in understanding how societies operating at the periphery of power respond and adapt to diverse ecological, political, economic, and social factors over the long term.

The Beast Between: Deer in Maya Art and Culture. MATTHEW LOOPER. 2019. University of Texas Press, Austin. viii + 276 pp., 20 b&w photos, 170 b&w illus. \$60.00 (hardcover), ISBN: 978-1-4773-1805-8.

Reseñado por Alejandro Sheseña, Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas

Como lo señala el título de la obra, se trata de un trabajo, en definitiva destacable dentro de los estudios mayas, dedicado a uno de los símbolos de mayor carga semántica en el arte y cultura mayas: el venado. De entrada, el libro representa la investigación más completa, exhaustiva y actualizada hasta la fecha publicada acerca de la importancia y el significado cultural y económico de los venados para los antiguos (y modernos) mayas. La multiplicidad de aspectos relacionados con este animal es abordada con erudición por el autor, Matthew Looper, a través de una introducción,