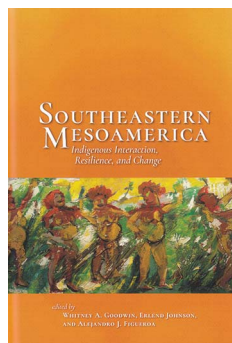


inhabitants and examples of settled life (Chapter 3); the Formative period and relations between West and Central Mexico (Chapter 4); the Classic period (Chapter 5); the Post-classic period (Chapter 6); and the Tarascan Empire and the protohistoric period (Chapter 7).

The author's research shows that as early as the Formative period (c. 1500 BC–AD 300), West Mexico was participating in the social and cultural life of the wider Mesoamerican region. This is evidenced by ceramics and figurines that demonstrate interaction with neighbouring regions, while, at the same time, artefacts known to have originated in West Mexico had made their way into the Basin of Mexico. Shared Mesoamerican funerary practices are also attested. This close interaction with other Mesoamerican regions continued in the Postclassic period (c. AD 900–1521) with the formation of long-lasting economic networks. Finally, Williams considers the Tarascan Empire, discovering long-distance contacts that developed between the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin—the heart of the Tarascan Empire—and the imperial periphery, and beyond to other Mesoamerican polities. Williams draws together all the above evidence to argue that West Mexico had significant influence in the Mesoamerican world, concluding that “it is high time to recognize West Mexico's rightful place among the major players on the stage of the Mesoamerican ecumene” (p. 413).

WHITNEY A. GOODWIN, ERLEND JOHNSON & ALEJANDRO J. FIGUEROA (ed.). 2021. *Southeastern Mesoamerica: Indigenous interaction, resilience, and change*. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-64642-096-4 hardback \$85.



Another region once considered peripheral—and, in fact, once known as the south-eastern Maya Periphery—is the area that encompasses modern-day Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. *Southeastern Mesoamerica: Indigenous interaction, resilience, and change* aims “to demonstrate the universal utility of the case studies from this region to archaeological and anthropological understandings of intercultural interaction among diverse populations along fluid, ever-changing frontiers and borders” (p. 3). Conscious of the “shifting archaeological and geographical concept” (p. 3) that is Mesoamerica, chapters in this volume celebrate the complexity of the varied Indigenous groups that have occupied this vast region

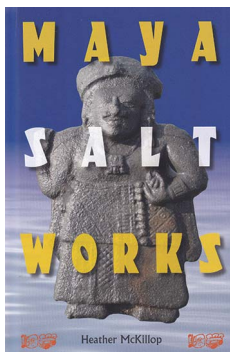
and the intricate networks that existed between them.

The volume comprises 14 chapters, in which authors centre their focus on south-eastern Mesoamerica not as a marginal area, but as an area with its own rich history and cultural development. The contributors' brief was to consider how Indigenous resilience and agency shaped these cultural developments and influenced interaction between these areas and regions considered more central to the Maya world. Chapters run chronologically, spanning a vast timescale from the deep history of the Preceramic period (c. 11 000–5000 cal BP) to the sixteenth century AD.

Following an introductory chapter by the editors, the volume opens with Figueroa and Scheffler's assessment of the relationship between the natural environment and behavioural changes, to investigate how the natural and social landscapes influenced the adoption of Mesoamerican cultivars, such as maize, in the highlands of south-west Honduras. The authors conclude that the decision to adopt these cultivars was part of a significant shift in the perception of landscape. Erlend Johnson's chapter brings the reader into the Late Classic period to investigate the influence of the Copán polity in western Honduras. The study shows that while Copán certainly played an important role in regional power, it was more limited in its reach than may have been expected; neighbouring areas appear to have had agency in the power relationship, being able to determine the extent of those relations. Cameron McNeil also focuses on Copán in Chapter 4, which considers the interconnectedness of the ruling elite of Copán and the nearby site of Río Amarillo, a strategically located site with fertile territory. This contribution highlights the complex nature of relationships between well known, powerful polities and lesser known, but perhaps no less powerful, centres.

All of the articles in the volume bring fresh perspectives to challenge traditional ways of viewing south-eastern Mesoamerica, and begin to shift the understanding of how the power balance between elites and non-elites was negotiated, who identified as Mayan and to what extent, and how the social networks and economic arteries that criss-crossed the region transcended both geographical and hierarchical boundaries.

HEATHER MCKILLOP. 2019. *Maya salt works*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida; 978-0-813-05633-3 hardback \$95.



The discovery, by the author of this volume, of a huge salt-production complex in southern Belize, offers the basis for a closer look at the economic arteries of Mesoamerica. Heather McKillop's account of the Paynes Creek sites provides a framework for the discussion of the scale of salt production and its role in the Maya economy.

McKillop opens with a chapter devoted to the economics of salt in the Maya world. Instead of being self-sufficient, Maya households produced a surplus of goods that could then be traded, usually in local marketplaces. Long-distance exchange also played a role, and exotic and non-local goods appear to have been available to most households. This chapter includes a precis of salt production and salt works in the Maya region, which began in the Late Archaic period, when horticulture began to reduce the reliance on hunting. Demand for salt rose in the Classic period and evidence for salt making is richer on sites from this time. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the Paynes Creek salt works at Port Honduras, Belize—a collection of 110 sites concentrated in an area of only 5km². This group of sites is unique in its preservation of wooden buildings, and these have transformed understanding of Maya salt production. Through the Paynes