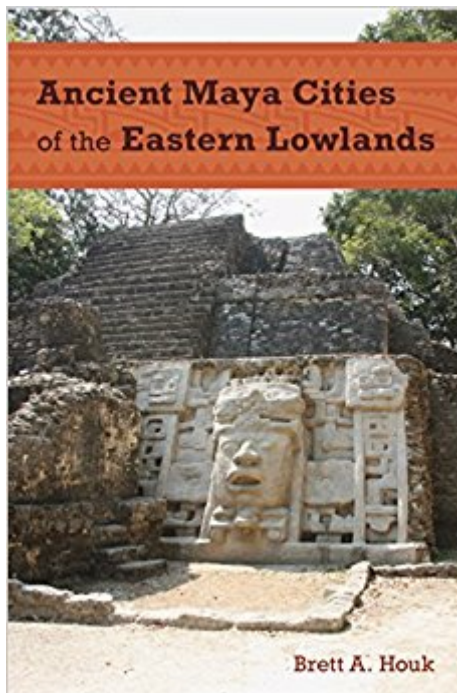


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# Ancient Maya Cities Of The Eastern Lowlands (Ancient Cities Of The New World)



## Synopsis

“Brings together for the first time all the major sites of this part of the Maya world and helps us understand how the ancient Maya planned and built their beautiful cities. It will become both a handbook and a source of ideas for other archaeologists for years to come.”

•George J. Bey III, *Coeditor of Pottery Economics in Mesoamerica*

“Skillfully integrates the social histories of urban development.”

•Vernon L. Scarborough, author of *The Flow of Power: Ancient Water Systems and Landscapes*

“Any scholar interested in urban planning and the built environment will find this book engaging and useful.”

•Lisa J. Lucero, author of *Water and Ritual*

For more than a century researchers have studied Maya ruins, and sites like Tikal, Palenque, Copán, and Chichén Itzá have shaped our understanding of the Maya. Yet cities of the eastern lowlands of Belize, an area that was home to a rich urban tradition that persisted and evolved for almost 2,000 years, are treated as peripheral to these great Classic period sites. The hot and humid climate and dense forests are inhospitable and make preservation of the ruins difficult, but this oft-ignored area reveals much about Maya urbanism and culture. Using data collected from different sites throughout the lowlands, including the Vaca Plateau and the Belize River Valley, Brett Houk presents the first synthesis of these unique ruins and discusses methods for mapping and excavating them. Considering the sites through the analytical lenses of the built environment and ancient urban planning, Houk vividly reconstructs their political history, considers how they fit into the larger political landscape of the Classic Maya, and examines what they tell us about Maya city building.

A volume in the series *Ancient Cities of the New World*, edited by Marilyn A. Masson, Michael E. Smith, and John W. Janusek

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A tremendous book, intellectually rich, detailed, ambitious, and articulate. Latin American Antiquity A solid, workmanlike and badly needed general account of Belize's under-valued sites. Antiquity A useful synthesis and analysis of Maya architecture in Belize. . . . Constantly returns to the builders of these cities and details how their social world is reflected in their permanent structures. . . . Houk writes clearly, with an approachable style. Journal of Anthropological Research "The standardized comparative approach used in this work is unique in Maya studies and will be a useful starting point for site-planning studies outside Belize as well. . . . Highly recommended. Choice A

Brett A. Houk is associate professor of archaeology and chair of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work at Texas Tech University.

I highly recommend this book, which presents a comparative approach to some of the most intensively investigated ancient Maya cities of the Eastern Lowlands (a.k.a. Belize, Central America). Focusing heavily on the "urban hallmarks" of these large and small cities, as opposed to the general settlement histories due to incomplete datasets, Houk addresses the development of infrastructure and integrative features that allow him to compare the varied urban environments represented, and to discuss the problematic issue of urban ranking in this unique part of the ancient Maya world. Adopting approaches that are now well-established in Mesoamerican studies, Houk also applies a uniquely Maya framework to his analysis, which provides a more culturally relevant approach to the study. The book is well written and researched, presenting a wonderful synthesis of Maya architecture and its arrangement in urban environments. This is a great book for scholars of Maya archaeology of all levels, as well as those wanting to get to know the Maya of Belize, and those interested in the complex topic of urban planning the world over and through time.

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