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The Value Of Things: Prehistoric To Contemporary Commodities In The Maya Region



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Synopsis

Jade, stone tools, honey and wax, ceramics, rum, land. What gave these commodities value in the Maya world, and how were those values determined? What factors influenced the rise and fall of a commodityÃ¢â ¬â„¢s value? The Value of Things examines the social and ritual value of commodities in Mesoamerica, providing a new and dynamic temporal view of the roles of trade of commodities and elite goods from the prehistoric Maya to the present.Editors Jennifer P. Mathews and Thomas H. Guderjan begin the volume with a review of the theoretical literature related to the Ã¢â ¬Å“value of things.Ã¢â ¬Â• Throughout the volume, well-known scholars offer chapters that examine the value of specific commodities in a broad time frameÃ¢â ¬â •from prehistoric, colonial, and historic times to the present. Using cases from the Maya world on both the local level and the macro-regional, contributors look at jade, agricultural products (ancient and contemporary), stone tools, salt, cacao (chocolate), honey and wax, henequen, sugarcane and rum, land, ceramic (ancient and contemporary), and contemporary tourist handicrafts.Each chapter author looks into what made their specific commodity valuable to ancient, historic, and contemporary peoples in the Maya region. Often a commodityÃ¢â ¬â„¢s worth goes far beyond its financial value; indeed, in some cases, it may not even be viewed as something that can be sold. Other themes include the rise and fall in commodity values based on perceived need, rarity or overproduction, and change in available raw materials; the domestic labor side of commodities, including daily life of the laborers; and relationships between elites and nonelites in production.Examining, explaining, and theorizing how people ascribe value to what they trade, this scholarly volume provides a rich look at local and regional Maya case studies through centuries of time. Contributors: Rani T. Alexander Dean E. Arnold Timothy Beach Briana Bianco Steven Bozarth Tiffany C. Cain Scott L. Fedick Thomas H. Guderjan John Gust Eleanor Harrison-Buck Brigitte Kovacevich Samantha Krause Joshua J. Kwoka Richard M. Leventhal Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach Jennifer P. Mathews Heather McKillop Allan D. Meyers Gary Rayson Mary Katherine Scott E. Cory Sills

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Ã¢â ¬Å“Examines the Ã¢â ¬Ëœvalue of thingsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ not only from an economic perspective but much more broadly, emphasizing the social, ritual, and ideological components.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Gabrielle Vail, co-author of The New Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs, Volume 2: The Codical Texts

Jennifer P. Mathews is a professor of anthropology at Trinity University. She is the author of Chicle: The Chewing Gum of the Americas, from the Ancient Maya to William Wrigley. The recipient of numerous teaching awards and service distinctions, she is an expert on commodities and historical archaeology in the YucatÃƒÂ¡n peninsula.Ã Â Thomas H. Guderjan is an associate professor of anthropology and chair of the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Texas at Tyler. He is the author of The Nature of an Ancient Maya City: Resources, Interaction, and Power at Blue Creek, Belize and Ancient Maya Traders of Ambergris Caye. Ã Â

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