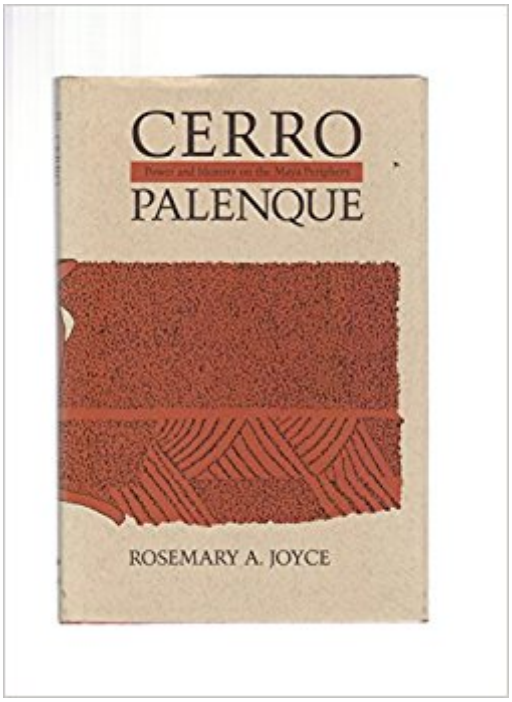
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Cerro Palenque: Power And Identity On The Maya Periphery



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Synopsis

Excavations at Cerro Palenque, a hilltop site in the Ulua Valley of northwest Honduras, revolutionized scholarsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ ideas about the Terminal Classic period (roughly ad 850Ã¢â ¬â œ1050) of Maya history and about the way in which cultures of the southeast Maya periphery related to the Lowland Maya. In this pathfinding study, Rosemary Joyce combines archaeological data gleaned from site research in 1980Ã¢â ¬â œ1983 with anthropological theory about the evolution of social power to reconstruct something of the culture and lifeways of the prehispanic inhabitants of Cerro Palenque.Joyce organizes her study in a novel way. Rather than presenting each category of excavated material (ceramics, lithics, etc.) in a separate chapter, she integrates this data in discussions of what people did and where they did it, resulting in a reconstruction of social activity more than in a description of material culture.JoyceÃ¢â ¬â„¢s findings indicate that the precolumbian elites of the Ulua Valley had very strong and diversified contacts with Lowland Maya culture, primarily through the Bay of Honduras, with far less contact with CopÃƒÂ¡n in the Highlands. The elites used their contacts with these distant, powerful cultures to reinforce their difference from the people they ruled and the legitimacy of their privileged status. Indeed, their dependence on foreign contacts ultimately led to their downfall when their foreign partners reorganized their economic and social order during the Terminal Classic period.Although archaeological research in the region has been undertaken since the 1890s, Cerro Palenque is the first full-length study of an Ulua Valley site ever published. JoyceÃ¢â ¬â„¢s pioneering approachÃ¢â ¬â •archaeological ethnographyÃ¢â ¬â •will be of interest to scholars dealing with any prehistoric people whose material remains provide the only clues to their culture.

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