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Robert M. Rosenswig

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## THE BEGINNINGS OF MESOAMERICAN CIVILIZATION

Mesoamerica is one of several cradles of civilization in the world. In this book, Robert M. Rosenswig proposes that we understand Early Formative Mesoamerica as an archipelago of complex societies that interacted with one another over long distances and that were separated by less sedentary peoples. These early “islands” of culture shared an Olmec artistic aesthetic, beginning approximately 1250 BCE (uncalibrated), that first defined Mesoamerica as an area of culture. Rosenswig frames the Olmec world from the perspective of the Soconusco area of Pacific Chiapas and Guatemala. The disagreements about Early Formative society that have raged over the past thirty years focus on the nature of inter-regional interaction between San Lorenzo and other Early Formative regions. He evaluates these debates from a fresh theoretical perspective and integrates new data into an assessment of Soconusco society before, during and after the apogee of the San Lorenzo polity.

Robert M. Rosenswig is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University at Albany – SUNY. He has directed archaeological field work in Mexico, Belize and Costa Rica and has published numerous articles on the origins of agriculture and the development of sociopolitical complexity in Mesoamerica.

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# The Beginnings of Mesoamerican Civilization

INTER-REGIONAL INTERACTION  
AND THE OLMEC

**Robert M. Rosenswig**

University at Albany – SUNY



**CAMBRIDGE**  
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*Jeanne Newman*

*(1918–2002)*

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