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978-0-521-87033-7 - Ancient Teotihuacan: Early Urbanism in Central Mexico

George L. Cowgill

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## Ancient Teotihuacan

This is the first comprehensive English-language book on the largest city in the Americas before the 1400s. Teotihuacan is a UNESCO World Heritage site, located in highland central Mexico, about twenty-five miles from Mexico City, visited by millions of tourists every year. The book begins with Cuicuilco, a predecessor that arose around 400 BCE, then traces Teotihuacan from its founding in approximately 150 BCE to its collapse around 600 CE. It describes the city's immense pyramids and other elite structures. It also discusses the dwellings and daily lives of commoners, including men, women, and children, and the craft activities of artisans. George L. Cowgill discusses politics, economics, technology, art, religion, and possible reasons for Teotihuacan's rise and fall. Long before the Aztecs, and 800 miles from Classic Maya centers, Teotihuacan was part of a broad Mesoamerican tradition but had a distinctive personality that invites comparison with other states and empires of the ancient world.

George L. Cowgill is Emeritus Professor of Anthropology in the School of Human Evolution and Social Change at Arizona State University. He is the director of the ASU-managed archaeological laboratory at Teotihuacan, Mexico. His work on Teotihuacan, anthropological theory, and quantitative methods in archaeology has been published in numerous major peer-reviewed journals. He is the coauthor, with René Millon and R. Bruce Drewitt, of *Urbanization at Teotihuacan, Mexico, Volume 1: The Teotihuacan Map, Part 2: Maps* (1973) and coeditor, with Norman Yoffee, of *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations* (1988). He was the keynote speaker at the fifth Round Table on Teotihuacan at the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Mexico in 2011.

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*Arizona State University*



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## Acknowledgments

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In 1964, René Millon invited me to join his ambitious project to map the entirety of the great ancient city of Teotihuacan. That seemed like a fine idea, at least for a few years, during which I could think about what I might do next. But Teotihuacan has kept me busy ever since. My greatest debt in writing this book is to René. In the 1960s he was my principal mentor. He has not written much about theory. Most of what I have learned from him has come from conversations, often in the house he and the late Clara Millon occupied during many seasons at Teotihuacan. I have not agreed with all of René's ideas, but this book shows his influence in many ways.

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