

THE EARLY OLMEC AND MESOAMERICA

The Early Formative Gulf Olmecs are central in a wide variety of debates regarding the early development of Mesoamerican societies. A fundamental issue in Olmec archaeology is the nature of interregional interaction among contemporaneous societies and the possible role of Gulf Olmecs in it. Debate is seldom informed by robust data, often relying on materials lacking archaeological context. In order to approach Olmec archaeology from new perspectives, this book introduces readers to the full spectrum of the material culture of Gulf Olmecs and their contemporaries, relying primarily on excavated archaeological data, much of which has not been previously published. For the first time, using a standard lexicon to consider the nature of the interaction among Early Formative societies, the authors, experts in diverse regions of Mesoamerican art and archaeology, provide carefully considered contrasts and comparisons of material culture that advance the understanding of the Early Formative origins of social complexity in early Mesoamerica.

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THE MATERIAL RECORD

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