

# The Technology of Maya Civilization

APPROACHES TO ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

## The Technology of Maya Civilization

Political Economy and Beyond in Lithic Studies



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The ancient Maya shaped their world with stone tools. Lithic artifacts helped create the cityscape, were central to warfare and hunting, were key to craft activities, were used to process food, and were employed in ritual performance. This volume expands our understanding of the past by considering Maya lithic artifacts made of chert, obsidian, silicified limestone, and jade. Using these as sources of data, lithic specialists examine the relationship between ancient people and natural resources, and ask questions regarding social organization and political economy. The editors bring together a detailed, comprehensive view of Maya stone artifacts that is crafted from new research, progressive analytical methods, and innovative anthropological theory. Thought provoking introductions and conclusions contextualize the past thirty years of research on Maya stone tools and look to the future of the field. Particular emphasis is given not to lithic technology, but to lithic systems as a technology of civilization. Stone artifacts were not merely cultural products, but, in conjunction with the people who used them, were tools that reproduced, modified, and created the fabric of society. Case studies based on original data collected at archaeological sites in Guatemala, Mexico, Belize, and Honduras form the bulk of the volume. Limitations presented by the availability of resources, the social context of production, the control of technology and esoteric knowledge, and political economy are key issues addressed by the contributors. The concluding remarks argue that Maya lithic analysis needs to expand to include more than studies of political economy. The chapters in this innovative volume do just that.

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