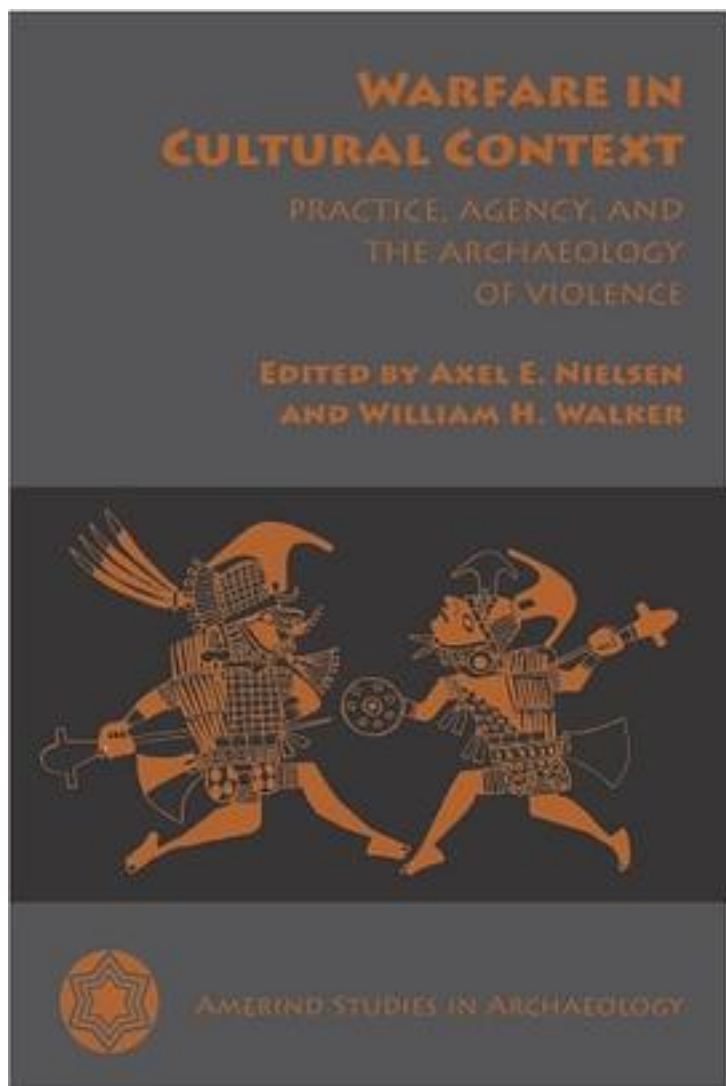


# Warfare in Cultural Context



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出版者:

出版时间:2009-10

装帧:

isbn:9780816527076

Warfare is a constant in human history. According to the contributors to this volume, archaeologists have assumed that within certain socioenvironmental parameters war is always essentially the same phenomenon and follows a common logic, breaking out under similar conditions and having analogous effects on the people involved. In pursuit of this idea, archaeologists have built models to account for the occurrence of war in various times and places. The models are then tested against prehistoric evidence to make the causes and conduct of war predictable and data-based. However, contributors argue, this model-and-evidence approach has given rise to multiple competing hypotheses and ambiguity rather than to full, coherent explanations of what turns out to be surprisingly complex acts of war. The chapters in *Warfare in Cultural Context* contend that agency and culture, inherited values and dispositions (such as religion and other cultural practices), beliefs, and institutions are always woven into the conduct of war. This revealing book focuses on the ways that specific people construed their interests and life projects, and their problems and possibilities, and consequently chose among alternative courses of action. Using archaeological and ethnohistorical data from various parts of the world, the contributors explore the multiple avenues for the cultural study of warfare that these ideas make possible. Contributions focus on cultural aspects of warfare in Mesoamerica, South America, North America, and Southeast Asia. Case studies include warfare among the Maya, Inca, southwestern Pueblos, Mississippian cultures, and the Enga of Papua New Guinea.

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