



Description

Product Description

An authoritative and magnificently illustrated survey of Mesoamerican architecture from pre-Olmec times to the Spanish conquest.

Pre-Columbian Architecture in Mesoamerica is destined to become a standard reference for the serious student and an intellectual delight for the interested amateur. This authoritative yet accessible study begins with an overview of the aesthetics, meanings, functions, and techniques of Mesoamerican architecture, and then proceeds to survey the historical development of the builder's art in each of the region's cultural areas. As readers travel from the the Maya heartland of Guatemala and the Yucatan to the Aztec stronghold of the Valley of Mexico, and all the way to the northern hinterlands of Mesoamerica, they will gain an appreciation of both the unity and the diversity of the region's architecture. The concluding chapter is devoted to the descriptions of architecture that have survived in Mayan and Aztec texts; it includes a unique and valuable glossary of the relevant glyphs.





The main text is illustrated with color photographs of the spectacular remains of pyramids, palaces, and plazas, while a scholarly appendix presents maps, plans, and drawings of the most important sites and structures.

Review

Praise for ***Pre-Columbian Architecture in Mesoamerica***:

"This is one of the most beautiful books ever published on Mesoamerican architecture; it's extensively illustrated, scholarly, completely footnoted, and well organized, and it presents ample maps, glossaries, and indexes. This book belongs in any fully stocked art or architecture library. The coverage and the illustrations are breathtaking; fans of this type of architecture will be overjoyed." — *Library Journal*

About the Author

María Teresa Uriarte is a professor of art history at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and the director of a major research project on Pre-Columbian mural painting in





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Excerpt from ***Pre-Columbian Architecture in Mesoamerica***

PREFACE

María Teresa Uriarte

Publishing a book has a lot in common with gardening. First you plant the seed of an idea, and then you work to make it sprout and grow. At last, the mature plant bears fruit when the reader holds the finished product in his or her hands.

So it was with this volume. The authors discussed their ideas at length, in numerous meetings. From the outset, we knew we wanted a new and different plant, one that did not repeat what had already been said about Pre-Columbian architecture. We agreed that this architecture should be considered in terms of its artistic values, and explored from an interdisciplinary perspective: architecture, urban studies, and art history would form the axis around which the contributions of archaeology, linguistics, and even astronomy would revolve. This approach was suggested in part by Beatriz De La Fuente,





Our book's theoretical groundwork is presented in the first three chapters. In chapter one, Antonio Toca and I discuss what we consider to be the aesthetic qualities of architecture; in chapter two, we investigate the meanings that emerge from architecture's relation to people, its surroundings, and the cosmos; and in chapter three, we analyze Mesoamerican construction techniques. Jesús Galindo uses his expertise as an astronomer to illustrate ancient buildings' connections to celestial objects and the calendar, which reveal the Mesoamerican preoccupation with the measurement of time.

While the following chapters, which survey individual regions, are more conventionally organized, we still attempt to offer the reader novel analyses and hypotheses that permit different ways of looking at buildings. We explore the fundamental structural elements that Mesoamerican cultures, from the Olmecs to the Aztecs, used to create harmonious architectural environments of which people were an integral part.

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In the innovative final chapter, Erik Velásquez presents his research on language and writing and their relationship to architecture.

This book is an invitation for the reader to learn about people who are different from him or her, but also similar, and to visit the places where they lived and went about their daily business. These were men and women like anybody else, and nobody else, typical yet also unique in their customs and beliefs, their myths and rituals, which they made into a tangible reality through their buildings and urban spaces.

It is an invitation to envision, and envision oneself in, ancient cities that can be as close or as distant as we choose. The authors have brought together words and images that will take the receptive reader on a journey beyond our contemporary time and space.

