



The Huasteca: Culture, History, and Interregional Exchange

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The Huasteca, a region on the northern Gulf Coast of Mexico, was for centuries a pre-Columbian crossroads for peoples, cultures, arts, and trade. Its multiethnic inhabitants influenced, and were influenced by, surrounding regions, ferrying unique artistic styles, languages, and other cultural elements to neighboring areas and beyond. In *The Huasteca: Culture, History, and Interregional Exchange*, a range of authorities on art, history, archaeology, and cultural anthropology bring long-overdue attention to the region's rich contributions to the pre-Columbian world. They also assess how the Huasteca fared from colonial times to the present. The authors call critical, even urgent attention to a region highly significant to Mesoamerican history but long neglected by scholars.

Editors Katherine A. Faust and Kim N. Richter put the plight and the importance of the Huasteca into historical and cultural context. They address challenges to study of the region, ranging from confusion about the term "Huasteca" (a legacy of the Aztec conquest in the late fifteenth century) to present-day misconceptions about the region's role in pre-Columbian history. Many of the contributions included here consider the Huasteca's interactions with other regions, particularly the American Southeast and the southern Gulf Coast of Mexico. Pre-Columbian Huastec inhabitants, for example, wore trapezoid-shaped shell ornaments unique in Mesoamerica but similar to those found along the Mississippi River.

With extensive examples drawn from archaeological evidence, and supported by nearly 200 images, the contributors explore the Huasteca as a junction where art, material culture, customs, ritual practices, and languages were exchanged. While most of the essays focus on pre-Columbian periods, a few address the early colonial period and contemporary agricultural and religious practices. Together, these essays illuminate the Huasteca's significant legacy and the cross-cultural connections that still resonate in the region today.

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