



The Olmecs: America's First Civilization (Ancient Peoples and Places)

By Richard A. Diehl

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"The first truly complete and authoritative account of this 3,000-year-old culture."—Michael D. Coe

The Olmecs of southern Mexico are America's oldest civilization and Mesoamerica's "Mother Culture." Famous for their Colossal Heads carved from giant boulders, the Olmecs have fascinated the public and archaeologists since the 1940s when *National Geographic* magazine reported the initial explorations of their centers. Despite well-publicized discoveries of spectacular basalt sculptures, portable jade objects, and richly decorated pottery vessels, until recently almost nothing was known about Olmec history, foreign contacts, and daily life. Now archaeologists have recovered information that allows them to assemble a remarkably broad picture of Olmec culture, its accomplishments, and its impact on later Mexican civilizations.

The Olmecs presents the first modern overview of information from recent archaeological field projects and studies of Olmec art. In addition to detailed coverage of Olmec life, culture, and art, it examines the Olmec presence in the surrounding areas of Mexico and their role in the formation of pre-Columbian Mesoamerican civilization. Profusely illustrated, it will become the standard work on this enigmatic culture. 152 illustrations, 20 in color.

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Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #738486 in Books
- Published on: 2005-11-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 6.25" w x .75" l, 1.30 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 208 pages

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Review

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About the Author

Richard A. Diehl is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. He has conducted archaeological investigations in Mexico at Tula and the Basin of Mexico, as well as San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán, La Mojarra, and Matacapán in southern Veracruz state.

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