



The Kowoj: Identity, Migration, and Geopolitics in Late Postclassic Petén, Guatemala (Mesoamerican Worlds)

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Neighbors of the better-known Itza in the central Petén lakes region of Guatemala, the Kowoj Maya have been studied for little more than a decade. *The Kowoj: Identity, Migration, and Geopolitics in Late Postclassic Petén, Guatemala* summarizes the results of recent research into this ethno-political group conducted by Prudence Rice, Don Rice, and their colleagues.

Chapters in *The Kowoj* address the question "Who are the Kowoj?" from varied viewpoints: archaeological, archival, linguistic, ethnographic, and bioarchaeological. Using data drawn primarily from the peninsular site of Zacpetén, the authors illuminate Kowoj history, ritual components of their self-expressed identity, and their archaeological identification. These data support the Kowoj claim of migration from Mayapán in Yucatán, where they were probably affiliated with the Xiw, in opposition to the Itza. These enmities extended into Petén, culminating in civil warfare by the time of final Spanish conquest in 1697.

The first volume to consider Postclassic Petén from broadly integrative anthropological, archaeological, and historical perspectives, *The Kowoj* is an important addition to the literature on late Maya culture and history in the southern lowlands. It will be of particular interest to archaeologists, historians, ethnohistorians, art historians, and epigraphers. *Mesoamerican Worlds Series*

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Editorial Review

Review

". . . Substantially enhances our understanding of Petén, its peoples, and its history. This book should attract a broad readership for its nuanced examination of material reflections of identity in a complex and shifting sociopolitical landscape."

- **John S. Henderson**, *American Anthropologist*

About the Author

Prudence M. Rice and **Don S. Rice** have co-directed research into the Maya occupation of the Petén lakes region of Guatemala for more than thirty-five years. The Kowoj is based on their archaeological and historical investigations, begun in 1994, of the sixteenth- to eighteenth-century political geography of the region. They are co-editors, with Arthur Demarest, of *The Terminal Classic in the Maya Lowlands* (UPC).

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