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Were most commoners in ancient Mesoamerica poor? In a material sense, yes, probably so. Were they poor in their beliefs and culture? Certainly not, as Commoner Ritual and Ideology in Ancient Mesoamerica demonstrates.

This volume explores the ritual life of Mesoamerica's common citizens, inside and outside of the domestic sphere, from Formative through Postclassic periods. Building from the premise that ritual and ideological expression inhered at all levels of society in Mesoamerica, the contributors demonstrate that ideology did not emanate solely from exalted individuals and that commoner ritual expression was not limited to household contexts. Taking an empirical approach to this under-studied and under-theorized area, contributors use material evidence to discover how commoner status conditioned the expression of ideas and values.

Revealing complex social hierarchies that varied across time and region, this volume offers theoretical approaches to commoner ideology, religious practice, and sociopolitical organization and builds a framework for future study of the correlation of ritual and ideological expression with social position for Mesoamericanists and archaeologists worldwide.