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Dancing Into Dreams explores 8th-century Maya vase painting of the Ik' kingdom, located in the tropical lowlands of present day Guatemala. Ik' vases are acclaimed for their naturalistic color, veristic portraiture, and calligraphic line. Their painted surfaces depict historical subject matter and often include the names of the artists and patrons, as well as hieroglyphic explanations of the portrayed events and vessel production. Collectively, such self-consciously historical works offer a precision and nuance, unparalleled in the ancient Americas, to the study of the role of art in elite society.

Authoritative and accessible, this handsomely illustrated volume presents a history of Ik' vase painting and describes the dramatic scenes represented on the vases with compelling and historically accurate vignettes.