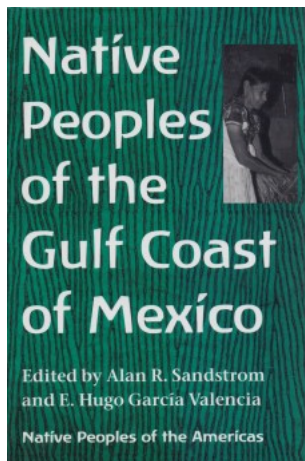


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For too long, the Gulf Coast of Mexico has been dismissed by scholars as peripheral to the Mesoamerican heartland, but researchers now recognize that much can be learned from this region's cultures. Peoples of the Gulf Coast particularly those in Veracruz and Tabasco share so many historical experiences and cultural features that they can fruitfully be viewed as a regional unit for research and analysis. Native Peoples of the Gulf Coast of Mexico is the first book to argue that the people of this region constitute a culture area distinct from other parts of Mexico. A pioneering effort by a team of international scholars who summarize hundreds of years of history, this encyclopedic work chronicles the prehistory, ethnohistory, and contemporary issues surrounding the many and varied peoples of the Gulf Coast, bringing together research on cultural groups about which little or only scattered information has been published. The volume includes discussions of the prehispanic period of the Gulf Coast, the ethnohistory of many of the neglected indigenous groups of Veracruz and the Huasteca, the settlement of the American Mediterranean, and the unique geographical and ecological context of the Chontal Maya of Tabasco. It provides descriptions of the Popoluca, Gulf Coast Nahuatl, Totonac, Tepehua, Sierra Nahuatl (Otomi), and Huastec Maya. Each chapter contains a discussion of each group's language, subsistence and settlement patterns, social organization, belief systems, and history of acculturation, and also examines contemporary challenges to the future of each native people. As these contributions reveal, Gulf Coast peoples share not only major cultural features but also historical experiences, such as domination by Hispanic elites beginning in the sixteenth century and subjection to forces of change in Mexico. Yet as contemporary people have been affected by factors such as economic development, increased emigration, and the spread of Protestantism, traditional cultures have become rallying points for ethnic identity. Native Peoples of the Gulf Coast of Mexico highlights the significance of the Gulf Coast for anyone interested in the great encounter between the Old and New Worlds and general processes of culture change. By revealing the degree to which these cultures have converged, it represents a major step toward achieving a broader understanding of the peoples of this region and will be an important reference work on these indigenous populations for years to come.