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# The Maya and Environmental Stress from Past to Present

Human response and adaptation to climate change in the Maya lowlands

**Eva Jobbová**

- This work adopts a holistic approach, integrating a wide range of archaeological, ethnographic, epigraphic and environmental data which is still rare in archaeological research.
- It offers a completely new perspective on widely debated hypothesis of drought being the main factor in the Classic Maya collapse.
- The work employs novel approaches such as using ethnographic data to better understand archaeological and written records; using systematic analysis of the epigraphic data to look at environmental stress; comparing settlement occupation data and paleoclimatic data, while also comparing northern Maya lowlands with southern lowlands.

Both the perceived successes and failures of the Maya are often linked to their relationship with the local environment and their response to episodes of climate change over a period of nearly 2000 years. However, our understanding of human responses to environmental stress has mostly been shaped by a narrow focus on drought as a cause for societal collapse, even in relatively well-watered tropical regions. We still know little about the choices humans make in response to extreme variability in rainfall in different environmental conditions and on multiple timescales. This work responds to recent debates and new analytical opportunities in Maya studies, provided by developments such as an increased volume of paleoclimatic data, the growing field of settlement archaeology and advances in Maya epigraphy. By combining a range of evidence, the book explores the relationship between Maya society and the local environment on multiple spatial and temporal scales, while also considering socio-cultural agencies. In addition, results from ethnographic fieldwork among contemporary Maya communities provide insights into the impact of stress-inducing climatic events on people's lives and their coping strategies. These serve as a guide when looking for similar patterns in archaeological and textual evidence.

**Eva Jobbová** is a Maya archaeologist interested in a broad range of topics including the development of Neotropical urbanism, the growth of social complexity and societal collapse, and the choices humans make in response to spatial and temporal variation in climate and environmental stress. Currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at University College Dublin, she is involved in a project focusing on Irish droughts.

# Readership

This book will be of interest to archaeologists, ethnographers, epigraphers, and environmental historians working in the Maya Lowlands but also internationally. The book would also appeal to anyone interested in human environmental interactions, especially who focus on the choices people make in the face of climate and environmental stress and how human responses are affected by different environmental conditions.

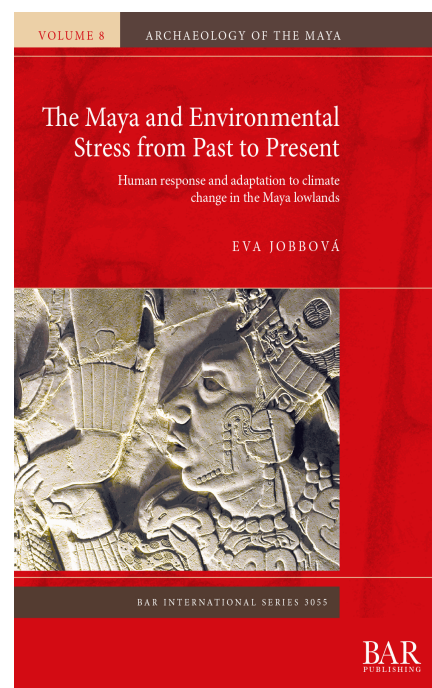
# Reviews

*'This is a fascinating study that compiles detailed and well-researched information from several different fields to approach the question of ancient environmental stress and response in the Maya area. This work has global implications.'*

Dr Kitty F. Emery, Florida Museum of Natural History

*'This work is a great contribution to the understanding of the human-environment interactions among the Mayan communities. It will be of interest not only for specialists dealing with Maya archaeology but also for all those scholars interested in the past human-environment interactions.'*

Dr Alessio Palmisano, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München



## Main Subject

Archaeobotany / Environment and Climate

## All Subjects

Agriculture / Farming / Husbandry / Land-use / Irrigation

Archaeobotany / Environment and Climate

Epigraphy / Ancient and Medieval Texts / Papyri

Ethnoarchaeology / Anthropology

Landscape Archaeology

Ritual / Religion / Temples

## Geographical Region

Central and South America and the Caribbean

## Time Period

Multiperiod

## Keywords

Archaeology, Climate change, Ethnography, Extreme variability in rainfall, Human response to environmental stress, Human-environmental relationship, Maya collapse, Maya droughts, Maya society, Paleoclimatology, Weather patterns

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