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"Fitzsimmons is the first to attempt to survey the entire corpus of Lowland Maya hieroglyphic texts, iconography, and archaeological site documentation relating to royal death, burial, and afterlife. It is an ambitious undertaking, but Fitzsimmons rises to the challenge and has produced a book that makes a lasting contribution to Maya archaeology."

--Patricia A. McAnany, Boston University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, author of *Living with the Ancestors: Kinship and Kingship in Ancient Maya Society*

Like their regal counterparts in societies around the globe, ancient Maya rulers departed this world with elaborate burial ceremonies and lavish grave goods, which often included ceramics, red pigments, earflares, stingray spines, jades, pearls, obsidian blades, and mosaics. Archaeological investigation of these burials, as well as the decipherment of inscriptions that record Maya rulers' funerary rites, have opened a fascinating window on how the ancient Maya envisaged the ruler's passage from the world of the living to the realm of the ancestors.

Focusing on the Classic Period (AD 250-900), James Fitzsimmons examines and compares textual and archaeological evidence for rites of death and burial in the Maya lowlands, from which he creates models of royal Maya funerary behavior. Exploring ancient Maya attitudes toward death expressed at well-known sites such as Tikal, Guatemala, and Copan, Honduras, as well as less-explored archaeological locations, Fitzsimmons reconstructs royal mortuary rites and expands our understanding of key Maya concepts including the afterlife and ancestor veneration.