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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910827301003321 |
| Autore | Guernsey Julia <1964-> |
| Titolo | Sculpture and social dynamics in preclassic Mesoamerica // Julia Guernsey |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Cambridge : , : Cambridge University Press, , 2012 |
| ISBN | 1-139-53995-7 1-107-22920-0 1-283-52201-2 1-139-52715-0 9786613834461 1-139-52595-6 1-139-53181-6 0-511-99825-2 1-139-53062-3 1-139-52834-3 |
| Edizione | [1st ed.] |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (xiv, 233 pages) : digital, PDF file(s) |
| Classificazione | SOC003000 |
| Disciplina | 730.97281 |
| Soggetti | Maya sculpture Olmec sculpture Indian sculpture - Mexico Indian sculpture - Central America |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015). |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | Introduction -- Potbellies and sculpture : a brief history of Preclassic scholarship -- Situating sculpture on the Preclassic Pacific slope of Mesoamerica -- The dating and distribution of potbellies and potbelly-related sculpture -- Blurring the lines : public space, private space, sculpture, and figurines -- Big bellies and fat gods -- Potbellies, ancestors, and performance -- Potbellies and social identity in the Preclassic. |
| Sommario/riassunto | This book examines the functions of sculpture during the Preclassic period in Mesoamerica and its significance in statements of social identity. Julia Guernsey situates the origins and evolution of |

monumental stone sculpture within a broader social and political context and demonstrates the role that such sculpture played in creating and institutionalizing social hierarchies. This book focuses specifically on an enigmatic type of public, monumental sculpture known as the 'potbelly' that traces its antecedents to earlier, small domestic ritual objects and ceramic figurines. The cessation of domestic rituals involving ceramic figurines along the Pacific slope coincided not only with the creation of the first monumental potbelly sculptures, but with the rise of the first state-level societies in Mesoamerica by the advent of the Late Preclassic period. The potbellies became central to the physical representation of new forms of social identity and expressions of political authority during this time of dramatic change.
