The title of this edited volume condenses an important aspect of culture. Clothing and adornment convey much about culture in general and specific cultures, regions, and time periods in particular. Dressing the bodies of members of a community provides rapid visual communication to help individuals with social identification; information on gender, sexuality, occupation, and residence; power and status; and religious or political responsibility and separates the mundane from special occasions. Editors Orr and Looper have compiled a substantial volume of 14 chapters that comparatively assess body adornment and clothing in the formative periods of Mesoamerica and Central America. The volume’s purpose is to assess whether, despite considerable variation, there is interregional sociopolitical exchange. Basing their essays on a wealth of previous scholarship, the contributors use ensembles, textiles, and the human body as a proxy variable. Grounded in an art history and costume studies framework that systematically focuses on design and style, the editors are joined by archaeologists who tackle topics such as production, technological development, and cultural meaning. The book provides an excellent synthesis of the topic and is well illustrated and rich in detail so that readers can draw their own conclusions.

--N. J. Parezo, University of Arizona

Summing Up: Highly recommended. Graduate students/faculty/specialists.