



Chaco Canyon: Archaeologists Explore the Lives of an Ancient Society

Brian Fagan

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Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, has been called the Stonehenge of North America. Its spectacular pueblos, or great houses, are world famous and have attracted the attention of archaeologists for more than a century. Beautifully illustrated with color and black-and-white photographs, *Chaco Canyon* draws on the very latest research on Chaco and its environs to tell the remarkable story of the people of the canyon, from foraging bands and humble farmers to the elaborate society that flourished between the tenth and twelfth centuries A.D. Brian Fagan is a master story teller, and he weaves the latest discoveries into a compelling narrative of people living in a harsh, unpredictable environment. Indeed, this is not a story about artifacts and dusty digs, but a riveting narrative of people in the distant past, going about their daily business, living and dying, loving, raising children, living in plenty and in hunger, pondering the cosmos, and facing the unpredictable challenges of the environment. Drawing on rare access to the records of the Chaco Synthesis Project, Fagan reveals a society where agriculture and religion went hand-in-hand, where the ritual power of Chaco's leaders drew pilgrims from distant communities bearing gifts. He describes the lavish burials in the heart of Pueblo Bonito, which offer clues about the identity of Chaco's shadowy leaders. And he explores the enduring mystery of Chaco's sudden decline in the face of savage drought and shows how its legacy survives into modern times.

Here then is the first authoritative account of the Chaco people written for a general audience, lending a fascinating human face to one of America's most famous archaeological sites.

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