



# Ritual and Honour: Warriors of the North American Plains

*Max Carocci*

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For thousands of years, Plains Indians and their ancestors have occupied the vast region that stretches from the Mississippi river to the Rocky Mountains and from the Canadian plains to the Gulf of Mexico. Today, peoples such as the Blackfoot and Sioux still live in groups bound by language and shared rituals. From about 1800, one of the most important units beyond the extended family was the 'warrior society' - a social, political and ritual group that engaged in warfare and organised ceremonial life. The societies played a prominent role in battles, offering members the opportunity to gain honours through individual acts of bravery such as stealing horses, capturing women, and taking scalps during war raids. These societies, however, have a rich ritual life that was marked by a strong sense of spirituality. In their ceremonies society members made use of objects such as pipes, rattles, and headdresses, as these were significant to their shared ideas of ritual and honour. Through a selection of unique objects from the British Museum's collection, this beautifully illustrated little book explores the world of the warriors of the North American Plains. Here are exceptional examples of feather headdresses, shields, moccasins, painted hides, scalps, pipes, tomahawks, and traditional and contemporary costumes. Many of these items may seem initially familiar from popular culture, but their deeper ritual significance is revealed by the author. A perennially popular subject, this book will appeal to young and old alike.



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