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The data-collecting function of Mesoamerican architecture is reflected in the ruin of the ancient Mayan observatory Caracol. The structure was built to collect data about such important astronomical events as the arrival of solstices or equinoxes—data vital to the survival of agriculture-based civilizations. Decorations on this and other pre-Columbian architectural marvels often depicted deities and religious rituals, providing archaeologists with important data about the lives of these early people.

Cover photo: John Curtis—Taurus Photos
Cover design: Ron DeWilde

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Submissions: Submit six copies of all articles and special-issue proposals to Bruce D. Shriver, IBM T.J. Watson Research Center, P.O. Box 218, HO-804A, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598; (914) 789-7626. For electronic submission, Shriver's addresses are Commpmail +. b.shriver, CSnet, Shriver@ibm.com; Vnet, shriver at yktvmh.

December 1986