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# Mesoamerican Archaeology Theory And Practice

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Human Sacrifice, Militarism, and Rulership  
The Aztecs, Maya, and Their Predecessors  
Case Studies from Ancient Mesoamerica  
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## ARELLANO MURRAY

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**Human Sacrifice, Militarism, and Rulership** Routledge  
Type Descriptions -- 8. Summary / Michael G. Callaghan -- The K'awil Complex -- The Yax Te Complex -- The Itzamkanak Complex -- The Wayab Subcomplex -- The K'ak Complex -- The Chak Complex -- Directions for Future Study -- Appendix A. List of Whole Vessels from Holmul, Excavated by Merwin -- Appendix B. List of Contexts from Sites in the Holmul Region -- References Cited -- Index of Type: Varieties -- Index of Type: Varieties by Surface Finish and Decorative Mode -- Index of Type: Varieties by Complex, Ware, and Group -- General Index -- Abstract / Resumen  
*The Aztecs, Maya, and Their Predecessors* University of Utah

Press

Entanglement theory posits that the interrelationship of humans and objects is a delimiting characteristic of human history and culture. This edited volume of original studies by leading archaeological theorists applies this concept to a broad range of topics, including archaeological science, heritage, and theory itself. In the theoretical explications and ten case studies, the editors and contributing authors: -build on the intersections between science, humanities and ecology to provide a more fine-grained, multi-scalar treatment emanating from the long-term perspective that characterizes archaeological research; -bring to light the subtle and unacknowledged paths that configure historical circumstances and bind human intentionality; -examine the constructions of personhood, the rigidity of path dependencies, the unpredictable connections between humans

and objects and the intricate paths of past events in varied geographic and historical contexts that channel future actions. This broad focus is inclusive of early complex developments in Asia and Europe, imperial and state strategies in the Andes and Mesoamerica, continuities of postcolonialism in North America, and the unforeseen and complex consequences that derive from archaeological practices. This volume will appeal to archaeologists and their advanced students.

**Case Studies from Ancient Mesoamerica** John Wiley & Sons  
*In Houses in a Landscape*, Julia A. Hendon examines the connections between social identity and social memory using archaeological research on indigenous societies that existed more than one thousand years ago in what is now Honduras. While these societies left behind monumental buildings, the remains of their dead, remnants of their daily life, intricate works of art, and fine examples of craftsmanship such as pottery and stone tools, they left only a small body of written records. Despite this paucity of written information, Hendon contends that an archaeological study of memory in such societies is possible and worthwhile. It is possible because memory is not just a faculty of the individual mind operating in isolation, but a social process embedded in the materiality of human existence. Intimately bound up in the relations people develop with one another and with the world around them through what they do, where and how they do it, and with whom or what, memory leaves material traces. Hendon conducted research on three contemporaneous Native American civilizations that flourished from the seventh century through the eleventh CE: the Maya kingdom of Copan, the hilltop center of Cerro Palenque, and the dispersed

settlement of the Cuyumapa valley. She analyzes domestic life in these societies, from cooking to crafting, as well as public and private ritual events including the ballgame. Combining her findings with a rich body of theory from anthropology, history, and geography, she explores how objects—the things people build, make, use, exchange, and discard—help people remember. In so doing, she demonstrates how everyday life becomes part of the social processes of remembering and forgetting, and how “memory communities” assert connections between the past and the present.

**Archaeological Theory in Practice** Duke University Press  
"In the seventeen years since the first edition of *Mesoamerican Archaeology: Method and Theory* was published, our goal of providing theoretically sophisticated and data rich explorations of important topics for a non-specialist reader, written by the researchers themselves, has proved successful. When approached by Wiley-Blackwell to edit a second edition, the original coeditors, Julia Hendon and Rosemary Joyce, agreed that the chance to incorporate new research by an international array of scholars was not to be missed. The first move was to add Lisa Overholtzer as editor. The three of us approached some authors from the first edition who agreed to update or rewrite their chapters. We then invited new contributors whose work reflects current research trends in Mesoamerican archaeology. For this edition we purposefully included a chapter on bioarchaeology and three chapters that include the Colonial period in their discussions. As with the first edition, this book is intended to be useful for anyone teaching Mesoamerican archaeology, whether as the sole subject of a course, or as one case study among

others in courses dealing with archaeology of the Americas, complex societies, or other topics. We also expect that it will be of interest to any reader who wants a sample of contemporary research on the major time periods and societies that are the focus of Mesoamerican archaeology. Because this book is a departure from other models for introductory texts, it is appropriate for us to briefly explain what it is, and is not, and to suggest how we hope it might be incorporated into the classroom. All three of us teach material from the field of Mesoamerican archaeology in basic introductory courses and more advanced offerings. As active researchers who each have developed and led our own field projects, we find ourselves struggling to provide students with a sense of the research process. In particular, we think it is important for students to see that changes in archaeological understanding (or differences in opinion, as illustrated by some of the essays included here) are a constructive part of the research process. They reflect the mechanisms through which our discipline debates explanations, puts them to the test against existing and new data, and gradually revises them. Too often, we find that students (and people outside the academy interested in archaeology) have the impression, especially from media coverage, that changes in interpretation result from violent rejection of earlier ideas, represented as poorly conceived, foolish, or examples of bad work. We do not think that representing archaeology as a kind of winner-takes-all contest is very true to the reality of the constant hard work, only occasionally accompanied by moments of transformative insight, that we experience as field researchers. Nor does the metaphor of a contest accurately represent the way

that new research builds on and acknowledges older ideas, even in the process of modifying, extending, or disagreeing with those ideas"--

#### **Houses in a Landscape** Routledge

*Anthropomorphizing the Cosmos* explores the sociocultural significance of more than three hundred Middle Preclassic Maya figurines uncovered at the site of Nixtun-Ch'ich' on Lake Petén Itzá in northern Guatemala. In this careful, holistic, and detailed analysis of the Petén lakes figurines—hand-modeled, terracotta anthropomorphic fragments, animal figures, and musical instruments such as whistles and ocarinas—Prudence M. Rice engages with a broad swath of theory and comparative data on Maya ritual practice. Presenting original data, *Anthropomorphizing the Cosmos* offers insight into the synchronous appearance of fired-clay figurines with the emergence of societal complexity in and beyond Mesoamerica. Rice situates these Preclassic Maya figurines in the broader context of Mesoamerican human figural representation, identifies possible connections between anthropomorphic figurine heads and the origins of calendrics and other writing in Mesoamerica, and examines the role of anthropomorphic figurines and zoomorphic musical instruments in Preclassic Maya ritual. The volume shows how community rituals involving the figurines helped to mitigate the uncertainties of societal transitions, including the beginnings of settled agricultural life, the emergence of social differentiation and inequalities, and the centralization of political power and decision-making in the Petén lowlands. Literature on Maya ritual, cosmology, and specialized artifacts has traditionally focused on the Classic period, with little

research centering on the very beginnings of Maya sociopolitical organization and ideological beliefs in the Middle Preclassic. *Anthropomorphizing the Cosmos* is a welcome contribution to the understanding of the earliest Maya and will be significant to Mayanists and Mesoamericanists as well as nonspecialists with interest in these early figurines

*Theory and Practice* Oxford University Press

A comprehensive overview, by period and region, of the archaeology of ritual and religion. The coverage is global, and extends from the earliest prehistory to modern times. Written by over sixty renowned specialists, the Handbook presents the very best in current scholarship, and will also stimulate further research.

Urbanism and Urbanization in the Formative Period Springer Science & Business Media

*Smoke, Flames, and the Human Body in Mesoamerican Ritual Practice* address the traditions, circumstances, and practices that involved the burning of bodies and bone, to better understand the ideologies behind these acts. It brings together scholars working across Mesoamerica with different methodologies and interdisciplinary lenses.

Archaeological Theory in Practice Routledge

From the early cities in the second millennium BC to the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan on the eve of the Spanish conquest, Ancient Mesoamericans created landscapes full of meaning and power in the center of their urban spaces. The sixteenth century description of Tenochtitlan by Bernal Diaz del Castillo and the archaeological remnants of Teotihuacan attest to the power and centrality of these urban configurations in Ancient Mesoamerican

history. In *Landscape and Power in Ancient Mesoamerica*, Rex Koontz, Kathryn Reese-Taylor, and Annabeth Headrick explore the cultural logic that structured and generated these centers. Through case studies of specific urban spaces and their meanings, the authors examine the general principles by which the Ancient Mesoamericans created meaningful urban space. In a profoundly interdisciplinary exchange involving both archaeologists and art historians, this volume connects the symbolism of those landscapes, the performances that activated this symbolism, and the cultural poetics of these ensembles.

**Mesoamerican Archaeology** Cambridge University Press

The ability to accumulate and store large amounts of goods is a key feature of complex societies in ancient times. Storage strategies reflect the broader economic and political organization of a society and changes in the development of control mechanisms in both administrative and non-administrative—often kinship based—sectors. This is the first volume to examine storage practices in ancient complex societies from a comparative perspective. This volume includes 14 original papers by leading archaeologists from four continents which compare storage systems in three key regions with lengthy traditions of complexity: the ancient Near East, Mesoamerica, and Andes. *Storage in Ancient Complex Societies* demonstrates the importance of understanding storage for the study of cultural evolution.

Updated Edition Cambridge University Press

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more than one thousand years ago in what is now Honduras. While these societies left behind monumental buildings, the remains of their dead, remnants of their daily life, intricate works of art, and fine examples of craftsmanship such as pottery and stone tools, they left only a small body of written records. Despite this paucity of written information, Hendon contends that an archaeological study of memory in such societies is possible and worthwhile. It is possible because memory is not just a faculty of the individual mind operating in isolation, but a social process embedded in the materiality of human existence. Intimately bound up in the relations people develop with one another and with the world around them through what they do, where and how they do it, and with whom or what, memory leaves material traces. Hendon conducted research on three contemporaneous Native American civilizations that flourished from the seventh century through the eleventh CE: the Maya kingdom of Copan, the hilltop center of Cerro Palenque, and the dispersed settlement of the Cuyumapa valley. She analyzes domestic life in these societies, from cooking to crafting, as well as public and private ritual events including the ballgame. Combining her findings with a rich body of theory from anthropology, history, and geography, she explores how objects—the things people build, make, use, exchange, and discard—help people remember. In so doing, she demonstrates how everyday life becomes part of the social processes of remembering and forgetting, and how “memory communities” assert connections between the past and the present.

Oysters in the Land of Cacao Routledge

Based on recent archaeological surveys and excavations, the

chapters in this volume provide current, comprehensive, area-by-area summaries of the region's Precolumbian past. Research in the last two decades has indicated that the evolution and adaptations of the indigenous cultures of the region parallel those found elsewhere in Mesoamerica, from the simple Formative groups to the complex states of the North. The topics discussed in the book—area and cultural syntheses and specific problems such as chronology, social organization, and economic systems—present much new information crucial to the understanding of cultural variations in Mesoamerica.

### **The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology**

Mesoamerican Archaeology Theory and Practice

This unique collection applies globalization concepts to the discipline of archaeology, using a wide range of global case studies from a group of international specialists. The volume spans from as early as 10,000 cal. BP to the modern era, analysing the relationship between material culture, complex connectivities between communities and groups, and cultural change. Each contributor considers globalization ideas explicitly to explore the socio-cultural connectivities of the past. In considering social practices shared between different historic groups, and also the expression of their respective identities, the papers in this volume illustrate the potential of globalization thinking to bridge the local and global in material culture analysis. The Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization is the first such volume to take a world archaeology approach, on a multi-period basis, in order to bring together the scope of evidence for the significance of material culture in the processes of globalization. This work thus also provides a means

to understand how material culture can be used to assess the impact of global engagement in our contemporary world. As such, it will appeal to archaeologists and historians as well as social science researchers interested in the origins of globalization.

*Memory and Everyday Life in Mesoamerica* Cambridge University Press

Many students view archaeological theory as a subject distinct from field research. This division is reinforced by the way theory is taught, often in stand-alone courses that focus more on logic and reasoning than on the application of ideas to fieldwork.

Divorcing thought from action does not convey how archaeologists go about understanding the past. This book bridges the gap between theory and practice by looking in detail at how the authors and their colleagues used theory to interpret what they found while conducting research in northwest Honduras. This is not a linear narrative. Rather, the book highlights the open-ended nature of archaeological investigations in which theories guide research whose findings may challenge these initial interpretations and lead in unexpected directions. Pursuing those novel investigations requires new theories that are themselves subject to refutation by newly gathered data. The central case study is the writers' work in Honduras. The interrelations of fieldwork, data, theory, and interpretation are also illustrated with two long-running archaeological debates, the emergence of inequality in southern Mesopotamia and inferring the ancient meanings of Stonehenge. The book is of special interest to undergraduate Anthropology/Archaeology majors and first- and second-year graduate students, along with anyone interested in how archaeologists convert the static materials we

find into dynamic histories of long-vanished people.

Memory and Everyday Life in Mesoamerica Anthropological Papers

At a time when archaeology has turned away from questions of the long-term and large scale, this collection of essays reflects on some of the big questions in archaeology and ancient history - how and why societies have grown in scale and complexity, how they have maintained and discarded aspects of their own cultural heritage, and how they have collapsed. In addressing these long-standing questions of broad interest and importance, the authors develop counter-narratives - new ways of understanding what used to be termed 'cultural evolution'. Encompassing the Middle East and Egypt, India, Southeast Asia, Australia, the American Southwest and Mesoamerica, the fourteen essays offer perspectives on long-term cultural trajectories; on cities, states and empires; on collapse; and on the relationship between archaeology and history. The book concludes with a commentary by one of the major voices in archaeological theory, Norman Yoffee.

Routledge

Over the past three decades, "landscape" has become an umbrella term to describe many different strands of archaeology. From the processualist study of settlement patterns to the phenomenologist's experience of the natural world, from human impact on past environments to the environment's impact on human thought, action, and interaction, the term has been used. In this volume, for the first time, over 80 archaeologists from three continents attempt a comprehensive definition of the ideas and practices of landscape archaeology, covering the theoretical

and the practical, the research and conservation, and encasing the term in a global framework. As a basic reference volume for landscape archaeology, this volume will be the benchmark for decades to come. All royalties on this Handbook are donated to the World Archaeological Congress.

*Archaeology of Mesoamerica* Routledge

The first discussion of Aztec economy to include cross-cultural comparisons with other ancient and premodern societies around the world.

*Aztec Imperial Strategies* Cambridge University Press

A unique and wide-ranging introduction to the major prehispanic and colonial societies of Mexico and Central America, featuring new and revised material throughout *Mesoamerican Archaeology: Theory and Practice, Second Edition*, provides readers with a diverse and well-balanced view of the archaeology of the indigenous societies of Mexico and Central America, helping students better understand key concepts and engage with contemporary debates and issues within the field. The fully updated second edition incorporates contemporary research that reflects new approaches and trends in Mesoamerican archaeology. New and revised chapters from first-time and returning authors cover the archaeology of Mesoamerican cultural history, from the early Gulf Coast Olmec, to the Classic and Postclassic Maya, to the cultures of Oaxaca and Central Mexico before and after colonization. Presenting a wide range of approaches that illustrate political, socio-economic, and symbolic interpretations, this textbook: Encourages students to consider diverse ways of thinking about Mesoamerica: as a linguistic area, as a geographic region, and as a network of communities of

practice Represents a wide spectrum of perspectives and approaches to Mesoamerican archaeology, including coverage of the Postclassic and Colonial periods Enables readers to think critically about how explanations of the past are produced, verified, and debated Includes accessible introductory material to ensure that students and non-specialists understand the chronological and geographic frameworks of the Mesoamerican tradition Discusses recent developments in the contemporary theory and practice of Mesoamerican archaeology Presents new and original research by a team of internationally recognized contributors *Mesoamerican Archaeology: Theory and Practice, Second Edition*, is ideal for use in undergraduate courses on the archaeology of Mexico and Central America, as well as for broader courses on the archaeology of the Americas.

Administration, Organization, and Control Routledge

Examines figurines from the Olmec to the Aztec civilizations. This book analyzes these objects by their stylistic attributes, archaeological content, function, and meaning.

Power and Identity in Archaeological Theory and Practice

Cambridge University Press

Until now, archaeological and historical studies of Mesoamerican plazas have been scarce compared to studies of the surrounding monumental architecture such as pyramidal temples and palaces. Many scholars have assumed that ancient Mesoamericans invested their labor, wealth, and symbolic value in pyramids and other prominent buildings, viewing plazas as by-products of these buildings. Even when researchers have recognized the potential significance of plazas, they have thought that plazas as vacant spaces could offer few clues about their

cultural and political roles. *Mesoamerican Plazas* challenges both of these assumptions. The primary question that has motivated the contributors is how Mesoamerican plazas became arenas for the creation and negotiation of social relations and values in a community. The thirteen contributions stress the significance of interplay between power relations and embodied practices set in specific historical and material settings, as outlined by practice theory and performance theory. This approach allows the contributors to explore broader anthropological issues, such as the negotiation of power relations, community making, and the constitution of political authorities. Overall, the contributions establish that physical interactions among people in communal events were not the outcomes of political machinations held behind the scenes, but were the actual political processes through which people created, negotiated, and subverted social realities. If so, spacious plazas that were arguably designed for interactions among a large number of individuals must have also provided critical arenas for the constitution and transformation of society.

[The Transition to Statehood in the New World](#) Left Coast Press

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*Preceramic Mesoamerica* delivers cutting-edge research on the Mesoamerican Paleoindian and Archaic periods. The chapters address a series of fundamental questions in American archaeology including the peopling of the Americas, human adaptations to late glacial landscapes, the Neolithic transition, and the origins of sedentism and early village life. This volume presents innovative and previously unpublished research on the Paleoindian and Archaic periods and evaluates current models in light of new findings. Examples include breakthroughs in dating Mesoamerica's earliest sites and their implications for models of hemispheric colonization; the transition to postglacial patterns of settlement and subsistence; divergent pathways to initial sedentism; the possibility of Archaic-period monumentality; changing patterns of interregional exchange and interaction; and debates surrounding the origins of agriculture, ceramics, and full-time village life. The volume provides a new perspective on the Mesoamerican Preceramic for students and scholars in archaeology, anthropology, and history. Readers will come to understand how the Preceramic contributed to the emergence of the cultural traditions that anthropologists recognize as Mesoamerica.