

Shirley Boteler Mock. *The Sowing and the Dawning: Termination, Dedication, and Transformation in the Archaeological and Ethnographic Record of Mesoamerica.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998. vi + 198 pp. \$75.00, library, ISBN 978-0-8263-1983-8.



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Memorials: Interpretations of Dedicatory and Termination Caches and Offerings

The volume's editor, Shirley Boteler Mock, an ethnohistorian at the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio and professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio, has assembled a diverse group of scholars to investigate the role of dedicatory and termination practices as seen in the Mesoamerican anthropological record. Mock and twenty of her colleagues have prepared brief assessments that focus upon the little understood material phenomenon and contexts of ritual deposits, dedicatory or votive offerings, caches, and termination events, in the main, that occur in the Maya area of Mesoamerica. Dedicatory offerings were placed within Maya structures when they were constructed or enlarged, and memorials were also made at the end of certain religious events or periods, and for other reasons, such as renewal or rain-giving ceremonies. The first scholarly attempt to synthesize and interpret these ritual activities is attributed to William R. Coe, author of *Piedras Negras Archaeology: Artifacts, Caches, and Burials* (Philadelphia: Universi-

ty of Pennsylvania Museum, 1959). Another assessment and paradigm appeared in a book chapter authored by Diane Z. Chase entitled "Caches and Censerwares: Meaning from Maya Pottery" (*A Pot for All Reasons: Ceramic Ecology Revisited*, edited by C. C. Kolb and L. M. Lackey, Philadelphia: Temple University, Laboratory of Anthropology, 1988, pp. 81-114). In that same year, Marshall Becker wrote "Caches as Burials, Burials as Caches: The Meaning of Ritual Deposits among the Classic Period Lowland Maya" (*Recent Studies in Pre-Columbian Archaeology*, edited by N. J. Saunders and O. de Montmollin, Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, International Series, S-421, 1988, pp. 117-134). In this provocative analysis, Becker challenged Maya specialists to reconceptualize human skeletal material as "ensouling" or animating a building. Therefore, structures would be constructed or born and be terminated or ritually killed -- the binary opposition of creation and destruction, and there could be multiple cyclical episodes.

Caches or offerings were often placed in particular locations, such as the exact center of the

ground plan of a temple pyramid, at the corners of a structure, or in subfloor contexts associated with altars, for example. The artifacts might include human and/or animal burials (deer, snakes, frogs, fish, birds, etc.), imitation bones and teeth (fashioned from marine shell), and organic artifacts (feather ornaments, textiles, carved wood, foodstuffs, etc.). Mock states that "one common offering across time and space was the sacrificial victim, both animal and human, placed in the foundation to bring it to life" (p. 6). In addition, pottery vessels (common domestic and/or elite or ceremonial wares), ceremonial ceramic censers, stone or fired clay figurines, marine shell ornaments, stingray spines and shark's teeth, ceremonial stone tools (obsidian figurines and prismatic blades, and chert eccentrics, etc.), raw materials (multicolored sands, sheets of mica, cinnabar, for example), and semiprecious artifacts (jade beads, ear ornaments, and other objects) could be included. Mock also comments that "these offerings are only tantalizing pieces of the original contexts, which vary according to content, investment of energy, deposition, and intent" (p. 3). Therefore, the objective of these pioneering expositions is to discuss and interpret these ritual memorials. Ethnographic, ethnohistoric, and archaeological data are combined to evaluate the artifacts and contexts of this phenomenon which, although relatively common in the anthropological literature of Mesoamerica and elsewhere, has not been assessed systematically or comparatively.

The volume's title is derived from a passage in the *Popul Vuh*, an important Quiche Maya chronicle (Dennis Tedlock's edition, *Popol Vuh: The Definitive Edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of Gods and Kings*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985, p. 165): "And here is the dawning and the sowing of the sun, moon, and stars. And Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Mahucutah, and True Jaguar were overjoyed when they saw the day-bringer. It came up first. It looked brilliant when it came up, since it was

ahead of the sun." Appropriately, the book is dedicated In Memoriam to two University of Texas at Austin colleagues, Anthropology Ph.D. Candidate Frances Kathryn Hohman Meskill (July, 1997) and to the mentor of many of the volume's contributors, the late Linda Schele, John D. Murchinson Regents' Professor in Art (April, 1998).

The book begins with the editor's introductory exposition, followed by four ethnographic essays on the Maya, seven chapters on Lowland Maya archaeology, and three other contributions concerning prehistoric cultures of the Basin of Mexico or the Valley of Oaxaca, and a concludes with a summary. The chapters each have separate references cited, but there is a four-page, double-column index of conflated proper nouns and topics. The volume also has a total of 83 figures, five tables, thirteen maps, 36 chapter endnotes, and 557 references. The essays vary in length from six to nineteen pages. Six of fourteen essays were originally presented April 12, 1992 at the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology held in Pittsburgh in a symposium entitled "Termination and Dedication Rituals in the Archaeological Record: Interpreting the Geography of Sacred Space in Ancient Mesoamerica," organized by Mock and co-chaired by Debra S. Walker and Mock. The current contributions include revised and expanded versions of these papers plus the addition of eight invited papers from archaeologists, anthropologists, and art historians. The editor does not identify the original symposiasts or the invitees but your reviewer will indicate these since he had the opportunity to attend the original oral presentations in 1992. The six presenters at the symposium whose papers appear in the current volume include Masson, Driver et al., Walker, Pendergast, Mock, and Lopez Lujan. Contributions were newly solicited from three ethnographers, Vogt, Stross, and McGee; and archaeologists Monaghan, Nobel, Gudjeran, Freidel et al., and Sugiyama. Oral presentations by Porter,

Valdez, Bardsley, and Lopez V. are not included in the published volume.

The initial chapter, "Prelude" (sixteen pages, 100 references) is written by the editor and provides an appropriate background and a firm context for the papers that follow. She considers how archaeologists have previously assessed caches and offerings, discusses the types of material culture recovered from excavated Maya sites, and elaborates the concept of binary oppositions (birth and death, creation and destruction). Mock also provides summaries of each of the contributions but leaves the assessment of the chapters to her colleague, David Freidel, who also served as the discussant of the papers given in 1992.

"Part One: Ethnographic Evidence from Mesoamerica" contains four chapters. Chapter Two, "Zinacanteco Dedication and Termination Rituals" (ten pages, three figures, two endnotes, seventeen references), is a solicited essay written by Evon Z. Vogt (Harvard University). He reviews dedication and termination ceremonies as practiced among the Tzotzil Maya-speaking Zinacantecos of Highland Chiapas, Mexico. Vogt considers the reinterpretation and transformation of ancient rituals by the modern Zinacantecan descendants, and describes wattle-and-daub and tile-roofed adobe house construction rites called *hol chuk*. The processes of sacrifice, reciprocity, and replacement within the context of cosmology and the interrelationships of divine and human actions are reviewed. New status ceremonies (rites of passage), include the ensouling of houses and the destruction of artifacts that possess the soul of their owner, are also elaborated. Shamanistic rituals and the use of music, candles, incense, and chicken sacrifice are described, and the author comments on the introduced Spanish cultural elements but relates the house dedication rites to ancient concepts and practices. Death rituals, the funeral procession, and the interment of the corpse are also described and the components of the ceremony are interpreted.

In Chapter Three, "Seven Ingredients in Mesoamerican Ensoulment: Dedication and Termination in Tenejapa" (nine pages, one figure, one map, six endnotes, nineteen references), Brian Stross (University of Texas at Austin), uses ethnographic data from Tzeltal Maya communities in Chiapas to evaluate the social customs and traditions associated with the life cycle of death and rebirth. In this solicited paper, he examines the organization and rationale affiliated with dedication and termination events, and assesses the components and permutations associated with human-created artifacts and birth and death rites of passage. The "seven chief components, ingredients, or processes" (pp. 32-33) are purifying, cleansing, and sweeping; measuring; naming; assigning guardianship; transferring or transmitting "animateness"; clothing the thing; and feeding. House animation, birth and death ceremonies, deactivating the animate, and the "killing" of ceramic vessels are discussed. There are similarities to the Zinacantecan rituals involving music, candles, incense, and chicken sacrifice as introduced Spanish cultural elements

Chapter Four, "The Lacandon Incense Burner Renewal Ceremony: Termination and Dedication Ritual Among the Contemporary Maya" (six pages, one figure, three endnotes, fourteen references) by R. Jon McGee (Southwest Texas State University) is also a newly added contribution. Among the contemporary Lacandon of southeastern Chiapas, McGee observes parallels between ancient and contemporary termination and dedication activities. He discusses briefly Lacandon culture and religion. Periodically, the Lacandon animate or en-soul their "god pots" (incense burners) through acts of propitiation, including prayers, and the offering of anthropomorphic figurines symbolizing human flesh and blood in the "god house." The author describes incense burner renewal, an elaborate annual ceremony that continued from Pre-columbian times to about 1970. Old vessels are ritually killed and abandoned and buried in hidden cave shrines upon their replacement by new ones.

Chapter Five, a solicited essay entitled "Dedication: Ritual or Production?" (six pages, six endnotes, eighteen references) by John Monaghan (Vanderbilt University), takes the reader from Chiapas to the Mixtec people of the Valley of Oaxaca. The author reports that dedication and termination "action" (a term he prefers to "ritual") are supposedly absent among the Mixtec, and he examines the broader context of "production" using the metaphor of cooking to demonstrate that these practices are culturally embedded. The connotations of cooking and procreation are considered, as are food taboos, hot and cold foods, and other transformation processes. Monaghan also assesses the relationships between material and phenomenological, and nature and culture in his evaluation.

"Part Two: Archaeological Evidence from the Maya" contains seven chapters. Chapter Six, "Intercessions with the Gods: Caches and Their Significance at Altun Ha and Lamanai, Belize" (nine pages, eight figures, one map, sixteen references) by David M. Pendergast (Royal Ontario Museum,

Toronto) draws upon the author's extensive research in Belize beginning in 1964. These two Lowland Maya archaeological sites were separate but neighboring polities, but employed different strategies in nature of the offerings and their placements. Artifact offerings at Altun Ha (n = 119) and at Lamanai (n = 123) chronologically span the Preclassic, Classic, Postclassic, and Contact periods are discussed. Cache placement and "meanings" are reviewed and association with the primary and subsidiary axes of structures is summarized. Pendergast contends that not all offerings were interred with dedicatory intentions ñ some were designed to amplify already extant political power, and he infers that the so-called "empty" caches at the Lamanai site actually contained animate or inanimate objects that did not survive in the archaeological record.

Chapter Seven, "Maya Dedications of Authority" (fifteen pages, eleven figures, eight endnotes, 26 references) by Sandra Noble (Director, Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc.) is also a new contribution. The author differentiates the seat of authority from the position of authority, and uses iconographic data from Classic period carved stone benches at Copan, Honduras to infer visual signs of authority. The depicted dedicatory events are employed, she argues, as a political strategy to document the supernatural sanction of human actions. Illustrations from the Dresden Codex, lintels at Yaxchilan, carved benches at Palenque, and panels from Lax Tunich are cited in the consideration of authority as a seat, a place, a person, and a concept. Hieroglyphic and iconographic changes ca. CE 775 also mark the period when royal human portraits were no longer employed, and "power" and "dynasty" became separate entities.

Chapter Eight, "Smashed Pots and Shattered Dreams: The Material Evidence for an Early Classic Maya Site Termination at Cerros, Belize" (nineteen pages, fourteen figures, two maps, 35 references) by Debra Selsor Walker (Florida Inter-

national University) is revised from her 1992 presentation. Dedication and termination deposits are reviewed. The ceramics from the site of Cerros, especially stacked censers, are associated with termination activities and monumental architecture. Censer stacks Walker argues mimic the *wakah chan*, or *ceiba* tree, which defines the central place of any Maya community (p. 86). Four caches and more than 6000 excavated censer sherds from the Terminal Preclassic and Early Classic periods were assessed. She proposes that broken vessels and *saskab* (white earth) layers indicate a site-wide rite of rededication performed in a "last-ditch effort" to rejuvenate the ancient seat of political power at Cerros, but this action failed and the community was abandoned.

Another new contribution is found in Chapter 9, "The Little Blue Creek Jade Cache: Early Classic Ritual in Northwestern Belize" (twelve pages, eight figures, three tables, two maps, 31 references) written by Thomas H. Guderjan (St. Mary's University, San Antonio). The author describes Blue Creek Ruin, a medium-size Maya center, and its architecture during the Early Classic period. A major series of caches were deposited at Structure 4, a central building in the main plaza dating to about CE 500. A stone-lined shaft capped by a massive limestone "bannerstone" contained broken pottery, 1000 worked pieces of jade (beads, earflares, and pendants), chert, marine shell, foodstuffs, and evidence of human sacrifice (a young adult male). The author concludes that the site was ruled by an independent royal lineage and that the termination event, the end of a royal bloodline, marked the restructuring of political and civic affairs.

Chapter Ten, "The Defaces and Forgotten Decapitation and Flaying/Mutilation as a Termination Event at Colha, Belize" (eleven, five figures, one map, four endnotes, seventy references) by Shirley Boteler Mock is a revised essay from the 1992 symposium. During the Late to Terminal Classic period at Colha, the "mutilation and de-

fleshing" of thirty human skulls (twenty adults and ten children) and their subsequent burial in a pit served to mark a decline at the site CE 800-850 (Late to Terminal Classic). The author states that this was a sacrificial execution but was also a ritual termination of elite power and identity. Mock employs iconographic, ethnohistoric, and archaeological data in her interpretation that this action was a symbolic defacement and desouling that marked the termination of sacred power at Colha. The event was analogous to the destruction of monumental portraiture at the sites of Cerros and Copan, and, she contends, was the reenactment of events described in the *Popol Vuh* – similarities to the Xipe Totec (the flayed god of fertility) complex of Central Mexico are also cited. Skulls were a primary source of regenerative power so that flaying and mutilating facial features signaled divine retribution for sociopolitical incompetence (p. 118). This termination act is similar to the effacement and destruction that occurred on monumental art elsewhere in Mesoamerica.

Chapter Eleven, "Bloody Bowls and Broken Pots: The Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Maya House" (nine pages, five figures, two maps, 38 references), given orally in 1992, is co-authored by James F. Garber (Southwest Texas State University), W. David Driver (University of Southern Illinois), Lauren A. Sullivan (University of Texas at Austin and University of Massachusetts at Boston), and David M. Glassman (Southwest Texas State University). Employing archaeological data from an Early to Late Classic period domestic housemound at the Blackman Eddy site in the Belize Valley, Belize, the authors argue that termination and dedication actions were not restricted to the Maya elite but also occurred in non-elite households, albeit in a different manner. The layering, placement, and contents of the offerings are described. The contents of the four of eight caches are describes. One of these included chert flakes, carbonize twigs, and a rodent skeleton in ceramic bowls (one inverted over the other); another was an "empty" cache; a third included an adult hu-

man skeleton (poorly preserved); and another cache had five complete vessels accompanied by chert and obsidian tools. The authors infer death and rebirth rituals, and New Year ceremonies from this evidence. Your reviewer observes, based on his own excavations, that these offerings are similar in content and locations to domestic household caches from Classic Teotihuacan period sites in the Basin of Mexico. Some of these caches served to dedicate shrines or altars

Another solicited essay is Chapter Twelve, "Termination Ritual Deposits at Yaxuna: Detecting the Historical in Archaeological Contexts" (ten pages, one figure, three maps, 38 references), co-authored by David A. Freidel and Charles K. Schuler (both, Southern Methodist University), and Rafael Cobos Palma (Tulane University and University of Yucatan). Archaeological data from the Early Classic period site of Yaxuna, located in northern Yucatan, is used to support the hypothesis that the polity was defeated in warfare and that this resulted in the systematic termination of major buildings and ritual structures. Excavations at an elite residence (5E-50 group) and pyramidal substructure (4E-5) confirm the use of white marl as a characteristic of termination deposits at the site. Although this case study offers a model for evaluating sociopolitical events, the authors point out the importance of context, and note that dedicatory and termination rituals among the Classic period Maya involved many of the same materials, including white marl (p. 142).

"Part Three: Archaeological Evidence from Mesoamerica" contains three contributions; the first by Sugiyama was solicited specifically for the book, while the chapters by Masson and Orr, and Lopez Lujan were orally presented at the 1992 symposium. Chapter Thirteen, "Termination Programs and Prehispanic Looting at the Feathered Serpent Pyramid in Teotihuacan, Mexico" (eighteen pages, five figures, two tables, one map, seven endnotes, 38 references) by Saburo Sugiyama (Arizona State University). The Classic period

pan-Mesoamerican polity and empire of Teotihuacan, centered in the Basin of Mexico, at its apogee (ca. CE 600) encompassed more than 22.5 square kilometers and had an urban population of at least 125,000 and perhaps as many as 200,000. Sugiyama's chapter is the most detailed of all of the contributions and is essential reading for all Mesoamericanists. Thirty-seven radiocarbon dates and archaeomagnetic dating studies are presented and evaluated. He assesses the Feathered Serpent Pyramid, a structure situated within the Ciudadela compound in urban Teotihuacan. The concepts of dedication and termination are illustrated graphically in the form of the mass burial of 200 sacrificial victims in front of the temple facades, at each corner, and within the pyramid itself. The three highly complex construction phases and four destruction phases are documented. These acts of profanation include painting, plastering, and stuccoing; intentional burning, dismantling of stone facades, the mutilation of the structure's monumental sculptures; and the destruction of some of the prior constructions at the pyramid. He argues successfully that some of the episodes of the looting of human burials located inside and outside of the pyramid were associated with the planned desecration ñ a form of legalized looting. At the same time, adjacent palaces and residences continued to be occupied. The evidence suggests a change in the administration but a continuation of a form of government at the urban center. Sugiyama's new and continuing archaeological excavations inside Teotihuacan's Pyramid of the Moon (not mentioned in this chapter) include the recovery of skeletons of a bound human and animals (jaguar, mountain lion, wolf, eagles, hawk, and falcon) -- buried alive -- as well as grave goods. Certainly this was a dedicatory offering.

In Chapter Fourteen, "The Writing on the Wall: Political Representation and Sacred Geography at Monte Alban" (eleven pages, five figures, 74 references), Marilyn A. Masson (State University of New York at Albany) and Heather Orr (Western

State College of Colorado, Gunnison) return the reader to the Valley of Oaxaca. They argue that elite rulers at the urban center of Monte Alban "appropriated sacrificial victims" as a part of the commemoration of major life events, cyclical calendrical episodes, and successes in warfare. Sacrificed captives carved in relief on stone monuments were part of rededication efforts, denoted sacred areas, and served to reactivate the sources of the power of this state polity. State-based shamanism and nahualism (animal spirit companions) involving feline transformation iconography symbolized the military and shamanistic prowess of the ruling elite. Feline depictions on warfare monuments, funerary contexts, felines as embodiments of "place," and ethnographic examples of nahualism are discussed. Warfare is a prominent theme in the Classic period art at Monte Alban, witness captive sacrifice, autosacrifice (bloodletting), and the positioning of the stone monuments ñ some as portals.

Chapter Fifteen, "Recreating the Cosmos: Seventeen Aztec Dedication Caches" (eleven pages, fifteen figures, 33 references) by Leonardo Lopez Lujan (Museo del Templo Mayor, Mexico City) deals with the Postclassic period when archaeological, ethnohistoric, and ethnographic sources can be combined. The Templo Mayor located in the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan is today situated in downtown Mexico City and has been the focus of numerous archaeological excavations. Lopez Lujan assembles information on the contents and specific contexts of seventeen ceremonial offerings (excavated 1978-1997) at the temple and interprets the associated rituals as a reenactment of the cosmogenic acts of the Aztec deities. Objects were deposited as offerings following imaginary axes. Among the offerings were marine shells and sand, ceramic vessels, and decapitated humans. The latter reflect a ceremony associated with the spring equinox and the twenty-day period of Xipe Totec (the flayed god). The author also postulates that the precise location of the offerings was a sign or symbol that constitutes a decipherable

code. Ethnohistoric and epigraphic data, inferences from ten codices (among them Dresden, Madrid, Azcatitlan, and Codex en Cruz), and archaeological information contribute to this assessment in which the author also determines that "the Templo Mayor grew in accordance with the increase in size of the empire" (p. 185).

The "Summary," contains one chapter, "Sacred Work: Dedication and Termination in Mesoamerica" (5 pp.), written by David Freidel (Southern Methodist University). Freidel evaluates the contributions and emphasizes the need to understand the architectural stratigraphy and the archaeological contexts of the offerings and caches in order to interpret the episodes of destruction, regeneration, and transformation. He states that the paradigms of termination and dedication, and regeneration and reproduction are significant in Mesoamerican cultures today as well as in the past, and he contends that scholars can best infer these events through the careful use of combined archival, epigraphic, ethnographic, and archaeological evidence. Freidel finds four points of agreement among the contributions (p. 189): 1. The way that Mesoamerican people conceive of their world, and have conceived of it for thousands of years of civilized life, has direct bearing on the work they do in it. 2. Effective analysis of the worlds made by Mesoamericans, artifactual and material requires useful models of their intentions in making it, based on their world views and cosmologies. 3. Mesoamerican cosmologies combine matter and spirit, such that work with material is usually also work with spirit and vice versa. 4. "Sacred" and "practical" are aspects of work aimed at common goals of social, cultural, and physical reproduction.

A few typographical gremlins crept into the text: spondylous (p. 5) should be spondylus; Zapotec (p. 13) is Zapotec; institutio (p. 77) is instituto; Gorge (p. 162) is George, and Sapain (p. 186) is Spain. Eduard Seler (1960) is said to be the first anthropologist working in the Basin of Mexico to

interpret votive caches (p. 8, 17). This is a correct assertion, except that Mock cites a 1960s reprinted edition of *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Amerikanischen Sprach(-) und Altertumskunde*, 5 volumes, rather than the original publication (*Die Teotihuacan Kultur des Hochlands von Mexico* (Berlin: Behrend, 1915). The citation (p. 17) for Sahagun's 1975 tome should read "Santa Fe: School of American Research, published by University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City." Nonetheless, these minor flaws do not in any way detract from this pioneering effort to document, assess, and interpret archaeological caches and offerings.

The editor and her colleagues have presented the reader with a compelling account of the roles of dedicatory and termination practices as evidenced in the Mesoamerican archaeological record. Although the majority of the contributions emphasize the Lowland Maya, there is much in methodology, theory, and interpretation that will be useful to scholars elsewhere in Mesoamerica, the New World, and, indeed, to any archaeologist who seeks to interpret the behaviors and meanings associated with offerings and caches. Mock states that "the Mesoamerican cosmos was enlivened by an environment of dying, regenerating, transforming, often ambivalent animals, plants, and humans, embraced as paradigmatic sets for mysteries of earth and life itself" (p. 4, citing Eva Hunt's *The Transformation of the Hummingbird*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977). This is demonstrated in the essays in this volume. Each essay makes significant contributions to our understanding of termination, dedication, and transformations ñ the sowing and the dawning. From a personal point of view, the chapters by McGee on incense burner renewal, Mock's essay on decapitation and mutilation, and Sugiyama's masterful account of dedication and termination at the Feathered Serpent Pyramid at Teotihuacan are especially valuable.

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