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0521574692 - Abandonment of Settlements and Regions: Ethnoarchaeological and Archaeological Approaches

Edited by Catherine M. Cameron and Steve A. Tomka

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All archaeological sites have been abandoned, but people abandoned sites in many different ways, and for different reasons. What they did when leaving a settlement, structure, or activity area had a direct effect on the kind and quality of the cultural remains entering the archaeological record – for example whether tools were removed, destroyed, or buried in the ground, and building structures dismantled or left standing.

The chapters, in this first volume to examine abandonment as a stage in the formation of an archaeological site, use ethnoarchaeological and archaeological data from many areas of the world: North and South America, Europe, Africa, and the Near East. They describe the many complex factors surrounding abandonment across entire regions and within settlement areas, and make an important theoretical and methodological contribution to this area of archaeological investigation.

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Editors

Françoise Audouze

Centre de Recherches Archéologiques, Meudon, France

Richard Bradley

Department of Archaeology, University of Reading

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Department of Anthropology, University of South Carolina

Tim Murray

Department of Archaeology, La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia

Colin Renfrew

Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge

Andrew Sherratt

Department of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Timothy Taylor

Department of Archaeology, University of Bradford

Norman Yoffee

Department of Anthropology, University of Arizona

Wendy Ashmore

Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

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CATHERINE M. CAMERON

and

STEVE A. TOMKA



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Contributors

ROBERT BROOKS
 State Archaeologist
 Oklahoma Archaeological Survey
 Norman, Oklahoma

CATHERINE M. CAMERON
 School of American Research
 Santa Fe, New Mexico

SUSAN DUBLIN
 Department of Anthropology
 City University of New York

PAUL R. FISH
 Arizona State Museum
 University of Arizona

SUSANNE K. FISH
 Arizona State Museum
 University of Arizona

T. J. FERGUSON
 Department of Anthropology
 University of New Mexico

MARTHA GRAHAM
 Anthropology Department
 American Museum of Natural History
 New York

LEE HORNE
 Editor *Expedition* and Research Associate
 Museum Applied Science Center for
 Archaeology
 The University Museum
 University of Pennsylvania

SISSEL JOHANNESSEN
 Department of Anthropology
 University of Minnesota

ARTHUR A. JOYCE
 Department of Anthropology
 American Museum of Natural History
 New York

SUSAN KENT
 Anthropology Program
 Old Dominion University
 Norfolk, Virginia

RICKY R. LIGHTFOOT
 Crow Canyon Archaeological Center
 Cortez, Colorado

KATINA T. LILLIOS
 Department of Anthropology
 Brandeis University

BARBARA J. MILLS
 Department of Anthropology
 University of Arizona

BARBARA MONTGOMERY
 Department of Anthropology
 University of Arizona

NAN A. ROTHSCHILD
 Department of Anthropology
 Bernard College
 Columbia University

SARAH H. SCHLANGER
 Museum of Indian Arts and
 Culture Laboratory of Anthropology
 Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe

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xiv *Contributors*

MARC G. STEVENSON
Department of Anthropology
University of Alberta
Edmonton

GLENN D. STONE
Department of Anthropology
Columbia University

STEVE A. TOMKA
Department of Anthropology
University of Texas, Austin

RICHARD WILSHUSEN
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Western Office of Project Review
Golden, Colorado

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This volume began as a set of papers prepared for two symposia at the 1990 Society of American Archaeology meetings in Las Vegas, Nevada. Both of us independently conceived of the idea of developing an SAA symposium focusing on abandonment as an archaeological process. Michael Schiffer made us aware of our mutual interests and we joined forces. The resulting symposia were entitled: “Abandonment Processes: Structures and Sites,” and “Abandonment Processes: Seasonal Variation and Regional Mobility.” This division provided the organization for the present volume. Michael Schiffer and Richard Ahlstrom were enlisted as discussants for the first session and Paul Fish and Marc Stevenson were discussants for the second session. Each of them provided important insights on the papers that were presented and added his own wisdom to the consideration of archaeological abandonment.

The success of the SAA symposia encouraged us to seek publication for the resulting group of papers.

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