ARCHAEOLOGY The Science of the Human Past, 3e Mark Q. Sutton & Robert M. Yohe II Chapter 11: Interpreting Past Cultural Systems

How Can Archaeology Answer Anthropological Questions?

- Culture: "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired...as a member of society" (Edward B. Tylor, 1871)
- Society: people living together and sharing aspects of culture

Social structure

Social organization

Social Archaeology

Creating and testing models of past societies and cultures

- An assumption: past An archaeological cultures operated in the same basic manner as contemporary ones.
- model of culture:
 - Technology/material culture
 - Settlement and subsistence
 - Cultural systems
 - Cognition

Cognitive Anthropology "The study of past ways of thought as inferred from material remains." (Colin Renfrew 1994) Worldview: People's beliefs and assumptions about how the world works and should work. *Post-processual approach?

Archaeology and Cultural Symbols • Symbols: material expressions of ideas and meanings used to: • Communicate • Organize • Regulate social relations among people • Regulate social relations between people and supernaturals • Nonutilitarian vs. utilitarian objects/designs

Interpreting Past Social Structures People's roles and statuses set the stage for social organization • Kinship Study of households • Skeletal analysis • Social Stratification • Stratified vs. nonstratified • Mortuary analysis

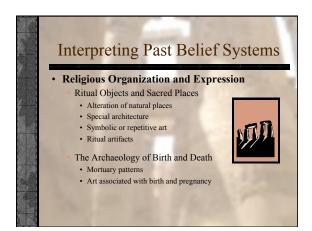
Interpreting Past Social Structures People's roles and statuses set the stage for social organization • Gender Ethnographic analogy Dietary data Skeletal data/ Mortuary data Art • Ethnicity Direct historical approach

Interpreting Political Organization Political organization: a specific type of social structure that allocates and distributes power and authority in a society Individuals with power Political office Ritual office Polity: a group with independent political organization

Interpreting Political Organization Four Levels of Political Organization Bands • Nonstratified • Small scale • Hunting and Gathering • Mobile • Mixed economy

Interpreting Political Organization **Four Levels of Political Organization States** Chiefdoms • Millions of people · Tens of thousands of people • cities · Record keeping • Large, permanent • Complex settlements infrastructure • Agriculture/ • Labor intensive specialists projects · Formal authority

Theories of the Origin of States Hydraulic Theory Irrigation leads to complex management which leads to state level organization. Warfare Agricultural prosperity leads to creation of military for defense and conquest. Multicausal Each state develops through its own particular history of interrelating factors.



Cosmology, Philosophy, and Oral Tradition

- Cosmology: the understanding of one's universe, its origins, organization, and workings
- **Philosophy**: deals with ethics, values, aesthetics
- Oral Tradition: the narration of stories from one generation to the next

Writing Art

Iconography, Art, and Expression

• **Iconography**: using artistic images to represent aspects of belief systems and other information.

Numerical systems Hieroglyphics Calendrical systems



Iconography, Art, and Expression

- Art: the creation of aesthetic objects
- Representational Art: paintings, inscriptions, sculptures

Two dimensional
Three dimensional

· Rock Art

Petroglyphs Pictographs Geoglyphs



Remembering the Individual Imagining the individual behavior that created the archaeological record. Speculative Difficult to verify Information about individuals can be learned from paleofeces and forensic analysis.