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MAYA MEMORY WORK

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Abstract

The critical role of social or collective memory in ongoing processes of societal reproduction and transformation is well acknowledged by anthropologists and is being increasingly modeled in archaeological interpretations as well. Investigating how social memory impacted the materialities and historical trajectories of the Maya civilization has great potential for advancing archaeological methodologies as well as enlarging our knowledge of the Maya. In addition to the wealth of epigraphic, ethnographic, and early historical information available for the Maya, archaeologists are examining enduring architecture, representative imagery, and even mundane artifacts that constitute a "technology of memory" for clues to the interplay of recollection and forgetting in the operation and transformation of Maya societies. This commentary reviews issues and problems in archaeological studies of social memory and addresses the specific prospects for investigating social memory among the pre-Hispanic Maya, drawing upon the analyses provided by the papers in this special section.

Since the 1980s social memory has become an increasingly important topic in anthropology (e.g., Climo and Cattell 2002; Connerton 1989; Fentress and Wickham 1992; Forty and Küchler 1999; Hallam and Hockey 2001; Küchler and Melion 1991; Mines and Weiss 1997; Stewart and Strathern 2003; Whitehouse 1992) and archaeology (e.g., Alcock 2002; Borić 2002; Bradley 2002; Chesson 2001; Dietler 1998; Hendon 2000, 2009; Holtorf 1997; Jones 2007; Kuijt 2008; Mills and Walker 2008; Mizoguchi 1993; Rowlands 1993; Stanton and Magnoni 2008b; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003b; Williams 2003; Yoffee 2007), as well as a number of related disciplines (Assmann 1995; Burke 1989; Lowenthal 1985; Olick and Robbins 1998; Wertsch 2002; Zelizer 1995; Zerubavel 2003; none of these lists is comprehensive). Memory has been moved from the individual psyche to the social collective, out of the mind and into the active body, thereby allowing for the temporal mediation of materiality, spatiality, textuality, and sociality in the production and transmission of social memory. Significant topics in anthropology and related disciplines include memory as embodied (Bourdieu 1977:94), as conveyed in performances (Connerton 1989:40), and as inscribed or objectified in various media. These media include portable objects (Battaglia 1990, 1992; Joyce 2000, 2003; Küchler 1987, 1988; Lillios 1999, 2003; Thomas 1993); architecture, especially the house (Bachelard 1969; Lane 2005; Meskell 2003; Van Dyke 2004); landscape features (Holtorf 1998; Küchler 1993; Morphy 1993, 1995; Santos-Granero 1998; Schama 1996); and images, oral narratives, and written texts (Barrett 1993; Holtorf 1997; Liebsohn 1994; Nora 1989; Wertsch 2002).

The focus on memory entails a foregrounding of the consciousness of time as passage and duration, as well as its interruption, in interpretations of social and cultural phenomena. Edmund Husserl's writings on phenomenological psychology (e.g., Husserl 1964) provided a ground for subsequent studies of time and thus memory (Gell 1992: 221). Some aspects of the past are Husserlian "retentions," treated as "horizons of a temporally extended present" (Gell 1992:223), denying a difference between the present, or now, and past. Others are "reproductions," replays of past experiences of a remembered or constructed "present" in what is the "now" moment (Gell 1992: 223). Recollection links the past with the present, thereby endowing the present with a certain meaning or value.

Nevertheless, this process is not straightforward; "collective memories help us fabricate, rearrange, or omit details from the past as we thought we knew it" (Zelizer 1995:217). In social contexts, acts of remembering are future-oriented, and only certain recollections are selected as a means to influence future circumstances (Battaglia 1990:8). Examining how societies use objects or other material phenomena from their past (or others' pasts) to create meanings in the present is one way to study social memory; significantly, it is precisely what archaeologists regularly do (Lane 2005:20). Lane (2005: 21; emphasis in original) observed that archaeologists have the opportunity to investigate how social memory "was constructed *by people in the past*," as "a form of 'archaeological practice' *in the past*" (see also Van Dyke and Alcock 2003a:3; examples in Stanton and Magnoni 2008b; Yoffee 2007). Moreover, highlighting the role of artifacts, structures, and the landscape in memory work should ultimately transform how archaeologists investigate the role of enduring material forms in processes of social reproduction and social change (Jones 2007:4).

Despite almost three decades of burgeoning interest, "social" or "collective memory" remains a slippery subject that has proven difficult to circumscribe. There is no agreement on what this phenomenon consists of or even its appropriate name. Alternative monikers include cultural memory, local memory, popular memory, public memory, and shared memory (Cattell and Climo 2002:5; Olick and Robbins 1998:111; Wertsch 2002:33; Zelizer 1995:214). The papers comprising this special section reveal this state of affairs—they present a selection of the diverse and even conflicting understandings of social memory, in part as a result of adherence to different definitions and theorists. These case studies from the greater Maya sphere illustrate the role of memory in forming and

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reiterating group identities, the political uses to which collective memory is put, the interplay of multiple and competing memories, and also collective, even "forced," forgetting (following Connerton 1989:15), which is not merely the loss of memory but may result from the "willed transformation of memory" (Battaglia 1992:14). Borgstede (2010) and Stockett (2010) in this issue also observe that social memory creates or sustains continuities with the past among Maya peoples in the present-day, a topic important to all archaeologists given the prominence of archaeology in cultural and national heritage issues.

Among the papers in this special section, Golden (2010) and Restall (2010) particularly focus on text-mediated memory as "history"—eliding what has been called "the most contested boundary" between memory and other domains (Olick and Robbins 1998: 110; see also Nora 1989; Wertsch 2002:19). The authors of the other articles treat quotidian and nonquotidian archaeological phenomena—pottery types, stone objects, caches, architectural complexes—as nontextual *aides-mémoires* for everyday, ritual, and commemorative performances that invoked and transmitted collective memories necessary for social reproduction and social change. Even the most mundane artifacts can form a "technology of memory": "Material things condense the social history of a community, the stories of individuals, and through their persistence and materiality project them forwards" (Thomas 1993:32). The fact that these papers raise more issues than they resolve reflects the inchoate state of memory studies (see Olick and Robbins 1998; Zelizer 1995). Taken as a whole, the contributions to this special section demonstrate the need for not only additional conceptualizing, but also the great potential for anthropologically-based social memory studies in Maya archaeology.

Three major foci among the general aims of these papers illustrate how archaeologists might investigate social memory (see Ricoeur 2004). One is the emphasis on *what* is remembered (or forgotten)—that is, memory versus the process of remembering (following Wertsch 2002:17). A second is a concern for *who* is doing the remembering, especially when those in power attempt to direct or control collective memories (Child and Golden 2008; Golden 2010; LeCount 2010; Stockett 2010). A given society will have multiple "memory communities," only some of whose memories are preserved, and different groups typically maintain rival, conflicting, or at least alternative memories (Burke 1989:107). The third is a focus on *how* social memory reproduces or transforms society or its constituent groups, entailing a greater interest in "memory-work" rather than "accounts of distinct memories" (Küchler 1993:86).

Although all three factors are important, the third one has the greatest potential for archaeology. However, this potential is neglected as long as memory is relegated to a purely cognitive phenomenon inaccessible except where it has been expressed through texts or similar representational media (e.g., Stanton and Magnoni 2008a:13). From the relationist practice or performance approaches typical of some contemporary theory (see Ortner 1984:144ff), investigating memory as a social and material process entails the most direct archaeological evidence because the materiality and temporality of the landscape, portable objects, and other social subjects are necessarily drawn into memory work. As Tim Ingold (1993:152–153) noted, the act of remembering requires an engagement "with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past." Beyond archaeological concerns, Paul Ricoeur (2004:4–5) observed that the "what" of memory is less important than the "how," and the "how" is necessary to understand "whose" memory is in question, with all the social and political ramifications that follow from that assessment.

In sum, it is widely acknowledged that social memory is better investigated as a process than as a thing (Cattell and Climo 2002: 23; Curtoni et al. 2003; Küchler 1993:86; Olick and Robbins 1998:122; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003a:3; Zelizer 1995:218). This point was reiterated by most authors of these papers, although exactly what that process is—cognitive, historical, social, or material—varied depending on which scholarly authorities they drew upon. Nevertheless, memory as process was more often backgrounded or taken for granted rather than foregrounded in these case studies. If one simply assumes that social memory is integral to the operation and reproduction of society, then it can easily overlap with history, myth, the past, identity, biography, ethnicity, emulation, legitimacy, discourse, knowledge, cognition, narratives, place, style, habitus, persistence, continuity, custom, tradition, norms, and so forth, such that its particular role in social processes becomes muted (see Cattell and Climo 2002:4; Olick and Robbins 1998:112). Once granted an all-pervading presence, "lurking behind every nook and cranny of everyday life," social memory becomes a mere "catch-all category" (Zelizer 1995: 234–235). Compelling papers in this special section incorporated social memory into related topics that have their own literatures and well-developed constructs for investigating materiality and sociality, especially "identity-formation" (Borgstede 2010; LeCount 2010) and "place," the latter considered as individual structural loci (Schwake and Iannone 2010; Stockett 2010) and within a network forming a regional landscape (Borgstede 2010).

I therefore begin this commentary with certain theoretical and methodological problems that impact memory studies in archaeology (for more general discussions, see, for example, Golden 2005:271; Olick and Robbins 1998; Zelizer 1995). I then address the prospects of archaeological usages of social memory among the pre-Hispanic Maya, highlighting several issues that stand out in these papers within the context of more wide-ranging topics. In terms of topical coverage, this essay is therefore not comprehensive concerning what could be done in Maya (or other) archaeological studies of memory. Some important issues were neglected in this small sampling of papers, an indication of the vast potential for memory studies in archaeology.

SOCIAL MEMORY AND MEMORY WORK

Social memory studies of the last two decades usually trace their origin to the pioneering work of Maurice Halbwachs (1980 [1950]; died 1945), whose ideas on collective memory were updated in a seminal book by Paul Connerton (1989). Halbwachs's contribution to the study of memory was his emphasis on the "collectivity" that is necessary for social, as opposed to individual, memories: "groups provide individuals with frameworks within which their memories are localised" (Connerton 1989:37; see also Bastide 1978:24). He showed that the group determines what is "memorable," what individuals remember (or forget) and how (Burke 1989:98). Halbwachs's focus on groups has proven useful to archaeologists, in that such (often corporate) groups typically occupy or are associated with certain social and material spaces, giving a literal meaning to the notion of localization:

> [N]o collective memory can exist without reference to a socially specific spatial framework. That is to say, our images of social spaces, because of their relative stability, give us the illusion of not changing and of rediscovering the past in the present. We conserve our recollections by referring them to the material

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> milieu that surrounds us. It is to our social spaces—those which we occupy, which we frequently retrace with our steps, where we always have access, which at each moment we are capable of mentally reconstructing—that we must turn our attention, if our memories are to reappear. Our memories are located within the mental and material spaces of the group (Connerton 1989:37).

To Halbwachs's general thesis Connerton contributed the notion that social memory depends on acts of communication between individuals and that "to study the social formation of memory is to study those acts of transfer that make remembering in common possible" (Connerton 1989:39; see also Burke [1989:100] on "modes of transmission of public memories"). Besides oral communication, Connerton focused on two other "acts of transfer"—commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices—in support of his argument that "images of the past and recollected knowledge of the past are conveyed and sustained by (more or less ritual) performances" (1989:40). However, the analytical distinction between these two acts of transfer is not necessarily maintained in actual practice (Battaglia 1992:3–4). Practices are repeated, "and repetition automatically implies continuity with the past" (Connerton 1989: 45), a linking of the present present and the absent past upon which memory is based. The same premise applies to the related notion of "tradition," whether "invented" or not, comparably defined by Hobsbawm (1983:1) as "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."

Thus, Connerton would have us examine repeated activities of a formalized nature occurring in certain places that were associated with specific corporate groups. Such repetition or recapitulation (also modeled as citation) is definitely visible to archaeologists—indeed, it is the foundation of practice approaches in archaeology (Joyce and Lopiparo 2005)—and can elucidate the material mnemonic aspects of daily life even in the deep past (Borić 2002:51). Several of the papers in this section demonstrate its potential, including the repeated ritual use of pottery vessels (LeCount 2010), architecture (Stockett 2010), and features embedded in architecture (Schwake and Iannone 2010). In addition, the phenomenologically influenced understanding of practice as experienced and embodied—as in the writings of Pierre Bourdieu (1977) and his notion of *habitus*, alongside Connerton's (1989:22ff) "habit-memory" (see LeCount 2010)—is also salient in memory studies. These theoretical perspectives and their subsequent methodological implementation direct our attention to the processes of memory work, to the "pragmatics of memory, by virtue of which remembering is doing something" (Ricoeur 2004:4).

The "how" of memory as a *social* process—the acts of transfer effected through mundane repetition associated with places and groups—was best developed here by LeCount. Other papers focus on "what" was to be remembered or forgotten, especially in terms of the modification of architecture or the reading of texts, assuming that recollection (or forgetting) was the intended purpose for transforming structures or erecting monuments with inscriptions. However, intention is difficult to demonstrate with archaeological evidence, especially because archaeologists have privileged knowledge of the future or consequences of those actions, which the original actors did not, and that knowledge tends to bias our interpretations. If old buildings are covered with new surfaces, was the purpose to force forgetting or, alternatively, to add a new layer of memories to the old ones, requiring an enforcement of remembering (see case studies in Stanton and Magnoni 2008b)? Iannone (2010) suggests that the destruction or burial of architectural features—rendering them invisible—may have had the effect of burning them into the collective memories of those who witnessed these events and those who later heard the stories about them. Paul Lane (2005) presents case studies in which the razing and rebuilding of structures elicited assertions from their builders that the structures had not been changed and were old rather than new. Thus, reading "remembering" or "forgetting" from the evidence of architectural modification, abandonment, or reuse is problematic (see also Canuto and Andrews 2008:265–266).

Too often such strategic actions are relegated to political elites by default because they controlled the erection of masonry architecture and stone monuments. As a consequence, "who" is supposed to remember or forget "what" is often insufficiently delineated. Although subroyal lords may have used monumental inscriptions to create their own counter-memories in contrast to royal hegemony, as developed in Golden's (2010) contribution, a focus on elite-commissioned monumentality leaves the commoners with little role to play other than to passively remember or forget as manipulatively bidden by those in power. Moreover, whereas architectural modification is often taken as evidence of political power, the agency involved in the absence of modification has tended to be ignored by archaeologists. Nevertheless, the continued reuse of an unmodified building could manifest a political agenda to prevent forgetting by maintaining a link between past and present, or to obviate the past by treating it as the same as the present.

Despite these limitations and difficulties, the archaeology of social memory holds out the promise of substantial advances in knowledge. Social memory was a critical factor in the endurance and dynamic modification of material settings of human existence, influencing what was preserved, changed, rejuvenated, destroyed, or rebuilt. As Lane (2005:21) observed,

> a complex set of recursive relationships would appear to exist between how societies use ancient remains to construct their past *and* the form and processes by which such ancient remains are passed on to future generations. If this is so, then it would appear that archaeology has enormous potential to illustrate the operation and relative significance of different concepts and attitudes to time over the course of human history.

A methodological tool to help realize this potential is to adopt John Barrett's (2001) suggestion that we abandon the notion of the archaeological "record"—treating physical remains as the mere traces or outcomes of antecedent past activities and intentions—and consider instead that archaeologists investigate them as the physical media within which social, material, and historical processes were embedded. Remembering and forgetting are entailed in those processes. Archaeologists also bring to the table the disparate experiences of lived memories of pre-modern and non-Western societies, as well as a temporal framework surpassing that of historians. In the remainder of my commentary, I point out certain prospects for Maya memory work, drawing on the contributions in this special section as examples.

SOCIAL MEMORY AND THE MAYA CIVILIZATION

The wealth of information available on the Maya should prove fertile ground for modeling social memory in ways that could

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benefit similar studies in other world areas. Maya archaeologists are well aware of the utility of the hieroglyphic inscriptions that could codify and preserve certain long-term memories or innovate new ones; calendrical systems that evidence a concern for timekeeping and a measured means to refer to the past (or future) in the present; symbolically embellished masonry architecture that provided "places" for groups to embed their social memories but which were remodeled, often in association with death and burial, invoking recollection and forgetting; and finely crafted objects, many of them heirloomed and imbued with their own biographies (Joyce 2000, 2003). This information is supplemented and enhanced by information on Maya practices that was recorded in the colonial period. Some of these practices can still be observed today (see Borgstede 2010; Iannone 2010; Restall 2010).

In contrast to the rest of Mesoamerica, the level of long-enduring linguistic and stylistic homogeneity in the Maya world is quite striking (an observation that does not understate the spatial, cultural, and temporal heterogeneity within that world). Because this area maintained a discernibly distinct though dynamic civilization for over a millennium, one can investigate the role of the past and its commemoration among ancient Maya peoples themselves—their "archaeological practice." They saw the ruins of earlier failed cities; they experienced the loss of place and the trauma of dislocation, sometimes as the result of violence. Some of their settlements were revived with specific reference to past individuals or events, while others were not. Still others were rejuvenated by engaging innovated cultural understandings or borrowing styles from distant (non-Maya) places—an apparent break with the past. There was no uniformity to these strategic uses of collective memory, a fact that requires further examination, especially along the distinctive systemic breaks between the Early and Late Classic periods and the emergence of Terminal Classic and Postclassic political economies and ideologies.

Although much of Maya archaeology has focused on major cities, more recent concerns have shifted to the lived experiences of commoners as well as aristocrats, and to secondary as well as primate centers. To what extent were memory habits and identities shared across social strata, and at what levels were they made different in order to reinforce social distance? That is the topic explored in this issue by LeCount (2010) in her examination of mundane commensal practices—namely, how eating shaped social spaces at Xunantunich—and by Stockett (2010) in her distinction between "public" and "social" memory as contested in the construction, use, and abandonment of monumental structures. Another topic to be investigated is the patterned organization of space at multiple levels, such that the familiarity and practices associated with humble households was writ large in the spatial organization of palaces (and vice versa).

A subject not well covered in these papers but worthy of consideration is the profound transformation of the original natural environment. Something as simple as dense stands of *ramón* trees or barely visible trails through the forest could have evoked memories of generations past and networks of places forming a lived landscape. These natural features need to be taken into account, even if they did not survive to the present (see Iannone 2010). In fact, the localizing of this civilization within a tropical forest setting has not sufficiently played into theorizing about Maya social memory (see below).

To take advantage of the potential value of social memory studies, more attention needs to be addressed to certain widespread features of Maya civilization (following Van Dyke 2004). I refer not to a common art or writing system or to rulership of centers by an *ahaw*, but to a fundamental cosmology—a "classification of the world and a set of prescriptions for correct action towards the world in both its human and non-human elements" (Gosden 1999:77)—that was continually produced within the social and material frameworks for the construction and sedimentation of collective memories. Although adherence to a basic cosmology is widely accepted by Maya scholars, it has more often been considered a shared cognitive phenomenon overlain on a physical landscape, such that how it continually emerged from material practices has less frequently been modeled. Among the contributions in this issue, LeCount (2010) tackles this problem via the evocation of memories that link past and present in the mundane practices of maize consumption by domestic groups as contrasted with the "toasting" activities of chocolate-drinking by elites. The latter were not the brief salutations to fellow drinkers or honored guests we make today. LeCount is referring instead to lengthy oral discourses on the fame or history of the individual aristocratic groups, something that may well have been the privilege and responsibility of titled individuals such as the "Great Toastmasters," the keepers of "the Word," in the K'iche' *Popol Vuh* (Tedlock 1985:227). Such formal recitations, made in the contexts of ritual drinking and feasting, linked smaller scale experiences of households to the reiteration of collective memories at the level of the larger community.

TIME-CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE TEMPORALITY OF MEMORY

Another significant component of Maya cosmology is their experiencing of time; as noted above, forms of temporality that connect past and present are critical to memory (Gell 1992:221ff; Husserl 1964). This aspect of the temporality of memory was succinctly explained by Connerton (1989:2):

> Concerning memory as such, we may note that our experience of the present very largely depends upon our knowledge of the past. We experience our present world in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present. And we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect that present. Hence the difficulty of extracting our past from our present: not simply because present factors tend to influence—some might want to say distort—our recollections of the past, but also because past factors tend to influence, or distort, our experience of the present.

Although too much has been made of the simple distinction between cyclical and linear time among Native Americans (Krech 2006), it is nevertheless important to recognize the existence of different kinds and durations of temporality (Fabian 1983), as well as "different categories of the past that make up historical consciousness" (Sutton 1998:3). Francis Yates (1966) demonstrated how Western ideas of memory are tied to linear conceptions of time (see Feeley-Harnik 1991:121; Rowlands 1993:143). Nevertheless, as Susanne Küchler (1993) has argued for memory work in Melanesia, the tropical forest—similar to the environment of much of the Maya area—is a landscape of forgetting, something that inhibits notions of persistence and linear continuity. Little is permanent; decay is a constant process to be either accepted or worked against, and mobility is an important survival strategy.

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Melanesian villages and gardens are carved out of the forest only temporarily, to be returned to the forest in a cycle that began in the past and dominates future-oriented agendas. In the Maya world, typically only certain tall trees, such as the ceiba—the quintessential axis mundi that marked the communal origins of Maya settlements—evidence an organic longevity of a different order, beyond the annual round of agricultural activities and the domestic cycles of extended family households that usually endured only about three generations. Even today Maya families generally don't remember—they forget—ascendant relatives more distant than grandparents (Borgstede 2010; Gillespie 2000). Such variant, though coexisting, temporalities will obviously impact the nature and production of social memory.

In this setting, replacement or transfer—encapsulated by the term *k'ex*—along with regeneration or generational change—subsumed as *jal*—became salient twinned processes in Maya cosmology (Carlsen and Prechtel 1991). Studies of Maya memory work should account for the continual replacement and rejuvenation of the visible and invisible worlds that Maya peoples inhabited. One manifestation of the *k'ex*/*jal* dialectic is that grandchildren become the replacements for their grandparents; both kin categories are called by a reciprocal term, *mam*, in many Maya languages (Gillespie 2002). That is, people today do not simply act in the way of their ancestors, which is the basis for the temporalizing connection of past and present often known as *costumbre* (e.g., Nash 1970:xvi); instead they replace/become them. Generational continuity is further reinforced by carrying out the practices attributed to the ancestors in the same places (e.g., Watanabe 1992:96). The Maya achieved a form of immortality that overcame the surface appearance of ephemerality.

Processes of replacement and regeneration may thereby obviate a temporal separation between the past, present, and future; that is, time as linear succession may elide with the notion of the "eternal return" of the past. The sheer measurement of elapsed time distinguishing living people from their ancestors is not necessarily an issue, as Borgstede (2010) demonstrates in his discussion of how a Jakaltek Maya community maintains a corporate identity via rituals of commemoration at certain archaeological sites the Jakaltek associate with ancestral figures. By the repetitive nature of these rituals, they continually assert continuity with the past. However, for that reason, Borgstede's presumption that the Jakaltek community has collectively maintained a centuries-long continuity of memories associated with the site of K'anil—because the site dates to the Postclassic period—requires independent verification. His own study explains how a cave site was incorporated into the Jakaltek sacred landscape via the extension of community mythology and ritual only after the site was discovered by archaeologists. These places operate as "sites of memory" more in the sense of the memories of the repeated ritual activities that are essential to group identities.

Even more interesting questions arise from his research: why do the Jakaltek continue to invoke myths of the past, reshaped into present knowledge of the landscape (which is constantly changing) via ritual practices that evoke that past, while other Maya communities have abandoned these sets of practices and embraced an identity for themselves that is more definitively future-looking, more modern and less "traditional"? This is part of the politics of social memory today, touched upon by Restall (2010) in his contribution on the production of history, which can range from a "will towards coherence" to the purposeful invention of mystique or exotic origins. It would be useful to develop as a point of contrast with the political uses of memory in the pre-Hispanic era and the different categories of the past that are invoked thereby.

Early in the history of the Maya civilization various durable media were innovated to anchor social memories, giving rise to a more profound sense of separation between past and present. In the Preclassic period it became common to incorporate the bodies (and souls) of the dead within residential architecture (Gillespie 2002; McAnany 1995, 1998), encapsulating their persons and modifying the memories they represented as they were transformed into ancestors. The cumulative rebuilding of these structures, often at the death of an important personage, introduced a separation between the living and the dead in a literally stratigraphic fashion, materially represented by the accumulation of bodies and building additions over time. As Barrett (1999) has shown for a similar case in Bronze and Iron Age Britain, an unintended consequence of this continued practice was that the past became visibly separated from the present, setting the stage for the emergence of a new "mode of historical consciousness" (following Hill 1988; Turner 1988). At the same time, the past was also materially accessible to the present by the manipulation of objects that indexed the past. That this was indeed part of the time-consciousness of Maya peoples is demonstrated by the frequency with which they dug into old tombs and caches, removing, reshuffling, or replacing their contents (see Schwake and Iannone 2010). Such ritual activities were a means of recasting the past in the present, recalling or innovating memories of places and persons.

Cacao drinking also became a prominent social ritual in the Preclassic period (Henderson and Joyce 2006; Powis et al. 2002). In her contribution to this special section, LeCount (2010) proposes that the annual cycle based on maize agriculture, together with the daily consumption of maize foods, created a social context characterized by a redundancy of habitual food practices that blurred the separation between past, present, and future in collective memory. However, she suggests that the consumption of cacao beverage, particularly as materially marked with personalized drinking vessels owned by the aristocracy in the Classic period, could have evoked a different temporality (and a different moral or value system) associated with linear histories that were the property of individual noble houses, reiterating social distance (see also LeCount 2001). Cacao, a shade- and water-loving tree, is symbolically associated with the primordium (pre-sun period) in Maya cosmogony, a temporal context separated from the present era dominated by solar cycles and maize harvests. Cacao is a link to origins as well as to the cumulative quality of history because in Mesoamerica it was ceremonially consumed at life crisis rituals (Henderson and Joyce 2006). The fact that the ritual and social contexts for cacao consumption changed dramatically between the Preclassic and Classic periods, as objectified by the suite of pottery vessels used to make and serve it (see LeCount 2010), may provide further clues to the acts of transfer of social memory through rituals and how these changed over time.

There is other, more definitive evidence that beginning in the Middle Preclassic period new social categories came into existence based in part on creating memories associated with identities of different kinds. This evidence consists of various media—platforms, megaliths (with or without carving), and eventually painted and sculpted hieroglyphs and murals—that signaled social memories in enduring material forms, akin to Richard Parmentier's (1987:11–12) "signs in history" that "become involved in social life as loci of historical intentionality *because* of their function as representational vehicles." The development of such media

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was a strategy for political power and became a means to attract followers who did not necessarily share, or share completely, in the same sense of memory. Structures were built atop great platforms that were much more durable than the ephemeral houses of farmers, referencing the strikingly visible, elevated, monumental, and enduring qualities that the burgeoning elites appropriated for themselves (Andres and Pyburn 2000; Joyce 2004). These structures raised on high mimicked great trees like the ceiba that signal duration and links to primordial origins and therefore indicate that memory and history, in terms of the linear representation of time as duration, were played out in the spatial orientation of verticality. Paramount lords saw themselves as trees (Freidel 1992), not simply in the sense of a spatial metaphor of sociocosmic order, but also in reference to the temporal duration signaled by such trees.

Linear time was a temporalizing strategy by which the aristocracy appropriated a separate past and a distinct historicity as part of their own legitimation, sometimes codified in hieroglyphic inscriptions, some of them preserved in durable media. Nevertheless, to make these assertions credible they had to invoke the past and at certain occasions render it simultaneous with the present. By the Late Preclassic period Maya elites were using the Long Count calendar—the "endless progress of time" in the succession of *tuns* (Thompson (1960:155)—along with the erection of stone stelae with portraits of individual rulers for performative rituals of commemoration that acknowledged the separation of past and present while temporarily overcoming it. With the calendar certain persons were able to metaphysically bridge past and present via the coordination or coincidence of designated points within measured time. The stone images of individual named personages solidified those memories against the prospects of decay. Stelae or lintels depicting notable ancestors served not merely as images but as social agents in their own right (Houston and Stuart 1998). Like dynastic Egyptian ancestral busts and stelae, as Lynn Meskell (2003:44–45) has shown, they "acted as a mnemonic to reactivate the presence of a known individual." Nevertheless, even the stelae and the monumental architecture of which they were usually a component were subject to modification and destruction, as several contributions in this special section explain.

TECHNOLOGY OF SOCIAL MEMORIES

Social memories are held by individuals, of course, and only a certain subset of them become part of a long-term collective memory that outlives the moments or the individuals who create or transmit those memories. The task for the investigator, as Connerton (1989) observed, is to analyze the acts of transfer of that information, so that it is shared (if imperfectly) within the group and across generations. Transgenerational memory underpins Halbwachs's (1980 [1950]) ideas of social memory (Ricoeur 2004: 394), and such acts of transfer are necessary to reproduce society with constituent identities and relationships relatively intact or on their way to becoming transformed. Significantly, the typical means by which egocentric memories become sociocentric is by the use of external media, including portable objects, structures, and landscape features. Individuals are born into a physical landscape and a world of objects by which they make sense of cultural and social order, even as their individual acts (which draw on that world for their value) continually reaffirm or transform that order (Bourdieu 1977; Morphy 1995).

In this issue LeCount (2010) looks beyond the potsherds of Xunantunich to consider the embodied memory of daily food production tasks shared across the social places within that center. She appropriately observes that it is less the pottery—as a stylistic marker of identity with inscribed pseudoglyphs—and more the actions of using the pottery in group contexts that reproduced social memories and contributed to local identities. Stockett (2010), Iannone (2010), and Schwake and Iannone (2010) consider the role of another medium—monumental architecture, including its hidden caches—in collective remembrance. Iannone suggests social memory was part of the cultural inventory carried by immigrants, who in founding new settlements emulated the places from which they originated (see also Child and Golden 2008; Van Dyke 2004 for a Chaco Canyon example). Transplanted elites thereby asserted legitimacy by reference to memories of the primate center they left behind. Eric Hirsch (1995) and Howard Morphy (1995) discussed similar sociocognitive processes whereby "background" knowledge (memories, histories, embodied systems of reference in the landscape) become "foregrounded" in the immediate practices of everyday life. Conceivably, in Iannone's case of border polities, the memories to be invoked were not simply those of the elites of centers but also those of other persons whom they wished to attract to their settlements as clients by creating a familiar setting.

Schwake and Iannone (2010) examine the placement of caches and burials at Zubin and Minanha, secondary centers in Belize. They consider the precise vertical positioning of ritual deposits in architectural levels separated by long time spans to indicate "an uncanny ability to remember," thus constituting material evidence of intergenerational collective memory. An interesting question that remains unanswered concerns the actions necessary for the remembering, and not just the memory itself. What types of commemorative practices—now perhaps archaeologically invisible—may have effected such acts of transfer, and how were they integrated into the reproduction of social relations and identities? Those practices are equally part of the technology of memory, and taking them into consideration makes such recollective abilities more comprehensible and less uncanny. For example, Mary Miller (1998) has discussed how social memory was communicated in association with elite structures that housed multiple monuments and interments, which she called "memory museums." Importantly, in these architectural configurations, as she observed, "the particularistic narrative of Maya history becomes the collective, publicly promulgated from a structure that could be both 'performed' and performed on" (Miller 1998:196). Miller's point was that the structures were a necessary facility for the *process* of materiality of memory—the practices of memory work—and not simply secondary objectifications of *a priori* mental memories. Through performance, relatively private or exclusive memories, which may have been ambiguous or conflictual, were concretized and appropriated by much larger groups, and their durations or lifespans were extended through continual active reproduction.

In this issue Stockett (2010) also focuses on how the built landscape was organized and activated to accord with distinct hegemonic sociopolitical discourses. By this means elites, promulgators of "public memory" in her usage, could tap into the "social" memories and memory production of commoners. This would promote a naturalized, disciplined view of the world with its proper places and proper actions and persons assigned to them (following Certeau 1984), by which commoners became or remained attached as service clients to the aristocracy. These and other specialized mechanisms for memory transfer are especially critical when the foundational narratives serving as charters for political legitimacy are at stake (Richards 1960). "Who owns the story, the narrative, the

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history, the memories" has become an even more pressing intellectual question with the advent of postmodernism (Cattell and Climo 2002:33). However, the commoners may have expressed their own counter-tactics and counter-memories (in Michel Foucault's phrase) to avoid or contest incorporation when it did not serve their interests (see Certeau 1984).

Borgstede (2010) takes up a similar subject in considering certain landscape features as sites of memory that affirm a collective identity from the point of view of contemporary people one would associate more with commoners than elites. The sacred places in the Jakaltek landscape were archaeological sites whose physical characteristics as ruins evidence a distant past even as they were all located a spatial distance from the community center, thus on a spatiotemporal periphery. Although these rituals are part of the corpus of current Maya practices, the same activities would have occurred in the past and should be investigated for the same reasons. As Ruth Van Dyke and Susan Alcock (2003a:1) noted, "past peoples [also] observed and interpreted traces of more distant pasts to serve the needs and interests of their present lives." It is well known that among the pre-Hispanic Maya certain ruined sites were favored locales for ritual practices, including the caching of objects, and many were pilgrimage shrines (Canuto and Andrews 2008:268). Mythological narratives like those collected by Borgstede–even in the absence of "history" codified in hieroglyphs–would have linked pre-Hispanic pilgrims to the shrines as sites of memory where commemorative acts would have helped to define or affirm group identities.

These landscapes as "texts" (Duncan 1990) served to anchor and reproduce local narratives and link them to more widely shared mythological foundations. The sacred quality of the narratives (socially and materially referenced and thus reiterated in the landscape) is prerequisite in order for such knowledge to transcend the individual and to be transferred across generations (Meskell 2003; Morphy 1995; Santos-Granero 1998). Especially in nonliterate societies, the "landscape not only evokes memory but is written upon it, thus becoming memory" (Santos-Granero 1998: 139; see also Küchler 1993:85–86). Importantly, Borgstede has access to mythological narratives that help to identify how the Jakaltek maintain their identity as a distinct group via a collective connection to past ancestral beings localized in specific places. The rituals performed at these sites reiterate their sacredness and ensure the production of social memories in the present, even as the specific narratives will change depending on contingent circumstances.

MEMORY AND HISTORY

The discussion of community-held narratives raises the ambiguous distinction between memory and history which remains a fundamental unresolved issue in memory studies (Golden 2005:271; see also LeCount 2010). Much has been written on this subject by scholars concerned with the historical emergence of western notions of historiography and historicity (Halbwachs 1980 [1950]; Nora 1989; Olick and Robbins 1998; Ricoeur 2004), and it has become a popular topic within the discipline of history (Burke 1989; Hutton 1993; Kansteiner 2002; Kenny 1999; Marchal 2001). Some see social memory as indicative of cultural continuity, whereas history is different—an invented past, the product of a disruption between past and present (Child and Golden 2008:66). However, others treat history as a special case of social memory, a codified version (Restall 2010), and thus built upon the same foundations and with the same potential for continuity or misrepresentation (Burke 1989:98; Holtorf 1997:59; Rowlands 1993). Within this latter group, Peter Burke (1989:100) suggests that historians should concern themselves with "the social history of remembering." In this special section, history rather than memory *per se* is the subject of papers by Golden (2010) and Restall (2010).

Restall (2010) focuses on Colonial period evidence, including fray Diego de Landa's misnamed *Relación* and what has been made of it by Maya scholarship. He characterizes both the "use" and "abuse" of this document as resting upon misrepresentations or misunderstandings of its nature and origin and further comments on the presumed invisibility of Afro-Yucatecans in colonial history. We might use these examples to get a sense of how history is produced through imperfect and inchoate interpretive processes (see Trouillot 1995). Although the contentious relationship between history and collective memory may constitute a more recent debate, there is a venerable anthropological literature on history, mythology, and oral traditions within which the multivocal and contested qualities of historical discourses and their subsequent interpretations by outsiders have been discussed (e.g., Leach 1965 [1954]).

A recurring problem for archaeology is that history has typically been treated as a unitary phenomenon from a Western viewpoint (see Burke 1990; Fogelson 1989; Ricoeur 2004:397). It is true that Halbwachs (1980 [1950]:64) considered formal history as monolithic, but he also observed that "[i]n addition to written history, there is a living history that perpetuates and renews itself through time and permits the recovery of many old currents that have seemingly disappeared. If this were not so, what right would we have to speak of a 'collective memory'?" Connerton (1989: 13–14) insisted that "social memory" is not the same thing as "historical reconstruction," using the traces of the past to infer the events of history, and historical reconstruction is not dependent on social memory. In contrast with the production of formal written histories, "[t]he production of more or less *informally* told narrative histories turns out to be a basic activity for characterisation of human actions. It is a feature of all communal memory" (1989:16–17).

From these positions, it is difficult to assume that pre-Hispanic Maya "recorded history" is equivalent to social memory, that it replaced social memory, or that it is equivalent to Western notions of history. In an analogous study of Roman inscriptions in Britain, Barrett (1993:237) observed that inscription is not merely a representation of a memory: "The situation in which an inscription was raised, the framing devices which were placed around it and the associations with the place of reading all acted to situate the reading." He demonstrated that different contexts for the erecting or commemorating of monumental inscriptions, which were typically affixed to buildings or were components of architectural complexes, referenced varying perceptions of time and diverse audiences or readers (Barrett 1993:236). The task for archaeologists, according to Barrett (1993:246), is not to formulate a chronological history of persons, dates, and events that may be contradictory from one inscription to another, but to focus on "how different ways of reading and understanding became possible through certain historically specific material conditions."

Anthropologists have tended to treat literate and nonliterate societies as having qualitatively different mechanisms of cultural transmission (e.g., Richards 1960; Rowlands 1993:141). As already noted, investigations into different Maya "historicities" (following Ohnuki-Tierney 1990; Sahlins 1985) or "modes of historical consciousness" (Hill 1998; Turner 1988; Valeri 1990), somewhat

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akin to what has been called "emic Maya historicism" (Canuto and Andrews 2008:269), are still waiting to be accomplished. In this special section, Restall (2010) details some of the challenges to early colonial historiography to make sense of various indigenous sources of information, but he deals more with the "concatenation of sources" that made rendering a coherent European-style chronicle history more difficult for Spanish compilers. What remains to be considered is the clash of historicities that occurred within Maya communities and among Mayas, Africans, and Spaniards. Restall's observation of the intentional opacity of the colonial Yucatec Maya *Books of Chilam Balam* and his notion that elite Maya "mythistory" promulgated their supernatural origins in order to distance themselves from commoners is a start toward understanding this aspect of Maya historicity, one which is comparable to others in the world (e.g., Sahlins 1985) and which could be further investigated in terms of different representational genres (see Andres and Pyburn 2000).

Other topics to be modeled to understand the various acts of transfer of social memory include different kinds of cognitive and social mnemonic devices that anthropologists have elucidated for non-Western and nonliterate societies, along with the important role of "charter keepers" (Richards 1960; compare to the mention of the "Great Toastmasters" above). Among the social mechanisms for preserving historical charters (the basis of political claims) is the common notion of the "'owned version' … the system by which the group which uses the charter is responsible for preserving it, defending it, reciting it, or perhaps concealing it, while the rest of the community need not, and perhaps should not know anything about it" (Richards 1960:180). Rival versions can exist of the same narrative such that no "authentic tradition" exists as a true rendering of facts to which all can agree. Differences in details are expected based on who is telling the tale and if the narrator has the right to do so (Leach 1965 [1954]:265–266). These social aspects of memory transfer are critical to understanding the politics of history as a process and a product (Trouillot 1995). In the Maya case, it is not enough to say that only the small minority of aristocrats were literate. It was their restricted privilege to own that information and for a certain minority of individuals to have the right to recite or perform it, either in the reading of texts or the making of "toasts" (see LeCount 2010). Failure to respect those property rights would have breached a moral code. Such information would always be partial and contested by others with their own versions of the past.

Thus, in asking *whose* memory the inscriptions record, Golden's (2010) analysis in this issue reveals the potential role of the leaders of certain secondary centers—only some of which have monumental inscriptions—as privileged charter-keepers even as they exercised their own agency and promoted their own agendas. These subroyal title-holders successfully demanded the moral authority to promulgate, in a ritually charged setting, a version of history claimed by their noble houses—in a medium normally monopolized by the royal house—to audiences likely not privy to the performance of historical narratives and the production of collective memories at the primary centers. Golden's analysis of contested history as contested social memory, delineating thereby different "memory communities," may reveal the degree to which various versions were differently owned, although it would be difficult to ascertain how widely such knowledge was disseminated. His analysis stands in contrast to the usual synoptic approach to Maya history whose aim is to create a single chronology of events by pulling together information recorded on monuments from a variety of sites, erected for different purposes and different audiences.

Still, if collective memory is made to coincide with written history—the guarded property of a small subset of literate elites—or limited to "unusual feats of remembrance" as proposed by Schwake and Iannone (2010) in their contribution to this issue, something materialized primarily in elite architecture—then the mass of Maya commoners—the "people without history" in Eric Wolf's (1982) famous phrase—may by default become the people without social memory. Again, practice as "habit-memory" and performance as the means of promulgating elite versions of history into the social memory of witnesses, who would communicate their experiences to the nonwitnessing members within their social spheres, requires more attention (along the lines of Borgstede's study of Jakaltek community rituals), and it will involve commoners as well as the nobility, as LeCount (2010) demonstrates in her contribution (see also Navarro Farr et al. 2008). Similar ritual performances at the level of the household, patio group, or neighborhood would have had the same effects on a smaller scale (e.g., Hendon 2000).

MEMORY AS PRESERVATION OR AS MANIPULATION

The longevity and volatility of the Maya civilization presents opportunities for archaeologists to model research questions concerning the dynamic production of social memory and its contingent impacts on both future actions and the materiality of Maya settlements. This situation allows for attention to an issue raised more generally by Richard Bradley (2003:224): "Why was it so important to relate the present to the past at particular junctures, and was that past reconstructed, or was it entirely remade?" Bradley's follow-up question returns us to a salient point in the memory (or memory versus history) literature—whether memory is better considered an intact *preservation* of past events and experiences, or an *interpretation* of the past made for the present providing an illusion of continuity, what Bradley (2003:226; see also Meskell 2003) calls a kind of "false memory syndrome."

With their emphasis on diachronic studies, archaeologists have tended to emphasize the continuity of social memories, especially where there are durable monuments or architecture that served to extend the life span of memories of the past (e.g., Bradley 2003:222; Holtorf 1997:50; Joyce 2004; Rowlands 1993). These phenomena became "inscribed" with memories (following Connerton 1989; see Rowlands 1993), invested with specific messages (with or without actual texts) to link the past and present for the future. They were the subject of commemorative practices, meant to be talked about, manifesting their own biographies (Holtorf 1998; Rowlands 1993:144). In addition to the buildings and stelae, finely crafted costume ornaments with their own name tags were material mnemonics of an embodied history of the Maya noble houses that curated or exchanged them, as Rosemary Joyce (2000, 2003) observed. The pottery of Xunantunich described in LeCount's (2010) contribution to this issue, although generic and constantly produced to replace broken or worn pieces, would also have served the function of inscription, and it was marked with pseudoglyphs whose meanings could not simply be "read."

However, other scholars have recognized the need to counter assumptions of continuity by highlighting the potential for discontinuity, as the past becomes subjected to manipulation and misrepresentation to serve the needs of the present (e.g., Holtorf 1997:49, 1998; Navarro Farr et al. 2008). Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) coined the phrase "invention of tradition" because such phenomena

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may explicitly assert an untrue continuity between past and present. Ricoeur (2004:4) observed that the "what" and the "how" of memory—that is, the split into its cognitive and pragmatic aspects—"has a major influence on the claim of memory to be faithful to the past[,] … the pragmatics of memory, by virtue of which remembering is doing something, has a jamming effect on the entire problematic of veracity: possibilities of abuse are ineluctably grafted onto the resources of usage, of use, of memory apprehended along its pragmatic axis."

Writing history onto certain media that are then the objects of subsequent ritual activities is also doing something, with a similar "jamming effect" that may silence alternative histories (Trouillot 1995). Maya elite architecture and stelae, like other enduring monuments, were intended to encode a message about the past for the future, what Cornelius Holtorf (1997:47; see also Andres and Pyburn 2000; Bradley 2003:222) termed a "prospective memory." As noted above, in influencing "the character of connectedness between past and present," artifacts "assume a projection forward of social relationships" (Thomas 1993:32). However, enduring objects and buildings were subject to the interpretations of later generations, which could have constituted distinct "retrospective memories" (Holtorf 1997:50) because "cultural memory is not about giving testimony *of* past events, accurately and truthfully, but about making meaningful statements *about* the past in a given present" (Holtorf 1997:50, 1998:24).

Indeed, despite the development of durable media for the preservation of inscribed memories, across the Maya world many memories were abruptly transformed at archaeologically recognizable turning points (the Middle to Late Preclassic, Late Preclassic to Classic, Early to Late Classic, and Late Classic to Terminal and Postclassic period transitions). During these turbulent times especially, ruined sites were reoccupied, or population centers were all but abandoned, requiring the invocation of memories to create the illusion of continuity (or discontinuity) through ritual acts that actually involved resignification, and hence the transformation of memories (Child and Golden 2008; Navarro Farr et al. 2008). In the Late Classic period, earlier stelae were removed and resettled, sometimes made invisible in architectural caches. Some were destroyed, others mutilated in intentional and patterned ways. Certain Late Classic artifacts and monuments were purposely made to mimic Early Classic period styles. Lengthy dynastic histories were written—or rewritten—in hieroglyphic inscriptions in the Late Classic (e.g., at Copan and Palenque). At Copan, Late Classic stelae and other monuments with a ruler's name were placed far beyond the ceremonial center to create a new, more expansive landscape of memory (Fash and Stuart 1991: 157, 172).

These significant shifts were not made easily. Competition for status and wealth—and for the labor and tribute of commoners—was evidently brutal. Displacement and warfare, always part of Maya history but more disruptive in the Late Classic through the Postclassic periods, would have introduced uncertainty, a fear for the future, even trauma. Traumatic memories were also depicted, for example, in the Bonampak murals of warfare and its aftermath. Emotion would have played a significant role in memory production. The psychological toll of dislocation, anxiety, and violence exacted on human beings would have impacted the sites of memory and forgetting. This factor is more characteristically brought up in Aztec studies of memories after the Spanish conquest, such as Serge Gruzinski's (1998) notion of "mutilated memory," but it would have been important at different times in the Maya area during both the pre-Hispanic period as well as the long aftermath of Spanish invasion, conquest, and colonialism.

Disruption sometimes stimulated an increase in references to the past and to anchoring events that may have had to have been dredged up out of a shadowy antiquity (way back to the Early Classic period). Thus, the "memories" of the past were not created out of whole cloth; traditions were not simply "invented." Maya stelae were effaced or broken, but often cached or repositioned. Old sections of elite buildings were closed off or filled in, but often to erect new superstructures or adjacent edifices. Nevertheless, the shifting of old memories requires some degree of forgetting, a "social amnesia" (Burke 1989:106), either enforced or due to the failure of transmission.

In this issue Stockett (2010) proposes the first alternative for the displacement of the monumental structures at Las Canoas and also at the larger centers of La Sierra and El Coyote in Honduras. She suggests that the decommissioning of elite buildings and thus the spaces they appropriated in official or public memories marked a resurgence of social memories and ultimately a transformation of memories, involving a degree of collective forgetting (see also Navarro Farr et al. 2008). This situation is similar to Bradley's (2003:225) notion of "confrontation," "the creation of entirely new structures which were intended to modify, or even transform, existing interpretations of these places … [involving] the forcible substitution of one set of memories for another."

But these actions may also have been practices of "incorporation," the taking of objects out of circulation so that they are no longer visible as points of material reference linking past and present. In the case of incorporation, "[d]isposed or destroyed objects are remembered for themselves, not for what they stood for in terms of remembered pasts" (Rowlands 1993:146). They can represent a memory for the future, becoming in the act of their disposal, defacement, abandonment, or deposition, a "memory-image" as Susanne Küchler (1987, 1993) called it, that may bind together those who share in it. Julia Hendon (2000:49) similarly noted for the pre-Hispanic Maya that the hiding of burials and caches within domestic spaces was part of the creation of social memory by household members, affirming their collective identity. The purposely infilled elite structure at Minanha discussed by Iannone (2010), the decommissioned buildings in Honduras described by Stockett (2010), and the superpositioned caches in Belize analyzed by Schwake and Iannone (2010) were incorporated "memory-images" at a much larger socio-spatial scale, up to that of the community as a whole. Thus, there is a constant interplay between processes of confrontation and incorporation, between prospective and retrospective memories whose materializations make them amenable to archaeological investigation.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this commentary has been to enumerate some of the many ways the pre-Hispanic Maya civilization offers archaeologically accessible evidence for analyzing the various acts of the production and transfer of collective memory in its social and spatiotemporal contexts that made social reproduction and cultural transformation possible. Although Schwake and Iannone (2010) propose a specific method or framework for investigating collective memory cross-culturally, it is more likely that "no single set of criteria will be universally appropriate" (Lane 2005:31). Cultural- and historical-contextually specific models, taking into account different historicities and time perspectives, will need to be devised to discern

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how social memory is implicated in the production and transformation of society, and thus in the formation of archaeological evidence.

Drawing on the included articles, this review focused on memory work, the "how" or processual aspect of memory making and transmission (as opposed to the what and who of memory, following Ricoeur [2004]). Memory as a process entails direct archaeological evidence because the materiality and temporality of the landscape, portable objects, and other social subjects are necessarily drawn into memory work. The technology of social memory—the engagement of the material world in creating and reiterating social memories through repeated practices in specific localities—was highlighted as an important contribution of several of these papers. Another salient topic was the relationship between memory and history. This relationship is highly contested, yet its significance is unquestionable in Maya studies because of the nearly two-millennia-long tradition of hieroglyphic writing. Although they were always monopolized by a small aristocratic group, many of the monumental and portable inscriptions were used in ceremonial and performative contexts that would have generated social memories, including among nonliterate publics, beyond the content of the inscriptions themselves. This raises the issue of political power in the preservation, disruption, or manipulation of memories, which was treated in these papers especially in the contexts of the building, transforming, razing, abandoning, and sacralizing of elite/ceremonial architecture, including architecture in a ruined condition.

Other major concerns addressed in these articles include the dialectic between prospective and retrospective memories, practices of inscription and incorporation in memory work and memory transfer, the spatiality of memory, memory images, and the role of memory in identity formation, especially as associated with corporate groups and architecturally embellished places. These papers illustrate how memory work is an ongoing process, as much about forgetting as remembering and as much about the future as the past (see Battaglia 1990:8; Munn 1986:9). In this regard, the active role of the remembered and innovated past in some Maya communities today, as brought out in several contributions, is a significant facet of Maya memory work. It should further alert archaeologists to the realization of how the ancient Maya would have engaged memory in a kind of archaeological practice in the past and of the important role of collective memory in archaeological practice of the present.

In sum, the longevity, complexity, enduring materiality, variability, and volatility of the Maya civilization provides a multitude of opportunities for archaeologists to model research questions concerning the dynamic production of social memory and its material and historical media and consequences. The contributions in this special section reveal the potential for engaging concepts and methods developed by social theorists, anthropologists, and archaeologists, so that Maya memory studies can contribute to cross-cultural understandings of this phenomenon, even as they enhance understandings of both ancient Maya societies and modern archaeological practices.

RESUMEN

El papel crítico de la memoria social o colectiva en procesos en curso de reproducción y transformación social está siendo cada vez más modelado en interpretaciones arqueológicas. La investigación como la memoria social afectó la materialidad y trayectorias históricas de la civilización maya tiene el gran potencial para avanzar metodologías arqueológicas así como ampliar el conocimiento de esta civilización. Este comentario examina cuestiones y problemas en estudios arqueológicos de memoria social y las perspectivas específicas para investigar la memoria social entre sociadades mayas prehispanos, utilizando los análisis proporcionados por las contribuciones en esta sección especial.

Los estudios de memoria social remontan su origen al trabajo pionero de Maurice Halbwachs, cuyas ideas en la memoria colectiva fueron actualizadas en un libro seminal escrito por Paul Connerton (1989). La contribución de Halbwachs era su énfasis en el grupo que es necesario para memorias sociales, a diferencia de memorias individuas. Siguiente de este avance, muchos investigadores estan de acuerdo en que el "trabajo de memoria," es decir los procesos de la fabricación de memoria, debería tomar la prioridad en la investigación. La memoria como un proceso implica pruebas arqueológicas directas porque la materialidad y la temporalidad del paisaje, objetos portátiles, y otros sujetos sociales son necesariamente comprometidos en el trabajo de memoria.

Los arqueólogos mayenses disfrutan de ventajas en el estudio del trabajo de memoria, incluyen las inscripciones jeroglíficas, calendarios que demuestran una preocupación por el cuidado de tiempo, arquitectura de albañilería simbólicamente embellecido y soportando (o restaurado) que proporcionó localidades para grupos para empotrar sus memorias sociales, y objetos sutilmente trabajados, a menudo con imágenes figurativas, muchos de ellos curados e imbuidos de sus propias biografías. Estos fenómenos, junto con artefactos mundanos, constituyeron "una tecnología de la memoria" pistas que proveen a los "actos de la transferencia" (recordar y olvidar) necesario de reproducir o transformar la sociedad, como detallado en contribuciones por LeCount, Stockett, Iannone, y Schwake e Iannone. Esta información es complementada y realzada por datos en prácticas mayas registradas en el período colonial así como aquellos observados hoy, como revelado en el artículo de Borgstede. Un sujeto no cubierto en esta sección especial pero digno de la consideración es el trabajo de memoria implicado en la transformación del ambiente natural.

La memoria se superpone inevitablemente con la historia, el sujeto de contribuciones por Golden y Restall. Los mayas prehispanos codificaron el conocimiento como "la historia" escrita en inscripciones jeroglíficas. Sin embargo, uno no puede asumir que la historia maya es el equivalente con la memoria social o que esto sustituyó la memoria social. Además, a pesar del desarrollo de medios duraderos para conservar memorias inscritas, a través del mundo maya las memorias e identidades fueron repentinamente transformados en períodos diferentes. Estas interrupciones requirieron que la evocación de nuevas memorias creara la ilusión de continuidad (o discontinuidad) por actos rituales que realmente implicaron el nuevo significado, y de ahí la transformación de memorias sociales.

En suma, la longevidad, complejidad, y volatilidad de la civilización maya presenta numerosas oportunidades de arqueólogos para modelar preguntas de investigación acerca de la producción dinámica de la memoria social y sus consecuencias materiales e históricas. Las contribuciones en esta sección especial revelan el potencial para conceptos y métodos simpáticos desarrollados por teóricos sociales, antropólogos, y arqueólogos en otras partes del mundo, de modo que los estudios de memoria maya puedan contribuir a amplia comprensión de estos fenómenos.

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