

MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Archaeoastronomy Module – AHAN7010
Week Description

Week 5: Case Studies – Americas

Purpose of the week

The last four weeks focus on worldwide case studies. Each week your readings will focus on different regions and time-periods, as well as exemplify different “flavours” of archaeoastronomy. This week the focus is on the Americas, which provide rich ethnographic and, in some cases historical, information to support archaeoastronomical claims.

Tasks this week

- Discuss your ideas for the research project in the forum

Class Description

The case studies continue, this week moving into the Americas and covering a vast time-span: from the Inca and Maya civilizations to the ethno- and archaeoastronomies of pre-industrial societies of the past and the ethnographic present. The Americas are rich in ethnographic material, including ethnoastronomy, which can, and indeed should be, brought into any interpretation of archaeoastronomical findings.

Included as a Recommended Resource is UNESCO’s Astronomy and World Heritage website, where you can find information on key heritage sites with known archaeoastronomical features.

Required Reading

This week you’ve got specially designed notes on Inca archaeoastronomy, as well as the American Southwest, which is a good place to start. These are then expanded by Malville’s excellent introductory book, as well as Sprajc and Malville’s more recent articles in the *Journal of Cosmology*. The optional readings expand on American archaeoastronomy and also include ethnoastronomical pieces.

Archaeoastronomy of the Incas Notes [DOC ON MOODLE]

Prehistoric Astronomy in the American Southwest Notes [DOC ON MOODLE]

Malville, J. McKim, *Guide to Prehistoric Astronomy in the Southwest*, Boulder: Johnson Books, 2008.

Sprajc, Ivan, "Astronomy in Ancient Mesoamerica: An Overview," *Journal of Cosmology* 9, 2010, pp. 2041-51. Available online:
<http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy101.html>

Malville, J. McKim, "Cosmology in the Inca Empire: Huaca Sanctuaries, State-Supported Pilgrimage, and Astronomy," *Journal of Cosmology* 9, 2010, pp. 2106-20. Available online: <http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy116.html>

Optional Reading

Campion, Nicholas, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World Religions*, New York: New York University Press, 2012, Chapters 5, 6.

Fabian, Stephen M., *Space-Time of the Bororo of Brazil*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992.

Hugh-Jones, Stephen, *The Palm and the Pleiades: Initiation and Cosmology in Northwest Amazonia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

MacDonald, John, *The Arctic Sky: Inuit Astronomy, Star Lore and Legend*, Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1998.

Aveni, Anthony (ed), *Foundations of New World Cultural Astronomy*, Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2008, Part II, Part IV and Chapters 27, 28, 30.

Gullberg, Steven, "Inca Solar Orientations in Southeastern Peru," *Journal of Cosmology* 9, 2010, pp. 2078-91. Available online:
<http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy104.html>

Recommended resources

UNESCO Astronomy and World Heritage Portal
<http://www2.astronomicalheritage.net/>

Thought for the Week

What are the limitations of ethnographic analogy?