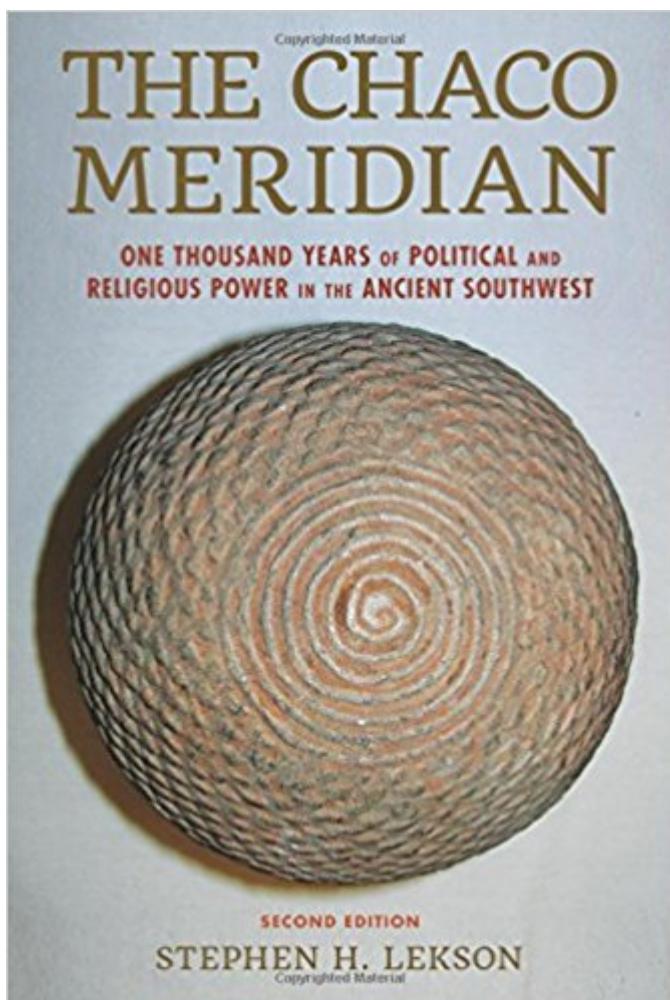


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# The Chaco Meridian: One Thousand Years Of Political And Religious Power In The Ancient Southwest



## Synopsis

Revisiting his ground-breaking synthesis of Southwestern prehistory, Lekson expands our understanding of the political and economic integration of the American Southwest to encapsulate over 1000 years and 1000 km, from Ad 500 to the arrival of the conquistadors, and from Chaco Canyon to Aztec Ruins to Paquimé and even Culiacán in Sinaloa, Mexico.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This second edition is a reissue of Lekson's controversial book first published in 1999, now significantly updated with recent bibliography and discussion. He credits an early period in prehistoric Pueblo development, focusing on the architecturally elaborate Chaco Canyon, to the appearance and history of rulers (which he would call kings) shifting north, then south to northern Mexico. His ambitious and hardly widely accepted ideas have led to a rich dialogue between archaeologists involved with Chaco archaeology that continues to shape the understanding of Pueblo culture. In a discipline that claims to be scientific not historical, the author stresses that Chaco deserves a historical narrative. Given the amount of work that has been done, archaeologists must say more now than "it is a mystery." Writing in an engagingly personal style, Lekson admits his role as a gadfly, deprecatingly indicates where he has been wrong, and advocates passionately for his historical interpretation. This makes the volume one for many readers, not simply those in academic programs of archaeology and anthropology, where it is essential. It also belongs in larger libraries, making it available to the general public. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels/libraries. (CHOICE) When The Chaco Meridian first appeared 15

years ago, it set off a spirited debate that triggered new thinking about Southwestern archaeology. . . . This new edition brings fresh insights to the debate over the shape and scope of Chaco Canyon and its successor centers. Challenging conventional wisdom, Lekson forces the archaeological community to seek new ways of looking at the American Southwest. (American Archaeology) In this second edition of *The Chaco Meridian*, Lekson doubles down on his theory by pushing the Chaco Meridian hundreds of miles north and south as well as hundreds of years back in time. . . . Lekson lays out his argument as one would a legal case. His lively prose, goofy puns and accessible language present the Chaco Meridian persuasively. . . . Fully two-thirds of this update to the 1999 classic is new material. Unlike many archaeologists working today, Lekson tackles big questions and isn't afraid to advance a controversial theory. Extensive chapter endnotes expand and riff on the ideas presented. It's refreshingly free of jargon and a delightful read. (The Surveyor: A Quarterly Publication of the Colorado Archaeological Society) The Chaco Meridian is a serious scholarly work, but Lekson's clear, jargon-free prose laced with silly puns makes it accessible to casual readers. . . . Archaeologists will argue about *The Chaco Meridian* and students will study it for years to come. For those who want to break out of the visitor's center and expand their understanding of the ancient Southwest, *The Chaco Meridian* will be a valuable reference and a delightful read. (Center for Colorado Studies) Not only does this edition contain considerable new content but the meridian itself is also expanded both geographically and temporally. [The book is an example of] his humorous and modest, if not self-deprecating, style of writing that makes what could be a very dry treatise a thoroughly enjoyable read. I dove into the deep end and came back up short of breath. Not so much because of the complexity of his arguments, for his clear writing style makes his positions easy to understand, but because of the sheer volume of data he provides to support them. Drawing upon a large body of published reports, with extensive endnotes accompanying each chapter, he presents his case in a lawyer-like fashion with a preponderance of evidence leading me to agree with him that there must be something more to this meridian thing than mere chance. So even if you have read the first edition, you will come away from reading this second one with a more complete and expanded argument in support of this concept and its underlying meaning. And if you have not read the first edition, fasten your seat belt because you are in for a wild ride. (Southwestern Lore) Steve Lekson rocked the archaeological world in 1999 with a general theory for Chaco Canyon that answered most of the problems that have puzzled its explorers for a century. In this new edition, he presents copious new evidence and insights to bolster that theory. This book is certain to set the parameters of the debate on Chaco Canyon for years to come. (Mark Michel, President of The Archaeological

Conservancy) This is vintage Steve Lekson: delightfully entertaining while presenting deeply insightful but highly controversial ideas about the ancient past. If you are fascinated with the iconic masonry ruins of Chaco Canyon and the prehistory of the American Southwest, you will love this book. (David R. Abbott, Arizona State University)

Stephen H. Lekson is professor of anthropology and Curator of Archaeology, Museum of Natural History, at the University of Colorado, Boulder. He has authored or edited over 10 books on southwestern archaeology including the award-winning Ancient Lands, Ancestral Places (Borderlands Book of the Year 1993), Canyon Spirits (Colorado Book Award Finalist, 2005), and A History of the Ancient Southwest (New Mexico Book Award, Science, 2010; Southwest Books of the Year, Notable Book, 2010). Lekson is also past president of the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center.

Very interesting concepts. Enjoyable reading.

Finally, American Archeology begins to clear its head from the delusional mists of darwinistic, collectivist utopianism, and present some useful analysis and correlation of ancient American cultures. I consider this book to be a step in the return to sanity; a maturation of ideas to explain "those who came before".

Lekson does a great job of examining SW pre history and making sense of it. Highly recommended for SW Anasazi fans. Always trying to solve the mysteries. Good read.

Book in wonderful condition!

Comprehensive, quirky and endlessly fascinating theory well grounded on the polity and economy of the inhabitants of Chaco Canyon and environs.

Think you know things? Think again. Read this and you will go back and re-visit those ancient sites. At dawn. And midnight. And you will stare at the North Star and the distant horizon...

Lekson is one of the great stylists of contemporary history

this is an awesome book. it's as spirited as it is scholarly. i enthusiastically recommend it to anyone as obsessed by chaco as i am.

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