



A Universal Theory of Pottery Production: Irving Rouse, Attributes, Modes, and Ethnography (Caribbean Archaeology and Ethnohistory)

Richard A. Krause

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In *A Universal Theory of Pottery Production*, award-winning archaeologist Richard A. Krause presents an ethnographic account of pottery production based on archaeological evidence.

Krause posits that the careful study of an archaeological site's ceramics can be used to formulate a step-and-stage theory of pottery production for the area. Krause's work suggests that by comparing the results of inquiries conducted at different sites and for different times, archaeologists may be able to create a general ethnographic theory of pottery production.

Krause demonstrates this process through a comprehensive analysis of potsherds from the highly stratified Puerto Rican site of Paso del Indio. He first provides a comprehensive explanation of the archaeological concepts of attribute, mode, feature, association, site, analysis, and classification. Using these seven concepts, he categorizes the production and decorative techniques in the Paso del Indio site. Krause then applies the concept of "focal form vessels" to the site's largest fragments to test his step-and-stage theory of production against the evidence they provide. Finally, he assigns the ceramics at Paso del Indio to previously discussed potting traditions.

Unlike other books on the subject that use statistical methods to frame basic archaeological concepts, Krause approaches these topics from the perspective of epistemology and the explicatory practices of empirical science. In *A Universal Theory of Pottery Production* Krause offers much of interest to North American, Caribbean, and South American archaeologists interested in the manufacture, decoration, and classification of prehistoric pottery, as well as for archaeologists interested in archaeological theory.

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