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Hopi Tales of Destruction preserves seven powerful tales about ancient Hopi villages that now lie in ruins. These narratives shed considerable light on the Hopis' past, giving insight into cultural values and social motivations beyond the ability of archaeology.

The tales concern such villages as Sikyatki, Hisatsongoopavi, and Awat'ovi, which were destroyed by war, fire, earthquake, or internal strife. Though abandoned for centuries, they live in memory, reminders of ancient tragedies and enmities that changed the Hopis forever. Related by storytellers from Second and Third Mesa, these tales vividly describe village destruction and show how much human evils such as witchcraft, hubris, corruption, and betrayal of fundamental values can precipitate social disintegration and chaos.

Ekkehart Malotki, who collected the original tales in the Hopi vernacular, has carefully edited and translated the tales in this special English-language edition. His introduction, notes, and a glossary reveal what historical and archaeological research has pieced together about the villages and correlates the stories with other legends.