Sixth Annual
South-Central Conference on Mesoamerica

University of Texas at San Antonio

November 6-8, 2015
Sixth Annual
South-Central Conference on Mesoamerica

Hosted by the University of Texas at San Antonio

Organizers
Jason Yaeger, M. Kathryn Brown, Bernadette Cap
UTSA Department of Anthropology

Sponsored by
UTSA Department of Anthropology
UTSA College of Liberal and Fine Arts
UTSA Office of the Vice President of Research
UTSA Belize Archaeology Research Program
Beta Analytic
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Keynote Address

Paradigm Shifts and Technology in Maya Archaeology: A Thirty Year Perspective from Caracol, Belize

Dr. Arlen Chase

University of Central Florida

Dr. Arlen F. Chase is a Pegasus Professor of Anthropology and Associate Dean in the College of Sciences at the University of Central Florida. He specializes in the archaeology of the ancient Maya. Dr. Chase has co-directed research at the site of Caracol, Belize, for the past 31 years. Prior to that, he conducted fieldwork at Tayasal, Guatemala, and Santa Rita Corozal, Belize. He has authored over 150 publications on an array of topics including Maya settlement patterns and urbanism, social and political organization, the Maya Collapse and Postclassic regeneration of Maya society, LiDAR survey, and epigraphy and iconography.

Friday, November 6, 2015
5:30 – 6:30 pm
El Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel
Romeo and Juliet Ballroom, 3rd Floor

Reception to follow in the Monte Cristo Rooms, 1st Floor
Conference Schedule

Abstracts for all presentations are available online at www.southcentralmeso.org

Friday, November 6, 2015
Presentations will be held in the Romeo and Juliet Room, 3rd floor

12:00 Registration begins

12:30 Welcome and Introductory Comments
M. Kathryn Brown (University of Texas at San Antonio) and Jason Yaeger (University of Texas at San Antonio)

12:45 Colha, Belize in Retrospect
Harry Shafer (Witte Museum of Natural History) and Thomas Hester (University of Texas at Austin)

1:15 Investigations of a Late Preclassic Round Structure at the Maya Hinterland Community of San Lorenzo, Belize
Victoria A. Ingalls (University of Texas at San Antonio)

1:30 Preliminary Investigations of a Monumental Platform at Early Xunantunich
Zoe J. Rawski (University of Texas at San Antonio)

1:45 Structural Comparison of La Venta Altar IV and Oxtotitlan Mural 1
Brendan Stanley (Texas State University) and Tara D. Smith (Texas State University)

2:00 Aztec Multi-site Ritual Continuity: The Relationship of Twin-Temple Pyramids in Central Mexico
Aaron Ott (University of Houston)

2:15 Alma Reed, Edward Thompson and the Well of Sacrifice at Chichén Itzá
Elaine Schele (Austin Community College)

2:30 Lithic Resource Utilization and Resource Availability: Comparisons from Callar Creek Quarry, Belize and Chalcatzingo, Mexico
Rachel A. Horowitz (Tulane University), Grant S. McCall (Tulane University), Dan M. Healan (Tulane University), and David Grove (University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign and the University of Florida)

2:45 Break
3:15 Development of Classic Maya Marketplace Exchange Networks in the Mopan River Valley, Belize  
*Bernadette Cap (University of Texas at San Antonio)*

3:30 A Surplus of Sherds: Ceramic Deposits of Xunantunich, Group D  
*Whitney C. Lytle (University of Texas at San Antonio)*

3:45 Chock Full O’Sherds: A Comparison of Two Ritual Deposits from La Corona  
*Caroline A. Parris (Tulane University)*

4:00 Royal Roads? Testing the Possible Ritual Function of Sacbeob at Chan Chich, Belize  
*Ashley Booher (Texas Tech University) and Brett A. Houk (Texas Tech University)*

4:15 The Stela Shrine at El Achiotal, Guatemala: Text and Context of an Early Classic Monument  
*Luke Auld-Thomas (Tulane University), Mauro Montejo (Independent Scholar), David Stuart (University of Texas at Austin), Marcello Canuto (Tulane University), and Tomas Barrientos (Universidad del Valle de Guatemala)*

4:30 Manufacture and Distribution of Effigy Incensarios in North-Central Yucatán and Northern Belize  
*Leslie G. Cecil (Stephen F. Austin State University)*

4:45 Navigating the Cultural Landscape of 19th-Century Belize: An Archaeological Examination of Kaxil Uinic Village  
*Brooke Bonorden (Texas Tech University) and Brett A. Houk (Texas Tech University)*

5:00 Filling in the Gaps: The Use of Archival Sources and Ethnographic Interviews to Better Understand the Archaeology of the 19th Century Rum Industry in Mexico  
*Jennifer Mathews (Trinity University)*

5:30 Keynote Address  
Paradigm Shifts and Technology in Maya Archaeology: A Thirty Year Perspective from Caracol, Belize  
*Dr. Arlen Chase (University of Central Florida)*

6:30 Reception  
*Held in the Monte Cristo Rooms, 1st floor*
Saturday, November 7, 2015

Presentations will be held in the Trinidad Room, 1st floor

8:00  Registration begins

8:30  Past, Present, and Future: The Development and Maintenance of a Cultural Landscape in a Maya Community
      Michael P. Saunders (Tulane University)

8:45  Counter-mapping the Caminos Reales of El Tajín, Mexico
      Sam Holley-Kline (Stanford University)

9:00  Urban Development in Formative Central Mexico: Preliminary Results of the Tlalancaleca Archaeological Project, Puebla
      Tatsuya Murakami (Tulane University), Shigeru Kabata (Universidad de las Américas-Puebla), Julieta M. López J. (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), José Juan Chávez V. (Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia), Hironori Furuhara (Saitama University), Willem VanEssendelft (Tulane University), Natalia Mauricio (Tulane University), and Mark Dennison (Tulane University)

9:15  A Multi-Method Approach for Reconstructing Occupational History and Activity Areas: Preliminary Results from the Formative Site of Tlalancaleca, Central Mexico
      Mark Dennison (Tulane University), Tatsuya Murakami (Tulane University), Shigeru Kabata (Universidad de las Américas-Puebla), Natalia Mauricio (Tulane University), Julieta M. López J. (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), José Juan Chávez V. (Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia), and Willem VanEssendelft (Tulane University)

9:30  Cancelled Presentation

9:45  Maya Bonesetters, Aires, and the Effect of Natural Cycles on the Body
      Servando Z. Hinojosa (University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley)

10:00 Break

10:30 Bioarchaeological Analyses of an Ancestral Context from Cahal Pech, San Ignacio, Belize
      Anna C. Novotny (Texas Tech University), Jaime Awe (Northern Arizona University), Catarina Santasillia (University of California at Riverside), and Kelly J. Knudson (Arizona State University)
10:45  From Pots and Burials: Social Memory, Nostalgia, and “Conscious Archaism” at the Medicinal Trail Site, Northwestern Belize
David M. Hyde (Western State Colorado University) and Fred Valdez, Jr. (The University of Texas at Austin)

11:00  Beyond the Model: Using Structure from Motion to Identify Taphonomic Processes in Burial CC-B11 at Chan Chich, Belize
Samantha Mitchell (Texas Tech University), Brett A. Houk (Texas Tech University), and Kelsey Herndon (Independent Scholar)

11:15  Using Three-Dimensional Surface Scans on an Ancient Maya Skeletal Sample: A Case Study for Research, Teaching, and Display Use
Victoria Harrington (Louisiana State University) and Heather McKillop (Louisiana State University)

11:30  If Shells Were Bones: Shifting Perceptions in Maya Archaeology
Margaret Greco (San Antonio College)

11:45  The Forgotten Bones of Tikal
D. M. Urquidi (Independent Scholar)

12:00  Lunch

1:15  The Road to Small Ruins: El Zapote in the Tikal Political Landscape of the Early Classic
Astrid Runggaldier (University of Texas at Austin), David Stuart (University of Texas at Austin), and Edwin Román (University of Texas at Austin)

1:30  Cancelled Presentation

1:45  Political Change Expressed in Public Architecture: An Activity Area Study of the Terminal Classic Maya Civic Complex at Actuncan, Belize
David W. Mixter (Washington University in St. Louis)

2:00  Warfare and Classic Maya Political Dynamics in the Mopan Valley, Belize
Jason Yaeger (University of Texas at San Antonio), M. Kathryn Brown (University of Texas at San Antonio), and Bernadette Cap (University of Texas at San Antonio)

2:15  Situating Lower Dover in the Belize Valley
Rafael A. Guerra (University of New Mexico)
2:30 Another Brick in the Wall: Wall Architecture in Western Belize and its Implications for Maya Defensive Barricades, Spatial Organization and Site Abandonment Processes  
Jaime J. Awe (Northern Arizona University) and Julie A. Hoggarth (Baylor University)

2:45 Dating the ‘Classic Maya Collapse’ in the Belize Valley  
Julie A. Hoggarth (Baylor University), Jaime J. Awe (Northern Arizona University), Brendan J. Culleton (The Pennsylvania State University), and Douglas J. Kennett (The Pennsylvania State University)

3:00 Break

3:15 Metaphors to Cure By: Tojolab'al Maya Midwifery and Cognitive Models of Health  
Bryan Bayles (Witte Museum of Natural History)

3:30 A Monumental Woman: Lady K'abel  
S. Janelle Montgomery (Texas Christian University)

3:45 Prey: The Role of Maya Women as Seen Through the Hunt  
Candace Carlisle Vilas (Texas Christian University)

4:00 Networks: Genesis of, and Paramount Factor in, Mayan Women's Entrepreneurship  
Mirna Ordoñez Sandoval (University of Arkansas)

4:30 Happy Hour Reception  
Held in the Mangos Terrace
Sunday, November 8, 2015
Presentations will be held in the Trinidad Room, 1st floor

9:00    My Tulancingo, My UTSA: How a Stolen Horse Linked Me to the Nahua Past, My Late Academic Mentor, and My New Home in San Antonio
        Catherine Komisaruk (University of Texas at San Antonio)

9:15    Poetic Composition of Iconography: Using a Textual Discourse Approach to Analyze Spatial Arrangement of Iconography within the Palenque Cross Group
        Jamie L. Lynn (Texas Tech University)

9:30    Palma with a Waterbird
        Cierra Frances (Linander) (University of Houston)

9:45    Embodying the Kingly Persona: Ephemerality and Memory in Temple 18 of Copan
        Alexandra Madsen (University of Texas at Austin)

10:00   Deposition at the Gulf Coast Formative site of El Manatí: Process, Performance, and the Making of Identity
        Jordann Davis (Texas Tech University)

10:15   The Political Ecology of Postclassic Maya Plant Use at Lake Mensabak, Chiapas, México
        Sebastian Salgado-Flores (University of Texas at San Antonio)

10:30   Break

10:45   Assessment of Sea-level Rise at Eleanor Betty: An Underwater Ancient Maya Salt Work
        Valerie Feathers (Louisiana State University), Heather McKillop (Louisiana State University), E. Cory Sills (University of Texas at Tyler), and Rachel Watson (Louisiana Division of Archaeology)

11:00   Investigating Late Classic Maya Plant Processing at Xunantunich, Belize Using Starch Grain Analysis
        Jessica Devio (University of Texas at San Antonio)

11:15   Cancelled Presentation

11:30   Geological Histories and Cultural Histories: An Exploration of Ceramic Household Provisioning in the Ancient Maya Lowlands
        Sarah Nicole Boudreaux (University of Texas at San Antonio)
11:45  Household Investigations at Floodplain North Settlement Cluster, Belize
      Tiffany M. Lindley (University of Texas at San Antonio)

12:00  Remembering Richard Adams
      Fred Valdez (University of Texas at Austin)
Abstracts
(In alphabetical order by first author’s last name)

Auld-Thomas, Luke (Tulane University)

The Stela Shrine at El Achiotal, Guatemala: Text and Context of an Early Classic Monument

In June 2015, excavations at El Achiotal, in Guatemala's northwest Peten, uncovered an Early Classic stela that had been broken in antiquity only to be re-dedicated shortly after, housed in a purpose-built shrine that was renovated and revisited for another two centuries. This paper will discuss the discovery of the monument and the shrine built to house it, and consider the implications of the stela's inscription for understanding the geopolitics of 5th Century Peten.

Awe, Jaime J. (Northern Arizona University) and Julie A. Hoggarth (Baylor University)

Another Brick in the Wall: Wall Architecture in Western Belize and its Implications for Maya Defensive Barricades, Spatial Organization and Site Abandonment Processes

Low walls that encircle, or partly enclose, sections of sites have been reported at a number of centers across the southern Maya lowlands. Almost always, researchers have unanimously interpreted this architecture as evidence for defensive barricades, and for the increase of internecine warfare during the Late Classic period. The discovery and recent investigations of similar walls at several sites in western Belize makes us question this generalized interpretation, and leads us to explore alternative explanations for wall architecture in this sub-region of the Maya lowlands.

Bayles, Bryan (Witte Museum of Natural History)

Metaphors to Cure By: Tojolab'al Maya Midwifery and Cognitive Models of Health

The southern Mexican state of Chiapas suffers consistently high levels of regional malnutrition, maternal and infant mortality and chronic infectious diseases exceeding national averages. Efforts to improve public health in this region must engage indigenous midwives and healers in a meaningful way, which presupposes a respectful understanding of the area's rich ethnomedical traditions. This presentation synthesizes years of in-depth medical anthropological fieldwork among Tojolabal Mayan midwives and healers. Qualitative and quantitative ethnographic methodologies reveal key cultural themes underlying cognitive models of reproductive health. Several prominent linguistic metaphors relating to natural cycles of agricultural growth, death and regeneration form a bridge that links human fertility and wellness to a living, dynamic cosmology with suggestive continuities to the Classic Maya.

Bonorden, Brooke (Texas Tech University) and Brett A. Houk (Texas Tech University)

Navigating the Cultural Landscape of 19th-Century Belize: An Archaeological Examination of Kaxil Uinic Village

Following the outbreak of the Caste War in the Yucatan (1847-1901), a group of San Pedro Maya refugees settled Kaxil Uinic village (ca. 1880-1931) in northwestern Belize (formerly British Honduras). Synthesizing archival and archaeological data on Kaxil Uinic, we examine the
nature of the varied social, political, and economic interactions that occurred between the San Pedro Maya and their British counterparts within the context of the dynamic sociocultural landscape of late 19th-century Belize.

**Booher, Ashley (Texas Tech University) and Brett A. Houk (Texas Tech University)**

*Royal Roads? Testing the Possible Ritual Function of Sacbeob at Chan Chich, Belize*

Causeways were an integral part of many Maya cities and represented significant labor investments. More than simple transportation routes, causeways at Maya sites had diverse functions, including economic, social, and ritual uses. Serving as a backdrop for royal rituals and processions may have been the primary function of some sacbeob and their associated architectural groups. The 2014 and 2015 excavations reported in this paper aimed to understand the age, form, and function of the Eastern and Western Causeways at the Maya site of Chan Chich and to identify evidence of ritual activities associated with processions along the causeways and their terminus structures.

**Boudreaux, Sarah Nicole (University of Texas at San Antonio)**

*Geological Histories and Cultural Histories: An Exploration of Ceramic Household Provisioning in the Ancient Maya Lowlands*

Understanding household ceramic provisioning in the Maya Lowlands is challenging because the nature of depositional histories of geologic features in the Yucatán peninsula. Provisioning inquiries usually address large geographical areas that are more likely to have identifying mineralogical markers that facilitate the identification of regional specific ceramic fabric. Subsequently, identifying provisioning patterns on a local level is almost impossible because of the geochemical makeup of the clays in local ceramic production. This paper discusses alternative ways to understanding the nature of local and household production, distribution, and consumption (i.e. provisioning) despite these known difficulties.

**Carlisle Vilas, Candace (Texas Christian University)**

*Prey: The Role of Maya Women as Seen Through the Hunt*

Issues pertaining to fertility played a strong role in Classic Maya society. Naturally occurring food stresses influenced the importance of animals and the activity of hunting. Through an examination of Maya ceramic vessels, I construct an iconography related to the hunt, specifically looking at those that involve images of a lecherous old man and nubile woman and connecting these with ethnographic evidence from modern and colonial Maya communal performances that relate hunting with issues related to fertility. By linking these elements, I establish the role of women as a man’s property and responsible for his success.

**Cap, Bernadette (University of Texas at San Antonio)**

*Development of Classic Maya Marketplace Exchange Networks in the Mopan River Valley, Belize*

There is growing evidence for marketplace exchange practices among the Classic Maya, which is a provisioning method for households and an integration method for society. This recognition has significance for understanding the complexity of the society as a whole as well as its constituent parts, such as the economic links across space and time or the social and political
organization involved in maintaining marketplace exchange. This paper examines the
development of marketplace exchange to address the ways in which this practice influenced the
structure of complexity in Classic Maya society. The site of Buenavista del Cayo, Belize is used
as a case example.

**Cecil, Leslie G. (Stephen F. Austin State University)**

*Manufacture and Distribution of Effigy Incensarios in North-Central Yucatán and Northern Belize*

Effigy incensarios (for example, Chen Mul and Kol Modeled) have been excavated from many
archaeological sites in north-central Yucatán, México and northern Belize. Their presence at
Postclassic sites indicates ritual activities (e.g., New Year rituals). Many of the effigy figures
attached to incensario vases represent iconography from Maya murals and codices and are
stylistically similar. Given the similarities and regional distribution, did the Postclassic Maya
exchange Chen Mul incensarios or were the incensarios a local manifestation of Postclassic
Maya rituals? Petrographic and chemical analyses of Chen Mul incensarios from Mayapán,
Kiuic, Santa Rita, and Laguna de On address this question.

**Davis, Jordann (Texas Tech University)**

*Deposition at the Gulf Coast Formative site of El Manatí: Process, Performance, and the Making of Identity*

From roughly 1700 – 1200 BCE, the Early Formative site of El Manatí, located in southern
Veracruz, was place at which ancient peoples deposited a complex array of raw materials at
manufactured things in an ancient streambed. Scholars have interpreted El Manatí as a sacred
space, the practice of deposition as ceremonial, and the interred goods as offerings that pertained
to fertility and renewal. Yet as this paper contends, the meaningful nature of “ritual” activity may
also be extended to include the range of human labors necessary for the making of the deposits
that effectively instantiated both individual and social identity.

**Dennison, Mark (Tulane University), Tatsuya Murakami (Tulane University), Shigeru Kabata (Universidad de las Américas-Puebla), Natalia Mauricio (Tulane University), Julieta M. López J. (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), José Juan Chávez V. (Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia), and Willem VanEssendelft (Tulane University)**

*A Multi-Method Approach for Reconstructing Occupational History and Activity Areas: Preliminary Results from the Formative Site of Tlalancaleca, Central Mexico*

While surface collection can cover a large area in a short time period, surface materials are not
always representative of past human activities that took place in that area over a long time
period. Excavation provides detailed information about stratigraphy and the kinds of human
activities, but it is practically impossible to excavate a large area in a short time period. This
paper discusses the utility of auger testing and soil geochemistry to complement the weaknesses
of surface collection and excavation based on research conducted at one of the major
architectural complexes at the Formative site of Tlalancaleca, Puebla.
**Devio, Jessica (University of Texas at San Antonio)**

*Investigating Late Classic Maya Plant Processing at Xunantunich, Belize Using Starch Grain Analysis*

Thousands of worked chert bladelets have been found in both Group D and Group E at Xunantunich in Late to Terminal Classic contexts. Edge-wear analysis suggests that the tools were used to process starchy food or for wood carving activities. Starch grain analysis was used on both washed and unwashed bladelets to identify whether the tools were used in food preparation. This paper discusses the methods used for the bladelet analysis including starch grain analysis and experimental grating activities. Finally, I discuss the preliminary results from the washed sample.

**Feathers, Valerie (Louisiana State University), Heather McKillop (Louisiana State University), E. Cory Sills (University of Texas at Tyler), and Rachel Watson (Louisiana Division of Archaeology)**

*Assessment of Sea-level Rise at Eleanor Betty: An Underwater Ancient Maya Salt Work*

Sediment samples were recovered from 2013 underwater excavations at Eleanor Betty, an ancient Maya salt work on the coast of Belize, to assess whether the site was terrestrial or on platforms over the water. The samples were subjected to loss-on ignition (burning sediment to determine the amount of organic matter) and microscopically sorted to identify plant remains, specifically fine red mangrove roots, an indicator of sea-level rise. The site contained wooden architecture preserved by mangrove peat. The high percentage or organic matter with an abundance of fine red mangrove roots suggests the site was once dry land.

**Frances (Linander), Cierra (University of Houston)**

*Palma with a Waterbird*

This presentation examines the function, form, and iconography of the Classic Veracruz Palma with a Waterbird, found at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. The palma object type has consistently been linked with the ballgame, but these connections are highly speculative and rest largely on sixteenth century evidence. Palmas typically feature a highly stylized, high-relief carving of a sacrificial scene. The Houston palma, however, features low-relief carving that resembles scenes carved in regional ball courts. I will explore and contextualize Palma with a Waterbird within both the larger regional image tradition and the history of the palma form.

**Greco, Margaret (San Antonio College)**

*If Shells Were Bones: Shifting Perceptions in Maya Archaeology*

A slight shift of perception can lead to greatly divergent paths in the interpretation of artifacts. Maya archaeologists characterize shell artifacts as exotic, symbolic items that have ritual value, a perception that lends itself to concerns of status, prestige, and power of Maya elites. But, what if shells were perceived as bones and not shells? This paper explores the interpretive potentiality that arises when shells are perceived as conceptual vehicles that align the nature of materiality with native experience. This perceptual shift leads to potent insights into both the ancient Maya and the contemporary assumptions held by Maya archaeologists.
Guerra, Rafael A. (University of New Mexico)

Situating Lower Dover in the Belize Valley

Archaeological investigations at the previously undocumented ancient Maya site of Lower Dover, located in the Belize Valley, began in 2010 by the BVAR project. We present the results of five years of research at Lower Dover. Excavations focused on constructing a site chronology and understanding its role in the Belize Valley during the Classic Period (~AD 500-900). Direct dating of human remains indicates that the site was occupied initially as late as cal AD 650. The site experienced continuous and rapid construction activity extending into the Terminal Classic, with a short reoccupation during the Late Postclassic Period (~AD 1400-1550).

Harrington, Victoria (Louisiana State University) and Heather McKillop (Louisiana State University)

Using Three-Dimensional Surface Scans on an Ancient Maya Skeletal Sample: A Case Study for Research, Teaching, and Display Use

Three-dimensional surface scanning could be used to create durable research, archival, and teaching records of well-preserved Maya skeletal material. This idea was tested on a sample of postcranial material from Moho Cay, a Classic period trading port in Belize. Three-dimensional surface scanning was used to preserve the fragile remains digitally. A desktop 3D scanner recorded a high-resolution surface topography of the bones. These digital records can be used in research collections, for teaching tools, and to provide a new method to analyze skeletal morphology.

Hinojosa, Servando Z. (University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley)

Maya Bonesetters, Aires, and the Effect of Natural Cycles on the Body

Maya bonesetters know that an important basis of their healing authority is their knowledge of the natural environment. As dry seasons become wet seasons, their workloads increase, but not only because the rains make people slip and fall on trails. Rainy seasons bring a more insidious agent of infirmity: aires. These invisible, penetrative forces threaten health during rainy seasons, when their cold qualities reach a pitch. Bonesetters must attend to injured bodies mindful of how cyclical exposure to aires worsens the body’s infirmities. Their attention to aires demonstrates that the physicality of their role means engaging closely with natural phenomena.

Hoggarth, Julie A. (Baylor University), Jaime J. Awe (Northern Arizona University), Brendan J. Culleton (The Pennsylvania State University), and Douglas J. Kennett (The Pennsylvania State University)

Dating the ‘Classic Maya Collapse’ in the Belize Valley

The extensive archaeological literature on the ‘Classic Maya collapse’ offers important information about the processes associated with the breakdown in political systems and the depopulation of the central Maya lowlands from A.D. 750-1000. New developments in high-resolution radiocarbon dating, in tandem with Bayesian chronology building, offer more precise methods for dating these processes than previously available. In this presentation, we present the initial results of our high-resolution radiocarbon chronology for the major centers of Baking Pot
and Cahal Pech in the Belize River Valley. Ultimately, this work centers on understanding broader processes of political cycling, population aggregation, and climate change through time.

**Holley-Kline, Sam (Stanford University)**

*Counter-mapping the Caminos Reales of El Tajín, Mexico*

In this paper, I present the results of an ethnographic counter-mapping project conducted in and around the archaeological site of El Tajín, Veracruz, Mexico. While El Tajín’s research historiography is well-documented, historical landscape associations have rarely been explored. To address this gap, I begin by discussing counter-mapping. I continue by focusing on a category of trails called caminos reales. In interviews, commerce and violence emerged as key themes related to these trails. After discussing these themes, I evaluate directions for future research in the area and argue for the importance of understanding the recent history of Mesoamerican sites more generally.

**Horowitz, Rachel A. (Tulane University), Grant S. McCall (Tulane University), Dan M. Healan (Tulane University), and David Grove (University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign and the University of Florida)**

*Lithic Resource Utilization and Resource Availability: Comparisons from Callar Creek Quarry, Belize and Chalcatzingo, Mexico*

The utilization of lithic materials reflects factors including resource availability, tool use, and economic considerations. This paper addresses the variability in use and production intensity of lithic materials from house and quarry contexts from Callar Creek Quarry, a chert quarry in western Belize, and households at Chalcatzingo, a Formative period site in central Mexico. Through an examination of lithic production intensity and tool use in these three contexts, this paper examines the role of resource access, whether through economic activity or natural landscape variability, and resource stress on the organization of lithic technology.

**Hyde, David M. (Western State Colorado University) and Fred Valdez, Jr. (The University of Texas at Austin)**

*From Pots and Burials: Social Memory, Nostalgia, and “Conscious Archaism” at the Medicinal Trail Site, Northwestern Belize.*

In this paper the three related ideas of social memory, nostalgia, and conscious archaism are discussed and applied to date from the Maya hinterland commoner community of Medicinal Trail in northwestern Belize. Excavations at Group A of the community have revealed two caches on a small Late Preclassic ceremonial platform and two burials on a Late-to-Terminal Classic shrine are similarly arranged. A pattern of interment that utilizes the northwest and southeast corners of ceremonial structures is believed to be expressions of socio-religious importance, creating continuity of space and kinship by the inhabitants. This pattern and other material culture evidence reinforce the possibility of an investment in long term, multi-generational household identity, using social memory, nostalgia, and what we refer to as “conscious archaism” to link the past to their present.
Ingalls, Victoria A. (University of Texas at San Antonio)

Investigations of a Late Preclassic Round Structure at the Maya Hinterland Community of San Lorenzo, Belize

Recent investigations at the Xunantunich hinterland site of San Lorenzo, Belize have uncovered a Late Preclassic round platform buried beneath a Late-to-Terminal Classic special function complex. Coupled with other recently recovered data, this discovery suggests that San Lorenzo did, indeed, have a substantial Preclassic occupation. Comparative data on similar Late Preclassic round platforms suggests that they may have served a ritual or public function within the community. This paper presents excavation data of this round platform from the past two field seasons. Additionally, I present preliminary interpretations of this platform and the re-use of special places within hinterland communities.

Komisaruk, Catherine (University of Texas at San Antonio)

My Tulancingo, My UTSA: How a Stolen Horse Linked Me to the Nahua Past, My Late Academic Mentor, and My New Home in San Antonio

The point of this paper is trifold: 1) To present a manuscript housed in UTSA’s Special Collections—a court case dated in 1571 from the town of Tulancingo. 2) To explain how the document illustrates several themes and methods in recent scholarship on Mesoamerican ethnohistory. 3) To share a personal story of my late PhD supervisor and his relationship with records from Tulancingo, and to contextualize my analysis of this document as part of his academic legacy.

Lindley, Tiffany M. (University of Texas at San Antonio)

Household Investigations at Floodplain North Settlement Cluster, Belize

In this paper I will examine data recovered from the 2015 field season at the Floodplain North Settlement Cluster, located within the environs of Rancho San Lorenzo, in the Mopan valley of Belize. My research investigates the responses of Maya hinterland households to Terminal Classic (AD 780-900) socioeconomic and political transformations. Preliminary analysis indicates four households were occupied in the Early Postclassic (AD 900-1200). By examining the Terminal Classic assemblages that showed continued occupation into the Postclassic I suggest residents of Floodplain North, motivated by strategies promoting social stability and resilience, actively chose to remain in the Mopan valley.

Lynn, Jamie L. (Texas Tech University)

Poetic Composition of Iconography: Using a Textual Discourse Approach to Analyze Spatial Arrangement of Iconography within the Palenque Cross Group

I propose the iconographic narrative within the Palenque Cross Group architectural monument is poetically composed. Using a textual discourse approach to analyze the iconography, I find the iconographic narrative has structures analogous to those of Late Classic textual narratives. Moreover, the iconographic narrative is arranged in a poetic chiasmus parallelism that spans all three temples. Ultimately, the poetic composition of iconography illustrates the following aspects of Late Classic Maya cultural ideology: the arrangement of time and space, the organization of the celestial, earthly, and underworld places, and the role of the Maya king.
Lytle, Whitney C. (University of Texas at San Antonio)

A Surplus of Sherds: Ceramic Deposits of Xunantunich, Group D

During the 2012-2015 field seasons, the Mopan Valley Preclassic Project has been conducting excavations at Group D, a Late Classic elite residential unit at the Belizean site of Xunantunich. This research has revealed Late/Terminal Preclassic construction within the group’s central platform complex. Recent investigations have also revealed enormous ceramic deposits in association with structures dating to each occupation. The presence of these deposits is suggestive of ritual activities that might include feasting and/or termination activities. In this paper, I will discuss the recent finds and how these discoveries have changed our perspective on the ritual re-use of Xunantunich, Group D.

Madsen, Alexandra (University of Texas at Austin)

Embodying the Kingly Persona: Ephemerality and Memory in Temple 18 of Copan

While some temples in Copan have received considerable attention, other important structures are ripe for interpretation. Temple 18, the burial tomb of Copan’s sixteenth ruler Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat, is one such neglected structure with a rich iconographic program. In this presentation I will address the major iconographic themes of Temple 18, paying particular attention to the elaborate “Maize God” motifs and references to resurrection. I will argue that after Yax Pasaj’s death, Temple 18 served as an effigy for the ruler, acting as a symbolic and physical extension of the kingly body.

Mathews, Jennifer (Trinity University)

Filling in the Gaps: The Use of Archival Sources and Ethnographic Interviews to Better Understand the Archaeology of the 19th Century Rum Industry in Mexico

Since 2010, we have been studying small archaeological sugar and rum processing sites from the 19th Century on the north coast of Quintana Roo, Mexico. Despite the recent occupation of these sites, much of the equipment related to this processing has been sold off for metal scrap, leaving large gaps in the archaeological record. Through archival research and ethnographic interviews with consultants in Mexico and the U.S. we have been able to fill in these gaps to better understand the productive capacities, allocation of labor resources, and other aspects of operations at north coast sugar and rum production sites.

Mitchell, Samantha (Texas Tech University), Brett A. Houk (Texas Tech University), and Kelsey Herndon (Independent Scholar)

Beyond the Model: Using Structure from Motion to Identify Taphonomic Processes in Burial CC-B11 at Chan Chich, Belize

Over the past decade, Structure from Motion (SfM) has increasingly been used as a means of digital preservation and for documenting archaeological excavations, including burials. However, few studies have tapped the potential of using SfM to document and analyze taphonomic processes affecting burials. This paper utilizes SfM models in conjunction with Meshlab and ArcGIS to elucidate specific post-depositional events that may have affected Burial CC-B11 at the ancient Maya site of Chan Chich, Belize. We conclude that utilizing SfM
modeling along with geospatial software can not only record burials with a high degree of detail, but can also contribute to analysis.

**Mixter, David W. (Washington University in St. Louis)**

*Political Change Expressed in Public Architecture: An Activity Area Study of the Terminal Classic Maya Civic Complex at Actuncan, Belize*

Although researchers have begun to agree that the 9th century Maya collapse resulted in the end of divine kingship as the dominant political form in the southern Maya Lowlands, the process of social reorganization that took place in the aftermath of collapse remains poorly understood. This paper draws on a comparative investigation of architectural form and an activity area study based on geochemical and microartefact proxies to elucidate the collapse-era construction of a large civic complex at Actuncan, Belize. These data point to the political ideology expressed by the platform’s construction and the subsequent lived experience of post-royal political life.

**Montgomery, S. Janelle (Texas Christian University)**

*A Monumental Woman: Lady K’abel*

The extraordinary Maya work known as the Front Face of a Stela (Free-Standing Stone with Relief) in the Cleveland Art Museum dates from the height of El Perú-Waka’s golden age. Raised to celebrate a k’atun ending, it depicts a powerful female ruler named Lady K’abel. In this presentation, I will show how Lady K’abel’s stela emerges from the context of El Perú-Waka’s complex political environment and engages in a dialogue with nearby stelae to describe a role unique among women in the Maya ruling structure.

**Murakami, Tatsuya (Tulane University), Shigeru Kabata (Universidad de las Américas-Puebla), Julieta M. López J. (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), José Juan Chávez V. (Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia), Hironori Furuhara (Saitama University), Willem VanEssendelft (Tulane University), Natalia Mauricio (Tulane University), and Mark Dennison (Tulane University)**

*Urban Development in Formative Central Mexico: Preliminary Results of the Tlalancaleca Archaeological Project, Puebla*

Tlalancaleca was one of the largest settlements before the rise of Teotihuacan in Central Mexico and likely provided cultural and historical settings for the creation of Central Mexican urban traditions during later periods. Yet its urbanization process as well as socio-spatial organization remain poorly understood. This paper presents preliminary results of mapping, ground survey, surface collection, manual auger probe, and test excavations, which were carried out over the four seasons of the project since 2012. It discusses the timing and extent of urban development and its implications for regional sociopolitical processes.
Anna C. Novotny (Texas Tech University), Jaime Awe (Northwestern Arizona University), Catarina Santasillia (University of California at Riverside), and Kelly J. Knudson (Arizona State University)

Bioarchaeological Analyses of an Ancestral Context from Cahal Pech, San Ignacio, Belize

Among the ancient Maya manipulation of the deceased body is associated with powerful ancestral rituals likely carried out to reinforce and legitimate sociopolitical power. A recently excavated tomb from Structure B1 at Cahal Pech, located within the Belize River Valley, shows evidence for centuries of interaction by the living with the deceased bodies entombed therein. We use taphonomic, isotopic, and radiocarbon data to reconstruct the sequence of interment and residential history of the tomb’s occupants.

Ordoñez Sandoval, Mirna (University of Arkansas)

Networks: Genesis of, and Paramount Factor in, Mayan Women's Entrepreneurship

Guatemala has abundant natural resources, yet the World Bank indicates that 75% of its population lives below the poverty line, with insufficient income to survive. Mayan women face enormous challenges including gender and ethnic discrimination, geographical exclusion, everyday violence, and lack of access to health, education, and employment opportunities. In this paper, I examine how Mayan women utilize entrepreneurship to the economic benefit of their families and communities, and how they create community networks to access capital and resources at local, national, and international levels. The establishment of networks is the paramount factor in Mayan women’s ability to overcome poverty.

Ott, Aaron (University of Houston)

Aztec Multi-site Ritual Continuity: The Relationship of Twin-Temple Pyramids in Central Mexico

The relationship of twin-temple pyramids in central Mexico used by the Aztec empire, during the late post-classic, has been previously under examined. Instead, each has been treated as an individual ritual site reflecting Aztec religious ideology. However, because of their architectural continuity, Templo Mayor being the greatest among them, a reasonable relationship can be posited wherein they constitute a network of religio-political control across the region. By examining their design elements, dates of operation, construction phases and ritual use, a view of the Aztec multi-site religious picture becomes clearer.

Parris, Caroline A. (Tulane University)

Chock Full O'Sherds: A Comparison of Two Ritual Deposits from La Corona

This paper compares two Late Classic Maya contexts from La Corona, Petén Guatemala: a chultun located in the ritual precinct of the site and a room in the royal palace. Both spaces were intentionally filled by the ancient Maya. The two deposits exhibit similar assemblages: faunal bone, lithic material, ceramic figurines, and large quantities of sherds dating to the end of the 8th century. While superficially similar, an in-depth comparison of the ceramic material from the two deposits reveals differences beyond their spatial contexts and suggests possible behaviors that led to the creation and deposition of these assemblages.
Rawski, Zoe J. (University of Texas at San Antonio)

*Preliminary Investigations of a Monumental Platform at Early Xunantunich*

Recent excavations in the Preclassic site core at Xunantunich have revealed new information about the site’s earliest monumental structures. Preliminary excavations of the monumental platform that forms the site core’s northern boundary have demonstrated multiple phases of architectural development, including a significant increase in size during the structure’s final phase. Furthermore, the presence of stair blocks and a ceramic vessel cache containing two carved jadeite heads sheds new light on ritual activities in the area during this early period. This paper focuses on the implications of these findings and their role in improving our understanding of the early site core.

Runnwaldier, Astrid (University of Texas at Austin), David Stuart (University of Texas at Austin), and Edwin Román (University of Texas at Austin)

*The Road to Small Ruins: El Zapote in the Tikal Political Landscape of the Early Classic*

This presentation highlights the poorly known site of El Zapote, nestled in the hills around Lake Macanché and part of the hinterland of Tikal, Guatemala. Despite its small size and the lack of research since its discovery forty years ago, this site holds considerable importance both for Early Classic Tikal and for current research on geopolitical interactions between Maya polities and Central Mexican foreigners, known as “The Entrada.” Based on the extant carved monuments, the information recorded by Ian Graham, and our own field observations, we propose that El Zapote played a participatory role in reshaping Tikal’s Early Classic dynasty.

Salgado-Flores, Sebastian (University of Texas at San Antonio)

*The Political Ecology of Postclassic Maya Plant Use at Lake Mensabak, Chiapas, México*

This presentation will present the background and preliminary results of a project studying changes in Maya plant use at several closely located sites during the middle-to-late Postclassic Period (~1300-1525 CE) at Lake Mensabak, Chiapas, Mexico. These sites were inhabited contemporaneously and exhibit substantive differences in size and political/economic importance, making the archaeobotanical assemblages recovered from them uniquely suited for a study focusing on how they were created by social processes. The ultimate goal of the project is to examine how political economy structures variability in resource gathering strategies between different subsets of society.

Saunders, Michael P. (Tulane University)

*Past, Present, and Future: The Development and Maintenance of a Cultural Landscape in a Maya Community*

Ethnographic data collected in a Maya community indicates (currently) sustainable systems of agroforestry and agriculture, while local archaeological data suggests these strategies developed over the very long-term. The resilience of these systems appears to lie in cultural factors as well as the actual physical practices employed – creating a combined socio-ecological system and an engineered landscape capable of mitigating significant disturbance. I review these findings and offer insights potentially useful to archaeologists regarding issues such as the self-organization of
irrigation systems, agricultural settlement patterns, and the use of terracing, house gardens, infield/outfield, or other intensive farming strategies to support dense populations.

**Schele, Elaine (Austin Community College)**

*Alma Reed, Edward Thompson and the Well of Sacrifice at Chichén Itzá*

This is a story of archaeology, romance and politics. In February 1923, the New York Times reporter Alma Reed was sent to the state of Yucatan with archaeologists from Carnegie Institution. They were conducting a preliminary study of Chichén Itzá with the sanction of the socialist and pro Maya governor Carrillo. Reed fell in love with the governor. She also interviewed the explorer Edward Thompson who had dredged the famous Well of Sacrifice. He gave her permission to publish the story of the well, starting a controversy over the well artifacts.

**Shafer, Harry (Witte Museum of Natural History) and Thomas Hester (University of Texas at Austin)**

*Colha, Belize in Retrospect*

Colha is an ancient Maya town located in northern Belize. The economic importance of Colha is due to its setting; high quality chert needed for axes, adzes, knives and spears, was abundant in large cobble and boulder-size masses and easily obtained in a geographically restricted area within a very broad zone of settlements and polities. The technological tradition established at Colha may have seen its ultimate origin in the Preceramic at the site and expansion in the Middle and Late Preclassic producing millions of stone tools that were dispersed to consumers throughout the region. Workshop production responded to the supporting the needs of Terminal Classic warfare. This unique tradition became extinct with the destruction of Colha in the Terminal Classic. A new settlement was established in the Early Postclassic with an entirely different lithic tradition with origins in the Yucatan.

**Stanley, Brendan (Texas State University) and Tara D. Smith (Texas State University)**

*Dual Locomotive Maws on Olmec Altar Thrones*

Formerly identified cosmograms for the Olmec culture include the Dallas Plaque and the Las Limas figure. This vision can now be further illuminated by new iconographic interpretations of works including La Venta Altar 4, Oxtotitlan Mural 1, and others. These interpretations build on the work of previous scholars and are supported via upstreaming through the Maya. The Olmec altar thrones mirror the Maya view of the cosmos as is famously portrayed on Hanab Pakal’s Sarcophagus. Thus new keys unlocking the map of the Olmec ‘Other’ will be shown with accompanying questions to be posed.

**Urquidi, D. M. (Independent Scholar)**

*The Forgotten Bones of Tikal*

In 1176, the book 'Deciphering the Maya Script' illustrated all six of the bones. However, five appeared to be fragments of an incomplete series of a more serious theme found in more than one chapter of the Pool Vuh as Astronomy. The bones were not remembered until the Paddler Gods as the Twins, was rediscovered as Six Bones that illustrate the astro-travels of two comet twins during a star event. The Maya recorded it on the bones as an abbreviated tale. The rebirth
of the Maize god in conjunction with "u batab," as the Moon God ruler, was an extra bonus of this theme.

Yaeger, Jason (University of Texas at San Antonio), M. Kathryn Brown (University of Texas at San Antonio), and Bernadette Cap (University of Texas at San Antonio)

Warfare and Classic Maya Political Dynamics in the Mopan Valley, Belize

Decades of fieldwork at sites across western Belize have made it increasingly clear that conflict and warfare played key roles in the Classic-period political dynamics of the region. This paper presents diverse data that are derived from excavations at multiple sites, regional LiDAR survey, iconographic studies of the region’s monuments, and epigraphic analysis of hieroglyphic texts from sites in the Mopan valley, including Xunantunich, Callar Creek, and Buenavista del Cayo. I synthesize these data to argue that warfare was common in the region, particularly during the Late and Terminal Classic periods; that it often involved foreign powers; and that it played an important role in the valley’s political dynamics.

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