South-Central Conference on Mesoamerica
Trinity University
Fiesta Room

November 4-6, 2011
South-Central Conference on Mesoamerica

Trinity University

November 4 - 6, 2011

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, SAN ANTONIO MUSEUM OF ART:

6:00-7:00 pm
**Early Registration**

There will be an early registration table outside of the Auditorium at the San Antonio Museum of Art. Conference participants can pick up their nametags and registration packets before attending the keynote lecture. Admission to the San Antonio Museum of Art will be free and all participants will receive a special sticker to attend the lecture and the reception following.

7:00-8:00 pm
**Keynote Lecture, Auditorium, San Antonio Museum of Art**

David Freidel (Washington University)

Maya History and Archaeology, a Long Personal View

With the thirtieth anniversary of the *Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque* fast approaching, it is a full generation since the beginning of the revolutionary era in Maya glyphic decipherment and the era of Pre-Columbian Maya history. Linda Schele envisioned a convergence of specialties in Maya studies into a unified field and to that end collaborated with me and other archaeologists, as well as linguists, ethnographers and art historians. But building bridges between the textual history emerging in the able efforts of the burgeoning field of Maya epigraphy and the equally active and expanding field record of Maya archaeology remains very much a work in progress. I note some promising examples from around the Maya lowlands and then review discoveries made in projects I have worked on.

8:00-9:00 pm
**Reception, San Antonio Museum of Art Atrium Room near the Pre-Columbian Art Collection**

Following the keynote lecture, there will be beer, wine (for those of legal age) and finger food for all conference participants in the Atrium Room. Attendees will have a chance to visit the museum’s fabulous Pre-Columbian collection in the adjacent wing (please no food or drinks in the collection area!).
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, FIESTA ROOM, TRINITY UNIVERSITY:

Registration: 8:00-8:30 am

8:30-8:45 am: Welcome Comments

Dennis Ahlburg, President of Trinity University

Tom Guderjan (University of Texas at Tyler) and Jennifer P. Mathews (Trinity University), Conference Co-Organizers

Presentations:

8:45-9:00 am
Robyn Dodge (University of Texas at Austin)

Evidence of Ancient Maya Household and Commoner Ritual Activities at Hun Tun, Belize

Maya household archaeology focuses on understanding how household structure, function and meaning allows household groups to contribute to a “broader Maya social universe.” Commoner rituals are an important aspect of household archaeology as commoners constitute the majority of ancient Maya Civilization. It is often at the household level that these rituals are generated. This paper examines data collected at the Maya settlement, Hun Tun in northwestern Belize between the 2008-2011 field seasons. Ancient Maya household archaeology, commoner rituals and settlement pattern analysis are ongoing research topics at Hun Tun. Architecture, stone monuments and a chultun are among the features excavated at Hun Tun, thus far. Among the recovered artifacts include: ceramics, lithics, obsidian, grinding stones, seashell, greenstone, and lithic eccentrics. These artifacts and features are discussed in context. They are interpreted to include evidence of expanding, changing household dynamics and commoner rituals.

9:00-9:15 am
Dana Ritchie Parker (University of Texas at Arlington) and Robert H. Tykot (University of South Florida)

Late and Terminal Classic Maya Subsistence: Stable Isotope Analysis at Chac Balam and San Juan on Northern Ambergris Caye, Belize

Skeletal populations from several Maya sites during the Late and Terminal Classic periods exhibit pathologies indicative of poor health and malnutrition, while populations from other sites appear comparatively healthy. Chac Balam and San Juan from Ambergris Caye in Belize are examples of flourishing sites with skeletal populations that possess few indicators of nutritional stress. Analysis of stable carbon and nitrogen isotopes on bone collagen and carbon isotopes on bone apatite from 30 individuals was conducted to elucidate dietary intake of the populations from Chac Balam and San Juan. Results indicate dietary possibilities typical for an island population, with primary food sources coming from the sea supplemented with terrestrial plants and fauna. No significant differences were found between males and females or adults and juveniles from these sites. Differences found between social groups indicate lower status individuals relied more on local resources and higher status individuals/elites perhaps had differential access to imported meat or produce.
SATURDAY MORNING

9:15-9:30 am
Eric Fries (University of California, Los Angeles)

If You Go Out in the Woods Today, You're Sure For a Big Surprise: A New View of the Northern Belize River Valley

Reconnaissance and survey over three field seasons in the northern reaches of the Belize River Valley have located a number of minor Maya centers located in close proximity to each other. Ground truthing of Google Earth imagery indicates dense settlement infill between the various site cores. Additionally, we see a recurring pattern of single large structures, possibly elite residences, with associated single large pyramids, located at a moderate distance from site cores. We suggest that these paired structures are nodes of elite control in a densely settled agricultural landscape. All sites have a Late Classic ceramic component, indicating at a minimum either continuous broad regional occupation over a long period or a single brief period of dense occupation. These findings are in marked contrast to previously developed regional predictive models.

9:30-9:45 am
Amy E. Thompson (University of New Mexico) and Keith M. Prufer (University of New Mexico)

Testing for the Truth: Excavations Groups G and F, Uxbenká, Toledo District, Belize

Initial mapping in 2005 of the Classic Maya center of Uxbenká identified Group G as an elite residential area, based on architectural features and location relative to the site core. Group F was identified as a sub-elite residential area based on its restricted access and location within the site core. Excavations in the 2011 field season found variation in architecture and artifacts at these locations, leading to new interpretations for the functions of these groups. Evidence from Group G suggests that it functioned as a ceremonial space during later phases of occupation. Group F may have been an elite, rather than sub-elite, residential area. Test units in plaza areas and buildings of both groups indicate multiple construction sequences and changes in function during the occupation of Uxbenká.

9:45-10:00 am
Tim Preston (Berkely City College)

Excavations of an Elite Residential Courtyard Group and Associated Activity Areas at Blue Creek

The CBN-13 Courtyard group has undergone intensive excavations during the 2009 and 2010 field seasons. The residential group is an elite status courtyard consisting five main structures and, at minimum, six associated structures located on two external activity areas. Founded during the Late Preclassic, the group continued to prosper during the Classic period with major expansions and modifications occurring in both the Late and Terminal Classic periods. This paper will use continued growth and longevity of the group as a proxy to define it as a power or control node situated within the overall Blue Creek site hierarchy.

BREAK: 10:00-10:30 am
Some Initial Thoughts on a Problematic Terminal Classic Deposit from the Maya site of La Milpa, Belize

In 2009, the La Milpa Core Project first encountered a dense, midden-like deposit at a small courtyard in the site core of La Milpa, Belize. The deposit was found on both sides of the eastern courtyard wall. Two radiocarbon dates from the sample yielded tenth century dates, placing the formation of the feature in the Terminal Classic period, approximately a century later than the previously accepted abandonment of the La Milpa. Although the deposit initially was interpreted to be a midden, it is possible the feature is related to termination rituals or offerings associated with the abandonment of the site and/or subsequent visitations. Two additional seasons of research in the courtyard have greatly increased our excavation sample of the problematic deposit along the wall. This presentation describes the deposit’s contents and its context with respect to the courtyard, and offers some preliminary interpretations as to the deposit’s importance and meaning.

What Happened at Maya Centers? A Preliminary View from Actuncan, Belize, Central America

After decades of research, we know a great deal about how the Maya buried their honored dead but precious little about the daily activities of the living in their civic centers. We hypothesize that a wide variety of activities occurred in Maya centers – from sacrifice to market trade – but we have scant archaeological documentation. This paper presents the preliminary results of a project at the site of Actuncan aimed at identifying the archaeological correlates of activity in public plazas through the use of rapid systematic testing, soil chemistry sampling, macro- and micro-artifact analysis, remote sensing, and targeted excavations.

Old Ways and New Views: Archaeological Research of the Programme for Belize Archaeological Project

The Programme for Belize Archaeological Project (PfBAP) has been conducting archaeological research in northwest Belize since 1992. A review of the history of research is presented. Original research interests along with current endeavors are compared and discussed. An overview of findings and interpretations is summarized in terms of current thought as well as theoretical perspectives.
SATURDAY MORNING

11:15-11:30
James F. Garber (Texas State University, San Marcos)

Burials, Buccaneers, and Baymen: Excavations in the Cemetery on St. George’s Caye Belize

The small island of St. George’s Caye served as the first capitol of Belize and was home to pirates, buccaneers, and Baymen. In the summer of 2009, Texas State University initiated a project to investigate the early English occupation of the Caye including an examination of the cemetery which is the earliest non-Maya cemetery in Belize. Excavations have revealed a complex system of burial types, burial rituals and multi-ethnic use of the cemetery. Additionally, the excavations show that the use of the cemetery was considerably more extensive than indicated in the archives.

11:30-11:45 am
Jennifer P. Mathews (Trinity University) and John Gust (University of California, Riverside)

Bittersweet History: The Sugar and Rum Industry of the Costa Escondida, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This research examines the archaeological history of the development of the sugar and rum industries in a remote region of northern Quintana Roo known as the “Costa Escondida” from the 1870s to the mid-twentieth century. This project was inspired by Paul Sullivan’s 2006 book Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatan, which investigates a mass murder that took place on October 12, 1875 at a remote sugar plantation known as Xuxub. Since 2009, we have been conducting archival and archaeological research of Xuxub and several nearby sites in the hopes of providing material evidence of what daily life was like for the people who lived and worked in the secluded mangroves of the region. This paper will present our preliminary findings on this poorly understood period.

11:45 am-12:00 pm
Kathryn O'Rourke (Trinity University)

The Mariscal Brothers and the Invention of Mexican Architectural History

The history of modern architecture in Mexico City has been understood most often in relation to the dramatic social and political changes that accompanied and followed the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). While architecture and politics were certainly linked there, as influential as any shift in political authority was the emergence, around the turn of the twentieth century, of new histories of Mexican architecture. At roughly the same time architects began designing buildings that resembled or recalled colonial architecture. Focusing on the buildings and writings of Federico Mariscal and the architectural theories developed by his brother, Nicolás, this paper explores the links between the Mariscals' work and later currents of Mexican architectural modernism. It argues that the Mariscals, along with early historians of Mexican architecture, helped shape in vital ways the trajectory of Mexican modernism by positioning architecture in a national historical framework.

LUNCH BREAK: 12:00-1:30 pm
SATURDAY AFTERNOON

1:30-1:45 pm
Grace Lloyd Bascopé (Maya Research Program) and Elias Alcocer Puerto (Universidad Autónomo de Yucatán)

Who’s Findings Are They, Anyway? An Attempt to Return Archaeological Information to A Maya Community

For ten years, the SMU/Selz Foundation Archaeological Project excavated at a large site on corporately held lands of Yaxunah, a Maya-speaking community in Yucatán. Project directors employed members of the Yaxunah community, which gave each man equal opportunity to earn needed cash during the field season. As excavations continued, the team shared archaeological techniques with workers. Most learned to recognize and follow a feature and do consolidation work. Still today a number of men are sought after for other projects around the state. The SMU/Selz team was careful to present a copy of each year’s field report to the community, as well. This paper focuses on a later attempt to provide community members with results of the SMU/Selz Foundation archaeologists’ findings. It explores challenges in providing this information to the community in a meaningful way. It also touches on the community’s desires to have artifacts from the site placed under its control, and have a voice in telling the story revealed by the discoveries there.

1:45-2:00 pm
Katrina Nunico (University of Texas at Arlington)

Archaeotourism at Xunantunich, Belize: A Study of Modern Slate Carving

This paper examines the relationship between modern slate carvers and the archaeological site of Xunantunich, which is located near San José Succotz, Belize. The entrance to Xunantunich is key to this study because this is a location where artisans, tourists, and tour guides come together. At the entrance, the slate carvers, who are local residents, sell their slates to tourists. The images that are hand carved into the slate represent what may or may not be replicas of ancient Maya artifacts. The slate carvers approach the tourists, many of whom are accompanied by tour guides, to sell their slates as the tourists either enter or exit on their tour of Xunantunich. Both the tour guides accompanying the tourists and the slate carvers are using a form of archaeotourism to earn a living from the tourists visiting the site of Xunantunich.

2:00-2:15 pm
M. Kathryn Brown (University of Texas at San Antonio)

A Modern Maya Ritual at Xunantunich, Belize and its implications for Ancient Maya Ritual Behavior

A modern Maya ritual event was documented at the site of Xunantunich. This ritual was held on the summer solstice, June 21st, in front of Structure A4, a relatively small pyramid located on the eastern side of the Classic site core. This paper discusses the details of this ritual and its implications for ancient Maya ritual behavior at the site. Recent excavations by the Mopan Valley Preclassic Project has documented a series of Preclassic ritual deposits located in front of a small eastern pyramid in the Preclassic ceremonial core of the site. These deposits are examined in light of the modern ritual event and our current understanding of ancient Maya cosmology.
SATURDAY AFTERNOON

2:15-2:30 pm
Anabella Coronado-Ruiz (University of Texas at Austin)

Structure Sub-1A and the Architectural Conservation at San Bartolo, Petén, Guatemala.

In 2001, immediately after the discovery of the Late Preclassic pictorial program in Structure 1 or Pinturas, San Bartolo, an intensive program began to guarantee the study and preservation of the site. Abandoned structures present us with challenges such as dealing with structural issues, but mainly defining new users and functions for these buildings. How do we balance the pressures of tourism and local communities, governmental regulations, indigenous rights, and archaeological research in Guatemala? This paper will evaluate the different audiences that played into the decision-making and planning of the conservation project of Structure Sub-1A. The problem solving and project execution during the last ten years will also be discussed.

2:30-2:45 pm
Michael Saunders (Tulane University)

Ecological Processes and Conceptions of the Sacred in a Maya Community

Previous research I conducted in Ch’aq’a Ya’, Guatemala, indicated that ritual practice in this Maya community is specifically adapted (and adaptable) to local circumstances. In fact the overall spiritual system seems to be structured so as to allow for local agency in response to changing conditions. Prior work emphasized the influence of new economic factors on recent and rapid shifts in ritual life. On a broader time scale, however, my current research also indicates that sacred site location and utilization are uniquely adapted to local weather patterns and ecological processes. Archaeological evidence shows continued inhabitation of the area dating from the Preclassic; such long term familiarity seems to allow for a now implicit understanding of ecological processes as manifested in conceptions of the sacred. This evidences the complex nature of an underlying cultural logic that influences not only sacred life but local lifeways in general.

2:45-3:00 pm
Mirela Conner (Prescott College)

Textiles of Highland Guatemala and Maya National Identity

Costume is a language. For centuries Mayas have been transmitting their cosmovisions through weaving, sharing their history and mythology to the readers of these sacred texts, Maya textiles. The arts of weaving and Maya indigenous costume are powerful expressions of the Maya social identity. Through the fast rising and on-going Pan-Mayan movement, Maya costume has been one of the most important carriers of Maya messages to the world. As a symbol of Maya resistance, through the many struggles they have encountered, from the Spanish conquest, civil war and current discrimination, Maya costume reveals their cultural uniqueness, and offers the world a text to be read. Maya textiles and indigenous costume are an intricate aspect of an active culture that has survived and is stronger than ever before.

3:00-3:15 pm
Catherine Johns (University of Colorado Denver)
What Ceramics Can Tell Us: Assemblages Indicating Activities in the Teuchitlan Tradition’s Guachimontones

Understanding the differences in activities between buildings at a site is critical to constructing a past culture's social organization. Studying the changes in ceramic assemblages is a way to identify the activities that could have occurred within structures. To investigate the social organization of the Teuchitlan Tradition, at the site of Navajas in Jalisco, Mexico the ceramic assemblages were analyzed. The structures at Navajas form what is called a Guachimontone, a ring of ritual structures surrounding a circular step pyramid, usually separated from the residential areas. Of particular importance for this analysis are: identifying distribution of closed- and open-mouthed vessels; comparing utilitarian ware to ritual vessels; and determining from this analysis whether ceramics present were used for storage or ritual. The ceramic assemblage data shows an even distribution of wares with similar utilitarian ratios in each structure. This provides an insight into the daily use of these structures.

3:15-3:30 pm
Jacinto Quirarte (University of Texas at San Antonio)

The Parameters of Preclassic Art: Isthmian, Izapa, and Maya

Defining the parameters of the Preclassic art styles found in the Isthmus, Chiapas and Guatemala continues to be a problem in spite of the numerous studies carried out by archaeologists, iconographers, and epigraphers. The origins and development of each style will remain elusive until this is done. In this paper I will focus on the analysis of forms and motifs found at Izapa, El Baul, Ta-k'alik' Ab'ay, Kaminaljuyu, Uaxactun, Tikal, Chiapa de Corzo, La Mojarra, and San Bartolo to distinguish one style from the other as a first step in solving this problem. This includes a comparative analysis of the figural proportions, the celestial and terrestrial bands, and the “Principal Birds” depicted on stelas, altars, stucco sculptures, carved bones, and murals found in all three areas.

BREAK 3:30-4:00 pm

BIDDING FOR SILENT AUCTION CLOSES AT 4:00 PM

4:00-4:15 pm
Gretel Rodríguez (University of Texas at Austin)

Rethinking the River Kingdoms: Olmec Monumental Sculpture in the Middle Usumacinta Basin.

The area surrounding the Usumacinta river was the backdrop for the development of important Maya centers during the Classic Period. The historical and artistic achievements of cities like Palenque, Yaxchilán, Piedras Negras, and Bonampak, among others, have received extensive attention from scholars. However, little attention has been given to the evidence for Pre-Classic occupation of this important area of Mesoamerica. This paper explores the presence of Pre-Classic monumental sculpture in the Middle Usumacinta basin in order to establish a pattern of permanent settlement during this period. Based on the assumption that monumental sculpture signals permanent rather than temporary settlement, this study proposes that Olmec and Epi-Olmec occupation predates the appearance of Maya cultural traits in the Usumacinta basin, suggesting that the later Classic sites were not uniquely the result of expansion from the east, but instead benefitted from a wider range of cultural influences and artistic styles.
SATURDAY AFTERNOON

4:15-4:30 pm
Meghan Rubenstein (University of Texas at Austin)

Iconographic Variation in Puuc Architectural Sculpture

Art and architectural programs were fundamental to the construction of cultural identity and the negotiation of political authority throughout ancient Mesoamerica. Richly ornamented monumental architecture in the Puuc region of the northwestern Yucatán Peninsula offers an opportunity to compare and contrast local and regional styles. In this paper I explore the ways in which architectural sculpture defines local identity while maintaining regional cohesion. Despite a seemingly homogeneous visual program, the use of iconographic elements is not standardized across the Puuc region. I consider how this carefully mediated architectural record can address the poorly understood political and cultural dynamics in the Puuc region during the Terminal Classic period.

4:30-4:45 pm
Keith Eppich (Collin College)

Tobacco Snuff Bottles: An 8th Century Tobacco Craze for the Late Classic Maya?

This paper explores the numerous snuff bottles from the site of El Peru-Waka’ in northwestern Guatemala. The bottles all date from 8th century elite burial contexts and seem to cluster in the later portion of that period. Such bottles are very similar to snuff bottles known from the Qing Dynasty China and assuming a functional equivalence, seems to indicate to a change in tobacco usage from smoking to insufflation. This shift suggests that tobacco may have taken on a role usually ascribed to cacao. During this period of intense political competition, did tobacco begin to supplement ritual activity?

4:45-5:00 pm
David Macias (Texas State University, San Marcos)

An Evaluation of Day Sign Variations in the Mixtec Codex Zouche-Nuttall

The calendar system in common use throughout much of ancient Mesoamerica can be found in the pictographic codices of the Post-Classic Mixteca. The twenty days of the Tonalpoalli (sacred day calendar) account for personal names and event dates. Several variations for each of these twenty days appear on the reverse of the Codex Zouche-Nuttall, which is devoted to the political biography of Lord Eight Deer “Jaguar Claw.” Common scholarship states that these variations reflect unknown augural meaning. This research examines the Mixtec Codex Zouche-Nuttall and distinguishes the day sign varieties in the reverse side.
5:00-5:15 pm
Robert Wald (Independent Researcher, Austin, Texas)

In the Crown’s Service: A Look at the Varied Depictions of an Important Group of Classic Maya Courtiers and the Divergent Decipherments of the Title They Share

Besides rulers, no Classic Maya court officials have received as much scrutiny from epigraphers and iconographers over such a long period of time as those whose title usually appears glyphically as ‘AJ-K’UH-na. The different assessments of these important courtiers’ main positions and duties are only outdone by the wide-ranging transcriptions and translations of their actual title. While differing readings and interpretations of Classic Maya words are not rare, seldom if ever have so many been offered for a particular title. Seeking to resolve this situation, a nearly exhaustive set of written occurrences and pictorial representations of these titleholders will be examined in context, interspersed with evaluations of the various suggested transcriptions and interpretations. The immediate goal is to ferret out the correct reading while explaining how the others have led us astray. The broader purpose is to gain further insight into how Maya rulers and their courts functioned.

5:15: CLOSING COMMENTS

RECEPTION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING, SKYLINE ROOM, TRINITY UNIVERSITY All conference participants are invited to attend a reception with beer, wine (for those of legal age) and finger food in the Skyline Room with a view of downtown San Antonio. The reception will end at 6:30 pm.

SILENT AUCTION

Don’t forget to bid on items in the Silent Auction during Saturday’s events. The bidding will close at 4:00 pm, after the last break. All proceeds will raise funds to help cover student travel scholarships for student presenters to the South-Central Conference on Mesoamerica. Cash or check donations only—make your checks out to the “Maya Research Program.” Thank you to Whole Earth Provisions, Trinity University Press, and several anonymous individuals who donated items for the auction.
Guatemalan Maya bonesetters tend to consider their craft an empirical one, and most employ little to no ritual in their work. This secular regard for bonesetting and bones is surprising because archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence suggests that human bones have received much ritual handling in the past. This paper first identifies the sacred regard for excarnate bones suggested in early sources, and then explores ethnographically how most bonesetters now consider bonesetting non-sacred. I posit that past Mesoamericans viewed bones inside the living body as set amidst more ritually charged body parts, like the heart, liver, and blood. Bones in the body were eclipsed by these body parts, and were probably considered less sacred than them over time. Bones outside the body, though, were no longer overshadowed by these body parts, and became ritually prominent. Human bones were thus least important ritually when inside the body, when bonesetters have treated them.

The Story of the Tikal Bones

Drawings of the six Tikal bones that David Kelley included in his 1977 book is a story about the journey of the Paddler Gods who were bringing the Maize god with his companions, the Howler Monkey (the NW winds); Xolotl, (who fell from the sky); Seven Macaw (who lit the way with the blue light of his Turquoise Teeth and Jewel eye) and Itzamna, the Iguana (the connection between earth and sky.) Four of the bones portray the astro-sightings in the sky. (38A-B and 51A-B). While 38A-B-C-D give pertinent information about the journey. The Maize god was to be reborn, a disaster occurred, but the journey did have a happy ending.

Stranger Kings, Provincial Governors, and Local Lords: Three Models of Classic Maya Rulership

This paper explores three distinct models of Maya rulership. The stranger king comes from a distant land, and his exotic origins and long-distance connections allow him to impose his authority on a local populace. The provincial governor is placed on the throne by a stronger regional power and supported economically, politically, and militarily by his overlords. Local lords rely on local social, political, and economic relationships and networks that they and their families have nurtured over generations. While these models are idealizations, and none fully captures the complexity of Maya political strategies and rhetoric, an examination of archaeological, art historical, and epigraphic record finds evidence that all three were important during the Classic period.
A Window into the Pacbitun Periphery: Excavations at Chaan Hol Rockshelter

During the 2011 field season of the Pacbitun Regional Archaeological Project, excavations at the Chaan Hol Rockshelter site were undertaken as part of an ongoing investigation into the periphery of Pacbitun. Pacbitun is a medium-sized ancient Maya site located along the southern rim of the Upper Belize River Valley. The research carried out at Chaan Hol focused on determining the temporal extent of occupation within the rockshelter as well as understanding what it might have been utilized for by the Pacbitun Maya. The Chaan Hol excavations revealed cultural alteration of the natural environment inside the rockshelter and identified ritually significant material culture including many freshwater (jute) snails, ceramic sherds, and lithics.

BREAK: 10:00-10:30 am

10:30-10:45 am
Colleen Hanratty (Southern Methodist University)

Collapse and Post-Collapse Processes of Blue Creek, Belize

Two decades of multi-disciplinary research at the site of Blue Creek has provided powerful insights into the collapse and post-collapse processes of this unique Maya center. The data reflect the populations’ adaptation to and manipulation of their environment as well as their response to marked environmental change. The Blue Creek data array emphasize the importance of human agency in the collapse and post-collapse processes at the end of the Classic period. This paper will examine how these factors directly contributed to a post-collapse model of political and social organization completely distinct from those previously documented at Blue Creek. In this paper we discuss the stressful dynamics of Late Classic period, including rapidly increasing population, political reorganization, declining soil quality, and expansion of agricultural systems. We then discuss the specific responses that are documented in the Terminal Classic period at Blue Creek and how the remnant populations of the Early Postclassic made use of the Classic period agricultural infrastructure.

10:45-11:00 am
Thomas H. Guderjan (University of Texas at Tyler), Samantha Krause (Four Corners Archaeology), Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach (George Mason University) and Timothy Beach (Georgetown University)

Identifying the Extent of Maya Ditched Field Systems in the Rio Hondo Valley of Belize and Mexico.

Scholars have long known that intensive agricultural systems were a component of the Classic Maya economy. Early studies identified ditched agricultural field systems and sparked debate about whether they were human made, distracting from the question of their extent and their role in Maya economy. Recent aerial surveys have revealed that the extent of agricultural intensification in the Rio Hondo valley was not yet well known and probably was underestimated by the archaeological community. We present new data resultant from aerial photography, mapping and GIS that will enable us to better understand the scale and nature of ancient Maya agricultural systems.
11:00-11:15 am  
Shirley Boteler Mock (Mesoamerican Archaeological Research Laboratory- MARL)  

Spider Iconography in Mesoamerica and the Southwest  

One of the earliest moebiliary rock art traditions (7,000-5,000 B.C.) in the Americas is found in rock-shelters in the Lower Pecos region of Texas on the Rio Grande. The context of the painted stones, broken and discarded in midden deposits where economic tasks such as basket making occurred, suggests they were painted by women in domestic rituals. The imagery on the painted stones is of interest in that it features spider/webs and warp and weft motifs as metaphors for female genitals and weaving. Spiders, similarly, are associated with female entities and creation in Mesoamerican myths and iconography. The many manifestations of the spider, potential meanings, and possible origins deep in prehistory are discussed in this paper.

11:15-11:30 am  
Margaret Greco (Our Lady of the Lake University)  

The Caiman and the Deer: A Relationship of Consequence  

The repertoire of the Maya iconography reflects a pervasive, and curious, intention of a people to fuse together the attributes of flora and fauna existing within their intimate natural world. Maya scholars have commonly perceived such imagery through a cognitive lens focusing on the phenomenon of metamorphoses. My experience as an archaeological illustrator — particularly through a sustained visual encounter with a specific fragment of an incensario — has elicited an alternative trajectory of interpretation derived from sensory associations. In this paper I explore the relationship of the caiman and the deer, fused as an image, within a contextual milieu of breath conveyed as smoke. This inquiry suggests that the Maya perception of imagery may be founded on bonds of sensory relationship rather than a state of metamorphosis, a consequence that has ramifications for our understanding of the nature of Maya cultural continuity.

11:45 am-12:00 pm  
Leah McCurdy (University of Texas at San Antonio)  

Virtual Reconstruction of the Built Environment in Archaeology: The Process  

Virtual reality in archaeology continues to grow as a presentation as well as analytical tool. Previously, I have presented on the research tool capabilities of virtual reconstruction for the built environment. In this presentation, I will broaden the understanding of the process of virtual reconstruction involving multiple technologies and software. I will use video screen captures of my work in several software packages including AutoCAD, Blender and Unity to demonstrate the various processes that go into creating a virtual reconstruction of archaeological remains. AutoCAD facilitates the creation of archaeologically accurate three-dimensional geometry. Blender software provides a platform to create a material world for the reconstructed virtual geometry. Most interesting and the least well known, Unity is a game engine software. The Unity platform allows for the creation of a live, virtual environment that visitors to the “game” can experience in real time. I will explore these media through a virtual reconstruction based on the Maya site of Xunantunich, Belize.

12:00 pm: Closing Comments
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Dr. Arturo Madrid, Murchison Distinguished Professor, Trinity University

Maya Research Program

MAS (Mexico, the Americas and Spain), Trinity University

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Trinity University

The San Antonio Museum of Art

Trinity University

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SAVE THE DATE!
THE THIRD ANNUAL SOUTH-CENTRAL CONFERENCE ON MESOAMERICA WILL BE HELD AT TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY THE WEEKEND OF NOVEMBER 2-4, 2022 (DATE PENDING)