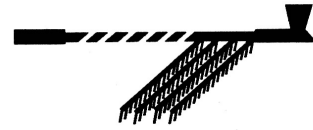


CALUMET



Newsletter of the Indian Peaks Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society
May, 2010

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Presentation (lecture) meetings are held in the University of Colorado Museum, Dinosaur Room on the Second Thursday of most Months, at 7:00 PM. **The public is always welcome.**

Web Site: WWW.INDIANPEAKSARCHAEOLOGY.ORG

- May 6** IPCAS Executive Board Meeting, 7:30PM, Tom Cree home
May 8 Loveland Museum, Finding Ancestors Underground
May 13 **IPCAS Presentation Meeting**, Dr. James Benedict, Topic: Archeology Above Timberline.
May 14-16 CRAA Rock Art Symposium and Annual Meeting, Trinidad
- June 22-28** CAS Trip to Easter Island
June 28-July 23 UNC Field School
June 29-July 11 CAS Trip to Northern Peru and the Sacred Valley
- July 24** CAS Quarterly Meeting, Cortez
- September 2** IPCAS Executive Board Meeting, 7:30PM
September 9 **IPCAS Presentation Meeting**, TBA
September 26 Soapstone Prairie Natural Area Tour, Ft. Collins, 7:30AM – 3PM
- October 7** IPCAS Executive Board Meeting, 7:30PM
October 14 **IPCAS Presentation Meeting**, Alice Tratebas, Newcastle, Wyoming BLM, Topic: Whoop-up Canyon - dating, fire damage, and finished photogrammetry
- November 4** IPCAS Executive Board Meeting, 7:30PM
November 11 **IPCAS Presentation Meeting**, TBA
- December 2** IPCAS Executive Board Meeting, 7:30PM
December 9 **IPCAS Christmas Party**, TBA

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FRANK & ERNEST

By Bob Thaves



May Topic

Our speaker for May is **Dr. James Benedict** of the Center for Mountain Archaeology, Ward, Colorado. His topic will be “Archeology Above Timberline”. Synopsis: Overview of archaeology above timberline in the Indian Peaks, emphasizing the *ecology* of early people. Discussion will include high-altitude environment, the necessities of life (water, food, shelter, toolstone), the kinds of sites represented (game drives and campsites), and the ways people scheduled their seasonal rounds to make the best use of available resources. Dr. Benedict will also have a selection of his research reports from the Center for Mountain Archeology series available for sale.

April Presentation Meeting



Dr. Arthur Joyce presented information about the Rio Viejo Site and nearby area in Oaxaca, Mexico

2010 Dues Renewal Schedule

Below is a table of the renewal fees for existing members for 2010. This will get all memberships to be renewed together on January 1, 2011. This table will also serve for new members, so that their membership will also renew on the same date. If you have not been contacted already with renewal information, you will be contacted soon.

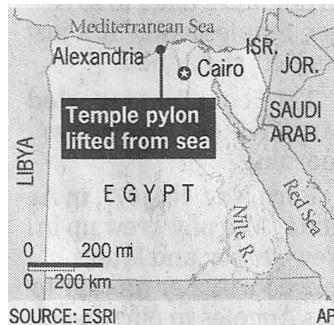
Quarterly new member enrollment	Fees:		
	Individual	Family	Student
January-March	\$28.50	\$33.00	\$14.25
April-June	\$21.50	\$24.75	\$10.75
July-September	\$14.25	\$16.50	\$7.25
October-December	\$7.25	\$8.25	\$3.75

Note: All renewals are due in January. New members pay a portion of the annual dues depending on during which quarter they join.

Monument Lifted From Cleopatra's City

By Katarina Kratovac, The Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt Archaeologists on Thursday hoisted a 9-ton temple pylon from the waters of the Mediterranean that was part of the palace complex of the fabled Cleopatra before it became submerged for centuries in the harbor of Alexandria.



The pylon, which once stood at the entrance to a temple of Isis, is to be the centerpiece of an ambitious underwater museum planned by Egypt to showcase the sunken city, believed to have been toppled into the sea by earthquakes in the 4th century. Divers and underwater archaeologists used a giant crane and ropes to lift the 9-ton, 7.4-foot-tall pylon, covered with muck and seaweed, out of the murky waters.

It was deposited ashore as Egypt's top archaeologist, Zahi Hawass, and other officials watched. The pylon was part of a sprawling palace from which the Ptolemaic dynasty ruled Egypt and where 1st Century B.C. Queen Cleopatra wooed the Roman general Marc Antony before they both committed suicide - after their defeat by Augustus Caesar.

The temple, dedicated to Isis, a pharaonic goddess of fertility and magic, is at least 2,050 years old but archaeologists believe it's likely much older. The pylon was cut from a single slab of red granite quarried in Aswan, some 700 miles (more than 1,100 kilometers) to the south, officials said.

"The cult of Isis was so powerful, it's no wonder Cleopatra chose to make her living quarters next to the temple," said coastal geoarchaeologist Jean- Daniel Stanley of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. Egyptian authorities hope that eventually the pylon will become a part of the underwater museum, an ambitious attempt to draw tourists to the country's northern coast, often overshadowed by the grand pharaonic temples of Luxor in the south, the Giza pyramids outside Cairo and the beaches of the Red Sea. They are hoping the allure of Alexandria, founded in 331 B.C. by Alexander the Great, can also be a draw.

Cleopatra's palace and other buildings and monuments now lie strewn on the seabed in the harbor of Alexandria, the second largest city of Egypt.

Dozens Of New Temples At Angkor Discovered With Satellite Data

ScienceDaily (Aug. 16, 2007) — Australian researchers using NASA technology to map the medieval city of Angkor have discovered at least 74 new temples. "We've mapped a huge settlement beyond the main temples at Angkor using radar imaging and other satellite data," said Damian Evans, a deputy director of the University of Sydney-based Greater Angkor Project. "This is the first time a complete, detailed and comprehensive map of Angkor has been presented," he said. Carpeted with vegetation and obscured by low-lying cloud, the ruins spill over 1,000 square kilometers outside the World Heritage site, located in present-day Cambodia, and are linked by a complex water management system.

Mr. Evans and colleagues from Australia, Cambodia, and France have worked for years to integrate information from hand-drawn maps, ground surveys, airborne photography, and ground-sensing radar provided by NASA. "The radar can sense differences in plant growth and moisture content that result from topographical variations of

less than a meter," Mr. Evans said. "We have identified over a thousand new manmade ponds and at least 74 long-lost temples, by correlating the radar data with on-the-ground sampling."

One single hydraulic system links the entire network, which appeared to provide Angkor's citizens with a stable water supply despite the unpredictable monsoon season. The system, thought to be purely decorative and ceremonial by many scholars for the past 30 years, may actually have been used for irrigation and the intensification of rice agriculture.

Mr. Evans said there "are also signs that the large-scale city engineered its own downfall by disrupting its local environment by expanding continuously into the surrounding forests and exposing the water management system to increased sedimentation and erratic water flows." This caused a radical reengineering of the landscape, and increased reliance on a massive and delicately balanced infrastructural network. The research and images are to be published by the PNAS.

Angkor Medieval 'Hydraulic City' Engineered Its Own Environmental Collapse

ScienceDaily (Sep. 12, 2007) — The architects of Cambodia's famed Angkor – the world's most extensive medieval "hydraulic city" – unwittingly engineered its environmental collapse, says research by UNSW scientists and a team of international scholars.

This revelation, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, supports a disputed hypothesis by French archaeologist Bernard-Philippe Groslier, who 50 years ago suggested that the vast medieval settlement of Angkor was defined, sustained, and ultimately overwhelmed by over-exploitation and the environmental impacts of a complex water-management network.

A succession of monarchs ruled the Angkor area from about 800 AD, producing the architectural masterpieces and sculpture now preserved as a World Heritage site. By the 13th century the civilization was in decline, and most of Angkor was abandoned by the early 15th century, apart from Angkor Wat, the main temple, which remained a Buddhist shrine.

Groslier surmised that a network of roads, canals and irrigation ponds established between the 9th and 16th centuries proved too vast to manage. He argued that extensive land clearing for rice fields supporting up to a million people living beyond Angkor's walled city produced serious ecological problems, including deforestation, topsoil degradation and erosion. Latter-day archaeologists disputed Groslier's view because he was unable to support his hypothesis with empirical data about the landscape beyond Angkor's central temple complex.

Using modern day aerial photography and high-resolution ground-sensing radar, the international research team, including UNSW's Professor Tony Milne, studied an area of nearly 3000 square kilometers, confirming Groslier's hypothesis by correlating their images to existing maps, topographic data sets and supporting information from extensive ground-based archaeological investigations. The team discovered more than 1000 man-made ponds and at least 74 more temple sites in the Angkor region, revealing ruins covering an area of 1000 square kilometers.

The study's radar images were acquired from NASA via an airborne imaging radar (AIRSAR) data instrument capable of accurately reconstructing surface structures through cloud cover. "The instrument can produce high-resolution images detecting surface structures as small as 20 cms in height and distinguish very subtle differences in surface vegetation and soil moisture," says Professor Milne from the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences. "This was of particular use in uncovering the archaeological landscape at Angkor. The distinctive spatial patterning of features manifests itself primarily in slight variations in topographic relief. This also influences the amplitude or 'brightness' of the radar signal returned to the sensor."

"Both the topographic relief and the surface brightness can be helpful in identifying the possible location of former roads, canals and rice fields," says Professor Milne. "When excavations were carried out, they prove to be the site of a canal or temple moat".

Archaeologists Uncover Ancient Governor's Palace In Turkey

ScienceDaily (Oct. 21, 2008) — Within the scope of an international rescue excavation project, a team of four archaeologists specialized in Middle Eastern affairs headed by Dr. Dirk Wicke (Institute of Egyptology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies) have unearthed parts of a Neo-Assyrian governor's palace dating back to the 9th to 7th century BCE in a two-month excavation program amongst the ruins on Ziyaret Tepe. The discoveries were extraordinary.

The site in the south-east of Turkey (Diyarbakir province) is at risk from the construction of the Ilisu Dam. For several years now it has been investigated by teams from the universities of Akron (Ohio), Cambridge, Munich and Istanbul (Marmara University) in a joint excavation project. Sponsorship by the research funds of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz in 2007 and 2008 gave its archaeologists the opportunity to become involved in this international and multi-disciplinary project. There are plans to continue the project for another three years.

The Upper Tigris region came under the sway of the Assyrians in the middle of the second millennium BCE. They established their provincial capital in Tushan which is identified today as Ziyaret Tepe. According to historical inscriptions by the Assyrian ruler Assurnasirpal II it is certain that the construction of an administrative palace in Tushan dates back to the year 882 BCE.

The excavation area of the Mainz team comprises the topmost parts of the acropolis, which must have been subsumed by the governor's palace. Parts of the private residential area and a courtyard have already been uncovered. The main rooms were well equipped - amongst the findings were colorful wall paintings and a facility for an oven on wheels. But the most unusual discovery was the excavation of cremations in pits within the extensive courtyard area. Five installations have been found to date, two of which were undisturbed and contained opulent burial goods. In the rectangular graves of approximately 1.50 m x 2.00 m in size, for example, a considerable layer of ash and burned bones as well as numerous bronze vessels, sumptuous stone and ivory receptacles, carved ivory objects, seals, and beads were found. These items indicate the high status of the people buried here. They are believed to have been residents of the palace. These objects are very similar to those found in the Assyrian capitals of Assur and Kalhu/Nimrud in modern day Iraq.

In addition to the cremation remains found this year, a rare treasure trove of more than 20 bronze vessels was discovered under the paving stones in the courtyard. These include a jug, a wine ladle, a sieve, several bowls and cups, mostly made from embossed bronze, which are now waiting to be restored. This will reveal their elaborate ornamentation which can already be made out under the corrosion layer.

The archaeological research project at Ziyaret Tepe (Turkey) undertaken by the Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies of Mainz University, which was set up 10 years ago, adds a new field archaeological portfolio alongside the excavations in Haft Tappeh and Tchogha Zanbil (Iran). It enables its students to work in the region in which they specialize and makes them part of an international research project.

Pre-Stonehenge Megaliths Linked to Death Rituals

By [Jennifer Viegas](#) | Fri Apr 9, 2010 05:13 AM ET

Nine recently discovered stone monuments in England predate Stonehenge but share similar construction and alignment with the famous megaliths. The recent finding of nine megaliths in Dartmoor, England suggests that monuments of Stonehenge played a key role in rituals, particularly related to death.

THE GIST:

- Nine megaliths in England share similar construction and alignment with Stonehenge.
- These monuments all mark the rising of the midsummer sun and the setting of midwinter sun.
- Burials and food remains found nearby suggest death-related rituals may have been held at the standing stones.

Nine megaliths in a remote part of Dartmoor, England, share features in common with Stonehenge, and may shed light on the meaning behind these prehistoric stone monuments, according to a report in the latest issue of *British Archaeology*. The Dartmoor megaliths, which were recently carbon-dated to around 3500 B.C., could predate Stonehenge, but both sites feature large standing stones that are aligned to mark the rising of the midsummer sun and the setting of the midwinter sun.

Yet another Dartmoor stone monument, called Drizzlecombe, shares the same orientation. The ancient Brits were not necessarily sun worshippers, however.

Archaeologist Mike Pitts, editor of the journal, told Discovery News that "huge quantities of barbecued juvenile pig bones" were found near Stonehenge, indicating that the animals were born in the spring and killed not far from the site "for pork feasting" in midwinter.

"The general feeling is that the sun was symbolizing or marking the occasion, rather than being the ritual focus itself, so it probably was not sun worship," added Pitts, who is author of the book "Hengeworld" and is one of the leading experts on British megaliths. This feasting was not just a meaningless pork party, and might have been more akin to a post-funeral wake today. Pitts believes the "solstice alignment phenomenon perhaps has something to do with death."

As he explains the setting sun and shorter days of winter would have represented the passage into the darkness of the underworld, and the reverse as the days start to lengthen again.

"At Stonehenge," he continued, "the dark navy-colored bluestones may themselves represent ancestors or spirits from the underworld, while the big orangey-pink (before weathering) sarsens could reflect summer and light."

The Dartmoor megaliths, described in a separate study in the current issue of the journal *Antiquity*, are now lying flat, since the stones in a row fell, or were individually pushed, over. The toppling was fortuitous for historians, however, since peat above and the below the stones permitted the carbon dating, which is extremely rare for such monuments.

Tom Greeves, who discovered the Dartmoor stones at a site called Cut Hill and is co-author of the *Antiquity* paper, said it is "remarkable that a previously unrecorded stone row with very large stones has been noted for the first time on one of Dartmoor's highest and remotest hills."

He added that to reach their location "requires a walk of about two hours from whatever direction." A ditched barrow (a mound of earth or stones) exists very close to the Cut Hill stones, providing further evidence that burials and possible death-related rituals might have taken place there.

At least 81 stone monuments have now been discovered nearby, with Cut Hill's being among the largest at over 705 feet in length. Both Greeves and Pitts said it's possible some of the monuments served different functions, such as marking land use zones.

The barrows, shared alignment, and other finds, however, indicate several standing stone monuments held ritualistic meaning.

Pitts likened their construction to the building of cathedrals and pyramids, and to the carving of the giant heads on Easter Island.

All, he said, are involved in the "defining of ritual spaces, giving ceremony and power distinctive physical presences, engaging large numbers by employing them in the construction processes, ceremonializing places beyond the mere moment of the rituals."

Pitts hopes that in the near future, archaeologists will carefully place the Cut Hill stones back into their upright positions, to further reveal what the monument looked like when it was first erected.

Prince's Palace Found in Volcanic Crater

By [Rossella Lorenzi](#), Feb 26, 2010

The residence of Sextus Tarquinius, the prince who sparked the revolt that led to the foundation of the Roman Republic, may have been found. The palace was found at the site where, according to legend, Romulus and Remus were educated.

THE GIST:

- The remains of an ancient palace have been found 12 miles outside of Rome. The palace likely belonged to the Etruscan prince Sextus Tarquinius and dates back to the sixth century B.C.

The remains of what might have been the residence of the Etruscan prince Sextus Tarquinius, son of the last legendary king of Rome Tarquinius Superbus (Tarquin the Proud), have been found on the slopes of an extinct volcanic crater about 12 miles from Rome, Italian archaeologists have announced.

The palace was discovered on the site of the ancient acropolis of Gabii, where, according to legend, Rome's mythical founders, Romulus and Remus, were educated. The building dates to the sixth century B.C and boasts the highest intact walls from the period ever found in Italy, standing at around 6.56 feet high.

"The dig has shown that the richly decorated monumental roof was dismantled, and the building filled with rubble. This has been a blessing, since it has allowed the palace to remain virtually intact," archaeologist Marco Fabbri of Rome's Tor Vergata University, told Discovery News.

Fabbri and colleagues from Rome's Archaeological Superintendency believe that the residence was furiously demolished, probably during the Roman revolt in 510 B.C. that ultimately led to the foundation of the Roman Republic.

The ongoing excavation has so far unearthed three, disconnected rooms which most likely opened onto a porticoed area. Under the building's exceptionally well-preserved floor slabs, eight round cells contained the remains of five stillborn babies. "We hope to unearth the rest of the residence this spring. In particular, we are looking to piece together the richly decorated roof," Fabbri said.

A terracotta fragment of the roof has already been found. It features the image of the Minotaur, an emblem of the Tarquins. "It's a strong piece of evidence to support the hypothesis that the edifice was built for the Tarquin family," Fabbri said. Indeed, the archaeologists do not rule out the hypothesis that the building was home to generations of Tarquins, and believe its last occupant was Sextus Tarquinius. The son of Rome's last king, the despotic Tarquinius Superbus, Sextus Tarquinius is notorious for having raped Lucretia, the virtuous wife of his cousin Tarquinius Collatinus.

The Roman historian Livy (Titus Livius), who lived 59 B.C.-A.D. 17, recounts that Lucretia, "overcome with sorrow and shame," stabbed herself after the attack. Her death sparked the revolt that put to an end the kingship of Tarquin the Proud and Sextus Tarquinius' life. "The people of Gabii murdered Sextus after he entered the town. It is not a coincidence that the lavish building is intentionally destroyed around this time," Fabbri said.

According to Nicola Terrenato, professor of classical archaeology at the University of Michigan, there is no doubt that the ruins belonged to the cultural context of the late, archaic king-cum-tyrants in central Italy. "Even if the precise attribution was not 100 percent correct, this would not detract much from the scholarly value of this wonderful discovery," Terrenato, who currently heads another Gabii archaeological project told Discovery News.

"Gabii's archaeological potential is enormous. It is one of the largest cities in Latium, and it is completely unencumbered by later buildings. When one thinks that what has been excavated yet is far less than 10 percent of the city, it is clear that many more surprises are in store," Terrenato said.

Archaeologists Find Cache Of Tablets In 2,700-Year Old Turkish Temple

ScienceDaily (Aug. 11, 2009) — Excavations led by a University of Toronto archaeologist at the site of a recently discovered temple in southeastern Turkey have uncovered a cache of cuneiform tablets dating back to the Iron Age period between 1200 and 600 BCE. Found in the temple's cella, or 'holy of holies', the tablets are part of a possible archive that may provide insights into Assyrian imperial aspirations.

The assemblage appears to represent a Neo-Assyrian renovation of an older Neo-Hittite temple complex, providing a rare glimpse into the religious dimension of Assyrian imperial ideology," says Timothy Harrison, professor of near eastern archaeology in the Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations and director of U of T's Tayinat Archaeological Project (TAP). "The tablets, and the information they contain, may possibly highlight the imperial ambitions of one of the great powers of the ancient world, and its lasting influence on the political culture of the Middle East." The cella also contained gold, bronze and iron implements, libation vessels and ornately decorated ritual objects.

Partially uncovered in 2008 at Tell Tayinat, capital of the Neo-Hittite Kingdom of Palastin, the structure of the building where the tablets were found preserves the classic plan of a Neo-Hittite temple. It formed part of a sacred precinct that once included monumental stelae carved in Luwian (an extinct Anatolian language once spoken in Turkey) hieroglyphic script, but which were found by the expedition smashed into tiny shard-like fragments.

"Tayinat was destroyed by the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BCE, and then transformed into an Assyrian provincial capital, equipped with its own governor and imperial administration," says Harrison. "Scholars have long speculated that the reference to Calneh in Isaiah's oracle against Assyria alludes to Tiglath-pileser's devastation of Kunulua – ie, Tayinat. The destruction of the Luwian monuments and conversion of the sacred precinct into an Assyrian religious complex may represent the physical manifestation of this historic event."

The temple was later burned in an intense fire and found filled with heavily charred brick and wood which, ironically, contributed to the preservation of the finds recovered from its inner chambers. "While those responsible for this later destruction are not yet known, the remarkable discoveries preserved in the Tayinat temple clearly record a pivotal moment in its history," says Harrison. "They promise a richly textured view of the cultural and ethnic contest that has long characterized the turbulent history of this region."

TAP is an international project, involving researchers from a dozen countries, and more than 20 universities and research institutes. It operates in close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture of Turkey, and provides research opportunities and training for both graduate and undergraduate students. The project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP), and receives support from the University of Toronto.

Southern Wall Of Jerusalem Discovered On Mount Zion

ScienceDaily (Nov. 11, 2008) — An exciting discovery in Jerusalem constituting extraordinary remains of the wall of the city from the time of the Second Temple (second century BCE-70 CE) that was built by the Hasmonean kings and was destroyed during the Great Revolt, and also the remains of a city wall from the Byzantine period (324-640 CE) which was built on top of it, were uncovered in an extensive excavation that is currently underway on Mount Zion.

The lines of these fortifications delineated Jerusalem from the south in periods when the ancient city had reached its largest size.

The excavation has been in progress for the past year and a half, under the direction of archaeologist Yehiel Zelinger of the Israel Antiquities Authority, in cooperation with the Nature and Parks Authority and with financial support provided by the Ir David Foundation.

The project is being implemented as part of the master plan for the Jerusalem City Wall National Park, the purpose of which is to preserve the region around the Old City of Jerusalem as an open area for tourism. In the future the remains of the ancient city walls will be incorporated in a promenade that will encircle the southern side of Mount Zion and will continue along the northern bank of Gai Ben Hinnom and terminate in the City of David.

The lines of the wall that delineate Mount Zion from the west and the south were first discovered and excavated at the end of the nineteenth century (1894-1897) by the Palestine Exploration Fund, under the direction of the archaeologist Frederick Jones Bliss and his architect assistant, Archibald Dickie. The work methods they employed involved the excavation of shafts that were linked by subterranean tunnels which ran along the outer face of the city walls.

Over the years their shafts and tunnels have filled up with soil and a year and a half ago when archaeologists were asked to determine the location of the areas that were excavated one hundred years ago they were unsuccessful in doing so. By cross-referencing the plans of the old excavation with updated maps of the area from today, archaeologist Yehiel Zelinger was able to locate the tunnel which the British expedition had dug. There remained in it “souvenirs” that were left behind by the early excavators in the form of one of the laborer’s shoes, the top of a gas light which was used to illuminate the tunnels, as well as fragments of beer and wine bottles from 120 years ago.

According to Yehiel Zelinger, excavation director on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, “Having located the two city walls on Mount Zion corroborates our theory regarding the expansion of the city toward the south during these two periods, when Jerusalem reached its largest size. In the Second Temple period the city, with the temple at its center, was a focal point for Jewish pilgrimage from all over the ancient world and in the Byzantine period it attracted Christian pilgrims who came in the footsteps of the story of the life and death of their messiah. The exposure of the Hasmonean city wall and the line of fortifications from the Byzantine period, which is dated 400 years later and is right on top of the former, prove that this is the most advantageous topographic location for the defense of the city. The artifacts indicate that in spite of the fact that the builders of the Byzantine wall were unaware of the existence of the wall from the time of the Second Temple they constructed their wall precisely along the same route”. Zelinger adds, “The fact that after 2,100 years the remains of the first city wall were preserved to a height of three meters is amazing. This is one of the most beautiful and complete sections of construction in the Hasmonean building style to be found in Jerusalem”.

Royals Weren't Only Builders Of Maya Temples, Archaeologist Finds

ScienceDaily (Feb. 26, 2008) — An intrepid archaeologist is well on her way to dislodging the prevailing assumptions of scholars about the people who built and used Maya temples.

From the grueling work of analyzing the “attributes,” the nitty-gritty physical details of six temples in Yalbac, a Maya center in the jungle of central Belize – and a popular target for antiquities looters – primary investigator Lisa Lucero is building her own theories about the politics of temple construction that began nearly two millennia ago. Her findings from the fill, the mortar and other remnants of jungle-wrapped structures lead her to believe that kings weren’t the only people building or sponsoring Late Classic period temples (from about 550 to 850), the stepped pyramids that rose like beacons out of the southern lowlands as early as 300 B.C.

“Preliminary results from Yalbac suggest that royals and nonroyals built temples,” said Lucero, a professor of anthropology at the University of Illinois. In fact, judging by the varieties of construction and materials, any number of different groups – nobles, priests and even commoners – may have built temples, Lucero said, and their temples undoubtedly served their different purposes and gods. That different groups had the wherewithal – the will, resources and freedom – to build temples suggests to Lucero that “the Maya could choose which temples to worship in and support; they had a voice in who succeeded politically.”

Yalbac's location on the eastern periphery of the southern Maya lowlands and its distance from regional centers may explain its particular dynamics and its "relative political independence," Lucero said.

The archaeologist's new propositions challenge academic thinking on Maya temples. "Maya scholars have basically assumed that rulers built all the temples," she said. "No one has questioned this, although cross-cultural comparison alone would suggest otherwise."

To be sure, the historic record is largely silent on why the Maya, a complex culture with many mysteries still to unravel, had several temples in any given center, which is why Lucero, among others, believes that archaeologists must seek answers from the buildings themselves and "construct more creative ways to assess what temple attributes can reveal about their non-material qualities."

While largely unknown – except to looters and loggers – Yalbac is a rich site. In addition to the six temples, it also includes two plazas, a large royal residence or acropolis, and a ball court. Several of the temples are likely royal, three likely residential or memorial. None so far has been cleared of surface debris. Only one of the temples has escaped looting. Looters, ironically, paved the way for Lucero's work to map, excavate and analyze Yalbac's Late Classic period temples.

Over the years, thieves have carved nine trenches into the site in their pursuit of priceless booty. These same trenches have become Lucero's access routes to the temples. Still, in order to reduce additional invasion and damage to the historic site, Belizean authorities restrict her excavation beyond the trenches. Some of the evidence she is accumulating is in the tons of fill – cobbles, boulders and stone pebbles, some in the tons of mortar – marl, plaster, and various kinds of loam.

Lucero – either on her own or leading groups of archaeology field school students – has been able to map the Yalbac site, including its structures, looters' trenches and stelae – upright marker stones, sometimes inscribed, erected by the Maya over the millennia. Over the years, she has dated ceramics found at Yalbac from about 300 B.C. through A.D. 900; her plaza test pit excavations have exposed floors that date to the same period, "a typical occupation history for Maya centers." "We also have placed test units throughout the site to get an idea as to monumental architecture construction histories and functions."

To date she has taken four New Mexico State University field school classes to Yalbac. She will take her first U. of I. field school class this May for a six-week hands-on course in archaeological survey and excavation. Lucero joined Illinois' department of anthropology last August, after a decade at NMSU. The focus this summer will be on profiling the temple looters' trenches and test excavations. Lucero and 10 undergraduates and two graduate assistants will collect data from the six temples in order to compare temple frequency, size differences, location, layout, accessibility, history of use, construction patterns, surface decoration and ritual deposits.

"We also will expand the trenches to see if the looters missed caches – artifacts consisting of shell, jade, ceramics, lithics, etc. – that may provide clues as to temple function and purpose."

Lucero doesn't spend much time worrying about looters. "While looting is still a problem, the relatively new management of the land-owning company, Yalbac Cattle and Ranch Co., which logs the 200,000 acres they own, have armed patrols that protect the area from illegal poachers, loggers and looters." Because Yalbac is directly behind the guardhouse, she said, "the site is very well protected, as are the students and staff." "We have been surveying the area for years without any problems," she said. "Often the loggers show us sites they have found in the process of searching for mahogany, cedar and rosewood."

Lucero's latest findings are detailed in the journal *Latin American Antiquity* in an article titled "Classic Maya Temples, Politics, and the Voice of the People." Lucero is the leading expert on Yalbac and the sole authorized archaeologist on the site, authorized by the Belize Institute of Archaeology. She has conducted research in the area since 1997, and on the Yalbac site since 2002. The work Lucero is doing will provide the basis for her next book project, an exploration of temples as text.

Donner Party Ate Family Dog, Probably Not People

Did ethnic prejudice spur the now infamous legend of the Donner Party's cannibalism?

By [Jennifer Viegas](#) | Thu Apr 15, 2010

THE GIST:

- Analysis of bones discovered at the Donner Party campsite found no evidence for cannibalism.
- The members did resort to consuming the family dog, cattle, deer and horses.
- Slate pieces and china shards reveal the members tried to live with dignity.

The Donner Party, a group of 19th century American pioneers who became snowbound in the Sierra Nevada and supposedly resorted to cannibalism, may not have eaten each other after all, suggests a new study on bones found at the Donner's Alder Creek campsite hearth in California. Detailed analysis of the bones instead found that the 84 Donner Party members consumed a family dog, "Uno," along with cattle, deer and horses. Cattle, likely eaten after the animals themselves died of starvation, appear to have been their mainstay.

The study is the first to show that the Donner members successfully hunted deer, despite the approximately 30 feet of snow on the ground during the winter of 1846-1847. The horses are thought to have come from relief parties that arrived in February and could have left a few of their animals behind. The paper, which will be published in the July issue of the journal *American Antiquity*, is also the first to prove the theory that the stranded individuals ate their pet dog. "They were boiling hides, chewing on leather and trying desperately to survive," project leader Gwen Robbins told Discovery News. "We can see that the bones were processed so heavily -- boiled and crushed down in order to extract any kind of nutrients from them."

Robbins, an assistant professor of biological anthropology at Appalachian State University, and her team produced thin sections from the hearth bones and examined them under high magnification in order to measure each basic structural unit and link the bones to particular animals. No human bones were identified. "What we have demonstrated is that there is no evidence for cannibalism," said Robbins. "If the Donner Party did resort to cannibalism, the bones were treated in a different way (such as buried), or they were placed on the hearth last and could have since eroded."

Victorian Era journalists, who embellished the accounts provided by the 47 survivors, largely fueled the legend of the Donner Party cannibalism. The survivors, 11 men and 36 women and children, fiercely denied the allegations. Although one man, Louis Keseberg, filed and won a defamation suit, he was still forever known as Keseberg the Cannibal. "Racism might have played a part," Robbins said. "Keseberg was an immigrant, and negative sentiment existed toward some recent immigrants then."

The trash and debris left around the Donner Party hearth in the spring of 1847 show that, in spite of their very difficult circumstances, the members tried to maintain a sense of decorum and normalcy. "Slates suggest they had the children sitting and doing their lessons, while shards of china indicate they were eating off of plates, retaining some dignity and hoping for the future," Robbins explained.

University of Montana anthropologist Kelly Dixon worked on the initial study that first documented the hearth and bones.

"The tale of the Donner Party has focused on the tragedy of survival cannibalism," said Dixon, "yet the archaeological remains inspire us to consider more significant implications, such as what it was like to be human, doing whatever possible to survive in one of the snowbound camps."

Robbins and her colleagues are currently writing a book about the Donner Party for the University of Oklahoma Press. It is scheduled for release next year.

See a film on the project at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgKSvkLNgXI&feature=email>

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