

April 2009

Archaeology:
A Non-Renewable
Resource



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A CHAPTER OF THE FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, April 15, 2009, 6:00 PM

Jack J. Geldbart Auditorium, Selby Public Library, 1331 First Street, Sarasota

Professor Gabrielle Vail

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Anthropology, New College of Florida
Weaving and Worldview in Prehispanic Mesoamerica

On Wednesday, April 15, Professor Gabrielle Vail will give a presentation to Time Sifters entitled "Weaving and Worldview in Prehispanic Mesoamerica." Professor Vail writes:

"In both ancient and contemporary Mesoamerican cultures, weaving is linked to ideas of world creation and the conception and birth of children. Although archaeological examples of prehispanic textiles from Mesoamerica are extremely rare, numerous other lines of evidence exist that offer substantial information about textile manufacture and the importance of cloth in economic, political, and ritual spheres. Our knowledge comes from various sources, including implements excavated archaeologically that were used for weaving (such as spindle whorls and bone tools), representations in two-dimensional art, and figurines that portray weavers, deities with weaving implements, and woven garments of various types. The focus of the presentation will be on how weaving fits into the worldview of Maya, Aztec, and Mixtec cultures and what textiles can tell us about the cosmology of the peoples of prehispanic Mesoamerica prior to Spanish contact."

Dr. Vail specializes in the study of prehispanic Maya culture, specifically as it is understood through hieroglyphic books called codices that feature texts pertaining to astronomical and divinatory topics. Her Time Sifters lecture will provide a preview of some of the material that will be presented in the exhibition

Woven Threads Through Time: Maya Women, Weavers, and Their Stories, curated by Dr. Vail at the Weedon Island Preserve in St. Petersburg. The exhibit highlights contemporary Maya textiles,

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Weaver Using Backstrap Loom

Madrid Codex, 15th century

<http://www.buetes.net/>

Image made available courtesy of Prof. Vail

MEETING CALENDAR

May 20, 2009

Student Award Winners

Winners of the Time Sifters Student Competition will present their research.

Time Sifters meets the third Wednesday of each month from September to May, except December

(April Meeting – cont. from page 1)

interviews with master weavers from highland Chiapas and Guatemala, and a rare look at hieroglyphic Maya texts dating from the seventh through fifteenth centuries focusing on the lives of royal Maya women and their deity patrons.

Professor Vail adds:

“We invite you to join us for the exhibit opening on May 3, 2009, 1 - 4 PM.”

[Note: Time Sifters is offering a special field trip for members and guests, on Saturday, May 23, to Weedon Island Preserve, to see the Weaving Exhibit as well as the other sights of the Preserve and of scenic Weedon Island. See Box at bottom of this page.]

Professor Vail received her B.A. From New College of the University of South Florida, and her M.A. and Ph. D. from Tulane University.

She has done collaborative research with colleagues on the Borgia group of codices from central Mexico and postclassic murals from the Maya area, as well as ethnohistoric documents from the Maya region. These studies contribute to our understanding of the ideology and religion of Mesoamerica and of interactions among Maya and central Mexican cultures during the Postclassic period.

Her numerous scholarly publications include:

2000 (co-editor with M. Macri). "Language and Dialect Variation in the Maya Hieroglyphic Script." Special Issue of *Written Language and Literacy*, Vol. 3, No. 1.

2004 (co-editor with A. Aveni). *The Madrid Codex: New Approaches to Understanding an Ancient Maya Manuscript*. University Press of Colorado, Boulder.

2006 (co-editor with Timothy Knowlton and Markus Eberl). *The Bricker Almanac: A Festschrift in Honor of Harvey and Victoria Bricker*. Special Issue of *Human Mosaic*, Vol. 36, No.1.

For further information about the Exhibit, consult the website:

**Woven Threads through Time:
Maya Women, Weavers and Their Stories**

at:

<http://www.buetes.net/index.htm>

For further information about the Weedon Island Preserve, as well as the Weedon Island culture, see:

<http://www.weedonislandcenter.org/>

http://tampa.about.com/od/natureoutdoors/p/Weedon_Island.htm

<http://www.baysoundings.com/sum03/weedon.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weedon_Island_culture

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Renewal in Time Sifters Archaeology Society is due the month that you joined or previously renewed. The renewal month is noted on the mailing label of the newsletter. Please check now to see when you should renew.

TIME SIFTERS FIELD TRIP

Saturday, May 23, 2009 to Weedon Island Preserve

See the exhibition *Woven Threads Through Time: Maya Women, Weavers, and Their Stories* and the other sights of scenic Weedon Island.

Field trip is open to Time Sifters members and their guests.

Signup and further information at Time Sifters Membership Meeting, April 15, 2009

1.5 MILLION YEAR OLD FOOTPRINTS, SIZE 9

A spectacular set of ancient footprints has recently been discovered in Kenya. Left by an early form of Homo erectus, the prints were made by a foot with arch and toe structure highly similar to a modern size 9, despite being made 1.5 million years ago. Accordingly these prints will be extraordinarily important in understanding the origins of human walking and running.

<http://www.earthmagazine.org/earth/article/1dd-7d9-2-1a>

http://news.yahoo.com/s/livescience/20090226/sc_livescience/theshoefits15millionyearoldhumanfootprintsfound

MORE VIRTUAL REALITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL WEBSITES

Last month's Time Sifters newsletter discussed the flight over and through Ancient Rome which is available on Google Earth. If you wish to explore additional "virtual reality" or other innovative archaeological websites, your Editor suggests the following (in keeping with the theme of the April meeting, these all represent archaeological sites in the Western Hemisphere):

1. Ceren Web Resource:

<http://s92197169.onlinehome.us/ceren/CONTENT/INDEX.HTML>

Ceren, sometimes called the "Pompeii of the New World," was a village in El Salvador buried by a volcanic eruption in 595 AD. The above site contains realistic 3D models of some of the buildings.

Editor's suggestions for viewing the website: You may have to disable pop-ups on your computer, as well as download several plug-ins if you don't have them already. Look for the pop-up window in order to navigate. Sometimes this pop-up seems to hide under other open windows, so if you can't find it, try closing other open windows in your browser.

For more about Ceren, see this website:

<http://archaeology.about.com/od/elsalvador/a/ceren.htm>

2. Chetro Ketl Great Kiva:

<http://sipapu.ucsb.edu/great.kiva/elite/index.html>

Explore inside a Great Kiva, an underground chamber of the Chaco Anasazi.

3. 3d Views of Chichen Itza

Another innovative use of the computer is to display 3d images through the use of red/blue glasses. If you have such a pair of glasses (one lens red and the other blue), you can view some nineteenth century stereoscopic pictures of Chichen Itza, photographed by Augustus Le Plongeon. These have been converted to red/blue 3d, by John W. Hoopes, Department of Anthropology, University of Kansas:

<http://web.ku.edu/~hoopes/506/LePlongeon.htm>

Red/blue glasses are available cheaply online, or you can follow the instructions on the above website on how to make your own.

In future newsletters, we plan to recommend other websites which use virtual reality or other innovative ways to view archaeological sites. Please feel free to share your favorites with the Editor.

BOARD ELECTION AT MAY MEETING

The annual election for the Time Sifters Board of Directors will take place at the May meeting. All members of the current board are willing to serve next year. If any other member of Time Sifters would like to serve, please contact a current board member.

MARCH MEETING

Thanks to Phyllis Kolianos for her presentation to Time Sifters on March 18 on Early Maritime Travel and Habitation on Old Tampa Bay. The 40' canoe recently discovered on the shores of Weedon Island must have been an impressive sight when it was paddled (or poled) across Tampa Bay 1100 years ago. Many other ancient canoes have been discovered in Florida, but all were used on lakes, not open water like this one. And the others are only a fraction of the size. Using techniques borrowed from marine salvage, Ms. Kolianos and her crew created a cofferdam which held back the waters of Tampa Bay long enough to partially uncover, measure and photograph this canoe, as well as take a sample for dating. Size and expense prohibited removal of the boat from its site, so it was covered up again, perhaps to await the time when further archaeological work may cast further light on its structure and use.

CALENDAR

Sunday, May 3, 1 – 4 PM

Exhibit Opening - *Woven Threads Through Time: Maya Women, Weavers, and Their Stories*

Weedon Island Preserve

May 8-9, Pensacola

FAS annual meeting

email questions to ebenchle@uwf.edu

Saturday, May 23

Time Sifters Field Trip to Weedon Island Preserve

See article, bottom of page 2

MEMBERSHIP

Individual: \$20 Family: \$30

Sustaining: \$50 Student: \$10

Make checks payable to *Time Sifters, Inc.*, and mail to Time Sifters, PO Box 5283, Sarasota FL 34277, or pay at meetings.

TIME SIFTERS, INC.

PO Box 5283

Sarasota FL 34277

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The Board of Directors meets the second Wednesday of the month, from August through May.

Please renew your membership before the date on the mailing label.