

Time Sifters

January 2014



A Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

PO Box 5283, Sarasota FL 34277

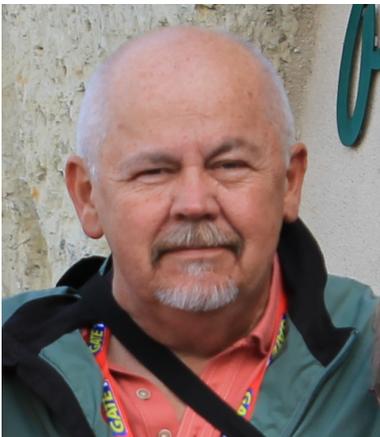
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NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, January 15, 2014, 6:00 PM

Selby Library, Downtown Sarasota

Darwin "Smitty" Smith Archaeology and World Heritage: The Year in Review



In what could become a yearly tradition, Time Sifters newest board member will present the archaeological year in review. He'll be talking about the new Unesco World Heritage Sites including Al Zurbarah Archaeological Site in Qatar; the Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese in the Ukraine; Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe, Germany; Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, China; The Hill Forts of Rajasthan, India; and The Wooden Tserkvas of the Carpathian Region.

Then he will cover some of the headline-grabbing discoveries of 2013. Richard III (see a related article by Uzi Baram on page 3); the royal tomb of Mayan Queen Kalomt'e K'abel; The Killian Shelter: a WWI trench excavation; the City of Thonis-Heracleion, Egypt; the raising of the Ironclad CSS Georgia; and London's Pompeii. It is sure to be a fun and interesting program.

Smitty was born in Gettysburg PA and brought up in Washington DC. He lived in the DC area until two years ago when he moved to Bradenton. He currently works for Sprint as a Senior Proposal Manager. Before that, Smitty worked for over 25 years for Honeywell Federal Systems where he was the Manager of the Graphic Arts and Audio Visual Department.

His passions are:

Archaeology ... He loves history and is a rabid reader of anything he can get his hands on about history and archeology. He joined Time Sifters two years ago and is a Board Member. He hopes to realize his goal of participating on a dig for the first time in 2014.

Travel ... He loves to travel and is currently working his way through Europe having visited Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Italy and Malta. He has also visited Iceland, Canada, and Mexico.

Photography ... He is an award winning professional photographer.

Soccer ... He is a fan of Manchester United of the EPL.

Car Racing ... He raced for four years until the money ran out now he watches from the fence!

Notes from a Time Sifter

The arrival of the New Year is celebrated world-wide as a time of renewal, a chance to begin again and do it better this time. The New Year was always associated with an auspicious time of year, usually associated with the planting or harvesting cycles. The first recorded New Year's celebration was in Babylon five thousand years ago. It was an eleven-day festival called Akitu which took place in the spring when barley was harvested. This was serious renewal involving the reading of their story of creation, purification rituals and symbolically removing the king's powers. During the ritual, a priest slapped the king's cheek and pulled his ears hard enough to bring tears to his eyes to make sure that the king was truly contrite. Then the king had to humbly crouch down before a statue of the deity (Marduk) and vow that he had not neglected his duties nor had he committed sins. The priest then slapped the king's cheek again and restored his kingly powers, assured by the king's tears that Marduk was pleased. The following days were dedicated to processions and celebrations that included lots of food and beer (ANET).

The Egyptian pharaoh did not have to submit to such humiliation because he was divine, and as such he led the New Year celebration which took place in late summer when the Nile began to flood bringing life-giving water to the rainless valley. The first day of the month was considered the birthday of the sun god (Ra-Horahy), a time to remember dead ancestors whose resurrection was symbolized by the new leaves that appeared on dormant vines. Flowers were floated in the river and gifts were offered to the god of the Nile (Hapy) to honor this nurturer of life, and to encourage a good flood (Gebel el-Silsila inscription). Hymns were sung and a great procession was led by priests who were accompanied by trumpets and drums. They took the pharaoh and his family to boats that carried them down the Nile from Karnak to Luxor, a journey of about two miles. At Karnak, they would reenact the king's coronation and everyone was treated to lots of food, beer and wine (Pyramid Texts). This celebration lasted for several days before the pharaoh returned to the main temple at Karnak to begin the normal activities of the year

The earliest Romans celebrated the New Year at the end of the autumn planting season (during the winter solstice) with feasts and drinks dedicated to Saturn, the god of the harvest. Romans exchanged good wishes and small gifts, people gave generous donations to the poor and executions were cancelled. By the early first century c. e., it had become a rowdy public holiday lasting several days with banquets and games. First-century c. e. poet Gaius Valerius Catullus said the Saturnalia celebration was "the best of times," and poet Lucian (120-180 c. e.) describes it as a time when "no business [was] allowed. Drinking and being drunk, noise and games of dice... singing naked, clapping ..." were part of the celebration.

All of these New Year celebrations were associated with the growing season but calendars were based on the phases of the moon which happens 12 times a year but is five days short of the solar year. Julius Caesar corrected that with the Julian calendar and dedicated the first month after the winter solstice to the god Janus, the god of gates, doors and new beginnings. Thus began the first day of the New Year on January 1, and calendars listed January as the first month of the year. Yet most European states continued to begin the New Year at the spring equinox until the 16th century when Pope Gregory decreed January 1 as New Year's Day (History.com). None of that, however, changed the celebratory rituals. Thankfully, we have eliminated "singing naked" (mostly) and the slapping our leaders, but the exchange of good wishes with plenty to drink continues to mark modern New Year festivities as it has for the last five thousand years.



Why Finding an English King Matters for the Archaeology of Sarasota/Manatee

Uzi Baram

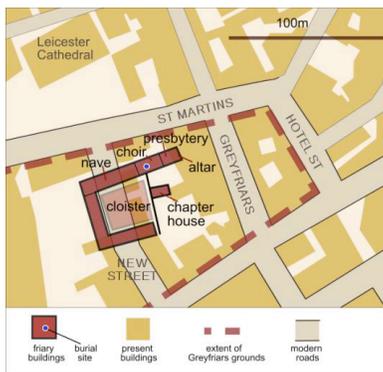
Professor of Anthropology, New College of Florida

The Top Archaeology Story of 2013

In February 2013, a partnership of academics and avocational historians announce recovering the skeletal remains of King Richard III (reigned 1483-1485), British royalty probably best remembered through a Shakespearian play. King Richard was killed at the end of the War of the Roses, replaced by Henry Tudor who became Henry VII, and his body buried in the church of the Grey Friars; the friary was dissolved by Henry VIII and the church erased. The archaeologists together with the King Richard III Society found the burial site with a skeleton that matched the age, sex, and stature of King Richard III. News accounts celebrated the excavation as a major discovery (for details, see University of Leicester's website <http://www.le.ac.uk/richardiii/>).



Portrait of Richard III of England (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Richard_III_earliest_surviving_portrait.jpg)



Small Blue Dot Represents Location of King Richard III's Remains (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Greyfriars_Leicester_site.svg)



In December 2013 the editors of Archaeology magazine listed the project as the top archaeology story of the year, stating: "The most celebrated archaeology story in recent memory is the 2013 confirmation that bones thought to belong to King Richard III, found beneath a parking lot in Leicester, were, in fact, those of the infamous English monarch. Naturally, it leads our Top 10 Discoveries of 2013" (see <http://www.archaeology.org/issues/116-1401/features/1573-richard-iii-homo-erectus-angkor-wat-jamestown>)

King Tut's tomb, Pompeii, Otzi the Ice Man found in the Alps, and now King Richard III are the popular successes of archaeology. The findings make for great headlines as excavations reveal specific details for individuals and offer tactile evidence of particular moments from the past. But while these are the headline-producing, most of archaeology addresses general questions – the evolution of modern humans, rising sea levels and human responses, the peopling of the Americas, the rise and demise of ancient civilizations, among many other anthropological concerns. The Leicester project offers an opportunity to reflect on the contemporary intersection of excavations, archaeology, and heritage.

The search for specific antiquities started the discipline in the early modern period but for the last half-century professional archaeologists have labeled the approach, dismissively, as antiquarianism. Yet antiquarianism, although rarely under that label, still fits popular perceptions of the field. The search for King Richard III illustrates a productive pathway that meets disciplinary and popular interests.

Archaeology and History in the News

The nuances for the Leicester project deserve attention: the archaeologists sustained an academic research design while partnering with the King Richard III Society. The Society, according to its mission statement (<http://www.richardiii.net/aboutus.php>), "aims to promote, in every possible way, research into the life and times of Richard III, and to secure a reassessment of the material relating to this period, and of the role of this monarch in English history." The mission statement goes on to recognize that its goals "appear to be an extraordinary phenomenon - a society dedicated to reclaiming the reputation of a king of England who died over 500 years ago and who reigned for little more than two years." There have been vigorous academic debates over the role of the public in archaeology, particularly as community-based approaches have developed and flourished. Read the full article at www.timesifters.org.



2014 MEETING CALENDAR

January 14, 6pm: Lecture at Selby - Speaker to be announced

February 19, 6pm: Dr. Robert Tykot - Bronze Age Sardinia

March 19, 6pm: Student Grant Winners

April 16: To be announced

May 21: To be announced

Selby Library: downtown Sarasota, Central Ave and 2nd Street

Membership

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