



JANUARY, 1998

# The Profile

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY • HOUSTON • TEXAS

## JANUARY MEETING

Friday, January 9, 1998 - 7:30 PM  
M D Anderson Hall  
University of St. Thomas

Speaker: Tom Middlebrook  
President  
Texas Archeological Society

Topic: The Saga of a Reformed 'Pot-aholic'

## LABORATORY SCHEDULE

Mondays, January 12 and January 26  
7:00 - 9:00 PM

Location: Rice University Archeology Lab  
Sewell Hall, Room 103

## HAS LIBRARY

Open between 6:30 and 7:25 PM before the  
monthly meeting, or by appointment. Call  
Jim Wells at (713) 944-4276.

## NEW LOCATION:

Little Archaeology Gallery  
3909 Yoakum Boulevard  
(adjacent to Hughes House)

Please send items for *The Profile* to:

Jeanette Siciliano  
12462 Barryknoll, Houston 77024  
(713) 795-4691  
e-mail: JnetteB@aol.com

## MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL APPLICATION

Houston Archeological Society, P.O. Box 6751, Houston, Tx 77265-6751

Please complete and mail with check for correct amount to the above address.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership: New Member      Please Circle one: Single - \$15.00      Contributing - \$30.00+  
Renewal      Family - \$20.00      Student - \$5.00

## ALL MEMBERS MUST SIGN THE FOLLOWING PLEDGE:

"I pledge that I will not intentionally violate the terms and conditions of any present or future federal, state, or local statute concerning cultural resources, or engage in the practice of buying or selling artifacts for commercial purposes, or engage in the willful destruction or distortion of archeological data, or disregard proper archeological field techniques".

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I would like to thank all who are participating in the field work at site 41FB3. Lately the weather has make it a real challenge but the persistence of all those involved have kept the project on track. The work is slow and tedious but if we can stick with it I believe we will be able to add even more to the archeological data on the people who lived in the area during Archaic times. I think we also need to keep in mind the patience and cooperation of the landowner.

---Joe Hudgins

## CONFERENCE

1998 East Texas Archeological Conference

Saturday, February 7, 1998  
9:00 - 5:00

Robert R. Muntz Library Room 401  
The University of Texas at Tyler  
University Blvd. Tyler, Texas

The agenda of the Sixth Annual Conference will consist of paper presentations in the morning, and a guest speaker in the afternoon. This year's speaker is Alston V. Thoms, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Environmental Archaeology at Texas A&M University. He will give a presentation on recent archeological investigations that he directed at the site of Camp Ford, a Civil War era prisoner of war camp located within Tyler. A tour of the site will be lead by Dr. Thoms after his presentation.

There will be a registration fee of \$3.00 per person. For more information contact: Bo Nelson, Rt. 4, Box 259 B-1, Pittsburg, Texas 75686. Phone - (903) 856-5291. e-mail: RBoNelson@aol.com.

## LECTURES

### AIA

Archaeological Institute of America  
Herring Hall Auditorium, Rice University

Tuesday, February 3, 1998 - 8:00 pm

*Excavations at Aila: a Roman Port on the Red Sea*  
S. Thomas Parker  
North Carolina State University

### Friends of Archaeology

Jones Auditorium, St. Thomas University

Sunday, January 25, 1998 - 5:00 pm

*Ancient Shipwrecks in Turkey*  
Dr. Donald A. Frey  
Vice-President  
Institute of Nautical Archaeology

## ISSUES AND VIEWS

### GENETICS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

A 'consultative meeting' on the 'Genetic History and Geography of Ireland' was held at the Royal Irish Academy on 31 October, 1997. The programme included evidence from the archaeological record, linguistics, genetics and a salutary warning from the field of medical epidemiology. The theme of the meeting was the question 'Can we find the origins of the Irish?' and the hidden (or thinly disguised) agenda of 'Can we use genetics and study of ancient DNA to do it?'. The final delivery was the outlining of a research programme seeking 4.2 million pounds. The basis of the research would be the examination of ancient human skeletal remains to establish whether supposed 'invasions' actually happened - probably the most famous of these being the coming of the Celts. Did they make an incursion into Ireland and, if so, from where? Ultimately Ireland, being an island, had to have people coming from outside. This programme is fraught with difficulties. On the archaeological side is the lack of extensive prehistoric

### ISSUES .....(continued)

material. Firstly, DNA cannot be extracted from cremated material, thereby rendering useless large sections of prehistory when cremation was the predominant method of disposal of the dead. Secondly, prehistoric skeletal material is a rare commodity and is often not in the best state of preservation. In fact, from 1000 BC up until AD 400 the population of Ireland is represented by only 20 or so skeletons, not all firmly dated or complete or from a definitive context. On the technical side, geneticists admit that prehistoric material would be too fragile to examine with any hope of getting a meaningful result. Therefore they propose to examine the Early Christian population, large numbers of whose skeletons are available, 'because this population would reflect earlier populations, as it would have a largely untouched gene pool'. This thinking is fundamentally flawed and shows naivety and generalisation on a grand scale. It is intended that the study would stop prior to the Viking raidings - obviously no need to take into account rampant Nordic genes, what with all that looting, pillaging and eh...doing what Vikings did best. The reason given by geneticists is that, after c.AD 800, incursions, invasions, plantations and resettlement of refugees in the form of Vikings, Anglo-Normans, Welsh, Flemings, English, Scots, Huguenots, Romanians, etc. are well documented and might be too *political* to draw conclusions from this later period in our population palimpsest.

For comparison the programme needs a large DNA sample of the present population of Ireland, to be collected by using non-invasive mouth swabs. This can then be compared with other current British and European populations. However, the examination of current people is charged with political intensity. Words such as race, culture, nationality and ethnic identity are all extremely emotive and very powerful in the wrong hands.

A question must also be raised about the ethics and security of this current population DNA database. Do *you* want to be 'fingerprinted'? If so, what may happen to your personal 'fingerprint' after this project is ended? The DNA record once taken is there to be used again and again. Currently in the USA, several companies are patenting blocks of hundreds of thousands of personal DNA records, and in the future it is envisaged that a standard DNA scan will be required as part of requests for insurance, perhaps even job applications. How secure will this programme's database be? YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

I question whether, for 4.2 million pounds this project is value for money. Personally, I think not. Archaeologists must ask themselves what questions they require to be answered, bearing in mind that the geneticists admit that only broad questions can possibly be answered. If we are tempted to believe that because it is pure science it must therefore be good for archaeology, think again of the scientists who split the atom - that was pure science too, and it went down a bomb. As for 'Dolly' the cloned sheep, EWE HAVE BEEN WARNED!

—Victor Buckley in *Archaeology Ireland*

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## FEBRUARY MEETING

Friday, February 13, 1998 - 7:30 PM  
M D Anderson Hall  
University of St. Thomas

Speaker: Jim Zintgraff  
Rock Art Foundation

Topic: Rock Art of the Lower Pecos



## LABORATORY SCHEDULE

Monday, February 16  
7:00 - 9:00 PM

Location: Rice University Archeology Lab  
Sewell Hall, Room 103

## HAS LIBRARY

Open between 6:30 and 7:25 PM before the monthly meeting, or by appointment. Call Jim Wells at (713) 944-4276.

## NEW LOCATION:

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### \*\*\*FINAL NOTICE\*\*\*

This is the last time the Membership Application will appear in the newsletter and the last newsletter you will receive. Please renew today. Check your address label - if a 98 appears on it you have paid up. If not, we hope you join us for another adventurous year.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Work continues on site 41FB3. HAS members who would like to participate in unearthing the past are welcome to join us. See me at the next meeting or call Sheldon Kindall at (281) 282-5336.

---Joe Hudgins

## SHIPWRECK WEEKEND

A Session of Illustrated Public Lectures Presented by  
The Institute of Nautical Archaeology  
Texas A&M University

Saturday, February 21, 1998  
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Room 206, Memorial Student Center (MSC)  
Main Campus of Texas A&M University  
College Station, Texas

### Prof. George F. Bass

Excavating the Oldest Shipwrecks in the Mediterranean: The Bronze Age Wrecks of Cape Gelidonya and Uluburun, Turkey

### Barto Arnold

Fleur-de-lis and Lone Star: La Salle's Shipwreck

Following the presentations a tour of INA and Nautical Archaeology Program facilities will include the conservation teaching lab, the Old World Project lab, the New World Project lab, and the Ship Reconstruction lab. Learn how you, the interested sport diver, avocational archaeologist-historian, or interested individual can become constructively involved as a volunteer.

Please call (409) 845-6694 to let us know if you plan to attend so we can plan for audience size. INA can be contacted at P.O. Drawer HG, College Station, TX 77841-5137. e-mail: [nautical@tamu.edu](mailto:nautical@tamu.edu)

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Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## EXHIBIT

First Exhibit in New Gallery

### LITTLE THINGS Artifacts from the Menil Collection

February 15 - March 13, 1998  
Weekdays 12 to 6  
Little Archaeology Gallery  
3907 Yoakum Boulevard

#### SKELETONS OF MAYAN WARRIORS DISCOVERED IN MAYAPAN

A group of 150 skeletons of Mayan warriors from the Post-classic period were discovered inside a cenote (sinkhole) at the Mayapan archeological site. Eunice Uc Gonzalez in charge of Mayapan's Cultural Evidences Project said this find could change some concepts of the Mayan culture since never before have the remains of Mayan warriors been found in a cenote. The Mayans believed that warriors were supposed to die at war and receive great honors. Their social rank made them worthy of direct ascent to heaven, while cenotes were used for sacrifices. It is believed these warriors probably died in battle and were of high-ranking lineage as evidenced by their skull deformations and dental incrustations. Various offerings were found with the warriors. The skeletons were found laying in an unorganized fashion, not in anatomical positions - "not as if they had been thrown into the water". They are dismembered with incomplete skulls and some are missing jaws or other bone parts, which is strange. Mayapan was founded around the end of the 10th century and extended its influence over the majority of the cities of the Yucatan. The city instigated a political confederation with Chichen Itza and Uxmal known as the Mayapan League. However, their prosperity ended suddenly, 75 years before the arrival of the Spaniards, because of internal dissention provoked by fighting between rival dynasties.

--Miami Herald, International Edition, 1/12/98

#### TRAVEL DIARY by Tom Nuckols

In January, I went on an eight-day expedition with the Friends of Archaeology to visit Mayan sites in the Mexican states of Yucatan and Quintana Roo. The idea of visiting Mayan sites was exciting, but what interested me most was a chance to visit the Spanish colonial city of Merida. The town would be the staging area for the first couple of days of our trip. Why such an interest in Merida? - Lorenzo de Zavalla (1788-1836) was born in the village of Tecoh and was baptized and later educated in Merida. At an early age he visited and wrote about the Mayan site of Uxmal. If you will recall from my previous writings, I have an interest in Zavalla for several reasons; he played an important part in Texas revolutionary politics, he was the vice-president of the provisional government for the Republic of Texas and his home on Buffalo Bayou was not too far from where I once lived in Channelview. He died at home from pneumonia after a boating accident. My fellow hotel roommate and HAS member John Herbert accompanied me on several walking tours of the city during our free time. We walked for blocks admiring colonial era limestone structures and spent a lot of time in the city's main plaza. Dominating the east side of the plaza, and the place of Zavalla's baptism, is the cathedral of Nuestra Senora de la Encarnacion. It was completed in 1598, and is so massive that the church of San Antonio's Mission San Jose would probably fit inside. Merida is the capital of the State of Yucatan, and the Governor's palace occupies the north side of the plaza. The palace was built in the 1870's and is open to the public. One room contains murals depicting Yucatecan history. The oldest building on the plaza dates to the 1540's and has an elaborately carved facade showing Spanish soldiers in armor standing on the bodies of conquered indians. This building is currently being used as a bank. The Mexican flag raising and lowering ceremony held each day in the plaza accompanied by a drum and bugle corps so impressed John and I that we watched it three times. One official's sole purpose was to walk around the plaza to ensure everyone was standing during the ceremony. As much as I enjoyed Mayan sites, visiting the City of Merida was well worth the trip.

Please send items for *The Profile* to: Jeanette Siciliano, 12462 Barryknoll, Houston, Texas 77024. e-mail: JnetteB@aol.com



G. STELA 5, TIKAL



E. STELA 4, COPAN

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