



THE
Albuquerque Archaeological Society
Newsletter

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October 2018

RINGING ROCKS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Ron Barber

7:30 PM, Tuesday October 16, 2018

Albuquerque Museum of Art and History

2000 Mountain Road NW

The Stone Calendar Project has been studying rock art sites throughout the Southwest and northern Mexico identifying glyphs that mark specific times of the year using unique light and shadow interactions. Many of the rock art sites exhibit evidence of additional cultural rituals that occurred at the calendar sites. One of the interesting findings is the presence of "ringing rocks," sometimes referred to as gong rocks in other parts of the world. These rare basalt and granite rocks have a unique microstructure that generates a ringing acoustic sound when struck. Most of the ringing rocks identified have been raised and placed on elevated supports, providing free edges that are less damped, producing a clear bell-like ringing tone. The points at which the rocks are struck are easily identified by markings and produce a wide range of tones. Even at the locations where ringing rocks are found, only a small fraction of the rocks exhibit these unique acoustic properties. The ringing rocks are generally located at rock art sites, occasionally with some glyphs and cupules engraved onto the ringing rocks. Due to the close proximity of the ringing rocks to the stone calendar sites, there was most likely an important cultural relationship. Ethnographic reports from the Southwest reveal use of these rocks, but have limited descriptive information on rock composition or range of applications. The study has identified multiple ringing rock sites and quarries in New Mexico and Arizona, occurring in Puebloan, Hohokam, and Patayan cultures.

Ron was born and raised in the oil fields of South America, in small isolated backcountry oil camps. His parents hauled their kids through the mountains, deserts and jungles, always in search of new adventures. Encountering indigenous cultures and ancient sites has led to a long-term interest and curiosity about lost civilizations. Ron is an explorer by nature, an engineer by profession. He is a mechanical engineer with 38 years at the national laboratories in California and New Mexico. Over the last eight years he has formed the Stone Calendar Project to study rock art throughout the Southwest, specifically looking for glyphs that might provide insights into early astronomical knowledge. He has applied his engineering background to develop a systematic approach to surveying and identifying glyphs for potential study, as well as developing three-dimensional modeling of light and sun interactions. The presentation will share some preliminary results of the Stone Calendar Project, a hobby that somehow got out of hand.

MINUTES OF THE ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

September 18, 2018

President Carol Chamberland opened the meeting at 7:33 PM. She welcomed visitors and invited all to stay after the meeting for cookies provided by Sally McLaughlin and beverages by Ann and Cindi Carson.

Meeting minutes: There being no corrections or omissions to the July minutes, they stand as published.

REPORTS

Treasurer – John Guth: We have \$11,792 in the checking account and \$11,000 in Certificates of Deposit after donating \$500 to the Archaeological Society of New Mexico scholarship fund. John transferred \$2000 profit from the ASNM Annual Meeting from checking to CD. He said AAS received a contribution of \$5000 from an anonymous donor. These sums will allow us to maintain membership dues at \$25, give us more flexibility with our insurance, and allow us to make donations to worthy archaeological projects as opportunities arise.

Newsletter – Helen Crotty asked for a volunteer to review an unsolicited book received for review, *Inside the Neolithic Mind* by David Lewis Williams and David Pearce. The person who reviews the book can keep it.

Archives – Karen Armstrong: In 1976 the Maxwell Museum Association newsletter advertised “a new exhibit featuring sillimanite (fibrolite) axes”. If anyone knows about this exhibit, has photos, knows who put the exhibit together, or anything at all, please contact Karen (fybate@comcast.net). The group continues processing the J. C. Cooney site collection and then will proceed to the Ladder Ranch site materials.

Membership – Mary Raje: Currently AAS has 182 members. Mary said that the bylaws provide that persons who want to renew membership can pay dues as early as October 15 and this will cover them through 2019.

Rock Art – Carol Chamberland: the team has had challenges in the past two months including illness and access problems.

Field Trips – Pat Harris listed upcoming field trips for September and October and possible future ones. Please see the field trip article in this Newsletter (next page) for detailed information. She asked that participants in the September 22 trip to San Marcos pay the \$10 fee at this meeting.

Pottery Southwest – Gretchen Obenauf: The editors are working on the next issue and need one long and one short submission for the Fall/Winter publication. Please send your contribution to *Pottery Southwest*.

Webmaster – Evan Kay: Thatcher Rogers has streamlined and added old newsletters to the website.

Seminars – Carol Chamberland: The bone seminar on September 15 was informative and invigorating.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Evan Kay announced that Monyssa Trujillo, a Native American liaison and archaeology assistant from Chaco Culture National Historic Park, contacted him about the first Archaeology Day at the park on October 20.

Carol Chamberland presented the list of open offices for the elections at the December meeting which include President, Vice President, Treasurer, Director-at-large, and Secretary. Several people have offered to fill positions: Evan Kay is interested in the office of President, Ann Braswell for Vice President, and John Guth Director-at-large. A nominating committee will be searching for others who are interested in filling any of these positions. Please step up to help fill out the slate.

The business meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM.

SPEAKER

Gretchen Obenauf introduced Bradley Vierra, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer at Pueblo de San Ildefonso. His presentation “Early Maize: A Trip Through Time and Space,” discussed the location of the initial domestication of maize and its spread over Mexico and into the American Southwest. The lecture was a visual tour of the archaeological sites containing the earliest evidence of maize cultivation dating back over 9,000 years. A synopsis of Dr. Vierra’s lecture was not available at press time.

Respectfully submitted by Ginger Foerster, Secretary.

FIELD TRIP NEWS

The October 20 field trip to the Tsi-p'in-owinge archaeological site led by Santa Fe Forest Supervisory Archaeologist Ann Baldwin and Steve Patchet of AAS, is filled. Experienced and fit hikers may apply for the wait list at trips@abqarchaeology.org.

A trip to the the Dittert site to be led by Gretchen Obenauf is scheduled for November 4. The Dittert site is an ancient Pueblo settlement located in Armijo Canyon. Comprising roughly 35 rooms over two stories of construction and a large blocked-in kiva, the site manifests an L-shape and the classic Pueblo III building style of the Greater Cibola region. Tree-ring and ceramic cross-dating show that people lived at Dittert from A.D. 1225–1300. The Dittert has a surrounding community with two roads that emanate outward from the site, a great kiva, and a dozen other pueblo sites. Signup and payment of the \$10 fee will be at the October 16 meeting.

Possible field trips being considered for 2019 include Arroyo Hondo (Santa Fe area), Candelaria Pueblo (Grants area), Petroglyph Panel at Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge (winter), Bowling Green Pueblo ruin (Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge, winter), Museum of Southwestern Biology (UNM campus, April [the windy month]), Nogales Cliff Dwelling (spring, with Mike Bremer), overnight to Blackwater Draw (Portales, spring), Rattlesnake Pueblo, and the Gutierrez-Hubbell House.

Pat reports that Ann Ramenofsky answered her thank-you note for taking the group to San Marcos September 22 with the following comment: “It was fun for me as well. What makes these tours special is the participants, and the Arch Soc group was wonderful. Interested, engaged with terrific energy.”

ARCHAEOLOGY FAIR AND ARCHAEOLOGY DAY EVENTS OCTOBER 6 AND 20

New Mexico's Archaeology Fair October 6, presented by the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Jemez Historic Site, and Friends of Coronado Historic Site, will be held at the Jemez Historical Site in Jemez Springs from 10 to 3. Activities for the whole family include atlatls, pinch pots, native games, yucca bracelets, beeweed painting, Wonder on Wheels (mobile museum), archaeological exhibits and demonstrations, and the on-going excavation of a Pueblo room. For information, call (575) 829-3530. No admission charge.

International Archaeology Day events **October 20** include **Open House at the Center for New Mexico Archaeology**, just southwest of Santa Fe, off Caja del Rio Road. A facility of the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, CNMA serves as a central resource for archaeological research, curation, and education in New Mexico. The Archaeological Repository at the CNMA houses nearly eight million artifacts from all time periods and cultures as well as the labs and offices of the Office of Archaeological Studies.

Arrangements are currently being made for **Chaco Culture National Historical Park** to host for the first time an all-day event on Archaeology Day **October 20**. Hands-on activities for the public include a mock excavation and structure re-pointing and an all-day conference that gives scholars a platform to present and answer questions about current or past research relating to the ancestral lands around. Southwest archaeological organizations have been invited to have information tables. Check with the Park for further details.

The Friends of Coronado Site will host their **Annual Fiesta of Cultures at the Coronado Historic Site October 20**. The Fiesta celebrates local Pueblo, Hispanic, and Anglo artistic and cultural traditions with a blending of entertainment, demonstrations, and arts and crafts vendors selling jewelry, pottery, tinwork, and local food vendors. Entertainment will be offered by the all-female Mariachi Buena Ventura at 11 am and the Bernalillo Matachines Dancers at 1 pm and 3pm. Demonstrations include Zia pottery firings by Ulysses Reid, blacksmiths and flint-knappers, and conversations with “Spanish Settlers” and modern archaeologists. Also on offer at the Festival are an all-ages craft table and face painting, new museum exhibits, and the painted kiva. No admission charge, but donations will be greatly appreciated.

2019 ASNM ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 26–28 IN SILVER CITY

The Grant County Society will host the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico Friday, April 26 to Sunday April 28. The meeting is one week earlier than the usual date because of a conflict with the Tour of the Gila Bicycle Race. Early registration at the host Murray Hotel (or elsewhere) is advised because of yet another event in Silver City on that weekend. The Murray's block rate (mention the ASNM meeting) at \$79 for queen bed, \$84 for king bed rooms (plus taxes), single or double occupancy, is available only on April 25, 26, and 27. Call 1-575-956-9400 for reservations. Note that cancellations must be made at least two weeks prior to the arrival date to avoid a penalty charge.

The theme is “Mimbres and Beyond: Archaeology of Southwest New Mexico and Connections to the Wider Region.” All forms and information will shortly be available on the Grant County Archaeological Society website (www.gcasnm.org). The committee is working on a means of registering and paying online. Questions about registration, accommodations, or dining can be sent to wmhudsonarch@yahoo.com.

BOOK REVIEW

The Aztecs at Independence: Nahua Culture Makers in Central Mexico, 1799-1832 by Miriam Melton-Villanueva, 2016. University of Arizona Press, Tucson. 256 pp, \$55 (hardcover or ebook).

Reviewed by Michael P. Bletzer

Popular notions of the Spanish Conquest of Central Mexico usually revolve around the chief antagonists, the Aztec (or more properly Mexica) ruler Motecuhzoma (Moctezuma/Montezuma) Xocoyotzin and the Spanish leader Hernán Cortés, as well as various other principal characters on both sides. The events of the immediate Conquest and post-Conquest periods, especially the various military encounters, the first outbreaks of introduced Old World diseases, and the concomitant loss of life among the indigenous population across and beyond the Valley of Mexico, convey an image of apocalyptic destruction, a veritable end-of-times scenario for the Aztecs and other Nahua (Nahuatl-speaking) groups in the region.

But amid the manifold documentary and material vestiges of the disaster, historians (and archaeologists) have long been aware of many aspects of Nahua culture surviving, more or less overtly, far beyond the Conquest Period of the early 1520s. Such perceptions, however, seem to fly under the radar, at least outside specialists' circles. As Miriam Melton-Villanueva's book shows, three centuries after the Spanish Conquest, at the dawn of Mexican Independence in the early 1800s, there still existed strong indigenous linguistic and cultural continuities just outside the center of Spanish rule in North America. The book focusses on the Metepec region in the Matlatzinco/Toluca Valley west of the Valley of Mexico during the transition years from Spanish colonial rule to Mexican independence. This area had not been part of the Aztec/Mexica core territory but had been subjected to Aztec/Mexica overlordship a century before the Spanish Conquest. The author analyzes more than 150 period wills which survive in the local convento de San Juan Bautista. A substantial portion of these documents were written in Nahuatl using Roman script.

That Melton-Villanueva was able to find and use these indigenous documents in a rural archive represents a marked variation from the contemporary Spanish-written record usually housed in the major repositories of Mexico or Spain. The geographic/political context of Melton-Villanueva's analysis is the small *altepetl* (“city state”) of San Bartolomé Metepec around the early 1800s and its *fiscalía*, an institution tied closely to the church to address religious and spiritual needs in the community. Closely connected to the *cabildo* (town council), the *fiscalía* offices included native *escribanos* (scribes) who noted down the wills on which the study is based. The book is divided into six chapters, which proceed from an introduction to the *altepetl* of San Bartolomé (Chapter 1), to the various texts produced by Nahua scribes in both Spanish (Chapter 2) and Nahuatl (Chapter 3), a description of scribal idiosyncrasies emerging from the documents (Chapter 4), the identification of various rites and local religious practices and the role of women in communal ritual life (Chapter 5), and the evidence of private or household rituals included in the wills (Chapter 6).

Although the various aspects of the inquiry are all related in one way or another, the narrative is complex. As the chapter titles indicate, the author touches on many aspects of late colonial Nahua “culture-making,” from patterns of “innovation and stability” in the linguistic makeup of the wills to what the documents reveal about Nahua ritual within (or beneath) official church practices. Of particular interest is the role of women that emerges from the wills. Women not only figure prominently among the will makers but also as participants and organizers of death-related ceremonies, saintly devotions, and

remembrance rituals. The often-communal aspect of these observations throws some light on otherwise undocumented Nahua customs at the time and to an extent reflects parts of an enduring ancestral Nahua ritual landscape at the end of the colonial period.

The study offers intriguing glimpses into the rural Nahua world long after the overarching structure of this world was at least outwardly destroyed in the Spanish Conquest. This should make Melton-Villanueva's work particularly enlightening to anyone interested in the late pre-Conquest and early historic period of Central Mexico. In addition, throughout the book the author has scattered episodes of her encounters with the Metepec community showing that remnants of the *fiscalía* system still exist – a nice ethnographic touch to complement the documentary analysis.

CALENDAR CHECK

Events: Archaeology Fair October 6 and Archeology Day October 20 [See article on page 3]

“Genizaro Identity and Ritual Performance of the Sandia Mountains” by Moises Gonzales, 6:30 pm October 9 at the Sandia Ranger Station, Tijeras. Friends of Tijeras Pueblo Monthly Lecture Series. A \$5 donation for non-members.

“A History of Archaic Research” by Bradley J. Vierra, 7:30–9:00 pm November 9 in Hibben Center room 105 on the UNM main campus. Free.

Conferences

New Mexico Archeological Council Fall Conference “The Archaic Period,” November 10 at the Hibben Center, UNM Campus. Information and registration form at nmarchcouncil.org.

Archeological Society of New Mexico Annual Meeting April 26–28 at the Murray Hotel in Silver City. Forms and more information to be posted soon at gcasnm.org. Questions to wmhudsonarch@yahoo.com.

ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Annual Dues

For emailed Newsletter: Student no charge (provide copy of current ID); Basic \$25; Sustaining \$35+. Print Newsletter by First Class Mail: Basic \$30; Sustaining \$40. Institutions/Libraries: \$10 for print Newsletter by First Class Mail, emailed Newsletter at no charge.

2018 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

To contact officers or committee chairs, or to change mailing or email address, email info@abqarchaeology.org or consult Membership Directory. Current members can sign up for field trips at meetings or by emailing trips@abqarchaeology.org.

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