



THE
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Newsletter

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THE RED LADY OF EL MIRÓN

Lawrence Guy Straus

7:30 PM, Tuesday, January 21, 2020
Albuquerque Museum of Art and History
2000 Mountain Road NW

In 2012, my colleague Manuel González Morales and I presented a preliminary report on the discovery of a human burial in Lower Magdalenian context in El Mirón Cave in Cantabria, Spain at the Paleoanthropology Society Meeting. A monographic issue of the *Journal of Archaeological Science* was dedicated to this burial in 2015 and, in 2016, an article was published in *Nature*. It documents the DNA evidence developed in laboratories at the Max Planck Institute in Germany and at Harvard University in the US that this human's genetic makeup confirmed the archaeological evidence for a Last Glacial Maximum *refugium* in southwest Europe from which humans re-expanded northward during the Magdalenian period. Originally interpreted as a secondary burial, the "Red Lady" is now understood to be an 18,800-year-old, disturbed primary interment from which certain major elements (the cranium and most long bones) had been removed, possibly as part of rituals that did not end with the original burial. Still-ongoing multidisciplinary analyses of this rare burial (unique for the Magdalenian of the Iberian Peninsula, but similar to semi-contemporaneous ones in France) include: osteological and dental studies of the remains to determine age and sex; physical and health status; dental residue studies on diet (mixed meat and plant); the presence or absence of infectious pathogens (absence); and determination of ancient DNA. In addition, there have been archaeological studies of the grave: artifactual and faunal contents of its infilling; its proximity to rock art engravings and pigment staining (possibly marking the grave); and mineralogical determination of the exact, non-local sources of the specially-prepared hematite ochre used to stain the clothing and the body and/or bones of the deceased, as well as the adjacent block and cave wall. It is apparent that this robust, apparently healthy 35- to 40-year-old female was given unusual and very special treatment after death that involved considerable investment on the part of the social group of which she had been an important member. The "Red Lady" of El Mirón joins the adult women buried in three French Magdalenian sites; only one other buried Magdalenian-age skeleton whose sex could be determined was an adult male from the French Laugerie-Basse site. Either this is a coincidence or the presumed special status of "men the hunters" is overrated.

Lawrence Straus is Leslie Spier Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico where he has served since 1975. He received his PhD in Anthropology from the University of Chicago, where he also obtained his AM and AB (Honors) degrees. His dissertation was on the 25,000-to-20,000-year-old Solutrean culture of Cantabrian Spain, and he is a specialist in the Upper Paleolithic of Western Europe. He has directed/co-directed excavations in Spain, France, Portugal, and Belgium. His archaeological fieldwork has spanned most of the late Quaternary period, from the Middle Paleolithic through the Bronze Age, especially the Magdalenian (20,000 to 14,000 years ago). [*Continued on page 2*]

AAS DUES FOR 2020 ARE NOW PAYABLE

If you have already paid your dues, thank you if not, please fill out the attached membership renewal form and mail it with your check to Treasurer, Albuquerque Archaeological Society, PO Box 4029, Albuquerque NM 87196, or bring both to the meeting. Please indicate any AAS committees with which you might be interested in serving.

LAURENCE G. STRAUS BIO (*Continued*)

Straus is the author or editor of 23 books, special journal issues, and monographs, and author/co-author of over 600 journal articles, chapters in edited volumes, and reviews. He is the US representative on the Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques Commission on the Upper Paleolithic of Eurasia and past president of the International Union of Quaternary Research (INQUA) Commission on Human Evolution & Paleocology, a former member of the US National Committee for INQUA, having been appointed three times by the US National Academy of Science. Straus has been Editor-in-Chief of UNM's 75-year-old, internationally renowned *Journal of Anthropological Research* since 1995. His research has been funded by numerous grants from the National Science Foundation, Leakey Foundation, National Geographic Society, Fundación Botín, University of New Mexico, and the Spanish and Cantabrian governments.

Straus is perhaps best known recently for the discovery and study of the "Red Lady of El Mirón," a 19,000-year old human burial in highly ritualized context, published as a special issue of the *Journal of Archaeological Science*. In 2016, Straus delivered the Annual Research Lecture, the highest honor bestowed on a faculty member by the University of New Mexico. He has given guest lectures at Harvard, Stanford, Chicago, Indiana, Arizona State, and several European universities and museums, and at the Smithsonian Institution and Oregon Museum of Science. Straus has been a visiting professor at several universities in Spain, Croatia, and Argentina. Symposia were held (and corresponding books published) in honor of his retirement at the Annual Meeting of the SAA in Orlando and at the III International Meeting on the Solutrean in Faro, Portugal. Straus's French grandfather and great-grandfather were amateur prehistorians in southwest France, and as a teenager he got his start in archaeology with the New Hampshire Archaeological Society. His wife, Mari Carmen, and daughter, Eva, are "*montañesas*" from Cantabria.

MINUTES OF THE ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

December 17, 2019

President Evan Kay began the meeting at 7:05 pm following potluck appetizers and a social hour. There were two visitors, and one guest.

Minutes: As there were no corrections or additions to the November 19 minutes, they stand as published in the Newsletter.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Evan stated that all the current Board members were willing to continue in their positions for 2020, but asked for were nominations from the floor. As there were no additional nominations it was moved and seconded that the current Board members will remain in office in 2020, and they were approved by acclamation. The Officers are: Evan Kay, President; Gretchen Obenauf, First Vice President; Ann Braswell, Second Vice President; Susan King, Secretary; Tom Obenauf, Treasurer; John Guth, Director; and Cindy Carson, Director.

REPORTS

Membership – Mary Raje: Thanks to all who have renewed their membership. Students must let Mary know that they want to continue as members.

Rock Art – Carol Chamberland: There will be no fieldwork until January.

Seminars – Carol Chamberland: Arrangements for 2020 seminars are in the works.

Field Trips – Pat Harris: The November 2 field trip to Cerro Indio Pueblo that Ann Braswell led was a super trip, and there are good trips ahead in the new year. Plans for a tour of the Frank Hibben house are in the works.

Pottery Southwest – Gretchen Obenauf: They are looking for good articles, and would like to feature interesting pots. Some articles have been promised for the next edition but are not in as yet.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Santa Fe National Forest is looking for archaeological site stewards. [See more details on page 7.]

Member Gwen Poe announced that there will be a December book-signing in Old Town of the book she authored, *Bingham the Bobcat*, a copy of which she showed the group. The book is a story of her family's time with a remarkable bobcat, rescued as a tiny kitten from the wild.

Gretchen Obenauf encouraged people to join the Archaeological Conservancy, which preserves significant archaeological sites. One benefit of joining beyond protecting these sites is that members receive the *American Archaeology* magazine quarterly.

SPEAKERS

As is customary at the December meeting, several members gave short presentations on archaeological sites they have visited in the past year. John Guth's topic was "Rabbit Mountain Obsidian Source in the Jemez Mountains;" Steve Rospopo reported on the "Highlights of Work with Linda Wheelbarger at the Point Site near Farmington;" Stephani Talley presented a slide show of "A Visit to Pompeii;" Jo Lynne's presentation covered visits to European museums and bog bodies displayed in them, and Carol Chamberland spoke about the "Rock Art of Australia."

Following the speakers, the members enjoyed the potluck dessert course.

Respectfully submitted by Susan King, Secretary.

SYNOPSIS OF NOVEMBER 2019 AAS PROGRAM

Hard Times and Mobility in Thirteenth-Century Southeast Utah: The Earth Shook & Spit Fire (elsewhere), and it Grew Dark & Cold

By Tom Windes

Since 2001, a volunteer crew of "wood rats" has worked on Cedar Mesa and Beef Basin in southeast Utah and beyond for the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the State of Utah documenting intact or partially intact sites with structural wood resources capable of yielding tree-ring dates. This work helps refine the late Pueblo III settlement and abandonment of the western region of the northern San Juan in southeast Utah in the AD 1100s and 1200s. The vast majority of sites are cliff ruins, where architectural preservation is often very good. These critical cultural resources are being documented in detail to also help establish baseline data for the various federal caretaker land agencies. However, the effects of natural deterioration to the wood and to the sites from weathering, insects, animals, and fires, as well as increased visitor impacts, looting, and potential negative impacts from future mineral extraction of the area provides urgency to collect this baseline data and a detailed look at these sites. Additionally, the debate over the new Bears Ears National Monument status has greatly increased public awareness of the cultural resources in the region, and a subsequent rise in visitation and negative impacts to the resources.

We have documented over 50 sites during this work, collected over 1000 tree-ring samples, and noted some unusual patterns to the occupation there in the AD 1200s, our most common site period. Notably, many cliff sites are nearly devoid of artifacts (generally attributed to historic looting), but we discovered that several cliff-top dune sites that we passed on our way to work in the cliff ruins are loaded with them, suggesting seasonal shifts between canyon and mesa tops. Corn cobs are prevalent among the cliff ruins but the groundstone tools (e.g., manos and metates) are typically absent or rare, as are ceramics and chipped stone.

There are also several cliff sites where the architecture and artifacts have been deliberately removed, leaving little more than sparse "ghost" adobe marks against the cliff walls from the former attached structures. Even these are often completely bare of artifacts. It is these sites that have often escaped attention or detailed recording, but are nevertheless important to our understanding of the overall use pattern of the local landscape. Some northern San Juan cliff sites in Chaco Canyon of similar age also exhibit few artifacts and building materials, despite being in non-accessible areas, and it is suggested that this absence is mainly attributed to prehistorical not historical cultural behavior.

Finally, our most defensive and latest sites date to about AD 1257-1260, a period that coincides with a massive series of volcanic eruptions that changed the world's climate and may have caused the final depopulation of the Four Corners Region, which is marked by severe cold in the winter of 1258–1259, two standard deviations below normal. This Volcanic Explosivity Index-7 eruption has just recently been identified as Samalas in Indonesia, which some have characterized as the most destructive in the last 10,000 years. It erupted four times in the late 1200s. Only seven volcanoes of a magnitude of VEI-7 (the second largest on a scale of 8) and no VEI-8s have erupted in the past 10,000 years. The AD 1200s are marked as the most sulfurous-aerosol-laden century in the past 2000 years, stratospheric aerosols that block the sun, darken the earth, and cause massive climate change. These conditions are thought responsible for the abandonment of Easter Island.

A similar but lesser VEI-7 eruption in 1815 at Tambora, Philippines, is much better documented and provides a better understanding of the disastrous climatic changes and related events that made these eruptions so disruptive to human populations. A previous eruption of an unknown volcano in 1810 provided the initial layer of sulfurous aerosols to the stratosphere that made Tambora's eruption deadlier. The direct and indirect climatic changes around the world by these two eruptions cost millions of lives, including from massive typhus and cholera outbreaks that spread across continents. A severe June cold and snow front from the New England to the Carolinas forced much migration from Canada and the northeastern United States to the Illinois/Indiana region, bringing five new states into the Union. There was a widespread US financial crisis with hundreds of bank failures and a slowdown in US food exports. The Irish suffered their first potato famine and typhus, which spread to Europe. The severe cold also affected Europe as crops failed. In India, the monsoons caused widespread flooding and cholera, which swept into Russia, across North Africa and back to Europe by 1832 and to the US in 1834. The phenomenal changes wrought on the world's climate by these VEI-7 volcanic eruptions provides a new arena for study of the changes affecting the world's populations.

AAS FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP

Pat Harris, Field Trip Chair, reports that the first AAS field trip of 2020 will be a February visit to the Frank Hibben house near the UNM campus. Our guide lives in the house and does tours. He did not know Dr. Hibben but has done research on his life and the house. The taxidermized animals remain. The tour will last 45 to 60 minutes and is limited to 20 current AAS members. The date will be announced at the January meeting, when there will be a signup with the usual collection of the \$10 AAS fee. The location, parking, and more information will be sent to the signees.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Diné History of Navajoland, Klara Kelley and Harris Francis, authors. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. 2019. Viii+331 pp., 1 table, 45 figures, 3 maps, bibliography, index. \$35.00 paperback (ISBN 9780816538744), \$35.00 eBook (ISBN 9780816540532).

Reviewed by Thatcher A. Rogers

Klara Kelley (Ph.D. in Anthropology, University of New Mexico, 1977) is a Euro-American independent cultural resources consultant for the Navajo Nation who previously worked for the Nation as an archaeologist, an ethnohistorian, and a college lecturer. Harris Francis (Nát'oh Dine'é Táchii'nii clan) worked for the Navajo Nation as a paralegal, an archaeologist, and a Navajo cultural specialist and currently is an independent Navajo cultural rights consultant. Collaborators since 1993, Kelley and Francis have authored several significant works such as *Navajo Sacred Places* (1993) and *Navajoland Trading Post Encyclopedia* (2018).

Historical narratives in the archaeological literature typically relied on archaeological data and focused on diachronic settlement patterning and shifts in material culture and mortuary assemblages. Occasionally, the narratives incorporated oral traditions of a culturally descendent community as supplementary material for proposed interpretations. In the Southwest, recent archaeological interpretations commonly incorporate Puebloan perspectives. This volume differs by relying on Diné (Navajo) oral traditions as primary source material and

incorporating archaeological data and historical records as supplementary data. Consequently, the volume's title, *A Diné History of Navajoland*, is fitting and reflects the unique struggles Navajo individuals and communities have endured and continue to endure under Euro-American colonization.

The introduction and the eleven chapters in this book are divisible into two distinct parts that will interest different readerships. The introduction summarizes Navajo history, presents the arguments found in successive chapters, and explores relationships between indigenous oral traditions and cultural sovereignty. The first four chapters focus on applying oral traditions to the archaeological record to improve Navajo understanding of their ancestors. Chapter 1 argues against the contemporary archaeological consensus that the Navajo (and Apache) arrived in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The authors' argument, that proto-Diné were present in the Southwest by A.D. 1000, relies on debates in glottochronology, the problematic record of absolute dates and wood-cutting practices on what they propose are early Navajo sites, and sites in Navajoland indicative of hunter-gatherers. This chapter is insightful and presents several questions archaeologists should investigate. The second chapter focuses on journey narratives in Navajo oral tradition as they relate to archaeologically hypothesized trade networks and routes. Chapters 3 and 4 describe geography from a traditional Navajo perspective and the formation and origin of several Navajo clans and lifeways. These two chapters represent my personal favorites for their insightful exploration into how natural geography is integral to oral traditions of a non-Pueblo indigenous group and the discussion of Navajo ethnogenesis.

The second part of the book, Chapters 5 through 11, describe the historical Navajo experience in response to settler and industrial Euro-American encroachment. Chapter 5 examines how processes of intergroup conflict and the construction of a social landscape from initial European contact to the traumatic Long Walk of the Navajo led to modern Navajo identity formation. The sixth and seventh chapters explore the expansion of settlers into Navajoland, persistent conflict with the railroad and ranchers, and how Navajo attempted to maintain their traditional and federally approved lands and rights. Chapter 8 presents life histories of Navajo who owned trading posts, with Chapter 9 demonstrating the important impacts of a single trading post – the Borrego Pass Trading Post – on Navajo life starting after the 1930s herd reductions. Chapters 10 and 11 describe the experience of Navajo coal miners near Gallup and changes in land use in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Chapter 11 closes with a somber discussion of how many of these changes detach Navajo from traditional practices. The Afterword reflects upon the ongoing history of Navajo endurance and major cultural shifts, and it reexamines the concept of cultural sovereignty described in the introduction. Well-crafted and thoughtful, the Afterword encourages current and future generations of Navajo to search for and learn their ancestral traditions and stories.

A Diné History of Navajoland is not a volume for all readers, but that is not the authors' intent. For instance, I find that the manner in which the archaeological data and its interpretations are discussed is selective regarding data and flawed or incorrect regarding interpretation – particularly parts of the first two chapters. Furthermore, the clear tonal differences between the first and second halves of the book appeal to different readerships. The first half emphasizes the ancestral connections of contemporary Navajo to prehispanic archaeological sites and locations. This section is of interest to Southwestern and indigenous archaeologists and anthropologists who engage in cultural affiliation studies or focus on the archaeology of northwestern New Mexico and northeastern Arizona. This half also explores how descendent communities conceptualize their past and its relationship to their traditional lands. The second half is a set of historical pieces that examine Navajo continuity throughout the jarring, sustained impacts of colonization. A technical writing style permeates these chapters, with names, places, and events successively listed akin to an encyclopedia. Nevertheless, this volume contributes importantly and significantly to conversations regarding the prehispanic Navajo, the application of oral traditions, the long-term impacts of colonization on the persistence of indigenous traditions and communities, and Navajo cultural sovereignty. This book is of interest to anthropologists and historians who study the Navajo and, most importantly, this book is for present and future Navajo.

Trincheras Sites in Time, Space, and Society, edited by Suzanne K. Fish, Paul R. Fish, and M. Elisa Villalpando. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018, 288 pp. \$34 paperback (ISBN 9780816539338), \$35 Ebook (ISBN9780816539345).

Reviewed by Matthew J. Barbour

Trincheras sites, or *cerros de trincheras*, are fascinating, especially when viewed from above. These hills, that dot the landscape of the American Southwest and Northern Mexico, with their stone terraces often look like the remnants of medieval castles. Popular literature has regularly associated these sites with warfare during the late Prehistoric period. However, their actual function and age of use is quite a bit more complicated.

Trincheras Sites in Time, Space, and Society is an academic look at these archaeological phenomena in more detail. It consists of nine chapters: "Introduction" by M. Elisa Villalpando, Suzanne K. Fish, and Paul R. Fish, "Cerros de Trincheras in Northwestern Chihuahua: The Arguments for Defense" by Robert J. Hard and John R. Roney, "Tumamoc Hill and the Early Pioneer Period: Occupation of the Tucson Basin" by Henry D. Wallace, Paul R. Fish, and Suzanne K. Fish, "Cerros de Trincheras in Southern Arizona: Review and Current Status of the Debate" by Christian E. Downum, "Excavations at Cerro Trincheras" by Randall H. McGuire and M. Elisa Villalpando, "Regional Heartlands and Transregional Trends" by Suzanne K. Fish and Paul R. Fish, "Delineating Hilltop Settlement Systems in West-Central Arizona, AD 1100-1400" by David R. Wilcox, Judith Rowe Taylor, Joseph Vogel, and J. Scott Wood, "Crafting Places: Mesoamerican Monumentality in Cerro de Trincheras and Other Hilltop Sites" by Ben A. Nelson, and "Concluding Observations: Perspectives from the Hill Towns of Oaxaca" by Stephen A. Kowalewski. Collectively, the articles contribute to a narrative that highlights both the diversity of trincheras sites and the commonalities many of these sites share with other hilltop sites in Mesoamerica and elsewhere.

The greatest case for the use of trincheras sites as defensive fortifications is made by Hard and Roney. In their article "Cerro de Trincheras in Northwestern Chihuahua," the authors look at case studies of hilltop settlements around the world and come to the conclusion that the cultural and physical environment of trincheras sites could only point to warfare. In particular, Hard and Roney examine the sites of Juanaquena, Canelo, Torres, and Vidal and suggest that construction of these sites was brought about due to warfare (driven by rapid population growth) during the Late Archaic period.

Others believe that these sites had many different functions. McGuire and Villalpando in "Excavations at Cerro Trincheras," argue that Cerro de Trincheras, with over 900 terraces, may have been built for "monumental effect" in addition to its use for agriculture, habitation, and defense. Wallace, Fish, and Fish demonstrate in "Tumamoc Hill and the Early Pioneer Period" that the stone architecture there is a palimpsest of multiple occupations with repeated abandonment, reuse, and construction of new features occurring over the course of approximately a thousand years (between about 800 BC and AD 700).

All of these interpretations are valid and as discussed by Stephen A. Kowalewski in "Concluding Observations," one is cautioned against making broad assumptions. In Kowalewski's own words, trincheras sites "are not a unitary phenomenon." Visually these sites may look similar, but they represent expressions of many different cultures over a broad period of time.

Speaking of visuals, it is worth noting that eleven full color aerial photos, by Adriel Heisey, are presented in the center of this book. These images feature most of the major archaeological sites discussed in the publication and are among the most breathtaking images of trincheras sites the reviewer has ever seen. They add to the narrative by allowing the reader (who may have never visited these places) to clearly visualize the impact the sites have on the desert landscape.

Given the interpretations and perspectives of the book are extraordinarily varied, there is something for everyone. There are articles on the connections with central Mexico, regional trade in the Tucson Basin, and warfare across the American Southwest, among many other topics. All are viewed through the lens of trincheras sites and the information is well researched and written. It is must read for those who work in the southern portions of New Mexico and Arizona, as well as Northern Mexico.

SANTA FE NATIONAL FOREST LOOKING FOR ARCHAEOLOGY SITE STEWARDS

Comprehensive training in a full-day session will be presented on Saturday, March 21, 2020, for eligible site steward applicants who wish to become a certified steward responsible for an assigned site within the Forest. Site Stewards work with a partner to regularly monitor their assigned site for evidence of deterioration due to natural causes or vandalism. The training prepares them for all responsibilities and contingencies, so they feel confident to perform the duties of a site steward. The position has many rewards, such as occasional workshops and special visits to other sites, all contributing to a better knowledge of the area's ancient cultures and archaeology. To apply, visit the "Become a Site Steward" page on the Santa Fe National Forest Site Stewards website sfnfsitestewards.org/becomeasteward.php to complete an application and review the program's criteria.

CALENDAR CHECK

Lectures

"A Natural History of Houses" by James L. Boone, 7:30 pm Thursday, January 30, Hibben 105, UNM campus. Ancestors Lecture. Free

"Chaco Landscapes: Sensory and Political Engagements with Place," by Ruth Van Dyke, 6:30 pm Thursday, February 13, St. Francis Auditorium, New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe. Free for SAR members; \$10 not-yet-members, Register at sarsf.info/VanDyke.

Conferences

Archeological Society of New Mexico Annual Meeting "Taos at the Crossroads of Trade" May 8–10 at the Sagebrush Inn, Taos. Visit the TAS website taosarch.org for full details or to register online or download a registration form. Reduced rates for registration or hotel rooms end April 15.

Pecos Conference 2020 August 6–9 in Mancos, Colorado. Registration opens in April.

ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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- ☐ Greeters (name tags & guest signup at meetings);
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☐ Field Trips (arrange for trip or assist chair with signups and follow up);
☐ Laboratory (assist with Hibben Center archival work);
☐ AAS Newsletter editorial assistant/trainee;
☐ AAS 50th Anniversary Volume Editor, assistant, researcher;
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