



THE
Albuquerque Archaeological Society
Newsletter

VOLUME 56 No. 7

US ISSN 0002 4953

July 2022

K'UUYEMUGEH AS A CENTER PLACE

Scott G. Ortman

7:30 pm Tuesday, July 19, 2022

At Your Computer, Tablet, or Smart Phone

Pueblo people today often refer to their home village as their center place, and this concept is also routinely applied to ancestral sites. What does a center place look like from an archaeological perspective? In this talk, I combine Tewa traditional knowledge and archaeological evidence to illustrate all of the ways in which the ancestral Pojoaque village of K'uuyemugeh was a center place for the people who lived there between the era of Tewa origins and the era of Spanish colonization.

Scott Ortman is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Colorado (CU) Boulder, a research affiliate of the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, an External Professor at the Santa Fe Institute, and Associate Editor for Anthropology and Archaeology at *Science Advances*. He is also a faculty affiliate of the CU Population Center and Director of the Center for Collaborative Synthesis in Archaeology within the Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado Boulder. Ortman's current research focuses on the contemporary relevance of archaeological research and findings. He is author or co-author of numerous papers on Pueblo Indian historical anthropology, archaeological demography, and complex systems approaches in archaeology; and his books include *Winds from the North: Tewa Origins and Historical Anthropology* (University of Utah Press, 2012), *Painted Reflections: Isomeric Design in Ancestral Pueblo Pottery* (with Joseph Traugott, Museum of New Mexico Press, 2018), and *Reframing the Northern Rio Grande Pueblo Economy* (editor, University of Arizona Press, 2019).

A day or so prior to the meeting, an email message will be sent to members with the link for the Zoom meeting, which will open around 7 to allow for greetings among friends. Please mute your microphone and turn off your video during the presentation until the question-and-answer session.

REMINDER

No meeting and no Newsletter in August

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 21, 2022 VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

President Evan Kay called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

MINUTES: As there were no additions or corrections to the minutes of the May 17, 2022 meeting, the minutes stand approved as published in the June Newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Tom Obenauf: Income for the month was \$30 for one membership renewal. Operating expenses were \$16.17 for the monthly Zoom license fee and \$18 for WordPress web hosting. There were no program expenses for the month. Checking account balance at the end of the month was \$5,995.49.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership – Mary Raje: Mary has completed a draft of the Membership Directory and submitted it to Evan Kay for some formatting changes. AAS brochures/flyers have been placed on the UNM campus by Jo Lynne Fenger and the remainder are awaiting students' return this fall.

“Archiving” Crew – Karen Armstrong: Four of the volunteers have COVID, as of committee chair Karen Armstrong's calls with them this week. There will be no volunteer session this Wednesday because UNM Collections lead Karen Price is out of the office and no collections are available to work with.

Because the group is not working with archives, it needs a new name, perhaps CCC (Collections Curation Crew).

Pottery Southwest – Gretchen Obenauf: As announced in last month's meeting, the latest issue is out and available on line.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ann Braswell has a speaker for the July meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Due to term limits, the President's and Second Vice President's positions are open for next year. Members are encouraged to run; one need only be a member to do so.

The Board is looking into a hybrid setup for the remainder of the year's meetings, whereby members may attend in person or continue to attend via Zoom.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC) will have a new exhibit beginning July 31 in which Native individuals will tell stories of selected pots from the School for Advanced Research collections and what the pots tell them.

ADJOURNMENT

The President adjourned the business portion of the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

SPEAKER

Vice President Ann Braswell introduced Suzanne Eckert, Head of Collections at the Arizona State Museum and Associate Professor in the School of Anthropology, University of Arizona whose presentation was entitled “More Than Meets the Eye: Slip, Paint, and Color Horizons on Ancestral Pueblo Pottery.” No synopsis is available. At Dr. Eckert's request, the presentation was not recorded because of restrictions on the use of the illustrations.

FIELD TRIP JULY 21 TO SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH IN SANTA FE

Pat Harris, Field Trip Chair, announces a morning docent visit to the School for Advanced Research (SAR) vault and campus on July 21, limited to seven AAS members. Details of the meet place and time will be sent to AAS members when signing up. The combined fee for the vault and campus tour is \$20 per person to be collected at the meet place. To sign-up, email Pat Harris at trips@abqarchaeology.org. Following the tours, lunch at a local restaurant is planned, though there is no obligation to go to lunch.

Started nearly 100 years ago, the School for Advanced Research's Indian Arts Research Center's collection has grown to 12,000 items housed in its two vaults. The ceramic collection contains pots from all 19 pueblos in New Mexico plus that of the Navajo and Apache and a donated collection of Mojave figurines. The age of the various pieces ranges from 800 AD to 2022 with the bulk of the collection dating to the 1800s. The docent-led tour will explain the history of the School for Advanced Research's collection along with some of the fascinating stories behind the pieces.

The campus walking tour explores the fascinating history, stunning architecture, and beautiful outdoor gardens of the 1920s home of Amelia Elizabeth White and Martha Root White. The secluded eight-acre estate, formerly known as "El Delirio" (The Madness), is now the campus for SAR, a research center for anthropologists, archaeologists, and artists. Please wear comfortable walking shoes so you can fully appreciate the rustic beauty of the campus and its graveled and flagstone walkways.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY FOR 2022–2023 READY FOR DISTRIBUTION

Membership Chair Mary Raje has completed her annual update of the Membership Directory, and it will be distributed electronically to all members for whom we have email addresses. Members who do not have Internet service or a printer may contact Mary at 505-980-0291 to request a print copy.

BOOK REVIEW

Museum Matters: Making and Unmaking Mexico's National Collections, edited by Miruna Achim, Susan Deans-Smith, and Sandra Rozental. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. 2021. xii+300 pp., 53 figures, 2 tables, notes, contributor biographies, index. \$50.00 hardcover (ISBN 9780816539574), \$50.00 eBook (ISBN 9780816544271).

Reviewed by Thatcher A. Seltzer-Rogers

Museums function as locations for members of the public to explore areas and times of the world otherwise inaccessible, from displays of dinosaurs and volcanism to lifeways and artifacts of past human societies. Yet, mostly ignored is the role of individuals employed by the museums and the governments that fund them in intentionally propagating preferred narratives. Recent studies have investigated the role of American national institutions such as the Smithsonian Institution in promoting specific aspects of past Indigenous North and Central American inhabitants' heritages (e.g., Hinsley 1991; Parezo 1987). These assessments demonstrate the complex relationships between museums and their supports and the public, the objects curated there, and the display of these objects. Rarely, however, do scholars focus on changes in the *meanings* of objects over time. In this volume, edited by Miruna Achim (Associate Professor in the Humanities and Social Sciences Division at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Cuajimalpa), Susan Deans-Smith (Associate Professor of History at the University of Texas), and Sandra Rozental (Associate Professor in the Humanities and Social Sciences Division at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Cuajimalpa), the contributing authors investigate the changes in what objects meant to the institutions that curated them and to the public over time and also challenge the prevailing Mexican notion, codified in Mexican federal law, that objects of the past are the heritage of the nation. The introductory chapter discusses these main themes, reviews the history of national museums in Mexico, and provides an outline of the volume's contents.

The first part (“Canons”) is composed of three chapters that investigate the relationship between curated objects and institutions and changes in social attitudes toward object display and collection. In the first chapter, Deans-Smith investigates the collection of objects in Mexico before independence in 1821 and contrasts their cultural significance during the Spanish empire to successive post-Mexican Independence eras. Importantly, Deans-Smith observes that prehispanic Mesoamerican sculptures acquired new, more fluid identities contingent upon larger aspirations of the political elite class. The second chapter, by Achim and Bertina Olmeda Vera, explores the production of archaeological fakes and forgeries, their acquisition by museums, and their loss, destruction, and intentional erasure by museum officials during the twentieth century. This contribution provides an entry into the ongoing dialogue in modern museums regarding how to identify fakes in their collections, and what to do with them thereafter, given that many now hold their own intriguing history. The concluding chapter in this part, by Laura Cházaro, investigates the transfer of medical objects and collections from two human biology museums and schools to the Museo Nacional de México and the changes in display and designated meaning that became attached to the medical objects in their new setting.

Four chapters in the second part (“Fragments”) assess the impacts on museums when objects become lost, forgotten, or reinterpreted over time. Leading off, Christina Bueno traces the complicated history of the Cross of Palenque, from its original 'discovery' to its segmentation, disposition, and display by several institutions – including the Smithsonian Institution – before finally discussing its eventual repatriation in a context of cultural diplomacy. This astute piece provides insight into the oftentimes illicit activities undertaken by North American archaeologists to procure prehispanic artifacts for museum collections and the larger political dynamics at play, particularly the nationalistic interests of Porfirio Díaz, Mexico’s seven-term President between 1876 and 1911. Frida Gorbach follows this chapter by assessing how to reconstruct the individual histories and scientific meaning of some 64,000 specimens collected by turn-of-the-century naturalists conducting global research that were simply expelled from the Museo Nacional de México in the early twentieth century. The third chapter in this section, by Haydeé López Hernández, focuses on ethnographic photographic records curated by the Museo Nacional de Antropología and how the removal of photos from exhibit spaces fits in the broader erasure of the diverse Indigenous heritages found in Mexico as part of national efforts to form a single national identity. In the final contribution to “Fragments,” Carlos Mondragón roots a sizable collection of Pacific artifacts in the scholastic development of ‘culture areas,’ especially that of Mesoamerica, in Mexican anthropology in the mid-twentieth century and demonstrates how these artifacts, mostly textiles of ceremonial significance, lost their cultural meaning and simply became relics emblematic of a 'Pacific Culture.'

The third part (“Disturbances”) consists of three chapters that interrogate how museums participated in historical acts of trauma against Indigenous groups by dispossessing and displaying objects outside of their cultural provenance. The first chapter, by Achim, reconstructs the history of two prehispanic ceramic urns from an island in the isthmus of Tehuantepec and their forced removal in 1843 as part of a scientific expedition evaluating the feasibility of a canal through the isthmus. Achim’s chapter poses the question of how contemporary museums often dismiss the violent removal of objects from their original locations and justify the practice against Indigenous protests regarding collection and display customs by constructing larger positivist narratives. In second chapter Mario Rufer contextualizes a replica of the Mexican coat of arms commissioned by the State in 1829 from the Purépecha (Tarascan) people using their traditional elaborate featherwork. He argues that it became stripped of its internal meaning and cast as a ‘handicraft’ emblematic of a 'lost' prehispanic craft and that it is displayed in a context that ignores the historical violence inflicted on the Purépecha by the Mexican state and further that the museum’s display and accompanying text interpret it solely through a nationalistic, mostly sanitized view, ignoring the cultural context within which it was created and the culture and local history it represents. The concluding chapter, in this part and the entire volume is by Rozental. It focuses on the removal and transportation of a prehispanic monolith colloquially labeled 'Tlaloc' (despite its predating the Aztec rain deity by around 500 to 800 years) in 1964, from a small town to its current location on a street outside the Museo Nacional de Antropología. Rozental compares the reasons given by Mexican national officials for removing it from its original location, i.e., mostly natural desiccation, with the damage by the elements in its current placement outside the museum, and points out that locals dismiss it as a replica given its unusual location. Rozental also discusses

modern uses of the monolith for political displays, demonstrating that museum-curated objects can adopt new meanings far beyond those intended by the creators of the objects and the national institutions that possess them.

In all, *Museum Matters*, is a deeply thoughtful work that challenges many aspects of modern museum practices. Although the contributions are at times uneven and the absence of a discussion/conclusion chapter limits the weaving together of major themes and questions posed throughout the various papers, this volume stands out for two reasons. First, it questions the dominant view of museum-curated objects as 'specimens/curios of scientific value' and thereby holding a constant meaning. Rather, numerous contributions demonstrate how politics, individual aspirations, and scholastic thought append new meanings to objects, and at the same time, erase the older, original meanings rooted in their specific cultural origins. Second, it provides, to my awareness, the first major call to critically assess the singular Mexican narrative, codified in law, that collections are objects of national patrimony. Achim and colleagues provide fodder for museums everywhere to reconsider just how objects, collections, and museum spaces themselves can service multiple segments of the public and multiple agendas simultaneously. I particularly found Achim and Olmeda Vera's chapter on archaeological fakes and forgeries to be intriguing, given similar issues for American museums, for example, the embellishment or outright forgery of Mimbres bowl designs and the relationship between early fake Casas Grandes vessels and the development of Mata Ortiz pottery. This book will be of great interest to archaeologists operating in museum spaces, to museum professionals, and to scholars interested in how museums, particularly those in Mexico, amassed their extensive collections of natural specimens and cultural artifacts and, in so doing, participated in the creation of knowledge that became foundational to current perceptions, including many misunderstandings in need of reevaluation.

References Cited

Hinsley, Curtis M.

1991 The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893. In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, edited by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, pp. 344-365.

Parezo, Nancy J.

1987 The Formation of Ethnographic Collections: The Smithsonian Institution in the American Southwest. *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 10:1-47.

NEWS AND NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

Non-Archaeological Help Wanted. University of Arizona Press, which offers our Newsletter book reviewers a choice of books to review from their annual spring and fall catalogs, has recently sent unsolicited a number of books dealing with contemporary Native American education and contemporary Navajo issues. If there is a member who would be interested in reviewing one or more of the books for the Newsletter, or who knows of someone who might be interested, please contact Helen Crotty at info@abqarchaeology.org for a list of titles. The reviewer gets to keep the book.

University of Arizona Press Makes 20 Archaeology Classics Open Access. Twenty backlist archaeology books are now available Open Access thanks to a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities. The titles, which include classics as well as some newer works, are available for online reading or downloading from Open Arizona, the press's OA portal. The titles include works by leading archaeologists: among the authors and editors are James Snead, Deborah Huntley, William Longacre, Barbara Mills, Patricia Crown, Margaret Nelson, Thomas Rocek, Michael Whalen, Paul Minnis, Bruce Huckell, Mark Varien, and Keith Kintigh. For a complete listing, go to uapress.arizona.edu/books and choose Open Arizona.

CALENDAR CHECK

Conferences

PECOS CONFERENCE August 11-14 on Rowe Mesa, New Mexico hosted by the Site Steward Foundation. Registration online now open at pecosconference.org.

SOUTHWEST KILN CONFERENCE October 7-9, Western New Mexico University Museum, in Silver City, New Mexico. Further information is forthcoming.

ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
PO Box 4029, Albuquerque, NM 87196
www.abqarchaeology.org and www.facebook.com/abqarchsoc

Annual Dues: For emailed newsletter: Student, no charge (provide copy of current ID); Basic Individual \$25; Basic Family \$30. Print newsletter by First Class mail: Basic Individual \$30; Basic Family \$35; Institutions/Libraries: \$10 for print newsletter by First Class Mail, emailed newsletter at no charge.

2022 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.

Officers

President:

Evan Kay

Vice Presidents:

Gretchen Obenauf

Ann Braswell

Secretary:

Susan King

Treasurer:

Tom Obenauf

Directors-at-Large:

Jo Lynne Fenger

John Guth

Standing Committee Chairs

Membership:

Mary Raje

Newsletter:

Helen Crotty

Mailer: Ann Braswell

Museum Lab/Archiving:

Karen Armstrong

Rock Art Recording:

Carol Chamberland

Greeter:

Sally McLaughlin

Committee Chairs (continued)

Field Trips:

Pat Harris

Steve Rospopo

Refreshments:

Ann Carson

Publicity:

Evan Kay

Pottery Southwest

Editors: Hayward Franklin, Peter

McKenna, Gretchen Obenauf

Webmaster:

Evan Kay

Asst: Thatcher Seltzer-Rogers