



Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc. Newsletter

www.sacarcheology.org

September/October - 2021

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 2021

September 13-25, 2021 - **Tour to Four Corners Southwest** led by Jan Johansen and Tom Johansen

October 2021

October 9, 2021 - Saturday, 2:00 p.m. PDT - **SAS Webinar** "*The Archaeologist and the Queen of Sheba*" by SAS Member, **Lynette Blumhardt**

October 15, 2021 4:00 p.m. Zoom Board Meeting

November 2021

December 2021

December 11, 2021, Saturday, 2:00 p.m. PDT - **SAS Annual Meeting and SAS Webinar** "*Pawneeland – Archaeology and Euro-American Account of Pawnees*" by **Carlton Gover**, member of Pawnee Nation and PhD candidate, University of Colorado

See announcements: <https://sacarcheology.org/announcements/> for **webinar access information** and calendar: <https://sacarcheology.org/archaeology-activities/calendar-of-events/> for the complete set of events in our website: www.sacarcheology.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SAS Webinar

Saturday, October 9, 2021

2:00 p.m.

"The Archaeologist and the Queen of Sheba"

by

Lynette Blumhardt

Scholars do not agree on where ancient Sheba was or whether or not the Queen of Sheba ever existed. There are a number of contenders for a possible location of Sheba. One site would be modern Yemen. The other is the Kingdom of Aksum which spanned the Red Sea from Ethiopia

to Yemen. Both benefited from trade routes through their territories. Frankincense and other spices were prized trade goods.

The Bible's Old Testament and the Quran describe the queen and her journey to visit King Solomon. She has been part of the Hebrew and Christian faiths for centuries, and the queen is an enduring cultural icon. Yet her existence has never been proved. American archaeologist and explorer Wendell Phillips wanted to be the first to locate proof of her and her realm. He ventured into Yemen in the 1950s to search for signs of the Queen of Sheba. His team excavated sites but found no evidence of the queen.

Lynette will discuss this mystery and describe archaeological sites that seem to be associated with the Queen of Sheba.

Lynette Blumhardt is a member of Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc.'s Board of Directors. She became fascinated with anthropology when she was in elementary school. This interest continued and was expanded through many anthropology classes and volunteering on more than a dozen archaeological excavations. The Queen of Sheba is one of her fascinations.

Friends are welcome and also invited to join our organization. There is no participation fee.

You may join early at 1:30 pm PST and enjoy a social half hour. See announcements:

<https://sacarcheology.org/announcements/> for **webinar access information**

Four Corners Archaeological Tour

September 13-25, 2021

Tour Details

This is a Members only event and additional participants are welcome. A reservation fee of \$50 per person and proof of vaccination is required with the reservation.

To receive information on the tour and make reservations contact Jan Johansen janjohansen@sbcglobal.net

The registration fee of \$50 per person may be sent to Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc. at P.O. Box 163287, Sacramento, CA 95816-9287 or at this late date use our web site <https://sacarcheology.org/society-membership/sas-donations-and-membership-payment/>.

PAST EVENTS

SAS Webinar – “The Potential of Obsidian Hydration Dating for Titicaca Basin Archaeology”

On Saturday, July 10, **Luis A. Flores-Blanco**, PhD student at UC Davis gave a presentation on obsidian hydration mythology as applied to Titicaca Basin Archaeology. He discussed the method for analyzing hydration of obsidian and the application of this technique for dating of artifacts in Peru. He has used the method in the laboratory of UC Davis and is planning to continue the analysis with more samples from the Titicaca Basin. His goal is to construct an Obsidian Hydration Dating (OHD) calibration curve for the Titicaca Basin.

Third Annual SAS Pool-Party/Pot-Luck/Social

On Saturday, July 24 approximately 20 SAS members enjoyed a social party. We thank Dan and Victoria Foster for offering their home for this wonderful get together.

SAS Webinar - "The Robberg of Southern Africa: Late Glacial Lithic Technology"

On Saturday, August 14th **Sara Watson**, PhD candidate UC Davis gave a presentation on Robberg Industry in South Africa. She reviewed the current state of research on Robberg and presented case studies of lithic technology from Robberg assemblages in western South Africa: Doring River Catchment and the south coast: Kynsna Eastern Heads Cave.

The Robberg technocomplex is one of southern Africa's most distinctive and cohesive technologies and found in cave and rock shelter sites across southern Africa at the end of Marine Isotope Stage (MIS) 2 and the Last Glacial Maximum. Since its early description, the Robberg Industry has typically been considered a relatively stable technology across southern Africa. Similarities include preference for fine grain raw material, similar reduction systems and place provisioning. However, focus on broad-scale similarities has masked temporal and spatial variability in Robberg technological organization. Recent research has focused on examining differences in Robberg technology. These differences as reflected in two sites are related to reduction intensity, amount of bipolar reduction and transport strategies.

MEMBER'S CORNER

We are pleased to acknowledge our major contributors for 2021. These donations help to support our scholarship program.

Patron (\$1000 or more)

Martie Lewis and Dennis Fenwick

Carolyn and Gordon McGregor

OSISoft - part of Aveva
Sponsor (\$100 - \$999)
Jeremy Johansen
Jan and Tom Johansen
Roger and Lydia Peake

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REFERENCES



The Dirt – A podcast for all ages and backgrounds about archaeology, anthropology, and our shared human story <https://thedirtpod.com/>

Recent Articles

The reviewed articles are:

- “The Ancient Carb Revolution”
- “Pleistocene sediment DNA reveals hominin and faunal turnovers at Denisova Cave”
- “Genomes offer rare glimpse of Neanderthal family groups”
- “Fossils expand human family tree—but questions remain”
- “A Middle Pleistocene Homo from Nesher Ramla, Israel”

“The Ancient Carb Revolution”

“A study of remains on pottery suggests that people ate starchy plants at least 12,000 years ago. A specific study at Göbekli Tepe in southern Turkey revealed that humans relied on grains much earlier than was previously thought—even before there was evidence that these plants were domesticated. Researchers such as Laura Dietrich at the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin used a range of techniques—from examining microscopic marks on ancient tools to analyzing DNA residues inside pots. Dietrich’s discoveries about the feasts at Göbekli Tepe started in the site’s ‘rock garden’. That’s the name archaeologists dismissively gave a nearby field where they dumped basalt grinding stones, limestone troughs and other large pieces of worked stone found amid the rubble. Dietrich cataloged the grinding stones and found that the ‘garden’ covered an area the size of a football field and contained more than 10,000 grinding stones and nearly 650 carved stone platters and vessels. No other settlement in the Near East has so many grinding stones, even in the late Neolithic, when agriculture was already well-established. Dietrich analyzed the grinding stones and found that they were smooth inside indicating that the stones were used for grinding a lot of grain probably for bread making. The grain could have been used for brewing Neolithic beer but experiments producing the same beer from hand-ground germinated grain, or malt, in the open vessel resulted in “a bit bitter, but drinkable’ brew”. It is believed that these people were apparently proto-farmers, already familiar with the cooking possibilities grain offered despite having no domesticated crops.” (Andrew Curry, *Nature*, V 594, 2021-7-24 pp. 488-491)

"Pleistocene sediment DNA reveals hominin and faunal turnovers at Denisova Cave"

"The report provides the analysis of DNA from 728 sediment samples that were collected at Denisova Cave in southern Siberia in a grid-like manner from layers dating to the Pleistocene epoch. The researchers retrieved ancient faunal and hominin mitochondrial (mt) DNA from 685 and 175 samples respectively. The earliest evidence for hominin mtDNA is of Denisovans, and is associated with early Middle Paleolithic stone tools that were deposited approximately 250,000 to 170,000 years ago; Neanderthal mtDNA first appears toward the end of this period. They detected a turnover in the mtDNA of Denisovans that coincided with changes in the composition of faunal mtDNA, and evidence that Denisovans and Neanderthals occupied the site repeatedly—possibly until, or after, the onset of the Initial Upper Palaeolithic at least 45,000 years ago, when modern human mtDNA is first recorded in the sediments" (Elena L. Zvala *et al. Nature*, V 595, 2021-7-15, pp. 399-403)

"Genomes offer rare glimpse of Neanderthal family groups

Low genetic diversity in males from two Siberian caves suggest females moved to their mates' families"

"More than 49,000 years ago, a family of Neanderthals set up camp in a cave high in Siberia's Altai Mountains. In the cave's main gallery, a teenage girl lost a tooth. Now, researchers have analyzed the genomes of the father and daughter and 12 of their relative, many of who sheltered in the same cave over less than 100 years. The new genomes almost double the number of Neanderthal genomes known and offer a glimpse of the Neanderthal population at the eastern end of their range, at a time when they were headed toward extinction. The evidence suggests that these Neanderthals lived in very small groups of 30 to 110 breeding adults, and that young females left their birth families to live with their mates' families." Ann Gibbons, *Science*, 2021-6-18 V 372 pp. 1251-52)

"Fossils expand human family tree—but questions remain

Bones found in Israel and China could belong to new types of ancient human"

"Fossils dating from around 140,000 years ago are adding to the ranks of hominins that mixed with early modern humans. A collection of fossils from Israel hint that a previously unknown group of hominins, proposed to be the direct ancestor of Neanderthals, might have dominated life in the Levant and lived alongside *Homo sapiens*. Meanwhile, researchers studying an ancient human skull found in China have controversially classified it as a new species—dubbed Dragon man—which might be an even closer relative to modern humans than are Neanderthals.

But both findings have sparked debate. The studies are based on analyses of the size, shape and structure of fossilized bones—methods that are subject to individual judgment and interpretation. As is often the case for fossil finds, there is no DNA evidence." (Nicola Jones, *Nature*, V 595, 2021-7-1 p. 20)

"A Middle Pleistocene *Homo* from Nesher Ramla, Israel"

"It has long been believed that Neanderthals originated and flourished on the European continent. However, recent morphological and genetic studies have suggested that they may have received a genetic contribution from a yet unknown non-European group. The researchers report on the recent diversity of archaic *Homo* fossils from the site of Nesher Ramla, Israel, which dated to 140,000 – 120,000 years ago. Comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analyses of the parietal bones, mandible, and lower second molar revealed that this *Homo* group presents a distinctive combination of Neanderthal and archaic features. They suggest that these specimens represent the late survivors of a Levantine Middle Pleistocene paleodeme that was most likely involved in the evolution of the Middle Pleistocene *Homo* in Europe and East Asia." Israel Hershkovitz *et al*, *Science*, 2021-6-25 V 372 pp. 1424-1433)

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