



34th Annual  
**Midwest Mesoamericanists  
Meeting**  
The University of Iowa

---

**Saturday March 5**  
**40 Schaeffer Hall (Pentacrest)**

**8:00 am Coffee and Donuts**

**8:30 am *Welcome and Introduction*, Glenn Storey, University of Iowa and Jeffrey Parsons, University of Michigan**  
**Thomas Charlton, Colleagues' Appreciation**

**9:00 am**

1. **Helen Perlstein Pollard**, Michigan State University

**Eréndira Ikikunari: Legend and film: The uses of archaeology to construct the present; the role of the archaeologist to transmit the past.**

**9:20 am**

2. **Karin Rebnegger**, Michigan State University

**Obsidian use in the Tarascan Core: Lake Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico**

**9:40 am**

3. **Hattula Moholy-Nagy**, University of Pennsylvania Museum, **James Meierhoff**, University of Illinois, Chicago, **Mark Golitko**, Field Museum of Chicago, **Caleb Kestle**

**A Large Sample of Obsidian Source Attributions from Tikal, Guatemala**

**BREAK 10:00 to 10:20**

**10:20 am**

4. **Frederic Hicks**, University of Louisville

**A Potpourri of Chichimecs**

**10:40 am**

5. **Erica Begun**, University of Iowa

**The West Mexican Presence at the N1W5:E19 Compound of Teotihuacan**

**11:00 am**

6. **James Meierhoff**, University of Illinois, Chicago, **Mark Golitko**, **Gary M. Feinman**, and **Patrick Ryan Williams**, Field Museum of Chicago

**Terminal and Post-classic Obsidian Exchange Networks: San Jose, Belize and the broader Maya World**

**11:20 am**

7. **Caleb Kestle**, University of Illinois, Chicago

**Preliminary Examination of Lakeside Middens at Mentsabók**

**11:40 pm**

8. **Andrew R. Wyatt**, University of Illinois at Chicago

**Every Earth is Fit for Burial: Southern Maya Lowland Chultunes as Burial Chambers**

**LUNCH 12:00 to 1:30 pm**

**1:30 pm**

**9. Ayla M. Amadio**, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale  
**Archaeo-Ethnography of a Prehispanic Steambath: Case Study from the Mixtec Highlands**

**1:50 pm**

**10. Maria Teresa Palomares Rodriguez**, Department of Anthropology, Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
**Recent excavations in the "Oaxaca Barrio" at Teotihuacan: New data on burials, urns, and the origins of the enclave.**

**2:10 pm**

**11. Donald McVicker**, North Central College/Field Museum  
**Maya Figurines in Groups**

**2:30 pm**

**12. Michelle M. Croissier**, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale  
**Re-thinking Teotihuacan's Oaxaca Barrio**

**BREAK 2:50-3:10 pm**

**3:10 pm**

**13. Raúl Quiakena García Chávez**, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, México  
**The Altepetl: origins and transformations**

**3:30 pm**

**14. Rebecca Deeb (presenter)**, University of Illinois at Chicago, **Santiago Juarez**, Northwestern University, and **Sebatian Salgado-Flores**, University of Texas at San Antonio  
**New Investigations at Lake Mensabak, Mexico: Settlements, Artifacts, and Rock Art**

**3:50 pm**

**15. Matthew Krystal**, North Central College.  
**Three Looms, Part Two**

**4:10 pm**

**16. Tracie Mayfield**, Chicago  
**Imagine There's No Big-House: A Discussion of the Implications of Architecture and Identity at the British Plantation Settlement at Lamanai, Belize (1837-1868)**

**4:30 pm**

**17. Meaghan Thies**, University of Iowa  
**The Power of Influence**

**4:50 pm Closing Remarks: Cynthia Otis Charlton**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Saturday Night Party- 7-10pm**

**The Airliner**

**2<sup>nd</sup> floor**



**34<sup>th</sup> Annual**  
**MIDWEST MESOAMERICANISTS MEETING**

University of Iowa, Department of Anthropology

**Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Room 40 Schaeffer Hall**

**8:00 am Coffee**

**8:30 am Welcome and Introduction, Glenn Storey, University of Iowa and Jeffrey Parsons, University of Michigan**  
**Thomas Charlton, Colleagues' Appreciation**

**9:00 am**

1. **Helen Perlstein Pollard, Michigan State University**

***Eréndira Ikikunari: Legend and film: The uses of archaeology to construct the present; the role of the archaeologist to transmit the past.***

This commercial film, produced in 2007-8, and filmed at major Tarascan archaeological sites using excavated artifacts and costumes copied from illustrations in sixteenth century documents, records a well-known legend referred to no earlier than the late eighteenth century. What are we to make of the legend and now the film?

**9:20 am**

2. **Karin Rebnegger, Michigan State University**

**Obsidian use in the Tarascan Core: Lake Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico**

Obsidian was used at Tarascan sites for an assortment of items. These items ranged from the auxiliary prismatic blades and scrapers to luxury lapidary items. People at some sites consumed more obsidian than others and procured obsidian from a variety of sources within and outside the borders of the empire. The use of obsidian in the core of the empire differs from that of locals in various regions of the empire. This paper will illuminate the different degrees at which obsidian was utilized in the Tarascan core and how it varied from that of other regions throughout the empire.

**9:40 am**

3. **Hattula Moholy-Nagy, University of Pennsylvania Museum, James Meierhoff, University of Illinois, Chicago, Mark Golitko, Field Museum of Chicago, Caleb Kestle**  
**A Large Sample of Obsidian Source Attributions from Tikal, Guatemala**

Recently we had the opportunity to attribute 1146 provenienced obsidian artifacts to 14 geological sources in Guatemala, Mexico, and Honduras using Portable X-Ray Fluorescence (pXRF). The artifacts are from Tikal, Guatemala, a major, Precolumbian Lowland Maya center, and were excavated by the Tikal Project of the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Our interest is in trying to understand the ways in which obsidian was used at Tikal. Here we will present the distributions of identified sources among artifact types, recovery contexts, types of structure groups, distance from the center of the site, and the way these variables changed over time.

## **BREAK 10:00 to 10:20 am**

### **10:20 am**

4. **Frederic Hicks**, University of Louisville

#### **A Potpourri of Chichimecs**

In 16th-century Mexico, the term "Chichimec" was used to refer to at least two very different kinds of people. In many of the Nahuatl-speaking urbanized polities, it was the name of some of the lordly or royal lineages, or a royal or lordly title, or the name of one or another of the ethnic-like segments in most polities of the region. But it was also the name applied, in those same polities, to the non-urban, tribal societies of northern Mexico, some of whom may even have been hunter-gatherers. Much has been written about the apparent connection between these two usages. This paper will look at the various kinds of Chichimecs reported in the ethnohistorical sources for different regions in central and northern Mexico and try to identify the "real" Chichimecs.

### **10:40 am**

5. **Erica Begun**, University of Iowa

#### **The West Mexican Presence at the N1W5:E19 Compound of Teotihuacan**

This is a preliminary report on the results from my dissertation research at the N1W5: Structure 19 compound at Teotihuacan. My research is an attempt to better identify and explore the presence of a small group of people with West Mexican cultural affiliation during the Classic Period. Burial ritual/goods and household assemblages were looked at in an attempt to understand how the population of the compound may have sought to create or maintain their ethnic and cultural identities in the complex urban setting of Teotihuacan.

### **11:00 am**

6. **James Meierhoff**, University of Illinois, Chicago, **Mark Golitko**, **Gary M. Feinman**, and **Patrick Ryan Williams**, Field Museum of Chicago  
**Terminal and Post-classic Obsidian Exchange Networks: San Jose, Belize and the broader Maya World**

The importance of Classic-Postclassic coastal trade among the Maya has been debated ever since Hammond's influential 1972 article on Mayan obsidian exchange networks, in which he argued that El Chayal obsidian, the dominant source present at

most Classic period Maya sites, was largely transported through inland networks, while Ixtepeque, the dominant source at most Maya sites during the Postclassic, was transported primarily by coastal traders. In this paper, we present new obsidian sourcing data from San Jose, Belize, a site excavated by J. Eric Thompson during the 1930s. We spatially embed the findings from San José in a broader pan-regional obsidian data set for the Terminal- and Postclassic periods, finding support for the central tenets of Hammond's original model, and the growing significance of sea-trade before the end of the Classic Period. Based on our analysis, we suggest that the growing economic control of vital commodities including obsidian and ritual paraphernalia by coastal traders and/or their partners, and the consequent decline of inland exchange networks, may have contributed to the decline of important inland Maya centers.

**11:20 am**

7. **Caleb Kestle**, University of Illinois, Chicago

**Preliminary Examination of Lakeside Middens at Mentsabók**

During the summer of 2010 unusually low lake levels at Lago Mentsabók exposed a series of early colonial trash deposits. Although these deposits could not be excavated, surface remains were recorded and analyzed in-situ. These remains provide interesting data on the subsistence practices of early colonial people in Chiapas. Due to the stable environmental conditions experienced by these deposits, animal remains were well preserved. Using the in-situ data as a reference, this presentation will discuss the preliminary counts of taxa present at the site and address the potential subsistence implications of the assemblage. Preliminary findings suggest that species that prefer disturbance and secondary forest environments make up the majority of the assemblage. This suggests that the early colonial inhabitants of the Mentsabók region were either engaged in an intensive pattern of land use or that lake Mentsabók sustained higher populations than was once thought.

**11:40 am**

8. **Andrew R. Wyatt**, University of Illinois at Chicago

**Every Earth is Fit for Burial: Southern Maya Lowland Chultunes as Burial Chambers**

Accepted wisdom considers *chultunes* – artificially constructed underground chambers found throughout the Maya area – as storage chambers for food or water. While researchers have proposed alternatives over the years, including sweatbaths or sites for the fermentation of alcoholic beverages, storage chambers are considered the typical function. However, empirical evidence provides little support for this hypothesis. The size and the environment within chultunes are not conducive to the storage of food. Chultunes are often found with burials or other ritual artifacts, or they are locations for the disposal or refuse, indicating that their primary function has ceased. Excavations in chultunes instead suggest a ritual role, with burials as the most likely primary function. This paper will explore the hypothesis that chultunes are burial chambers associated with both commoner and elite households by presenting evidence from excavations and from the analysis of artifacts in chultunes at sites throughout the Maya area and Mesoamerica.

**LUNCH 12:00 to 1:30 pm**

**1:30 pm**

9. **Ayla M. Amadio**, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

**Archaeo-Ethnography of a Prehispanic Steambath: Case Study from the Mixtec Highlands**

A Prehispanic steambath or *temazcal* excavated at the Mixteca Alta site of Tayata is examined from multiple anthropological perspectives to understand its uses and unusual features, including human burials—some probable child sacrifices—and its location in an isolated elite precinct. *Temazcales* appear in both highland and lowland Mesoamerican sites throughout the Classic and Postclassic Periods but the lack of excavated contexts have made them difficult to interpret. The *temazcal* at Tayata is the earliest example of this type of structure that has been excavated; evidence presented indicates the changing use of these buildings from places of elite political and ritual activity to places of contemporary postpartum rejuvenation. The contextual analysis, time depth and formal variation of *temazcales* indicate a significant departure from the ethnographic baseline, and an origin in ritual transformation and the reconstruction of place during the Classic Period.

**1:50 pm**

10. **Maria Teresa Palomares Rodriguez**, Department of Anthropology, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

**Recent excavations in the "Oaxaca Barrio" at Teotihuacan: New data on burials, urns, and the origins of the enclave.**

Since its discovery in the 1960s, the “Oaxaca Barrio” in the ancient city of Teotihuacan has been defined by its association with the Zapotec homeland and Monte Alban. In this paper, I present the results of a salvage project in the Zapotec neighborhood and assess the burials, pottery and other artifacts present. One emerging pattern from the recent excavations is an earlier date for the beginnings of the enclave—dating to Formative rather than Classic times. There are thus at least two distinct contexts for understanding the barrio, the first being its origins in a time of Zapotec expansion and the second, much later in time, during Teotihuacan’s urban renewal. My study shows that Zapotec migrants adapted to living in Teotihuacan over a considerable period of time, maintaining aspects of their homeland identity, but also generating a new cultural repertoire by which members of the enclave redefined themselves.

**2:10 pm**

11. **Donald McVicker**, North Central College/Field Museum

**Maya Figurines in Groups**

During the course of research on Classic/Late Classic Maya ceramic figurines attributed to Jaina Island I became interested in the role these figurines may have played in groups rather than simply as objects to be placed in graves. Beginning with the well-known La Venta offering #4 figurine groupings were surveyed including the recently excavated spectacular set from Warka/El Peru. It is proposed that it is the pre-burial use of these miniatures in sets that is the key to determining their function.

**2:30 pm**

12. **Michelle M. Croissier**, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale  
**Re-thinking Teotihuacan's Oaxaca Barrio**

Millon's surface survey of Teotihuacan revealed a Zapotec presence and an undefined "special relationship" with the Valley of Oaxaca. My excavations in the barrio were designed to examine the nature of this relationship and among other features and new dates uncovered a Zapotec-style two-room temple. I propose that the Barrio was settled by Zapotec migrants no later than the Terminal Formative and that the settlers were not of Monte Albán origin but from elsewhere in Oaxaca. My conclusions, based on empirical data, formal migration models, and ethnographic and ethnohistoric analogies, are that (1) Zapotec migrants used the temple-based institutions of their homeland to organize themselves at the community-level; (2) that chain migration (kin-structured and/or patron-client driven) explains the Zapotec presence or movement into the barrio; and (3) Teotihuacan's Oaxaca Barrio is best understood as an ethnic sub-society or enclave that has analogues in both ancient and modern urban settings.

**BREAK 2:50 to 3:10 pm**

13. **Raúl Quiakena García Chávez**, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, México

***The Altepetl: origins and transformations***

The origins of the Altepetl were the first societies of nomadic people that arrived to the Basin of Mexico around the XII Century B.C. These people passed through different social stages from simple to complex chiefdoms and then to states. Some people have the notion that the Altepetl is a word with political significance, but in this paper I want to show that the Altepetl was a place, the setting of a society, the settlement, and eventually the Altepetl was transformed into an urban center. This last moment was when the Altepetl took the significance of a state, but really the urban center was the place or the locus of the state. We showed that structural transformations took place in the Chichimec societies from the moment when the Altepetl was founded to the moment when the settlements were transformed into urban centers. These transformations are the topic of the paper and will be showed in the correct fashion.

**3:30 pm**

14. **Rebecca Deeb (presenter)**, University of Illinois at Chicago, **Santiago Juarez**, Northwestern University, and **Sebatian Salgado-Flores**, University of Texas at San Antonio

**New Investigations at Lake Mensabak, Mexico: Settlements, Artifacts, and Rock Art**

In its fourth year, the Mensabak Archaeological Project (MAP), at Lake Mensabak, Chiapas, Mexico, completed a season of survey and documentation in 2010. The lake is located in the heart of the Lacandon Jungle, and is at a confluence of prehistoric ethno-linguistic Maya groups. The area has significant Late Classic non-lakeshore sites, and Late Classic to Postclassic lakeshore occupations that include historic period reoccupations. This presentation will share results of mapping, extensive shoreline

artifact surveys, and inferences about the lake's regional ties. In addition, I will describe my findings from high-resolution and infrared images of the lake's rock art. Finally, I present MAP as an example of collaborative research among cultural anthropologists, archaeologists, and indigenous people.

### **3:50 pm**

15. **Matthew Krystal**, North Central College.

#### **Three Looms, Part Two**

"...[H]ow the residents of some communities manage to improve their livelihoods in spite of [structural] limitations..." is a main question explored in Liliana Goldin's *Global Maya: Work and Ideology in Rural Guatemala* (2009:7). *Oxib' Q'alem* ('Three Looms') is a documentary film in process that closely examines production and distribution of textiles by three differently-organized and variably-successful Highland Maya weaving enterprises. An excerpt of *Oxib' Q'alem* featuring Campana Ab'aj textiles will be screened. Campana Ab'aj ('ringing stone') textiles is an extended family cooperative based in the *la Calera* neighborhood of San Miguel Totonicipán. Through innovative design, flexible organization of production, and an array of strategies to engage a variety of local and international markets, Campana Ab'aj represents improved economic prospects for its members. However, global economic slowdown, diminished (and always fickle) tourism, and weak property rights protection threaten to undermine progress made.

### **4:10 pm**

16. **Tracie Mayfield**, Chicago

#### **Imagine There's No Big-House: A Discussion of the Implications of Architecture and Identity at the British Plantation Settlement at Lamanai, Belize (1837-1868)**

In 1837, the British government granted two-hundred acres in northwest Belize to James Hyde and Company. Although this landscape was rife with objects that can be positively linked with contemporaneous British identity, the only nineteenth-century architecture identified at Lamanai (to date) is a sugar mill. The lack of British era features at Lamanai is somewhat of an anathema with regard to colonial profit making spaces. Architecture such as a big-house, supervisors' housing, quarters, and walls were frequently used to identify a group's inclusion or exclusion to discrete zones. Clues to the reasons for the variability of the plantation landscape may be drawn directly from the deep history of Maya occupation and the presence of large-scale architectural remains in this particular region. The very setting of difference between Maya and British ideologies and aesthetics may have given rise to a new expression of British identity at this particular site.

### **4:30 pm**

19. **Meagan Thies**, University of Iowa

#### **The Power of Influence**

Cahokia and an assessment of "complexity".

**4:50 pm Closing Remarks: Cynthia Otis Charlton**