

# ASM Ink



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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

[www.marylandarcheology.org](http://www.marylandarcheology.org)

## Footprints may not be 21,000 years old

By Vittoria Benzine

Condensed from *Artnet News*, November 24, 2022

A joint team of American researchers has contradicted previous claims that fossilized footprints found in 2009 in the Lake Otero Basin at New Mexico's White Sands National Park are the oldest in North America—allegedly from the last Ice Age. The group's latest work appeared in a recent edition of *Quaternary Research*.

Last September, researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey radiocarbon dated *Ruppia cirrhosa* seeds lodged throughout the footprints. Their results implied the footprints were left between 22,800 to 21,130 years ago. Previously, the earliest-known human beings in North America were dated between 14,000 and 16,000 years ago. If true, the conclusion would upend all manner of assumptions in the field.

The team published its findings in *Science* last year.

Charles Oviatt, a Kansas State University geologist, told *Heritage Daily* this week that he read the original *Science* article, "and was initially struck, not only by how tremendous the footprints were on their own, but how important accurate dating would be."

Last year, researchers acknowledged potential interference due to the "reservoir effect." Underwater plants like *Ruppia cirrhosa*, an underwater ditch grass, can appear much older since they photosynthesize from the water, which often holds ancient carbon, rather than in the atmosphere, which would create a more contemporary picture.

Oviatt joined three colleagues from DRI, University of Nevada, and Oregon State University in arranging to test *Ruppia cirrhosa* samples archived at the University of New Mexico herbarium. They had originally been collected while alive from a spring-fed pond close by during 1947.

Leading commercial radiocarbon lab Beta Analytic conducted dating on those archived samples. Results dated the plants as 7,400 years old, "an offset resulting from the use of ancient groundwater by the plant," *Heritage Daily* noted. If those results were skewed by 7,400 years, then there's a chance that footprints at White Sands actually align with existing records.

It's all just the scientific method at work. "The original investigators went to some lengths to corroborate their claims and I am told they are still working on it," Rhode told *Artnet News*. "They have publicly recognized the need for such corroborative evidence to convince the community at large. There is now and will continue to be much more work on this one."

It's time

Not only is Christmas staring you in the face, but so is 2023.

To renew

Make sure the joys of the new year include more adventures in archeology.

One good way to assure that is to renew your membership in ASM. It's easy, it's fast and it doesn't cost much.

See the ASM website for details and join us in looking forward to another year of playing in the dirt.

# Upcoming events

Dec. 3: ASM board. Meeting. Via Zoom.

## Volunteer opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT participants and other ASM members:

**ASM Volunteer Lab, most Tuesdays:** The lab in Crownsville. Contact Zachary Singer at

[Zachary.Singer@maryland.gov](mailto:Zachary.Singer@maryland.gov)

**The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center** seeks participants in its Citizen-Scientist Program in archeology and other environmental research programs in Edgewater. Field and lab work are conducted Wednesdays and on occasional Saturdays. Contact Jim Gibb at [jamesggibb@verizon.net](mailto:jamesggibb@verizon.net)

**Charles County for lab and field work** volunteers, contact Esther Read at [ReadE@charlescountymd.gov](mailto:ReadE@charlescountymd.gov)

For more information, contact Carol Cowherd at [ccasm2010@gmail.com](mailto:ccasm2010@gmail.com).

The **Anne Arundel County Archeology Lab** in Edgewater, in conjunction with The Lost Towns Project, accepts volunteers and interns to help process artifacts, including washing, labeling, sorting and cataloging. No experience needed. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. The lab is generally open 2-3 weekdays each week from 9:00-3:00. Volunteers must sign up in advance. There are occasional opportunities for fieldwork as well. For more information, the current lab or field schedule, or to sign up, email Drew Webster at [volunteers@losttownsproject.org](mailto:volunteers@losttownsproject.org).

**UPAG/Howard County Recs and Parks** invites volunteers interested in processing collections and conducting historical research to contact Kelly Palich at [Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov) or 410-313-0423.

**Montgomery County** for lab and field work volunteers, contact Heather Bouslog at 301 563 7530 or [Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org)

**Mount Calvert.** Lab work and field work. 301 627 1286.

**Jefferson Patterson Park** invites volunteers to take part in its activities, including archeology, historical research and conservation. Contact 410 586 8554.

**The Archaeological Institute of America** provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide. Call up [www.archaeological.org/fieldwork](http://www.archaeological.org/fieldwork) to get started.

## CAT corner:

If your email address changes please remember to let Tom know. It's the only contact we have for many of you. For more information on the CAT program contact Tom McLaughlin at [mclaugh01@verizon.net](mailto:mclaugh01@verizon.net)

Frank & Ernest

by Thaves



# The problem with glacier artifacts

By Rick Noack

*Condensed from the Washington Post, November 3, 2022*

FORCLE GLACIER, Switzerland — At about 8,000 feet above sea level, Switzerland's Forcle Glacier has for thousands of years been deeply ensconced in a mountain valley overlooked by some of Europe's highest peaks.

To early human hunters, it must have seemed as if its snow-covered body of ice would forever keep the valley locked in its frozen grip. Whatever was lost on these rocks was swallowed by the ice, never to reappear.

But when the Swiss archeologist Romain Andenmatten arrived here on a recent September day, the ground was so muddy and moist that his shoes sank deep into it. On the ground in front of him lay a leather strap. The last time a human held it may have been over 1,000 years ago.

As climate change melts glaciers at unprecedented speeds, such ancient artifacts are emerging from the shrinking layers of ice around the world. For archeologists, this is both a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and a daunting task as the planet's rapid warming is exposing objects faster than they can be saved.

When the artifacts emerge after decades or centuries, many are so well preserved that they seem to have been frozen just hours earlier. Some of the most scientifically valuable finds are organic, such as wood and leather, which would normally decompose without the ice.

But because of the speed at which the earth's glaciers are melting — temperatures are rising two times as fast in the Alps as elsewhere — researchers worry that they do not have enough time. Large portions of the collective history of about a third of the world's population in mountain areas are "melting away," said archeologist Marcel Cornelissen.

This year alone, Swiss glaciers lost 6 percent of their ice, said glaciologist Matthias Huss, who likens the destructive force of this summer's heat waves to an Alpine "hurricane."

Late in summer 1991, two German hikers on the Italian-Austrian border found the frozen body of a man who was initially assumed to be the victim of a recent accident. He later became known as Ötzi, or "Iceman" — a 5,000-year-old murder victim who had been killed with an arrow and preserved in the ice.

Over the following decades, Ötzi became perhaps the most carefully investigated body in history, allowing researchers to draw conclusions about historical climates, early human habits and genetics.

The more the ice melts, the deeper archeologists advance into some of its oldest layers — and into the past. Among the finds have been a Swiss leather shoe over 3,500 years old and a 10,000-year-old Alpine glacier mine. In Norway, a 1,300-year-old ski that predates the Vikings was so well preserved that scientists were able to reproduce a functioning copy and race down the slopes with it.

About half of all global ice discoveries that are medieval or older have been made in Norway, which has a particularly high accumulation of ice that does not move. Archeologists prefer searching for artifacts in such deposits because — unlike in glaciers — the lack of movement prevents the items from being ground up and "spat out," said Regula Gubler, a Swiss scientist. In the Swiss Alps, the most promising areas of discovery are the ice patches and snowfields around the glaciers, not the glaciers themselves.

For Lars Holger Pilo and many of his colleagues, the challenge is no longer identifying sites where discoveries are likely but prioritizing those that are most important for salvaging.

"For every patch we find, there are probably dozens that go unnoticed and quietly melt away — and the cultural heritage embedded in them is out there under the August sun, rotting," said Nicholas Jarman, an archeologist for the U.S. National Park Service in New Mexico.

"It's a small reflection of the broader societal challenge that we're faced with," he said. "Will I be looking back in 20 years, wishing that I'd done more?"

In Switzerland, Andenmatten and his colleague hope that crowdsourcing can help them rise to the challenge.

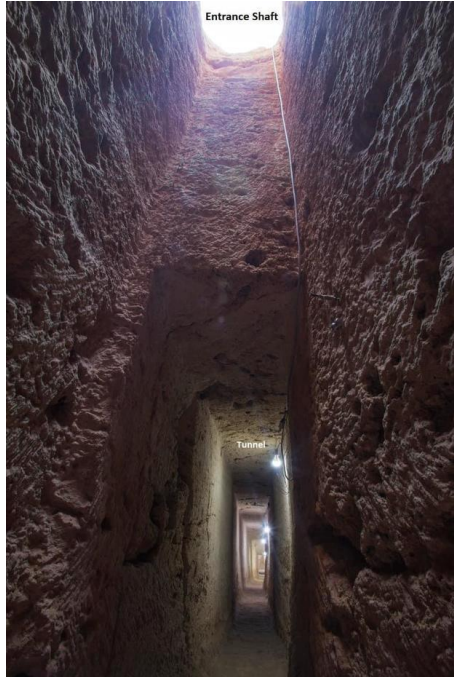
They released a smartphone app last year that lets anyone share photos and the GPS coordinates of potential finds. It allows the scientists to make a first assessment of the significance of a discovery before they embark on a sometimes days-long hike. But the influx of artifacts could come to an abrupt end one day.

Swiss researcher Gubler has hiked up to the Schnidejoch, almost every year for the past decade and says it used to be an archeological treasure chest. But this summer, she found that all the ice had disappeared.

# Long rock tunnel found at Egyptian temple

By Greg Cannella

Condensed from CBS News, Nov. 10, 2022



Archeologists have discovered a massive ancient rock tunnel beneath an Egyptian temple, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities announced last week.

A group led by Kathleen Martinez, who heads the Egyptian-Dominican mission of the University of Santo Domingo, uncovered the tunnel. She has made several previous discoveries in her search for the tomb of Queen Cleopatra.

Archeologists described the tunnel a "geometric miracle," according to a news release from the ministry. It stretches over 4,300 feet and is carved in a rock 42 feet below the ground in the area of the Temple of Tapozeris Magna, which is located west of the city of Alexandria, the ministry said.

The name of the temple, Tapozeris Magna, is dedicated to Osiris — the God of death.

The tunnel's architectural design appears to resemble that of Greece's Jubilinos Tunnel, but longer, the ministry said. Martinez said a part of the tunnel was found to be submerged under the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, according to the ministry.

During previous excavations, researchers also found artifacts inside the temple, including coins bearing the images and names of Cleopatra and Alexander the Great.

## Discoveries keep being made in Egypt

By Vittoria Benzine

Condensed from Artnews Net, November 8, 2022

November 4 marked a hundred years since British archeologist Howard Carter unearthed King Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, near Luxor. A century on, the tombs of ancient Egypt's rulers continue to yield new discoveries.

Archeologists have recently unearthed a store of artifacts around Giza's Saqqara necropolis site, including coffins, papyri and other artifacts, in a series of connected coffin rooms 65 feet beneath Egypt's iconic pyramids.

Zahi Hawass, Egypt's former Minister of State for Antiquities Affairs, told *NBC's* that the latest finds are related not only to King Tut's generals and advisers, but also the pharaoh King Teti.

Mummies found around Teti's tomb at Saqqara will be exhumed and X-rayed by way of autopsy. After being conserved and archived, relics will likely go on view at the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza—slated to open next year. Some relics from King Tut's tomb are bound for the museum too.

Hawass has repeatedly emphasized that archeologists have only turned up a fraction of Egypt's buried monuments. He considers Saqqara this moment's hottest spot.

"Teti was worshipped as a god in the New Kingdom, and everyone wanted to be buried alongside him," Hawass told *NBC News* of the Sixth Dynasty's first king, who ruled for roughly 12 years between 2300—2181 B.C.E. Hawass added that his team has found close to 300 coffins around Teti's pyramid this year, each with ample substance for archeological study.

Hawass and his British rival Nicholas Reeves are still competing to discover the tomb of Tut's stepmother, Queen Nefertiti, rumored to be hidden behind the young ruler's tomb.

## Jack Davis, a vital member of the ASNC, dies

The ASNC is saddened to report the sudden death of Jack Davis, during recovery from a hip fracture. While Jack was a recognized face throughout Harford County and the Maryland archeological community, the chapter considered him one of the most active in ASNC and many other regional public education organizations. He is literally irreplaceable within the chapter, for seeing every project through from beginning to end, and providing the required logistical support for every activity.

## Book review: The other side of Manifest Destiny

**Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America, By Pekka Hamalainen, Liveright, 2022, 571 pages, \$40**

The story is well-known. Hardy European settlers started on the Atlantic coast and fought their way westward until, generations later, they had conquered the entire continent. But, contrary to what these migrants had been taught, it wasn't an empty continent theirs for the taking. Several million scattered people already called it home. And Pekka Hamalainen's goal was to tell the story as those indigenous people saw it.

Not counting the Vikings, the first Europeans to establish a land colony on the continent were the Portuguese, who set up camp in Newfoundland in 1521. It lasted about five years.

The first people to be enslaved did not arrive in North America in 1619; they were already here. Slavery was a common fate of Indians captured by Europeans. Spanish, French, Dutch, English and Russian. They came, they saw, they enslaved. It was also common for Indians to do it to members of other tribes or peoples they captured. For the Europeans, it was a common practice back home. The Indians invented it on their own.

Rather than tobacco, slaves were "the continent's most precious commodity," Hamalainen writes. Even at the beginning, "As many as fifty thousand southern Indians may have been enslaved. Many of them were shipped to Caribbean slave islands, while others were sold to planters on the Eastern Seaboard, where they labored in rice and tobacco fields alongside African slaves."

Each side did not trust the other, and both had good reasons not to. For the Indians, it was these uninvited strangers who kept coming and trying to change the Native ways of life. Their constant efforts to expand and their use of the land (settlements and agriculture) did not make for a smooth mix.

The culture clash never was resolved. Even if a treaty was worked out to stop the fighting, it usually was quickly violated (usually by the Europeans) and the settlers took the quiet as a reason to move into the now more-peaceful land and cause new friction. "Where the United States should have been cultivating alliances with Indigenous nations, most of which they had not defeated, rogue colonists and soldiers alienated nation after nation."

After the Revolution (which rid the East Coast of the British but not the rest of the continent), "Rather than trying to remove the Indians by force, the Confederation Congress sold millions of acres to land speculators, who in turn would sell land in 160-, 640- and 5,760-acre tracts. The strategy was obvious: once the land was sold, colonists would eradicate Native Americans on their own... But the sales were disappointing. There were too many speculators, far too many Indians, and far too few U.S. troops."

The same pattern kept repeating itself across the country. The Indians expected the settlers to share their technology and embrace the Indians as allies and kin, whereas the British or the Spanish or French or Americans sought to dictate their ways and their God to the Indians.

In the trans-Mississippi west, continuing a centuries-long process, Cherokees Choctaws, Chickasaws, Muscogees and Catawbas tried to teach the European newcomers how to treat the Native inhabitants and educate them about proper behavior, boundaries and how to think and speak properly. They weren't good learners.

The Europeans advanced through strength of numbers, technology, spreading diseases (sometimes unintentionally) and having gotten the Indians used to wanting western goods. The Ojibwes, for example, "had to make difficult choices .... They wanted to rid their lands of the haughty British, but they also needed to preserve the vital commercial lifeline."

**Continued on next page**

Nothing the Indians tried worked in the long run. "Some nations relied on naked force and numbers to corral and punish colonial powers, while others sought alliances with them. Some forged ties to other Native nations and reinvented themselves as confederacies."

He writes, "The most powerful nations and confederacies – the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, the Indian Confederacy, the Wyandots, Lakotas, Comanches, Muscogees, Cherokees, and Seminoles – defeated the colonists in battle repeatedly and controlled the diplomatic proceedings that followed. They possessed the authority, savvy and will to dictate terms to the Spanish, French, British and U.S. empires."

"Fighting on their homelands, the Indians did not need to win battles and wars; they just needed not to lose them." When they did win one, such as on the Little Big Horn, retribution was certain.

"Since the founding in 1776, there had been more than sixteen hundred official military engagements with Native Americans." "Too weak to reduce the Indians to subjects, the United States had to negotiate contracts with sovereign Native nations. They would have to do so 222 times between 1804 and 1970, the largest cessions occurring before 1867."

The long fight had drained the U.S. government coffers, sometimes absorbing nearly five-sixths of the total federal expenditure year after year. The U.S. was spending \$144,000 a day to fight the Plains Indians.

There are many questionable factual errors in the section I know the most about, the Mid-Atlantic, that I was left to wonder about the rest of the book. For instance he has the original colonists leaving Jamestown for a site further upriver rather than to return to England. He has Maryland "far up the Chesapeake Bay" from Virginia and claims that "overwhelming" Native sea power kept the Atlantic coast "free of colonial bases for decades."

The book has many maps and photographs. Unfortunately, most of them are half-page and almost unusable.

Because the book covers such a wide area, both in time and space, new names and words are constantly being thrown into the mix and when they are mentioned again, often many pages later, there is no explanation of who or what it is. One example, the term "pays d'en haut" appears on page 124 without explanation and then is used frequently throughout the book, always without explanation.

The book includes 71 pages of notes, bibliographic not additional information, and a 30-page index.

For a one-book-tells-all history of the fight for North America, this one would be hard to beat.

-- Myron Beckenstein

## When archeologists traded trowels for guns

By Yiannis Papadopoulos

*Condensed from Ekatherimini.com, November 24, 2022*

He knew how to handle a gun, but had no experience of battle. Yet in the summer of 2014, archeologist Pshtiwan Ahmed had to step into the role of guard at the Erbil Civilization Museum in the autonomous district of Iraqi Kurdistan, when the proper security guards were sent to the front, along with all the other reserves, to stop the expansion of ISIS.

He and other colleagues split the work of defending the displays into 12-hour shifts. Mosul had already fallen without resistance and the enemy was at the gates. Would they suffer a similar fate?

"Of course we were scared," says the 38-year-old archeologist. "We had seen that ISIS was targeting antiquities to destroy or loot them, and we were wondering how we would protect our families and our city, as well as our museum."

Developments were so rapid, it was impossible to come up with some viable plan to hide or remove the museum's exhibits to a different location. The Erbil Civilization Museum may have had only three display rooms, but its storage areas were packed with artifacts and recent excavation finds.

One contingency plan had been to have three trucks on standby to save whatever could be saved in the event of an emergency. When it came down to practicalities, though, the plan had to be abandoned because no one could say where it would be safe to take the artifacts. The only solution at that moment was to arm the staff and to assign them to guard duty, even though they had no experience of such matters.

The assault was eventually stopped several kilometers outside of Erbil.

## Chapter news

### Central Chapter

All Meetings will be held on Zoom the third Tuesday of every second month. For more information and to be added to the Zoom list contact: Katharine Fernstrom at [kwfappraising@gmail.com](mailto:kwfappraising@gmail.com)

### Charles County

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday (September–May). The next few will be virtual. Contact President Carol Cowherd at [ccasm2010@gmail.com](mailto:ccasm2010@gmail.com) for Zoom access information. Website [ccarchsoc.blogspot.com](http://ccarchsoc.blogspot.com) and Facebook [@ccasm2010](https://www.facebook.com/ccasm2010)

### Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month. In-person meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:30 p.m. Virtual meetings, will be via Zoom with the presentation at 7:30 p.m. For up-to-date information contact Don Housley at [donhou704@earthlink.net](mailto:donhou704@earthlink.net) or 301-424-8526 or check chapter website: <http://www.asmmidpotomac.org>, or send an email to: [asmmidpotomac@gmail.com](mailto:asmmidpotomac@gmail.com) or see [www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac- Archaeology/182856471768](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768)

**December 16:** Chapter Party 7:00 pm Agricultural History Farm Park, 18400 Muncaster Rd, Derwood, MD

### Monocacy

Meetings are the second Wednesday at 7 p.m. Community Room of the C. Burr Artz Library, 110 East Patrick Street, Frederick . For more information, visit the chapter's web page [masarcheology.org](http://masarcheology.org) or call 301-378-0212.

### Northern Chesapeake

A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Dan Coates at 410- 808-2398 or [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net)

**December 9:** Annual December dinner meeting. Aberdeen. IOOF hall in Aberdeen.

### St. Mary's County

Meetings are at the Leonardtown Library in Leonard every second Tuesday night of the month at 6:30. For information contact Craig Lukezic at [crlukezic@gmail.com](mailto:crlukezic@gmail.com)

### Upper Patuxent

Meetings the second Saturday or Sunday of the month, virtual or at the Heritage Program Office, 9944 Route 108, Ellicott City, unless otherwise noted. [www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358) or [www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com](http://www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com) or call Kelly Palich, 410-313-0423.

### Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Fellowship Hall, 211 S. Lee Street in Cumberland, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Email: [wmdasm@yahoo.com](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com)

The Archeological Society of Maryland Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization devoted to the study and conservation of Maryland archeology.

ASM members receive the monthly newsletter, ASM Ink, the biannual journal, MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10-percent discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Ethan Bean, 765-716-5282 or [beans32@comcast.net](mailto:beans32@comcast.net) for membership rates.

Newsletter submissions: Send to Myron Beckenstein, 3126 Gracefield Rd., Apt 106, Silver Spring, MD. 20904 or 240-867-3662 or [myronbeck@verizon.net](mailto:myronbeck@verizon.net)

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