



AN ARCHAEOLOGY RENDEZVOUS IN THE LONE STAR STATE

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Christopher B. Rodning is Program Chair of the SAA 79th Annual Meeting.

Whenever I receive the preliminary program for an upcoming SAA conference, I find myself excited about and impressed by what everybody is doing, eager to learn more about it all, and hopeful that my own papers contribute positively to the myriad ongoing conversations in archaeology and related fields of study. Getting an SAA program is a bit like having a tasty appetizer; receiving the raw database of SAA submissions as the SAA Program Chair is a bit more like a feast, with a lot of interesting material to taste, as well as a lot to cook. Of course, some of you will be talking about feasting and drinking at SAA 2014 in Austin, and, hopefully, all of us shall eat and drink and be merry while we are there. I also do recall going outside during SAA 2007 to watch the bats fly out at dusk from under the bridge crossing Lady Bird Lake, and I recommend we all do that again while we are in Austin. Meanwhile, the site of the original Whole Foods Market is located in Austin, and what began as a patch for optimal neighborhood foraging has become a monument of sorts, with similar monumental spaces found at sites scattered across the country.

It is fitting, perhaps, that SAA 2014 will take place in Texas, as it promises to be the largest SAA conference yet, with close to 3,000 people already registered. The online SAA submission system lassoed more than 3,000 submissions, including one electronic symposium, more than 2,000 papers in 175 organized paper sessions, more than 80 posters in 13 organized poster sessions, 634 general paper abstracts, 439 general poster abstracts, and 21 forums. Meanwhile, we also have one of the larger SAA program committees in recent years (can we call it the SAA Program Posse?), and I am grateful to the 35 excellent people who agreed to help me review submissions and compose the conference schedule, as well as staff from the SAA office in Washington, D.C. Program committee members are currently reviewing abstracts and drafting the schedule of events. It is good to read widely about the diverse and interesting activities of the SAA community, including fieldwork, artifact analyses, heritage management, public outreach, historic preservation, cultural resource management and consultation, development of digital publications and archives, policy development and

implementation, and teaching. Program committee members and I have contacted some submitters to ask for revisions to some abstracts in an effort to correct mistakes and to improve the quality and clarity of (y)our abstracts and the SAA program overall; thank you for your responses and responsiveness to our inquiries.

Some sessions for SAA 2014 have been sponsored by organizations such as the Committee on the Status of Women in Archaeology (COSWA) and the Society for Africanist Archaeologists, and as in years past, the Amerind Foundation will choose one SAA symposium for its Amerind Seminar program. The careers and contributions of several of our senior colleagues will be honored through symposia at SAA 2014, including sessions in honor of Linda Cordell, Dan Healan, Michael Jochim, Geoffrey Clark, Deborah Pearsall, James Brady, Norman Hammond, James Neely, Tom Green, Karl Butzer, Grete Lillehammer, Leslie Shaw, and Joseph Cramer. Meanwhile, SAA 2014 will also include the Fryxell Symposium in honor of Marvin Rowe, focusing on archaeological geochemistry. The biennial Gordon Willey Symposium on the history of archaeology, organized by Bernard Means and Patrick Trader, includes papers about the practice of archaeology between the New Deal and the National Historic Preservation Act, and a symposium by Frances McManamon considers the impact of cultural resource management on developments in archaeology method and theory 40 years after the passage of the NHPA in 1974. One “double” symposium of note here are those by Robert Tykot and Jeffrey Ferguson in honor of the golden anniversary of obsidian studies in archaeology—50 years since the 1964 publication of an important paper in the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* by Johnson Cann and Colin Renfrew, both of whom will participate in the symposium in Austin. The Frison Institute Symposium, organized by Robert Kelly, will focus on the relationship between climate change and culture change. Environment and climate are important topics on tap for SAA 2014, including sessions and presentations about the methodological challenges of relating trends in paleoenvironmental evidence to patterns of culture change, human adaptations to extreme environments and envi-



The Harry Ransom Center is one of the world's finest cultural archives (credit: Pete Smith; photo courtesy of the Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau).

ronmental extremes, historical ecology, settlement ecology, cases of site and regional abandonments, foraging strategies in estuarine and riverine environments, adaptations to coastal environments, the cultural landscapes of forests, urban landscapes of the ancient world, and the landscape impacts of colonialism and cultural practices during the historic period.

As is often the case for SAA conferences, there are many papers and posters about Mesoamerica, Central America, and southwestern North America. Several sessions and papers concentrate on other areas of North America and South America.

Although there are more papers about archaeology in the Americas than elsewhere, other world areas are well represented, including papers and sessions about the archaeology of Arabia, Mongolia, China, India, east and southeast Asia, southwest and central Asia, the South Pacific, the North Atlantic, and Africa. Papers focusing on one or more of these world areas explore diverse topics, including monumentality and public architecture, ideology, iconography, identity politics at local and regional scales, gender, mortuary practices, craft production and specialization, trade and exchange, abundance and surplus, conquest and colonialism, borders and frontiers, mobility and migration, foraging and farming, alternative pathways to complexity and inequality in past societies, regional social and political integration and disintegration, household archaeology, water management, warfare and weaponry, paths and movement, rock art, placemaking, toolmaking, subsistence practices and foodways, kinship, disability and charity in past societies, violence, human evolution, human colonization of new continents, cultural developments in islands and archipelagoes, and maritime archaeology.

Some papers and sessions will concentrate on broad theoretical and methodological issues, and some forums will bring together panelists and participants for discussions of contemporary issues and concerns in diverse areas of archaeological practice. The SAA Presidential Forum, which will take place on the Wednesday evening of the conference, will focus on current trends in publishing in archaeology. The SAA Ethics Bowl will take place on Thursday afternoon.

Other events at SAA 2014 will concentrate on best practices in CRM and other domains of archaeology and historic preservation, heritage management and community empowerment, indigenous landscapes, public outreach and education, digital applications in archaeology, the stewardship of archaeological and museum collections, the role of descendant communities and other stakeholders in archaeology, and careers and professional development.

Thanks for your interesting and insightful contributions to the SAA 2014 program, and I am excited about our upcoming annual conference. If you see me in Austin in April, please say howdy. I know some of you but would like to meet more of you. I have a beard and a tweed blazer, which means, of course, that I am easy to spot at an archaeology conference. Because it is Texas, I may just have to put on my cowboy boots, as well, because, well, why not, and as Lyle Lovett puts it, "That's right, you're not from Texas, but Texas wants you anyway."