

ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



www.marylandarcheology.org

Trying to fight rising sea level, and losing

Ben Guarino

Condensed from the Washington Post, December. 18, 2019

Seven thousand years ago, long before modern industry began to heat the planet, rising seas threatened a community on the coast of Israel. The villagers needed to defend their home, so they built a wall.

It failed. People abandoned the village. The Mediterranean Sea swept inland and drowned the buildings.

But the sea may protect what it ruins. Cool water and a meter-thick layer of sand preserved the paraphernalia of Neolithic life, such as olive pits, bowls, animal bones and graves. The wall stands out: It is a 100-yard row of boulders that runs parallel to the ancient shoreline.

"It's the world's oldest sea wall," said Jonathan Benjamin, a marine archeologist at Flinders University in Australia. "It's the first evidence of that very real problem that we're dealing with today" — though he was quick to stress the difference between the source of sea-level rise then (the natural aftermath of an ice age) and now (human-made global warming).

Benjamin and his co-authors claim, in a study published in PLOS One on Wednesday, that this is the "oldest known coastal defense worldwide."

The settlement, named Tel Hreiz, was uncovered in 1960 by accident, when divers looking for shipwrecks found flint tools and human bones. Most of the site is submerged three to four meters below sea level. It drew little attention until 2012, when strong winter storms shifted the sand cover to reveal a line of boulders. Another storm in 2015 exposed additional stones.

Benjamin and marine archeologist Ehud Galili, of the University of Haifa in Israel, said they debated several alternative possibilities for what the wall could have been — a corral to contain cattle, a dam, a defense against marauders — before dismissing them.

"No enemy was expected from the seaside," Galili said. These people used wooden branches, not stones, to contain their cattle. The sheer size of the wall, its position and the unusual nature of the boulders all pointed toward one purpose: a defense against the sea.

"These people understood that they had to put huge boulders down there, not little stones. They were clearly thinking ahead, that they wanted this wall to last," said Marie Jackson, a professor in geology at the University of Utah. "This is a really dynamic sea coast. Without these walls, there would have been little protection."

Tel Hreiz, when it was first established, would have been about 2.5 yards above sea level. Radiocarbon dating indicates the village thrived for several hundred years. Roughly 10 to 20 families lived there, Galili said. It would have been a home for these Neolithic people for at least 10 generations.

The settlers of Tel Hreiz could not have known that the sea was rising after what geologists call the "last glacial maximum." At the peak of the most recent ice age, about 20,000 years ago, immense amounts of ice were locked up in the poles. As the ice melted, oceans rose.

Between 9,000 to 7,000 years ago, the Mediterranean crept up the coast at about 1.5 inches per year,

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Upcoming events

February 15: Tour of USS Constitution, Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Contact Sue Langley at 410-697-9564 or susan.langley@maryland.gov

March 7: ASM board meeting. Heritage House, Ellicott City. 9 a.m. All members welcome

March 28: Workshop in Archeology, Crownsville, all day.

April 18: ASM Spring Symposium, Crownsville, all day.

November 7: Annual meeting of ASM.

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 Charlie Hall at charles.hall@maryland.gov or Louise Akerson at lakerson1@verizon.net. It is currently working on cataloging artifacts from the Levering Coffee House Site, Baltimore (a mostly late 18th/early 19th Century site).

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

Montgomery County for lab and field work volunteers, contact Heather Bouslag at 301 563 7530 or Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org

The Anne Arundel County Archaeology Program and the Lost Towns Project welcome volunteers in both field and lab at numerous sites. For diggers, the Linniston site on Gibson Island shows signs of occupation from the 17th through 19th centuries. Digging is on Fridays from 8 to 3. Through February, the lab at Historic London Town in Edgewater will be open for volunteers only on Mondays. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, come to the Anne Arundel collection facility at 7409 Baltimore-Annapolis Blvd. in Glen Burnie. For more information and to sign up email Drew Webster at volunteers@losttownsproject.org or call 410 222 1318.

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 to get started.

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

CAT corner: For information on the CAT program, contact the new chair, Kelly Palich at Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-0423.

Alumni news: Previous director Sarah Grady has gotten married and run off to France.

ASM news:

Coming next month, the annual Workshop in Archeology

ASM's springtime lecture series begins Saturday, March 28 with the popular Workshop in Archeology.

Starting things off will be a keynote speech by Travis Parno of Historic St. Mary's City. He will talk about the search for the 1634 fort built at the very founding of the Maryland colony.

The Maryland Historical Trust, cosponsor of the Workshop, funded a research project in which St. Mary's collaborated with Tim Horsley, to conduct a tripartite remote sensing survey of two potential locations for the fort. Turning to modern technology, the survey used magnetic susceptibility, gradiometry and ground-penetrating radar to detect anomalies, which HSMC ground-truthed during its annual summer field school.

Following his presentation, the Workshop will shift into its familiar format of four time slots with, usually, three options available during each. There will be a CAT session, this time a prehistoric overview.

The Workshop will be at MHT headquarters in Crownsville.

More information and the complete program will be in the March newsletter.

Donations sought for the silent auction; what do you have?

The second part of the lecture series will be the Spring Symposium, April 18, also at Crownsville. At the symposium the silent auction will be returning. Being sought for it are donations of handmade items, gift cards, gift baskets and interesting objects. Look around and see what you can offer. Any books received will be donated to the ASM book sales or to a local library.

If you would like to make a donation, complete the donation form arriving with this newsletter. A donation request letter, for soliciting donations from businesses, also is attached.

Contact Elaine F. H. Chhean (SilentAuction@marylandarcheology.org) for additional information. Items should be received by April 15, but let Elaine know they are coming.

Lost Towns, Sotterley win preservation awards

Among the 10 projects cited by the Maryland Historical Trust for 2020 Preservation Awards were two that specifically mentioned archeology. As noted in the announcement, they are:

"Lost Towns Project, Inc. and Anne Arundel County (Anne Arundel County) - The Lost Towns Project, Inc., in cooperation with Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning Cultural Resources Division created 'African American Voices, Memories and Places: A Four Rivers Heritage Trail,' an online multi-media Story Map tour highlighting African American heritage sites. It was produced with direct participation by the local African American community, resulting in many new audiences to appreciate an under-represented heritage. (*Excellence in Media and Publications*)

"Historic Sotterley, Inc. for "Building Bridges to Common Ground" (St. Mary's County) - Historic Sotterley's "Building Bridges to Common Ground" programming focused on the study and interpretation of history, drama, genealogy and archeology to tell the story of the slave trade and its abolition in acknowledgement that examination of painful history can result in healing. (*Excellence in Public Programming*)"

Help Wanted! Looking for a Teacher of the Year

Bill McIntyre, chair for the Teacher of the Year Award still needs help. ASM members who may be aware of a teacher who seems to fit the description for nomination to receive this award are asked to contact Bill. The teacher may be elementary, middle or high school level and teaching in public or private school. It is important to identify potential nominees as soon as possible.

Contact Bill at williamlmac@comcast.net or 410-939-0768.

It's up to you: Let opportunity knock or pass you by

Don't look now but 2020 is already in its second month. Those months are slipping away quickly. Don't let your chance to renew your ASM membership slip away too. We can't promise you a chance to win \$1 million or a complete 31-piece set of plastic silverware. But we can promise you a role in looking to uncover Maryland's past, plus copies of our journal and this newsletter plus reduced admission to ASM events, such as the upcoming Workshop in Archeology, the Spring Symposium and the Annual Tyler Bastian Field Session.

A renewal form and information are at the ASM website, www.marylandarcheology.org

Virginia artifact may be a 'witch bottle'

By Peter Jamison

Condensed from the Washington Post, January 25, 2020

When archeologists digging between busy lanes of traffic on Virginia's Interstate 64 unearthed a broken bottle filled with nails, they weren't sure exactly what they had found.

The glass vessel discovered at an old Civil War fortification east of Williamsburg might simply have been an ad hoc toolbox for troops garrisoned at the site nearly 160 years ago. But researchers at the Center for Archaeological Research at the College of William & Mary advanced a far more intriguing theory this week.

The artifact, they say, may in fact be a "witch bottle," one of only a handful that have been found in the United States.

What's a witch bottle? For centuries, they were used as occult countermeasures to the mischief of suspected sorceresses in England and America.

The evidence of a superstitious purpose is circumstantial but compelling, according to Joe Jones, the center's director. The bottle, jade blue and less than half a foot in height, was plucked in 2016 from the soil dividing traffic on Interstate 64 between exits 238 and 242 in York County.

Known as Redoubt 9, the site was part of a string of fortifications between the James and York Rivers, originally built by Confederates to repel Union troops advancing on Richmond. But Redoubt 9 was taken over by Union forces after the Battle of Williamsburg in 1862, and the bottle — which carries the name of a manufacturer in eastern Pennsylvania — is probably a relic of those soldiers, Jones said.

Witch bottles can be traced to the East Anglia region of England in the late Middle Ages, according to a summary of research on the subject by JSTOR Daily. The bottles typically included human urine, hair or fingernail clippings and sharp objects such as nails, pins or thorns.

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the study authors say. Hearths and homes at Tel Hreiz, built of simple stone without mortar, would have been vulnerable to the water. "Wave activity can do great damage to such structures," Galili said. "Little by little, the damage became more rapid and more often."

These warning signs may have triggered similar debates to those that coastal communities have now, Benjamin said. "They went to great lengths to protect their home."

The boulders that formed the sea wall did not come from nearby. It would have taken tremendous effort to construct a wall. "The size and weight of those boulders are stupendous and speaks to the intent of the builders to make something, to build a wall, that had longevity and usefulness," Jackson said.

At the current pace of sea-level rise, in 2100 the ocean will be two feet higher than it is. In places such as Miami, where the sea has risen about .35 inches per year since 2006, the rates of rise are possibly double what the people of Tel Hreiz faced.

"They tried to stick it out and eventually they abandoned it," Benjamin said. "And that is a sobering lesson from our human past, isn't it?"

Holy Minerva, graves may be of Amazons

By Derek Hawkins

Condensed from the Washington Post, January 7, 2020

For a long time, modern scholars believed that the Amazons were little more than a figment of ancient imaginations.

These were the fierce warrior women of Ancient Greek lore who supposedly sparred with Hercules, lived in lesbian matriarchies and hacked off their breasts so they could better fire their arrows. Homer immortalized them in "The Iliad." Eons later, they played a central role in the Wonder Woman comics.

Some historians argued that they were probably a propaganda tool created to keep Athenian women in line. Another theory suggested that they may have been beardless men mistaken for women by the Greeks.

But a growing body of archeological evidence shows that legends about the horseback-riding, bow-wielding female fighters were almost certainly rooted in reality. Myths about the Amazons' homosexuality and self-mutilation are still dubious at best, but new research appears to confirm that there really were groups of nomadic women who trained, hunted and battled alongside their male counterparts on the Eurasian steppe.

In a landmark discovery revealed this month, archeologists unearthed the remains of four female warriors buried with a cache of arrowheads, spears and horseback-riding equipment in a tomb in western Russia — right where Ancient Greek stories placed the Amazons.

The team from the Institute of Archaeology at the Russian Academy of Sciences identified the women as Scythian nomads who were interred at a burial site some 2,500 years ago near the present-day community of Devitsa. The women ranged in age from early teens to late 40s, according to the archeologists.

Earlier excavations have turned up similar evidence, though not always so well preserved. In 2017, Armenian researchers discovered the remains of a woman in her 20s who they said resembled Amazon myths. They found that she died from battle injuries. Their report in the *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* noted that she had an arrowhead buried in her leg and that her bone and muscle structure indicated she rode horses.

Adrienne Mayor, author of "The Amazons: Lives and Legends of Warrior Women Across the Ancient World," said the findings suggested that young girls were trained early on, just like boys, to ride horses and use bows and arrows.

"This was an egalitarian society," Mayor told *The Washington Post*. "The fact that you have a range of ages is important because people previously thought that mothers wouldn't be out fighting because they had children."

"In these small tribes on the harsh steppes, it makes sense that every single person has to have the same skills and competence to defend the tribe as necessary," she added.

Mayor said she expects future research to bolster the case for the existence of female warriors. Before the development of DNA testing and bioarcheology, researchers often assumed that any excavated tomb or grave that contained weapons and human remains belonged to a man. But new analysis has already showed that about one-third of armed Scythian skeletons unearthed in such digs were women, she said.

Henry Miller receives major SHA award

Historic St. Mary's City archeologist Henry M. Miller has received the J. C. Harrington Award from the Society for Historical Archaeology. It is the highest international award for the profession of historical archeology. Since its initiation in 1981, only 35 people have received this award.

Miller began at St. Mary's City in 1972 and later served as the museum's Archeology Curator and Director of Research. Beginning in 2015, he became the first Maryland Heritage Scholar. He has also long been an adjunct professor of anthropology at St. Mary's College, teaching his first class there in 1974.

A major part of his working life has been devoted to converting archeological and historical findings into interpretations for the public.

Much of Miller's career has been devoted to early Maryland and its first capital of St. Mary's City. His efforts have resulted in the discovery that the city was not the scattered gaggle of buildings as was assumed by historians but an elaborately planned urban place.

Chapter News

In addition to the listed chapters, ASM has chapters at Hood College and the Community College of Baltimore County and a club at Huntingtown High School in Calvert County, run by Jeff Cunningham; visit its website, <http://hhsarchaeology.weebly.com/>

Anne Arundel

Anne Arundel Chapter will be meeting at the Schmidt Center at SERC, the second Tuesday of each month, 7 to 9 p.m. Parking in front of the venue. For information, contact Jim Gibb at JamesGGibb@verizon.net

Central Chapter

Central Chapter holds bimonthly meetings at MICA's Bunting Center, 1401 W. Mt Royal Ave, Baltimore. For information contact Katharine Fernstrom at kwfappraising@gmail.com. New Facebook page is "Central Chapter of the ASM."

Charles County

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday (September-May) at the LaPlata Police Department. Contact President Carol Cowherd at ccasm2010@gmail.com. Website ccarchsoc.blogspot.com and Facebook [@ccasm2010](https://www.facebook.com/ccasm2010)

February 13: Carolin McManus. TBD

March 12: Esther Doyle Read. TBD.

April 9: Patricia Samford with a Post-Colonial refined earthenware workshop.

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion in Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant at 5:30 p.m. Contact Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: <http://www.asmmidpotomac.org> Email: asmmidpotomac@gmail.com Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Potomac-Archaeology/182856471768

February 20: Chapter member Ralph Buglass will speak on "The Off-the-Beaten Sites in Montgomery County."

March 19: Frank Sanford, chapter member, will speak on his Earth Watch travel to South Africa.

April 16: Don Barron, docent at the MOOseum in Germantown Maryland, will speak on the history of dairy farming in Montgomery County and the Museum's history and collections.

May 21: Bob Hines, chapter member, will give an update on and plans for excavation at the Riggs House in Brookeville.

Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. For more information, visit the chapter's web page at digfrederick.com or call 301-378-0212.

February 12: Stephen Israel will speak on the project he initiated, "Maryland Archeology Past Portraits Project," a survey of avocational and professional archeologists throughout the state.

Northern Chesapeake

Members and guests assemble at 6:30 for light refreshments. A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Dan Coates at 410- 273-9619 or dancoates@comcast.net Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

February 12: Subject TBA. Havre de Grace City Hall.

March 11: Subject TBA. Historical Society of Cecil County, Elkton.

Friday, April: Date & subject TBA. Edgewood Hall, Harford Community College, Bel Air.

May (Exact date TBA)

Annual Picnic Meeting. St. Patrick's Irish Catholic Church, Conowingo

St. Mary's County

Meetings are the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Joseph D. Carter State Office Building in the Russell Conference Room, Leonardtown. For information contact Chris Coogan at Ccoogan@smcm.edu

Upper Patuxent

Meetings the second Saturday or Sunday of the month, at the Heritage Program Office, 9944 Route 108, Ellicott City, unless otherwise noted. www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358 or www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com or try uparchaeologygroup@gmail.com Or call Kelly Palich, 410 313 0423.

Feb 8: Archeology of Howard County, at historic Waverly mansion.

March 8: Archeology of Patapsco Female Institute, at the B&O station museum in Ellicott City.

April 18: The Elkridge site by Robert Wall.

May 9: Steve Curtis and Kelly Palich on the Mill Town of Tridelphia.

Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. in the LaVale Library, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Email: wmdasm@yahoo.com Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/wmdasm>

February 28: An Archeological Doubleheader: Brent Chippendale will report on the 2019 ASM Field Session held at the Billingsley site and then on how a visit to the Colony of Avalon in Newfoundland revealed connections to Maryland history and archeology. Note: There will be no peanuts, popcorn or Cracker Jacks served at this presentation.

March 27: Roy Brown will do a primitive technology presentation on the replication of Native American Containers: "From Deer Stomachs to Ceramic Ware."

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, 609 N. Paca Street, Apt. 3, Baltimore, MD 21201 for membership rates. For publication sales, not including newsletter or Journal, contact Dan Coates at ASM Publications, 716 Country Club Rd.,

Havre de Grace, MD 21078-2104 or 410-273-9619 or dancoates@comcast.net

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