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Alabama Archaeological Society

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

Editor
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2602 Green Mountain Rd.
Huntsville, Alabama 35803

MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

A.A.S. 1986 WINTER MEETING

The 1986 meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society will be held Saturday, December 6, 1986 at the Nelson B. Jones Conference Building at Mound State Monument; Moundville, Alabama.

AAS 1986 WINTER MEETING AGENDA

What: Announcement for the 1986 Winter Meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society

Where: To be held at the Nelson B. Jones Conference Building at Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama

When: December 6, 1986

Tentative Schedule

9:00-9:30	Registration - Coffee and Doughnuts
9:30-9:45	Welcome and Remarks on the Alabama DeSoto Commission - Douglas Jones - Director, Alabama State Museum of Natural History, The University of Alabama
9:45-10:15	Archaeological Testing of Two Sites Associated with the Oliver Lock and Dam Project. Tim S. Mistovich - The University of Alabama
10:15-10:45	1986 Archaeological Investigations at Jacksonville State University. Harry O. Holstein - Jacksonville State University
10:45-11:00	Morning Break
11:00-11:30	1909 to 1986---Seventy-eight years of Central Alabama Archaeology. Craig Sheldon - Auburn University at Montgomery and John Cottier - Auburn University
11:30-12:00	The Two French Forts at Fort Toulouse. Ned Jenkins - Alabama Historical Commission and Richard Krause - The University of Alabama

12:00-1:00	Box lunch and Board Meeting
1:00-1:15	Business Meeting
1:15-2:15	1986 Field Season at Tell Halif, Israel. Eugene Futato - The University of Alabama
2:15-2:45	The Gulf Formational on the North Central Gulf Coast. Noel R. Stowe - University of South Alabama
2:45-3:00	Afternoon Break
3:00-3:30	Archaeological Investigations in the Huntsville Area. Carey B. Oakley - The University of Alabama
3:30-3:45	Meeting Adjournment
3:45-5:00	Tour of Museum and Research Facilities at Mound State Monument.
5:00-Until	Bar-B-Que supper at the Conference Building

Notes: The noonday meal will be a lunchbox affair. You are welcome to bring your own or we will take orders in the morning for a local restau rant.

For supper we will have barbeque. We will provide the meat, refreshment, etc., but request all participants to bring a covered dish.

Registration fee will be $5.00, including all expenses except lunch.

For those of you who would like to stay over you may want to visit the Rotunda Plaza which is located immeidately in front of the Amelia Gayle Library on the Unversity Campus.

Local motels are:

Holiday Inn	-	553-1550
Shoney's Inn	-	556-7950
Ramada Inn	-	759-4431
La Quinta Inn	-	349-3270

Carey B. Oakley
Moundville

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter - The Birmingham Archaeological Society met on Thursday, September 11, in the archaeological laboratory at The University of Alabama

in Birmingham. Mr. Sam Green from Birmingham presented an excellent slide presentation entitled "Living History at Fort Toulouse". He was dressed in a uniform that was typical of those worn by French marines in the 16th century and described some of the living conditions and practices during the period. In addition, he gave an update on the reconstruction plans for Fort Toulouse.

On October 9, Mr. Houston Wright from Huntsville presented a program entitled "Paleo Man of Alabama". This meeting will be held at the Red Mountain Museum.

Annette Otts

Huntsville Chapter - Dr. Jim Knight of the Office of Archaeological Research, Moundville, was the speaker at the October chapter meeting. Dr. Knight gave an update of his progress on the excavations near Redstone Arsenal, under way since early September.

Members of the Huntsville Chapter traveled to Georgia in October to visit the Emory University Museum of Art and Archaeology in Atlanta, and the Rock Eagle Mound about 70 miles west of Atlanta. See notes elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Huntsville Chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For more information on chapter meetings and other activities, call Program Chairman Houston Wright at 881-2485.

Dorothy Luke

Cullman Chapter - The chapter met at the Cullman County Courthouse on October 20.

Howard King

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Society wishes to acknowledge the generous contribution by Dr. W. J. Alvers of Guntersville, Alabama, to the Edward C. Mahan Research Fund.

The Editors

BOOK REVIEW

Ten Thousand Years of Alabama Prehistory - by Phillip Krebs et al. 1986. Alabama State Museum of Natural History Bulletin 8.

This book is 130 pages of photographs of the finest prehistoric Indian artifacts, all from Alabama. This book is priced at an unbelievable $10 and is available from Office of Archaeological Research; One Mound State Monument; Moundville, AL 35474. This book is for all ages, with clear and well positioned photographs. We highly recommend it.

The Editors

ROCK EAGLE MOUND, GEORGIA

"One mile west of this point is a stone mound believed to have been constructed by prehistoric Indians before Columbus discovered America. The mound is composed of white quartz rocks, forming the shape of a bird in flight with its head turned toward the east and wings outspread. It meansures 102 feet from head to tail and 120 feet from wingtip to wingtip, while the body rises to above the surrounding surface. The mound is thought to have been built for burial purposes." So reads a highway marker near the mound site.

The Indians carried the white quartz rocks comprising the mound from nearby areas. Well defined and definitely in the shape of a bird, it is called an eagle by many people, but when viewed from the modern tower erected for visitor viewing, the head features are seen to have the appearance of a buzzard. The actual bird intended by the builders is open to conjecture.

As is true in too many instances, thoughtless digging and rock removal by many people had already taken place by the time archaeologists scientifically dismantled the mound. Excavation revealed some charred bone, but no artifacts. When their investigation was completed, the archaeologists reconstructed the mound to its original form and erected a high fence around it.

The site can only be fully appreciated by viewing it from the highest level of the tower, located at the tail of the bird. It may be reached on U. S. Highway 441 about five (5) miles north of Eatonton, Georgia at the Rock Eagle 4-H Center. Free and open year around.

Editors

EMORY UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

An excellent indepth review of the museum and its collection was prepared by Bonna D. Wescoat and Monique Seefried and appeared in May/June 1985 issue of "Archaeology." The following is quoted from the museum's "A Preview of the Collection," Atlanta, Georgia, 15 Feb—4 Apr, 1982.

The archaeological collection is especially noteworthy for its Egyptian antiquities. The mummies and decorated mummy cases and coverings constitute a very good chronological representation, unique in the southeast, including Predynastic, Middle Kingdom, and several Ptolemaic examples. The civilizations of Mesopotamia and ancient Persia are represented by pottery and metal works. From Palestine has come the selection of Early and Middle Bronze Age pottery and scarabs found at Jericho. The Museum's collection of oil lamps, most of which come from Palestine, represents every archaeological period—from the Early Bronze Age to the 13th century A.D.—and therefore show very well the beginnings and development of lamp types and forms. Many of these pieces were donated by collector Ruth Schloessinger. Examples of pottery from Cyprus, Greece, and southern Italy (Magna Grecia), representing some of the different shapes found in those areas during the first millenium B. C.

Editors

CANNIBALISM IN THE NEOLITHIC

Despite abundant literature on the subject, the occurrence of human cannibalism in Old World prehistory remains an open question. We are concerned here with dietary cannibalism - the use of humans by humans as food - evidence for which is found in patterns of bone modification and discard. The key features of dietary cannibalism involve close, detailed similarities in the treatment of animal and human remains. If it is accepted that the animal remains in question were processed as food items, then it can be suggested by anology that the human remains, subjected to identical processing, were also eaten.

Evidence of deliberate discard, cut marks, and bone breakage to extract marrow are criteria used to deduce that animal bones at archaeological sites were food refuse; these same criteria have been used to interpret isolated and scattered human bones at various prehistoric sites as evidence of cannibalism. However, in many cases such an interpretation is weakened by doubts about whether humans caused the observed damage and by lack of precise contextual evidence. Poorly recorded excavation data, insufficient documentation and analysis of damage and discard patterns, and the high frequency of pre- and postdepositional disturbances by nonhuman agents at archaeological sites have fueled these doubts. These are the main reasons why explanations of cannibalism are often ignored or rejected.

It has been suggested that human bones with cut marks are not the remains of cannibal meals but the traces of funerary rites involving the handling of corpses without consumption of human tissues. Secondary burial may mimic cannibalism if it includes active dismemberment and defleshing of the body; however, the absence of bone breakage for marrow and the mode of bone disposal will set it apart from dietary cannibalism.

A hypothesis of dietary cannibalism must be based on four types of evidence: (i) Similar butchering techniques in human and animal remains. Thus frequency, location, and type of verified cut marks and chop marks on human and animal bones must be similar, but we should allow for anatomical differences between humans and animals; (ii) similar patterns of long bone breakage that might facilitate marrow extraction; (iii) identical patterns of postprocessing discard of human and animal remains; (iv) evidence of cooking; if present, such evidence should indicate comparable treatment of human and animal remains.

We studied recently excavated materials from a Neolithic cave site in southeastern France. A combination of excellent bone preservation, primary depositional context, and fine excavation techniques allows us to present evidence of cannibalism at the site.

The Fontbregoua Cave is divided into three spatially discrete areas: the porch, the main room, and the lower room. All areas have yielded skeletal and cultural materials; pottery, stone tools, remains of domestic and wild faunas, carbonized seeds of domestic wheat and barley, and human remains.

Stratigraphic and cultural evidence suggest that during the 5th and 4th millenia B.C. the cave was repeatedly used as a temporary residential camp. In the Early Neolithic, hunting and sheep and goat herding were of comparable importance, whereas in the Middle Neolithic hunting played a minor role.

Preserved habitation features include 13 clusters of bones, which occur in shallow, probably man-made, hollows of relatively small size. Ten of these clusters preserve the butchered remains of wild or domestic animals; three clusters contain only human remains.

Four features contained the remains of several wild animals, either wild boars or animals of several different species. Each contained a partial skeleton of a domestic sheep. All analyzed features are judged to have resulted from single episodes of butchering and discard.

In the main room there is a shallow depression containing 134 fragments of postcranial bones that lack most of the articular ends. These bones are from a minimum of six individuals: three adults, two children, and one individual of indeterminate age. Also in the feature were eight stone bracelet fragments that conjoin to form two round bracelets. In addition, the feature contained one broken, small polished ax, with a chopping edge of 1.1 cm., which was probably used for butchering the axial skeleton. The bones of the six individual were processed and discarded at the same time.

Human and animal clusters are found in all parts of the cave; there is no special area reserved for features with the human bones. The pattern that emerges from all human and animal clusters shows discard of selectively butchered parts. Two facts are intriguing. First, missing anatomical segments are represented by isolated elements or scraps of little food value; for example, carpals, occipital condyle, minute bits of sacrum, or, as in Feature 4, intact lower leg parts. Second, these isolated elements are near or at points of disjointing and segmentation. We conclude that the missing anatomical segments have been culled from essentially complete carcasses at the cave itself. After disarticulation, selected body parts were set aside for separate processing and consumption; thus they are missing from the features. If segmentation had taken place outside the cave, it is unlikely that scraps from the culled units would have been collected and transported inside the cave for the purpose of discarding them.

In sum, it is clear that human and animal carcasses were processed and discarded according to the same pattern of selective butchering. Segmentation and selection of parts for differential use or distribution are normally practices when butchering animals; their occurrence in the processing of human carcasses is significant.

All cut marks, regardless of the taxonomic identify of the bones, show features suggesting that they were made shortly after death, rather than a year or more after death. This assessment of the timing of processing is based on scanning electron microscope comparisons of the Fontbregoua material and experimentally altered bones. Immediate processing is consistent with an interpretation that both animals and humans were processed for use as food.

There are strong similarities in frequencies of marked bones and types of cut marks. Especially significant is the abundance of filleting marks on both human and animal bones, indicating that meat was routinely removed from the bones.

With respect to cut mark location and morphology, a remarkable degree of concordance can be observed between animal and human bones. Of 33 cut mark varieties on human cranial and postcranial bones, 23 can be matched with similar marks on homologous animal bones.

All marrow bones in the features and all bones in the H3 cluster are broken, each in several fragments. Although some damage is likely due to postdepositional alteration and sediment pressure, the high degree of fragmentation of the long bones is primarily attributed to deliberate breakage for marrow.

Two indicators of cooking that might be found on archaeological bones are changes in collagen chromatographs and changes in the microscopic morphology of bone surfaces. Both were absent from the Fontbregoua bones. Amino acid analyses of bone collagen in nine samples from H1, H3, Feature 1, and the main room deposits show that these bones were not exposed to temperatures greater than 150 degrees C; scanning electron microscope inspection of various bone samples did not reveal changes in microscopic morphology known to occur at 185 degrees C. However, temperatures achieved by meat-covered bones during boiling or roasting are lower than these thresholds, as experimental studies confirm.

Additional evidence that casts doubt on the idea of cooking is provided by the abundant filleting marks and intact anatomical units, both features that one would not expect to find in roasted or boiled remains. Clearly, there is no good evidence showing that cooking of meat-on-bone occurred. However, the treatment of animal and human remains does not differ in this regard; in both cases uncooked bones were discarded after filleting and marrow fracturing.

Our inference that animal and human meat was eaten is based on the evidence of ordinary butchering practices and unceremonial patterns of discard in a domestic setting. Similarities in the treatment of animal and human remains are striking. The evidence of breakage to extract marrow and the mode of discard contrast strongly with known secondary burial practices. Elements of rituals seem to be present in the treatment of human skulls, but they are consistent with an interpretation of exocannibalism.

We believe that cannibalism is the only satisfactory explanation for the evidence found at Fontbregoua Cave. Taphonomic studies of human bones at additional Stone Age French sites should help to establish whether our findings represent isolated events or institutional practices.

(From an article by Paola Villa et al in SCIENCE, 25 July 1986.)

The Editors

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of *Journal of Alabama Archaeology* Vol. 20-29 each issue	($2.50 to Members)	$5.00 pp
Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations (Journal of Alabama Archaeology) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint, each issue		$5.00 pp
Special Publication 1 — Fort Mitchell		$2.00 pp
Special Publication 2 — *The Archaeological Sequence at Durant Bend, Dallas County Alabama*		$4.50 pp
Special Publication 3 — *Archaeological Investigations at Horseshoe Bend*		$6.50 pp
Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part 1, Point Types		$10.00 pp
Lively, Long, Josselyn - *Pebble Tool Paper*		$3.00 pp
Investigations in Russell Cave, published by the National Park Service		$7.50 pp
Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology (Juvenile)		$7.00 pp

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1 Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama 35474

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