

Charles Towne Landing Archaeology Update

CHARLES TOWNE LANDING ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

February 26, 2011, 9:30 a.m– 5:00 p.m.

Founders Hall, Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site

Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site invites all those who are interested in the archaeology of South Carolina to its inaugural Charles Towne Landing Archaeology Conference. This year's conference is focusing on the development of archaeology as a scientific discipline in our state and where it stands today. Seven short papers and a number of posters on various aspects of South Carolina archaeology will announce the latest discoveries and research in the field. The keynote address will be delivered by Chris Judge, assistant director of Native American Studies at USC Lancaster (read all about Chris' profile on page 3).

Concurrent with the poster and paper sessions, guests will also have the opportunity to enjoy an exhibit titled "The History of Archaeology in South Carolina: From Curiosity Cabinets to Science." This collection of artifacts, on loan from various non-profit institutions and cultural resource management companies, will follow the evolution of archaeology in South Carolina since the nineteenth century. An archaeology-themed

silent auction to benefit non-profit organizations promoting archaeology in our state will be open to visitors as well.

The conference will open in the morning with free coffee and breakfast snacks and close with a reception. In addition, the conference fee (\$10) will include admission to the park grounds for the entire day and a cannon firing.

All guests are encouraged to bring cash for lunch services and silent auction bids. We will not be able to accept checks or credit cards. There are no ATMs on the park.

Please see the preliminary program on page 2. For more information, contact Charles Towne Landing at (843) 852- 4200 or David Jones at djones@scprt.com.



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Upcoming Events

Charles Towne Landing
 Archaeology Conference

February 26, 2011

Details on page 1.

Upcoming Events

Piecing Together the
 Past with Archaeology

Charles Towne Landing
 State Historic Site

March 12, 2011
 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

For details visit the [program website](#).

CHARLES TOWNE LANDING ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

Preliminary Program

9:30: Welcoming address – David Jones,
Archaeologist, SCPRT

9:40-10:00: Megan King, *Distribution of Debitage
from the Topper Site: An Evaluation of the Purported Pre-
Clovis Occupation.*

10:00-10:20: Michael Stoner, *Pots of the Caribbean:
Barbadian Redwares and the Carolina Connection.*

10:30-10:50: Break

10:50-11:10– Kimberly Pyszka, Maureen Hays,
Scott Harris, *"unto seynte Paules": A Tale of St. Paul's
Church and Parsonage.*

11:10- 11:30– Elizabeth Reitz, Martha Zierden,
Wildlife in Urban Charleston, South Carolina, USA.

11:30- 11:50- Carl Steen, *Making Stoneware Pottery
in the Old Edgefield District of South Carolina: An
Introduction.*

12:00-1:00- Lunch break (Lunch is not included in
the conference fee.)

1:00-1:20- Lonnie Franklin, *Archaeology of Standing
Buildings: South Carolina Textile Mills and Culture
Change.*

1:20-1:40- Natalie Adams, *The Archaeology of
Community: Understanding Society from the Bottom Up.*

1:50-2:20- Keynote address by Chris Judge,
University of South Carolina, Lancaster.

3:00- Cannon Demonstration

3:00-5:00: Reception (light hors d'oeuvres and
drinks)

Ongoing events: Free coffee and snacks, Posters,
Exhibit, Silent Archaeology Auction.

Special thanks to our sponsors.



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of South Carolina, Inc.



Colonial Dorchester Archaeology Update

As we wrap up the year of 2010 at Colonial Dorchester, we spring into the new year with an exciting stage in the archaeological process: cataloging and sorting artifacts from our past projects. This stage, although laborious, is the elusive key to Dorchester's history. Studying the artifacts not only gives us the insight into the people and cultures of the area, but also allows archaeologists to plan more in-depth investigations for the future. Once the material culture has been cataloged and entered into our artifact database, we use programs such as ArcGIS and Surfer to transform the data into a more understandable language. These programs manipulate the data to create images and maps that help us piece together the past. Please feel free to stop by and witness our work in our archaeological lab in person.



This February, we are hosting our second annual French and Indian war living history event. During the French and Indian War (1754-1763) the British Colony of South Carolina felt threatened by possible French military activities along the Southern Atlantic Seacoast. To alleviate this threat, the colony constructed the tabby fort at the town of Dorchester. Nearly 250 years later, we have partnered with Fort Loudon Tennessee State Park, members of the Independent Company of South Carolina, and local volunteers to bring our park's rich history back to life. Visitors will have the opportunity to interact with over fifty authentically clothed historic interpreters as they demonstrate tasks and skills common to the American Colonial period such as cooking, blacksmithing, medical practices, military drills, and musket firing. An eighteenth century Cherokee camp will be open to visitors as well. The event will be held on Saturday, February 5th, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ■



Meet an Archaeologist

Chris Judge

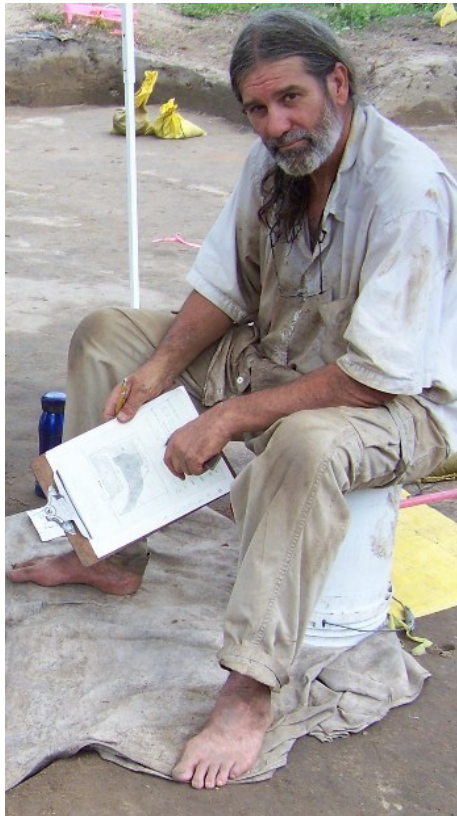
Chris Judge entered the Business School at the University of South Carolina in the late 1970s. Three weeks into his new endeavor, memories of National Geographic Magazine from his childhood began to manifest themselves in ways that had a profound impact on the direction of his life. Fortunately for us, Chris discovered archaeology at Rucker's Bottom, a site along the Savannah River in Georgia. The experience hooked him and he never looked back. The rest, dare we say is history.

Chris received his B.A. in Anthropology in 1983 and his M.A., also in Anthropology, in 1987 from the University of South Carolina. Like most archaeologists, he spent a couple of years working various jobs and sites across the southeast. Additionally, he spent five summers from 1983 to 1989 as a Field Director for the Bally Lough Archaeological Project in Waterford, Ireland. In 1990, he became the Heritage Trust Program Archaeologist at the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. It was at Heritage Trust that Chris carried out some of his most important work to date, and established himself as one of the most prominent and respected archaeologists in the southeastern U.S.

Chris has also served as an Adjunct Instructor in the Department of Anthropology at USC from 1991 until 2006. At that time, he enrolled in the PhD program at USC in Columbia and became an Instructor of Anthropology at the University of South Carolina Lancaster. In that capacity, he also

serves as the Assistant Director of Native American Studies at USC Lancaster.

Throughout his tenure in South Carolina, Chris has focused his efforts on the Kolb Site. Situated on a sand dune adjacent to an old course of the Pee Dee River, the site has been occupied from the Ice Age



Chris Judge in his work clothes.

13,000 years ago on up to the present with evidence of Native American, African American and European American cultural lifeways. The dissertation Chris is currently working on focuses on the Late Prehistoric landscape in the Pee Dee River Valley. "I am trying to place the Late Prehistoric Kolb site occupations in a river drainage wide context," Chris explains.

Chris advises students who want to get into archaeology to "volunteer at Charles Towne Landing, The Charleston Museum in the lab or at the evening Kolb lab in Columbia. Join the Archaeological Society of South Carolina and get involved". It becomes a win-win

for everyone. The students get valuable experience and the archaeological community "needs your energy and input".

Of the numerous components of archeological work, Chris says the interaction with the public, especially "telling and showing people about our collective past when they visit me in the field," is what he enjoys most. This becomes readily apparent if you ever visit one of Chris' sites. ■

Featured Article

Pseudoarchaeology (*or Decoding Ancient Mysteries*)

by Cordelia Trout

They sometimes begin as an innocent prank. More frequently they are shortcuts to fame and fortune. Sadly, they can be the sincere, life-long crusade of a learned man. Pseudoarchaeological investigations of the ancient world are championed by some, despised by the rest. There are no gray areas, so brace yourselves for a world of extra-terrestrials, lost continents, and arcane ciphers.

Pseudoarchaeology, sometimes labeled as “alternative archaeology” by mainstream archaeologists, is the systematic attempt to explain the mysteries of the ancient world through paranormal theories. More often than not, it is based on a sustained belief in the existence of legendary objects or civilizations. Generally criticized for their unscientific approach and insufficient data, these theories can nevertheless appeal to people’s religious, philosophical, or nationalistic devotions. Rooted in the intellectual pastimes of the Victorians, abused by Nazi ideals, and revitalized by New Age concepts, the history of pseudoarchaeology is one convoluted mess. Let us take a look at some of the more amusing –or should we say groundbreaking and enlightening- research done in this field.

Fakes and Forgeries

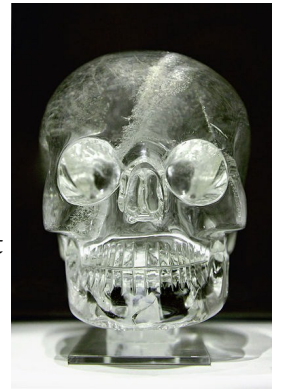
Should this category be included here, or should it go straight into the fraud bin? Unfortunately a forged object can become the very center of a pseudoarchaeological belief. In most cases, scientific tests are not accepted as proof of either forgery or authenticity –they just engender a more heated thread of controversy. There are surprisingly few mysteries that have been solved to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Probably the most high-profile case is the mystery of the crystal skulls. These impressive artifacts are carved out of a single piece of rock crystal in the shape of human skulls and allegedly

belong to a Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican culture. In the eyes of the skeptics, their provenance cannot be determined since most of them mysteriously surfaced in the art market. No crystal skull was ever found in a properly documented archaeological excavation. A number of them were traced back to Eugène Boban who was an antiquities dealer in the nineteenth century. Scientific studies of these skulls revealed the use of lapidary equipment, including drills and rotary tools that were not available to Pre-Columbian cultures. Reputable institutions such as the British Museum and the Smithsonian announced their crystal skulls to be forgeries. For some people, however, the use of higher technology in the creation of these skulls points to the involvement of otherworldly powers. In the 1970s, Frank Dorland, a free lance art restorer, observed that the Mitchell-Hedges skull was carved against the natural grain of the crystal and it should have shattered during manufacturing. How did the ancients do it? He proposed that an Atlantean connection was possible. Others believe that the skulls were carved by extraterrestrials. The long list of paranormal claims attached to these mysterious artifacts include healing powers, psychic divination, trapped souls, and the possible prevention of the 2012 apocalypse should all the crystal skulls be gathered in one room before the due date.

Ancient Aliens

One cannot even dream of entering into the realm of pseudoarchaeology without having to tackle the question of extraterrestrial influence on the civilizations of the past. There are two major



Crystal skull at the British Museum.

arguments in this avenue of research: alien technology aided ancient peoples in construction projects, and, in return, these civilizations left depictions of aliens in their art and literature. The first argument is essentially based on the assumption that ancient civilizations were too primitive to do anything on their own. Anthropologist John Omunhundro aptly named this approach "Our Ancestors, The Dummies" hypothesis. Erich von Däniken, a Swiss hotel manager, lead the movement by publishing his first book *Chariots of the Gods?* in the late sixties amidst news of space exploration. He claims, for instance, that alien forces must have been at work during the construction of the pyramids. "Is it really a coincidence," he asks, "that the height of the pyramid of Cheops multiplied by a thousand million –98,000,000 miles– corresponds approximately to the distance between the earth and the sun?" Coincidence? Hardly, since he is off by about five million miles in his "approximation." Speaking of millions, Däniken's books sold 63 million copies in 32 languages.

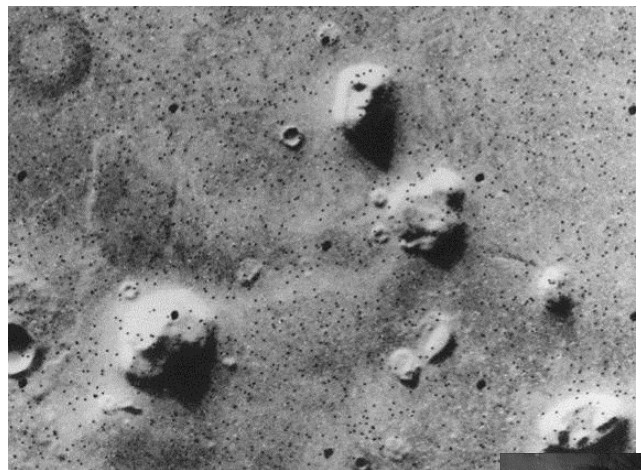
The second argument, now commonly known as the "ancient astronaut theory," offers a number of artistic depictions as evidence of ancient sightings of spaceships or encounters with an alien in space gear. For instance, von Däniken interprets the carvings on the lid of the sarcophagus of the Mayan king Pakal as an image of an astronaut working the controls of a space craft. Another author following, Zecharia Sitchin argues that the references to "those who came from



A replica of the Pakal sarcophagus lid displayed as the "Mayan Astronaut" at the International UFO museum in Roswell, NM.

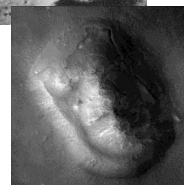
above" in Hebrew and Sumerian texts are meant to describe extraterrestrials visiting earth. Sitchin also proposes that these alien visitors interbred with *Homo erectus* in order to create a new species, *Homo sapiens*.

Another interesting dimension of outer-space archaeology is the idea of Martian civilizations. Proponents of this theory examine photos of Mars in an attempt to identify manmade features. Controversy was first kindled when a man's face appeared on the photos taken by *Viking 1* in 1976. NASA officials quickly released a statement assuring that the face was an illusion created by shadows. Some weren't so sure. They argued that the face is an archaeological monument constructed by a Martian civilization. The main advocate of the movement is Richard Hoagland who authored *The Monuments of Mars: City on the Edge of Forever*, and identified the rest of the "blobs" as fortresses, mounds, and pyramids. According to this theory, the builders of this civilization escaped from a cataclysmic event on Mars, came to Earth, and evolved into a slightly different race: us! Higher resolution images taken more recently by Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter showed that the face was created by shadows. Some still see the face in the new images while others claim that the photos are fakes.



Above: Images of the Cydonia region of Mars taken in 1976 by Viking 1.

Right: High resolution detail of the "face" taken by Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter.



Lost cities and continents

Searching for lost civilizations? Look no further than your own planet. You may think that every inch of Earth has been charted, but El Dorado, the Lost City of Z, Lemuria, and Atlantis are just hibernating in their hiding spots waiting for that daring adventurer to come and find them. And there is certainly no lack of trying: many an explorer vanished into stormy seas or the jungles of South America in this quest. Most lost cities come with fringe benefits of magnificent treasures, but as far as the “fan base” is concerned, Atlantis takes the cake. Why? Not only does the search for Atlantis continue to this day, but many mysterious phenomena are explained by the superhuman powers and technologies the Atlanteans once possessed.

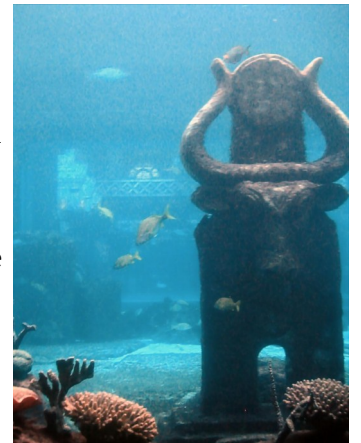
It all started with the philosophical musings of Plato in fourth century B.C. In his two dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias*, Plato’s characters discuss what an ideal society might look like. Critias, the character the second dialogue was named after, recalls a story of a continent called Atlantis which vanished into the sea after a devastating earthquake. According to his account, Atlantis was located outside the Pillars of Hercules (modern Straits of Gibraltar). The continent was extremely fertile and rich in metals. On this bountiful land Atlanteans built a circular city with concentric moats and land strips, all connected by canals and bridges. The empire had a vast army and controlled most of the Mediterranean, but the dominion came to an end when disaster struck.

Most historians and philologists accept Plato’s account of Atlantis as an allegorical tale about civil organization and governments. Needless to say, the rest embrace it as a historical event that was preserved in oral culture. Even though Plato’s passages are fairly brief and do not insinuate uncanny technologies or genetically superior beings, the Atlanteans emerged from the depths of the ocean with superhuman powers. In 1882, Minnesota congressman and author Ignatius Loyola Donnelly revived the legend by claiming that the

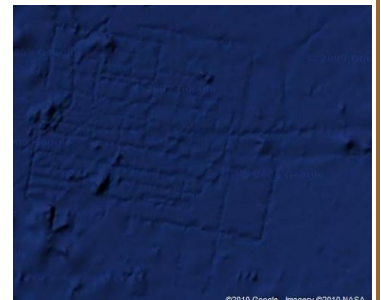
Atlanteans were the ancestors of all races and the catastrophe that destroyed the continent is Noah’s flood. A few years later Helena Petrovna Blavatsky penned the very influential *The Secret Doctrine* (which was apparently based on an ancient text from Atlantis), in which she described this lost race as mighty magicians, whose unrestrained practice of powerful magic contributed to their doom. Since then, more and more fantastic qualities and achievements have been attributed to the Atlanteans including crystal technology, rejuvenation, laser beams, blue blood, telekinesis, flying machines, and submarines. They have been held responsible for the pyramids, monoliths, Easter Island Statues, and the Bermuda Triangle. The continent has been placed in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, The Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, and any other body of water imaginable, not to mention Antarctica and a couple other landlocked locations. And, for a nominal fee (upwards of \$399, that is) you can purchase and harness the power of Atlantean Crystals online.

21st Century Pseudoarchaeology

Pseudoarchaeology is not a “fad” or a thing of the past. Scientific tests and computer technology nowadays provide the pseudoscientific conspiracy theorists with much needed “evidence.” Last year, Google, Inc. got mixed up in this world of mystique when a hawk-eyed observer noted an anomaly that looked like a submerged city grid off the coast of west Africa. The discovery of Atlantis



“The Dig” at Atlantis Paradise Island, a luxury resort in the Bahamas inspired by the lost city.



Google Earth Atlantis glitch is about 100 miles in length.

quickly made headlines. The official blog of Google, Inc. answered these rumors in a lengthy entry titled *Atlantis? No it Atlant-isn't* and tried to explain that the image was the artificial result of their data collection process. In some circles, their explanation is considered a feeble attempt at a cover-up.

The internet makes the dissemination of these theories easier than ever. A few years ago, for instance, a chain email reached millions and claimed that archaeologists found evidence of giants mentioned in the Bible. A number of photos showing people excavating enormous skulls or skeletons were offered as evidence. The very first photo that started it all was, in fact, a perfectly innocent digital image created by a Canadian artist for an online photo manipulation contest. The artist, who sent a letter to National Geographic News explaining the origin of the image, said that he is especially amused by people who claim to have taken the picture or witnessed the discovery. The controversy nevertheless refuses to die down since more and more "giants" are reported from around the world.

Most pseudoarchaeological theories are just that – theories. Originators of these claims very rarely have formal education in archaeology or participate in actual fieldwork. That's probably why archaeologists were startled when a team led by Semir Osmanagic, a Bosnian-American metalwork contractor from Houston, managed to obtain dig permits in 2006 and announced to the world that he was excavating a Mayan pyramid in Bosnia. The call for staff and volunteers even appeared on the websites of reputable archaeological organizations before anyone noticed what was going on. Osmanagic maintains that the Maya were responsible for synchronizing the vibrations of the Sun with "Earthly frequency" and constructing pyramids on strategic gateways to other dimensions. No small feat, but luckily their ancestors were none other than the Atlanteans. Geologists are assuring the world that the "pyramids" are natural formations. Meanwhile

archaeologists are petitioning to revoke Osmanagic's permits on grounds that he is actually destroying other Medieval and Roman remains in his quest for a Mayan pyramid.



The alleged pyramid of the sun in Visoko, Bosnia.

Why do "mainstream" archaeologists make such a racket about alternative archaeology? Is it that they are just narrow-minded? In fact, the objection has a lot to do with the popular but erroneous image of an archaeologist that is, in a way, perpetuated through these theories. Pseudoarchaeological interpretations, at least the ones outlined above, disregard the actual accomplishments of past cultures and try to find a "greater meaning" behind their existence. This approach is usually offensive to archaeologists who devote their lives studying these cultures because they think they are "cool" enough without the addition of magical powers or extraterrestrial allies. Unfortunately, still many people tune in for TV shows that are constantly "decoding mysteries," "hunting treasures," or "revealing truths." The real truth is, archaeology is fun, even if you don't find treasures. Aren't the pyramids magnificent enough without secret mathematical messages encoded into their chambers? Archaeological sites that are not fortunate enough to have been inhabited by aliens are still counting on public support and funding. There seems to be a lot of energy and interest out there that can be channeled into real archaeology. ■

Further Reading:

Feder, K. L. (1990). *Frauds, myths, and mysteries: Science and pseudoscience in archaeology*. Mountain View, Calif: Mayfield Pub. Co.

Haughton, B. (2007). *Hidden history: Lost civilizations, secret knowledge, and ancient mysteries*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: New Page Books.

Shermer, M. (2002). *The Skeptic encyclopedia of pseudoscience*. Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO.

Cordelia Trout is a free lance archaeologist and writer living in Charleston, SC.

Around the World

NEWS!

- Zahi Hawass, the secretary general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, voiced concern over the preservation of the Egyptian obelisk in Central Park in a letter to the president of the Central Park Conservancy and the Mayor of New York City. Hawass wrote that the obelisk, commonly known as Cleopatra's Needle, has been severely weathered over the past century and if preservation efforts are not improved, he will "take the necessary steps to bring this precious artifact home and save it from ruin." NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, denies that the monument is in danger. Read more about the letter and the rebuttal on the [New York Post](#).



The Obelisk at Central Park was commissioned by King Thutmose III around 1450 BC. ➤

- Archaeologists excavating a tomb near Xian, China, discovered a 2,400-year-old bronze vessel containing bone soup. The soup was still in liquid form but had turned green due to the oxidation of the pot, the [Global Times](#) reported. The find complements the recent recovery of [2,500-year-old noodles](#) from the Turpan District of Xinjiang in China.



- An archaeological crew surveying the Thames River bank in low tide discovered 6,000-year-old timbers just steps away from the formidable MI6 headquarters. Archaeologists are calling the find "London's oldest foreshore structure." According to the [Guardian](#), Security Services from MI6 stepped in and questioned the team led by the Thames Discovery Programme (TDP) when their survey equipment was mistaken for a rocket launcher. Visit [TDP's website](#) for details and photos.

▲ *The timbers were found right below these trees when the tide was out.*

- The 2,000-year-old House of Gladiators in Pompeii collapsed. The building was once used by gladiators to train before combat. According to the [Discovery News](#) article, this is the third major collapse in Italy in a year. Archaeologists are criticizing the Italian government for cutting culture budgets that are reserved for preserving ancient monuments. A report revealed that many other Italian buildings and monuments are at risk. Hundreds of museums and archaeological sites closed their doors for a day as a protest, but Culture Minister Sandro Bondi denied responsibility.
- A 6,000-year-old wine press discovered in a cave in Armenia could be the oldest known winery, archaeologists say. The team also recovered grape seeds and remains of pressed grapes, as well as fermentation vats, storage jars, and drinking vessels. Radiocarbon tests dated the installation to 4,100-4,000 B.C. The same site reported the discovery of a 5,500-year-old leather shoe last summer. [Discovery News](#) has the story.