

# Museum of Anthropological Archaeology



Zhaneta Gjyshja is one of two new archaeology graduate students at the Museum. Here she is on a field survey in Përmet, South Albania (page 4).

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# Letter from the Director

Greetings! What a year 2020 has been. In March, we closed the Museum and the Research Museums Center in response to the pandemic. Since then, students, curators, and staff have worked mostly remotely. Unfortunately, most summer field projects, including my own in Kosovo, were canceled. Our second-annual Museum field school, which operates in both Kosovo (doing survey) and North Carolina (doing excavation with Rob Beck), was fully enrolled, but it was also canceled.

Within the Museum community, the impact of coronavirus is strongly felt by graduate students, who lost time and resources this year. In some cases they have had to switch field sites. At this point (November 2020), we are holding out hope that the pandemic will ease and fieldwork in 2021 will prove possible.

COVID-19 has had a grave impact everywhere in the world. Many of the places where we do archaeology, whether in the United States or elsewhere, have been ravaged by the disease. Indeed, it is difficult to think about digging when people at home and abroad are suffering. Moreover, the coronavirus has laid bare the racial inequities inherent in American society. The senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others have prompted a national reckoning with race and racism. In the absence of fieldwork, this summer the students, faculty, and staff of UMMAA came together to develop a DEI (diversity-equity-inclusion) action plan. Our ultimate goal is to make the Museum antiracist and welcoming to all people. You can read about these efforts in more detail on page 6.

The loss of a field season has had a wide-ranging impact, including on this very newsletter—with no fieldwork, there are no photos from the 2020 season and no news from our students about their summer research in the U.S. and abroad.

Even during a “lost year,” however, the Museum has successes to report. We are happy to have two new graduate students to introduce in these pages, and we are also pleased to be able to report on the critical work that supports the Museum and its research. Our collections managers worked for months to migrate the Museum’s database to CollectiveAccess, a system designed to help track the digital records of our 3 million plus artifacts. This is a step on the way to making the Museum’s database information accessible to the public (page 8). In late October, the Museum had a presence at a national repatriation conference that marked the 30th anniversary of NAGPRA (page 9). And working with the University of Michigan Press, the Museum finished scanning its full backlist to make all of our publications (including rare and out of print titles) available electronically and in print (page 9).

Many of you have generously supported UMMAA in various ways over the years. Thank you! Your support is greatly appreciated. We know that giving in a time of uncertainty is difficult, and please know that your gifts mean more now than ever before. If you want your gift to help graduate students recover from “lost” fieldwork during 2020, please let us know. If you want to support our DEI initiatives, please let us know that, too. As always, we look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Michael L. Galaty, Director  
Museum of Anthropological Archaeology

Thank you, generous donors! It is because of your support that the Museum can plan to send students on excavation trips around the world in 2021. Gifts are critical for our work and our ability to attract the best minds in archaeology, which in turn contributes to our standing as a vital and vibrant museum with a reputation as a leader in our field. For your convenience, we encourage you to donate online: please visit [Learn More](#) and [Give Online](#). If you prefer to mail a check, include the completed gift form below with your check.

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The University requires sufficient time to process credit card gifts prior to December 21, 2020, in accordance with IRS rules and regulations. In order for a credit card gift to be deductible in 2020, credit card gifts sent by mail must reach the University by December 18th; OR you may give online at [donate.umich.edu](http://donate.umich.edu). We are working at reduced capacity due to the pandemic, however you may also call (888) 518-7888 (toll free) or (734) 647-6179 (local), M-F 9 AM - 4 PM EST, between December 18 and 31, 2020 to donate over the phone. PLEASE HAVE THE SOLICITATION FORM ON HAND FOR YOUR CALL. Do NOT send your credit card information by email.

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Students learn how to excavate during the 2019 Museum field school at the Berry site in Morganton, North Carolina.

# Meet the Museum's New Graduate Students

## Zhaneta Gjyshja

Zhaneta Gjyshja comes to Michigan from Albania. Prior to entering the University of Michigan's PhD program, she completed two Master's degrees: one in archaeology at the University of Tirana and one in applied anthropology at Mississippi State University. Her thesis work at the former was focused on the prehistory of the Shkodra region. Her thesis for the latter was a formal, petrographic, and chemical analysis of grinding stones collected by the Projekti Arkeologjik i Shkodrës (PASH). She demonstrated that unlike southern Albania, which procured grinding stones from Italy and Greece, northern Albania produced its own grinding stones, made largely from local granites.

Zhaneta's research at Michigan will focus on the prehistory of Albania, Kosovo, and the Balkans. She also has interests in petrography, settlement pattern analysis, and material culture. For her dissertation, she is interested in examining change and continuity in northern Albania and western Kosovo during the transitional phase spanning the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age. To do so, she intends to excavate and analyze artifacts and architectural remains from various sites in the region.

From July 2019 to August 2020, she was a coordinator for archaeology at an Albanian consulting company. During this period, she conducted numerous surveys in the framework of rescue or salvage archaeology, and she served as field coordinator and a compiler of field reports. She is also studying the prehistoric pottery collected by PASH and is the author and co-author of two chapters in a forthcoming volume on PASH by the UMMAA press.

Zhaneta was assistant lecturer at the University of Tirana, and she has excavated and/or surveyed in Albania, Kosovo, Greece, Italy, and the United States. Currently she is stuck in Tirana and taking her classes remotely. She looks forward to moving to Ann Arbor as soon as the pandemic is over and visa restrictions are lifted.

Please welcome our new student, Zhaneta Gjyshja!



Zhaneta Gjyshja stands in front of a cave that was used during prehistoric times in Tepelenë, South Albania.

# Meet the Museum's New Graduate Students

Kara Larson



Kara Larson, first-year PhD student at UMMAA, (left) cleans up a profile wall in the Swag excavation units at the Topper site in South Carolina and (right) elutes strontium from animal enamel samples at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Kara Larson earned her Master's degree in applied anthropology at Mississippi State University prior to joining the Museum as a first-year PhD student in September 2020. She hopes to apply stable isotope analyses and zooarchaeology to study how Early Bronze Age urbanization in the Levant affected herd management strategies and dietary subsistence among people living in marginal environments.

She is interested in how the rise of urban economies leads to shifts in social networks and intra-regional complexity. Kara is a junior staff member at the Tell el-Hesi and Khirbet Summeily excavations in the Southern Levant and has excavation experience in Israel, Greece, and North America.

Please welcome our new student, Kara Larson!

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at UMMAA

## Students, faculty, and staff approve Museum action plan, working groups

The summer of 2020 saw the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement and widespread protests against systemic racism across the country triggered by the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others. During this time, graduate students presented a manifesto to the Museum community. This manifesto prompted a series of virtual Museum-wide meetings of students, faculty, and staff, and laid the groundwork for the creation of an UMMAA action plan, which is summarized below. (Read the entire action plan [here](#)).

In order to carry out the action plan, the Museum community formed several working groups.

Michael Galaty, director of the Museum, wrote, “Several of the items in our action plan will have immediate, tangible benefits, helping to make the Museum and archaeology generally more diverse, equitable, and inclusive:

- In the coming year we will host a speaker series on Black archaeology. These presentations will be online and open to the public.
- Building on our recent field course at Gordon Hall in Dexter, Michigan, a new working group is developing plans for outreach to the Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County communities.
- We are reaching out directly to various, diverse departments on campus whose undergraduate students might have an interest in archaeology classes.”

Members of the Museum community expressed their support and enthusiasm for the Museum’s DEI work.

“This work is necessary because archaeology needs to outgrow its colonial origins and to diminish the inherent inequalities that are pervasive in our field,” commented Jennifer Larios, PhD candidate at the Museum. “We, as a community, must make our field more accessible to and equitable for people from a variety of backgrounds.”

Alicia Ventresca Miller, curator of Asian archaeology at UMMAA, recognized the effort that has gone into the work and the inclusive nature of the work itself.

“The UMMAA community came together to create an action plan. This has entailed months of discussion and meetings to formulate working groups, create mission statements, and build frameworks for future work. While we have made progress over the past few months, we are in the process of outlining detailed action items to further our DEI initiatives.”

She added, “I am extremely proud of our graduate students who have contributed so much of their time and energy in advocating for changes, not only in the museum culture, but across disciplines.”

“UMMAA is a community, and we should all feel welcome, respected, and connected, all of the time,” wrote Robin Beck, curator of North American archaeology and associate director at UMMAA. “The DEI work that we are engaged with now goes beyond [just] saying we want an inclusive and diverse community...to taking concrete, active steps to make sure it’s happening. I’m proud of what we’re doing, and I’m especially proud of our students. It’s work we’re doing together, and that’s the kind of work that makes our community stronger.”

Following is an excerpt from the Museum’s Black Lives Matter/Diversity Equity Inclusion Action Plan.

“Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, and in memory of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the countless others who have died violently and needlessly at the hands of the police, we, the students, faculty, and staff of the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology and the archaeology subfield of the Department of Anthropology, do hereby commit to the following actions, to be taken posthaste and without delay.

Our primary, overarching goal is to create a Museum environment that is safe, supportive, and welcoming to all people, most especially Black and Indigenous individuals and People of Color (BIPOC). We acknowledge that we have not in the past sufficiently addressed the needs and safety of BIPOC students in particular, and through this action plan, we aim to correct inequities and, to the best of our ability, redress past wrongs. To those individuals and groups who may have been hurt in the past, through our behavior or as a result of our inaction, we offer this document as a first step towards healing and reconciliation. We understand that forming a more diverse, more inclusive Museum community is a process, and so we further commit to holding ourselves accountable and laboring continuously towards a Museum space that is open, affirming, and intentionally antiracist.

In writing and publishing this action plan, we further aim to have a positive impact on society at large and in archaeology specifically. We hope through our actions to help make archaeology a more reflexive, responsive, and diverse field. We are committed to nurturing a vibrant intellectual community, one which encourages the free exchange of ideas, and values and will accommodate multiple theoretical perspectives. These action points are drawn from a much longer, more detailed manifesto, presented to the wider UMMAA community by the archaeology graduate students on July 4, 2020.”

Following this introduction, the plan sets out more than 20 points of action, including the initiatives mentioned above. Other goals include the revision of the Museum’s mission statement and the creation of statements on vision, values, BLM and DEI support, and land acknowledgment; revising staff and faculty hiring procedures so as to encourage diverse job candidates; encouraging a larger, more diverse applicant pool of graduate and undergraduate students; and developing a formal orientation program for graduate students, to include diversity training.

As part of the action plan, the Museum community agreed to hold periodic meetings to report on progress made on the items in the plan. In addition, an outside consultant will conduct diversity training at the Museum annually.

The action plan concludes: “We consider this plan to be a living, evolving document, one that will guide us in coming years towards a better, stronger, safer, more resilient, truly inclusive Museum.”

As of November 2020, the Museum is in the process of creating a web page that focuses on our DEI work. Stay tuned!



Yard signs like this appeared in neighborhoods across the country in the summer of 2020, as the antiracism movement took hold. Prompted by graduate students, the Museum created an action plan to address diversity, equity, and inclusion within its own community.

# Collections Database Project

## Migrating data for more than three million artifacts

In 2016, a herculean task began on the University of Michigan campus: [moving](#) the UMMAA's more than three million artifacts from the [Ruthven](#) and Kipke buildings to updated facilities in the [Research Museums Center](#) south of campus. As part of the move, the Museum's collections managers updated the artifact database, which involved counting, labeling, recording, and repacking many of the artifacts. The move would ultimately take two years. It was finished in 2018.

On the heels of that physical relocation of the artifacts, collections managers at the UMMAA began working to standardize the digital records representing the collections and their 98-year [Museum history](#). Their goal: to migrate those records into a new database—one that is much more user-friendly and accessible. Supported by LSA Technology Services, and thanks to the hard work of former collections manager [Lauren Fuka](#), collections managers Jim Moss and Andrea Blaser completed the migration of the Museum's artifact data from Microsoft Access to [CollectiveAccess](#) in February 2020. CollectiveAccess is an open source software for managing and publishing museum and archival collections.

The collections managers continue to work closely with LSA TS and Whirl-i-Gig, the developers of CollectiveAccess, to finalize and stabilize the core database. The next phase will be to complete a post-migration data clean-up project in preparation for making the data available online. This phase of the project will require input and support from volunteers, students, LSA TS, the University Libraries, and Museum staff and curators. When complete, the Museum will have the capacity to accurately share the collections and their histories while presenting a digital interface that is responsive to the needs of researchers and the source communities from which our collections originate.

We hope to be able to make our data available to the UMMAA community by the end of the 2020–2021 academic year, with a tentative timeline (depending on funding and support) of going online to the public by 2022: the Museum's 100-year anniversary.

Through this digital initiative we hope that our collections will engage a much wider audience and encourage new scholarship based on our [worldwide collections](#).

—Jim Moss and Andrea Blaser

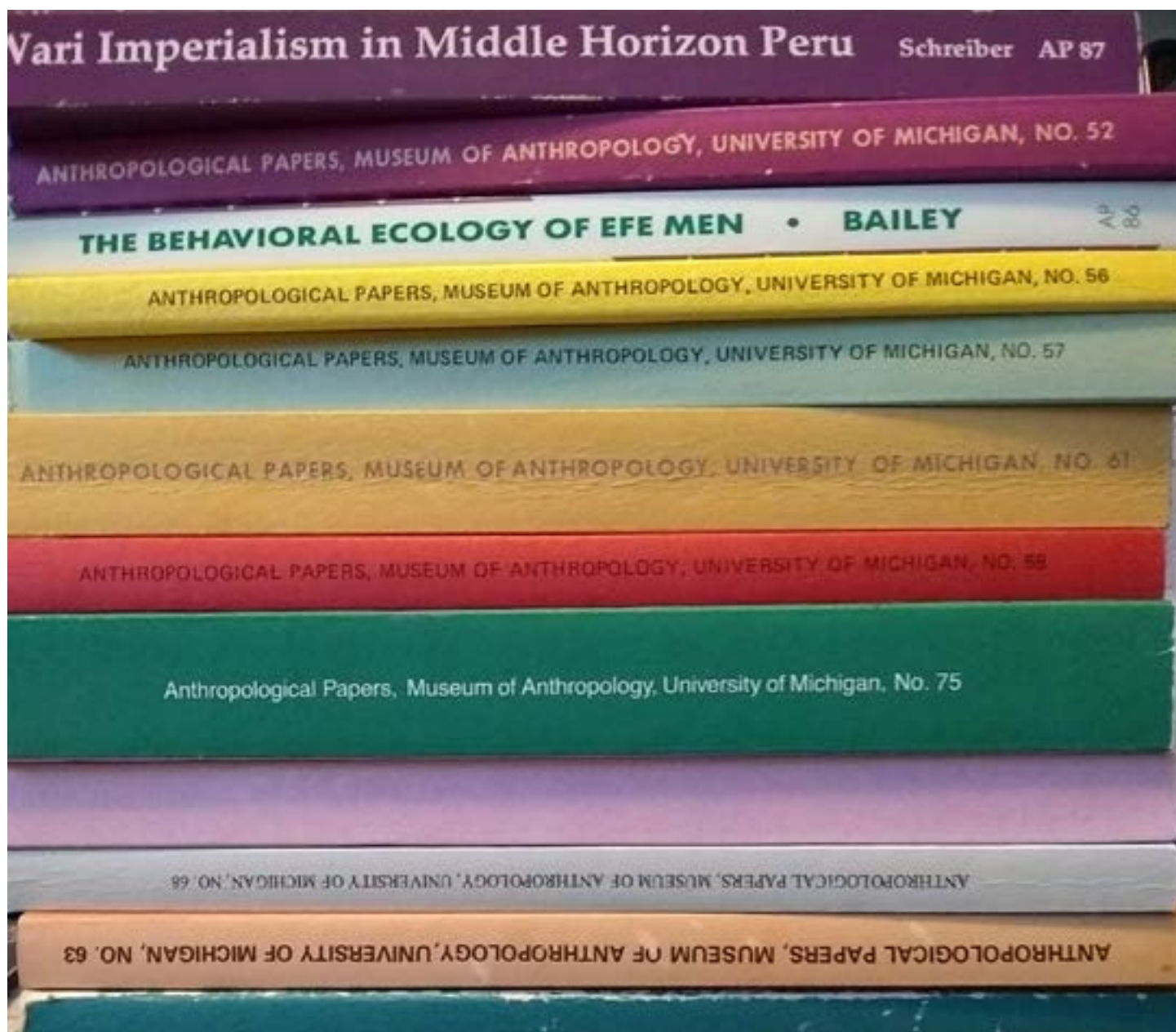


Jim Moss, one of three collections managers at UMMAA, works on the database that holds digital records of the Museum's more than 3 million artifacts.



# Museum Books Project

Scanning project brings back the Museum's rare and out of print books



In 1932, the Museum published its first book: *The Ethnobotanical Laboratory at the University of Michigan*, by Melvin R. Gilmore. Since then—for nearly 90 years—the UMMAA has published academic books on the archaeology and ethnology of Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America, and Europe. We specialize in monographs that are rich in data and illustrations, often including hundreds of maps, plans, and artifact photographs and drawings. UMMAA is one of the few places that publishes the complete datasets of archaeological sites.

Unfortunately, over the decades, many of the Museum's earliest works—and even some recent books—went out of print and became unavailable. By 2017, about half of the UMMAA's 200 titles were out of print, including dozens of classics on archaeological sites in North America, such as Jane Holden

Kelley's study of southeastern New Mexico, James B. Griffin's *The Fort Ancient Aspect*, and *The Spiro Ceremonial Center*, by James A. Brown. Also unavailable were many early works on Paleoindian sites and the archaeology of Michigan.

In early 2018, the Museum began a collaborative project with the University of Michigan Press with the goal of making those classics available again. After about two years of work, the project succeeded: All of the Museum's books are now available, both in print and electronically. The Museum's titles are also available on the UMP's Fulcrum site, a site with the capacity to host and display complex archaeological data.

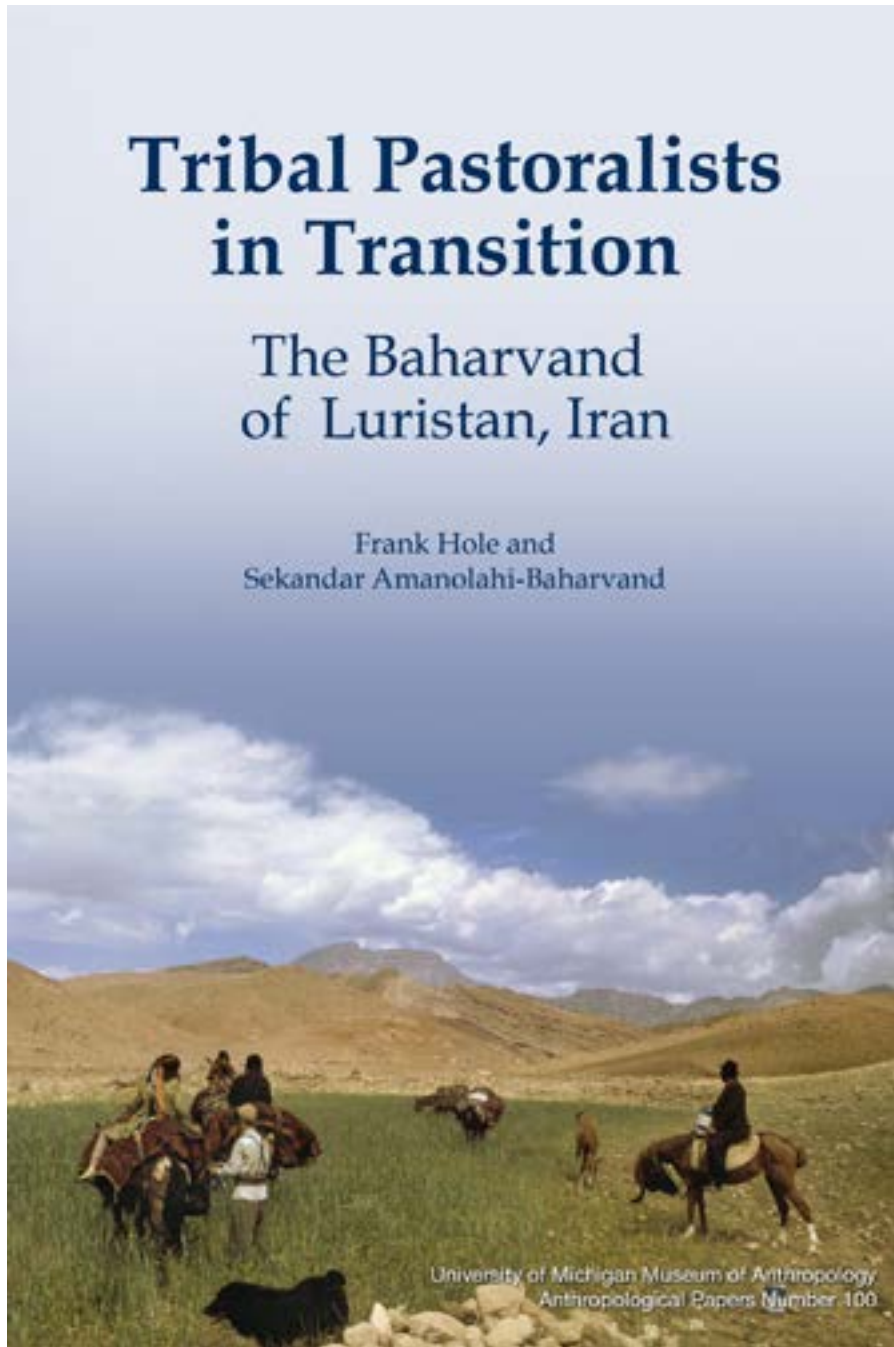
Browse all the Museum's books [here](#).

And check out the Museum's collection on Fulcrum [here](#).

# Tribal Pastoralists in Transition

The Baharvand  
of Luristan, Iran

Frank Hole and  
Sekandar Amanolahi-Baharvand



In the spring of 1973, the Baharvand tribe from the Luristan province of central western Iran prepared to migrate from their winter pastures to their summer camp in the mountains. Seasonal migration in spring and fall had been their way of life for as long as anyone in the camp could remember. They moved their camp and their animals—sheep, goats, horses, donkeys, and chickens—in order to find green pastures and suitable temperatures. That year, one migrating family in the tribe allowed an outsider to make the trip with them. Anthropology professor Frank Hole, accompanied by his graduate student, Sekandar Amanolahi-Baharvand, traveled with the family of Morad Khan as they migrated into the mountains. In this volume, Hole describes the

journey, the modern and prehistoric sites along the way, and the people he traveled with. It is a portrait of people in transition—even as the family follows the ancient migration path, there are signs of economic and social change everywhere. The journey was documented with abundant photographs.

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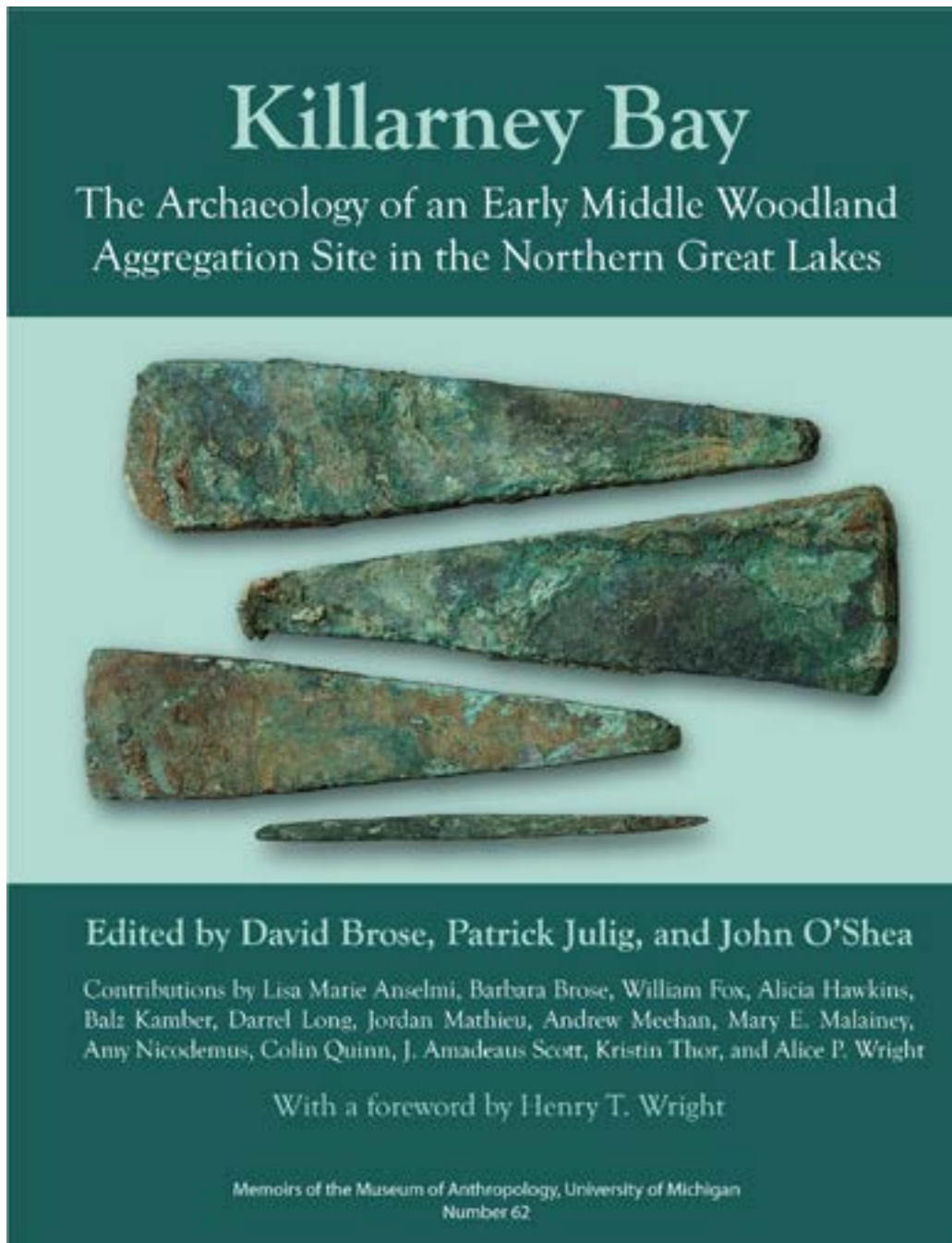
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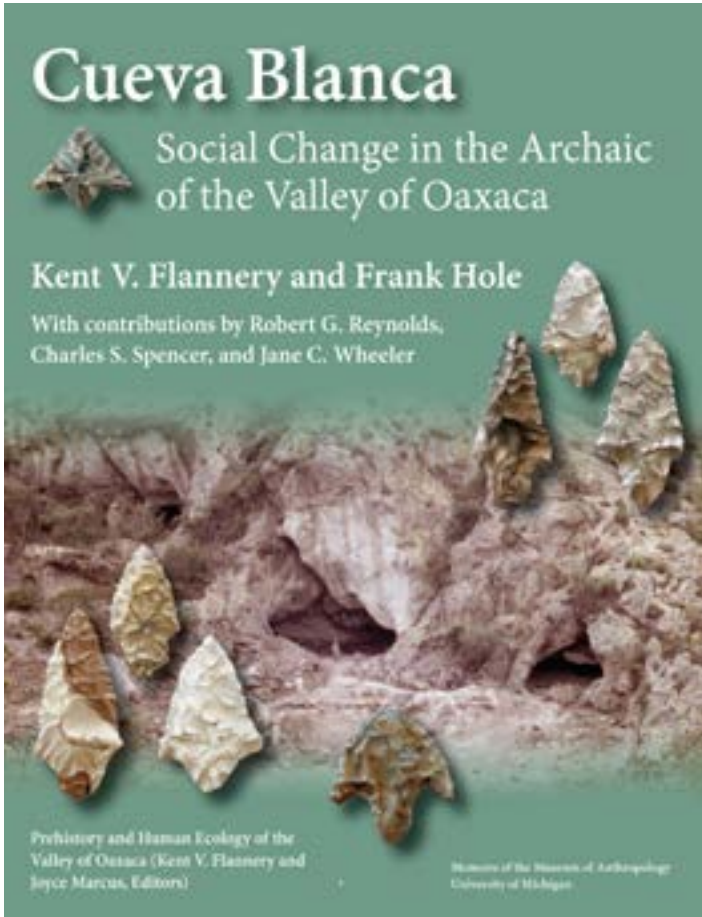


The archaeological site at Killarney Bay, on the northeast side of Georgian Bay in Ontario, Canada, has attracted and mystified archaeologists for decades. The quantities of copper artifacts, exotic cherts, and long-distance trade goods all call our attention to the importance of the site during its time of occupation. Yet researchers have struggled to date the site or assign it to a particular cultural tradition, since the artifacts and mortuary components do not precisely match those of other sites and assemblages in the Upper Great Lakes. The history of archaeological investigation at Killarney Bay stretches across parts of three centuries and involves field schools from universities in two countries (Laurentian University in Canada

and the University of Michigan in the United States). This volume pulls together the results from all prior research at the site and represents the first comprehensive report ever published on the excavations and finds at Killarney Bay. Illustrated with maps, charts, and field and artifact photographs.

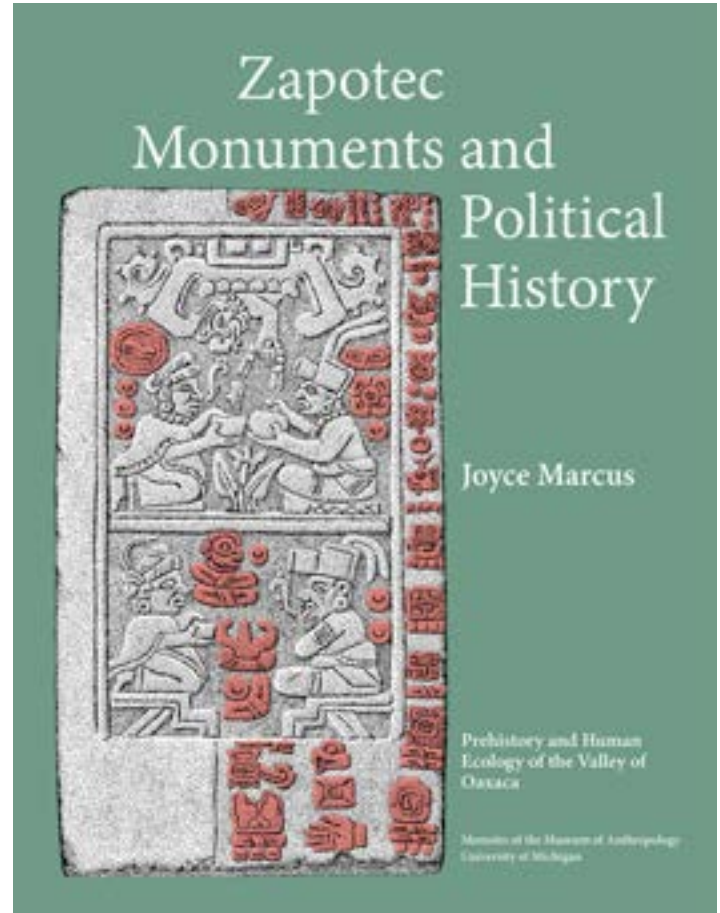
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## Recent Museum Books



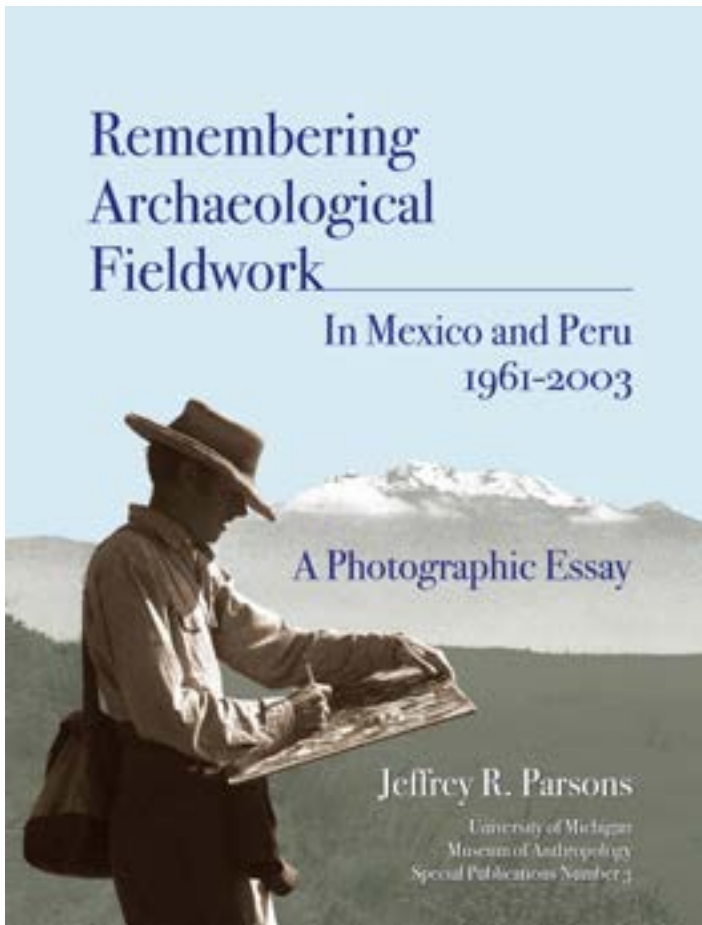
Archaeologists Kent Flannery and Frank Hole report on their excavations at the site of Cueva Blanca, where humans lived more than 12,000 years ago. Cueva Blanca lies in a volcanic tuff cliff some 4 km northwest of Mitla, Oaxaca, Mexico. It is one of a series of Archaic sites excavated by Flannery and Hole as part of a project on the prehistory and human ecology of the Valley of Oaxaca. The oldest stratigraphic level in Cueva Blanca yielded Late Pleistocene fauna, including some species no longer present in southern Mexico. The second oldest level, Zone E, produced Early Archaic material with calibrated dates as old as 11,000–10,000 BC. Color frontispiece.

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Of the four major hieroglyphic writing systems of ancient Mesoamerica (Zapotec, Maya, Mixtec, and Aztec), the Zapotec is widely considered to be one of the oldest and least studied. This volume assesses the origins of Zapotec writing; the spread of writing following the formation of the Monte Albán state; the use of Zapotec writing to commemorate inaugurations, building dedications, apical ancestors, founding couples, and noble genealogies; the role of Zapotec writing in the changing political agendas of the region; and the decline of hieroglyphic writing in the Valley of Oaxaca. Lavishly illustrated with maps, photographs, and original artwork. Color insert.

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Half a century ago, when archaeologist Jeffrey R. Parsons began fieldwork in Mexico and Peru, he could not know that many of the sites he studied were on the brink of destruction. The rural landscapes through which he traveled were, in many cases, destined to be plowed under and paved over. In this volume, Parsons offers readers a chance to see archaeological sites that were hundreds or thousands of years old and have since vanished or been irrevocably altered. Hundreds of photographs, accompanied by descriptions, illustrate the sites, the people, and the landscapes that Parsons encountered during four decades of research in these regions. Foreword by Richard I. Ford.

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Since 1932, the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology (UMMAA) has published academic books that feature excellent scholarship, meticulous research, and innovative interpretation. We continue this tradition today, producing data-rich monographs on the archaeology and ethnology of Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America, and Europe. Our authors use illustrations, photographs, tables, and charts to explain their research in comprehensive detail, resulting in books that are priceless historical records, relevant to current and future researchers.

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Archaeology graduate student Kara Larson uncovers a sacrificed donkey in an Early Bronze Age neighborhood at Tell es-Safi, Israel.