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Blumenfeld, Jodi

"The Neandertal Face: A Comparative Perspective".

The Neandertal face is examined from a comparative perspective in order to better understand which elements of the Neandertal face represent a true cold climate adaptation, and which elements represent a derived morphology reflecting reproductive isolation from other groups of hominids. Neandertals are characterized by a suite of distinctive cranial and post-cranial features. Post-cranially, Neandertals resemble modern cold-adapted peoples, as indicated by their short, stocky physique and low mean crural index. If Neandertals resembled modern cold-adapted peoples below the neck, it is plausible to hypothesize that they would exhibit a cold-adapted morphology in their crania as well. Focusing on three facial features found in Neandertals that are generally thought to represent an adaptation to a cold climate, a discriminant function analysis was performed using a climatologically diverse comparative sample of populations taken from the W.W. Howells database, in which the Neandertal sample was classified as more similar to the warm-adapted populations. An alternative hypothesis concerning Neandertal midface morphology is that the Neandertal face is an adaptation to an unusual amount of wear placed on their anterior dentition. There are two possible conclusions. The first is that the unique morphology of the Neandertal face is not an adaptation to a cold climate, but rather related to the intensive use of their anterior dentition. The second is that the Neandertal face is a cold-adapted one, but adapted to the cold in a way that is completely different than modern cold-adapted groups— a species-specific adaptation, which makes sense if they are, in fact, a distinct species separate from modern Homo sapiens.

Toyne, Maria.

"Gender and Cranial Modification at three Postclassic Maya Sites".

One of the goals of archaeology is to understand how social relations are constructed by studying cultural and physical remains of past peoples. It is understood that gender is culturally constructed interpretation of social identity that differentiates individuals based on biological sex categories of male and female. Recognizing the ways in which men and women are differentiated can give us clues to how gender was constructed in the past. One of the cultural practices among the prehistoric Maya of Mesoamerica that is observable in the archaeological record, artistic representations and ethnohistoric documents is artificial cranial modification. This practice represents an intentional and permanent highly visible characteristic that is imposed upon individuals by other members of society when they are infants. Understanding how it is manifested between males and females may tell us something about Maya gender construction. In this paper, I explore the relationship between artificial crania modification and biological sex of individuals from 3 Postclassic sites in Belize: Lamanai, Marco Gonzalez and San Pedro. The objective is to see if patterns of
modification reveal aspects of gender differentiation in Maya society from AD 1000 - 1520.

Finnis, Elizabeth.
"I see two different classes': Lesbians, Class and Space as Sanctuary in a Small Community"

This paper is part of a preliminary analysis of the lives and experiences of lesbians living in a mid-sized community in Northern Ontario. It may be tempting to assume that in smaller communities, gay men and lesbians will band together into a seamless whole in order to create safe public spaces for social interactions. However, this kind of analysis overlooks other ways of self-identification. In this paper, I explore how sexual identity and being 'out of the closet' intersects with the concepts of social status or job type. I place exploration on the context of social spaces, specifically focusing on monthly dances sponsored by a local gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) organisation. I argue that, for some lesbians, understandings of who attends dances are linked with ideas of social class or status. In turn, social status is linked with perceptions of who is open about their sexual identity and who is still 'in the closet'. Dances are described as sanctuary for the GLBT community, however, the notion of sanctuary takes on negative or positive connotations depending on the positioning of the individual. What appears to be happening for some women in this community is the division of lesbian space according to perceived differences in social status.

Ginter, Jaime.
"Beyond the Flesh: An Osteobiography of an Early Iroquoian Female".

On May 11, 2000 a human cranium was unearthed by a landscaper constructing a pond in the backyard of a residence in the area of Delhi, Ontario. The cranium that was discovered turned out to be part of a solitary primary burial of an Early Iroquoian female. Little research has been conducted on the area of Early Iroquoian burial practices and most research on this topic has tended to focus on Iroquoian ossuaries. In the past, analyses of skeletal remains and burial practices have tended to focus on frequencies of burial attributes and pathological conditions while ignoring the
greater social and cultural forces that shape an individual during life. An osteobiography offers a more holistic analysis of the individual as reflected in the skeletal remains. Specifically, an osteobiography moves beyond quantitative analysis and seeks to give an identity back to the individual. This paper discusses the skeletal analysis that was undertaken to determine the age, sex, ancestry, and health of this individual in an attempt to understand the broader forces that affected this individual in life. Inferences about the activities and behaviors that this individual may have been engaged in during her life will be discussed.

Gold, Phil.
“An Anthropological Paradigm of Genocide: Never Again?”.  

The one hundred-year period of 1901–2000 has been the most destructive of any in the history of recorded human culture. In spite of the significant impact of memory upon human culture we have witnessed the profoundly destructive tendencies in several cultures. In part it is a result of the anthropological dichotomy of us and them, the self and the other. Other crucial and essential factors include the power of ideology and persuasion, and propaganda.

In this essay I will discuss the symbolic power of cultural memory, the anthropological conception of “otherness” and the impact of ideology and propaganda in terms of three examples of cultural genocide: Armenia, World War II, and Cambodia. The more recent examples of ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Zimbabwe will also be discussed within this framework. The fundamental questions to be discussed include: Can we consider genocide to be a paradigm of modern/postmodern human culture? How selective has Western Culture become in terms of its response to recent examples of ethnic cleansing? How significant to human culture is memory when ideological persuasion pushes people toward new experiments in mass destruction?

Lichtenfeld, Marc.
“The Talking Heads: Variation in Artificial Cranial Modification as a Marker of Ethnicity in the Jequetepeque Valley, Peru”.

The aims of this study are to understand the cultural practice of Artificial Cranial Modification and the expression of the modifications as a marker of ethnicity in the Jequetepeque Valley, Peru. A discussion of Artificial Cranial Modification and how it varies in relation to ethnicity can help us to understand broader issues regarding how ethnicity was created and maintained by several groups in the region over a period of 1500 years. Artificial Cranial Modification is part of a cultural suite of body modification traits used by various groups to indicate ethnicity and has existed for thousands of years (Gertzen and Gertzen 1995) in many forms, both temporary and permanent.

Four sites and four cultures that contain individuals with Artificial Cranial Modification in the Jequetepeque Valley were chosen for this study and include samples of Moche, Transitional, Lambayeque, and Chimú individuals. I will detail the nature of the inter- and intra-population variation expressed in each of the samples that are included in this thesis and the most important analytical tool used: a morphometric, computer-based program called Thin-Plate Spline.

McMillian, Katherine.
"Keeping Up With the Joneses? An Evaluation of Expressive Redundancy at Three Lowland Maya Sites".

The term “expressive redundancy”, as employed by Cannon (1989), is adapted from Kroeber’s notion that mortuary behaviour represents a form of expressive fashion. Cannon suggests that mortuary practices provide the opportunity for expressions of status and status aspirations between competing groups. Within such a framework the elite differentiate themselves through the adoption of new forms of expression. As these new forms become more accessible to and emulated by wider portions of the population, the effectiveness of the differentiation strategy is diminished, forcing the elite to seek new ways of expressing their social distance from the general public. In this paper, I extend the notion of expressive redundancy to study another form of symbolic expression: the physical modifications performed by the ancient Maya. Mortuary and skeletal data from the three lowland Maya sites Cuello, Altar de Sacrificios, and Seibal are considered within their historical contexts, in order to evaluated the possible applicability of expressive redundancy to the patterns noted through time in cranial and dental modifications. Through both visual inspections and statistical evaluation of the data, a few weak trends are apparent. Because of small sample sizes, most interpretations drawn from the data must remain speculative. However, the few trends seen in the data provide encouragement to consider expressive redundancy as a possible explanation for Maya cultural modifications as more data are compiled.

Poirier, Nadege.

"Tracing the Reproductive behaviors of Australopithecus afarensis".

Sexual dimorphism is the difference between males and females of the same species with regards to some aspect of their non-reproductive anatomy, which includes body size. The differences between fossil records are sometimes assumed to be due to sexual dimorphism and these assumption leads to many disagreements in the paleoanthropological field. Australopithecus afarensis is one species in the fossil record that has been included in the sexual dimorphism battle. Here I examine three different studies to learn if Australopithecus afarensis was indeed sexually dimorphic, or if it is actually two species categorized as one. The result of this analysis then leads to an understanding of what the significance of Australopithecus afarensis is, in sexually dimorphic terms. What would its reproductive behavior be like? By examining African primates such as the gorilla, the chimpanzee and the bonobo, and by examining modern humans what we can deduce from observing their reproductive behaviors may be applied in determining the reproductive behaviors of Australopithecus afarensis.

Rainey, Doni.

"Site Formation Processes of the Pazyryk Burial-Cairns of Siberia".

The mortuary record provides a window into peoples of the past, providing clues to cultural practices. Cultural and non-cultural factors that affect the process of site formation can contribute to or obliterate valuable information pertaining to cultural practices and for this purpose, the identification of these factors is integral to a more holistic interpretation of the mortuary record. The Pazyryk burial-cairns are located in the Pazyryk valley of Siberia, in
the High Altai Autonomous Oblast approximately 120 miles north of the Chinese border and 90 miles west of the Mongolian border. Beginning in 1865 with Radloff, at least 12 barrows have been excavated. The construction of the barrow-cairns in combination with the altitude and climate of the Pazyryk valley created a situation in which the temperature inside the barrow-cairns reached below 0 degrees Celsius, creating discontinuous permafrost in a region free of permafrost. However, two different types of ice occur within the barrow-cairns, the second of which is the result of looting episodes occurring several years after interment. The unique periglacial and post-depositional processes seen in the Pazyryk barrow-cairns are a direct result of cultural formation processes and human-induced disturbances in combination with the environmental conditions, creating a unique situation of excellent preservation.

Sverihinsky, Alex.

"Franz Boas and Anti-Nazism".

In my paper I will discuss the work of the prominent German-American anthropologist Franz Boas as a social activist on the issue of race. The primary focus will be on the various obstacles Boas faced during his efforts to discredit Nazi beliefs regarding racial supremacy, which were legitimised through the false scientific movement of eugenics.

During the early twentieth century the scientific community was completely divided on the issue of race. Many scientists implemented pseudoscientific practices by wrongly applying the newly formulated science of biological heredity along with their personally biased views regarding racial differences. This pseudoscientific reasoning resulted from the belief that it was only biology, not the environment, which was solely responsible for the inherent character weaknesses within various “inferior” racial groups. This was the underlying notion of the eugenics movement, which preached that the liberal political policies throughout Europe and United States were artificially preserving the genetically “unfit” members of society from the mechanisms of natural selection. The misuse of scientific information regarding biological heredity and Darwin’s theory on natural selection, contributed to rise of the Nazi racial doctrine. Boas believed that the Nazi regime was falsely supported by the politically motivated pseudoscientific research, and as a result tried to gain a scientific consensus to counteract Hitler’s propaganda machine. However, he did not receive adequate support from the rest of the scientific community in spite of his strong effort to combat racist Nazi doctrines and anti-Semitism.

Additionally, I will detail the various factors that were present during that particular timeframe, which contributed to the feeble support from the majority of the scientific community. Finally, I will conclude with a discussion of some of the reasons for the lack of scientific support for Boas’ stance on racism.