

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2017

DIXIE ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

P.O. Box 611

Washington, Utah 84780

Jim King

Kay "Feather" Robinson

Chris Oravec

Carol Spencer

Gary Smith

September Meeting Presentation

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Dixie State University

Native American Religious Symbolism: Mesoamerica and the American Southwest

Wednesday, September 13 2017, 7 pm

Udvar-Hazy Building, Boeing Auditorium Room 121
Dixie State University Campus

Mesoamerican religious imagery comes from the "Mother Culture" of Mesoamerica, the Olmec empire (1500 – 400 BC). Hallmarks of its mythology are found in various media from stone relief carvings and paintings to the layout of ceremonial centers. The media include such images as symbolic dualisms and a quincunx cosmic design of a flat, four-cornered horizontal plane and a vertical center axis. Comparisons can be made between Mesoamerican images and the Native American religious symbolism of sand paintings and blanket designs in the Southwest.

Biographical Note

Since his childhood in Moab, Utah and Oregon Andrew McDonald has been fascinated by Indian life in the Americas. He received a B.A. in Archeology from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah; a M.A. in Anthropology from La Universidad de las Américas in Cholula, Puebla, México and a Ph.D. in Latin American Studies from The University of Texas at Austin. He was an archaeological research supervisor at sites in Mexico on the Chiapas Pacific Coast and in the Chiapas Grijalva River basin, published papers based on this research, and taught in Departments of Anthropology at Brigham Young and Texas State Universities. His second, more lucrative career was as a computer software developer, mostly in manufacturing.

Welcome back to DAS

We are heading into fall and meetings are planned for the second Wednesday of each month starting September. There are some interesting and exciting speakers and field trips planned for the coming months. Please mark your calendars!

Field Trip Report

Field trip sign-ups resume at the September 13 meeting. To kick off the year, our first field trip will be to a site of local interest. You must be a member to join field trips, and be present at the meeting to sign up for a particular field trip. See the membership/liability form below.

Field Trip leaders are always needed. If you know about a location of interest or if you want to assist in learning about new places, contact Jim King, Field Trip Coordinator. He can use your help.

Board Membership

We have two new board members! Carol Spencer and Gary Smith have joined the Board. If you wish to contribute your time, skills and enthusiasm to DAS please contact one of the board members and we will be sure to follow up. We can't go on without you!

Dues are Due

Thanks to new members and returning members for your dues and waivers. If you have not already paid them, the 2017 dues are due. They are \$25 for an individual or \$30 for a couple. Please fill out the membership form below (on the last page) or download the one on this website under "Membership Information." Each person must sign the form. Bring the form and your dues to a meeting or mail them to:

Dixie Archaeology Society, PO Box 611, Washington, UT 84780

Research Report: Petroglyphs and Total Solar Eclipses

by Chris Oravec

Archaeoastronomy is the study of how ancient peoples identified and measured events in the sky. Given the excitement about the total solar eclipse occurring August 21 2017 in the Northern Hemisphere, let's see how Pre-Puebloan "Anasazi" people from the Four Corners region of the Southwest may have portrayed total eclipses in their rock art.

Astronomers at Lowell Observatory think the Chaco Canyon petroglyph depicted below might represent a solar eclipse. The long lines curving out of the disk could be "coronal mass ejections (CMEs) or "helmet streamers" that flare outward from the sun's surface every eleven years. In addition, the triangle shape to the upper left corner could be a representation of the planet Venus, which can be seen during totality.



<https://www.lowellsolareclipse.com/.../archaeological-eviden.../>

See also: http://www.hao.ucar.edu/education/archeoslides/slide_16.php

And: <http://www.newsweek.com/total-solar-eclipse-new-mexico-chaco-canyon-rock-art-shows-ancient-eclipse-649082>

In fact, “helmet streamers” could help pinpoint the date of the Chaco Canyon representation. Four total solar eclipses were visible in the San Juan Basin including Chaco Canyon between A.D. 700 and 1300: 13 April 804; 11 July 1097; 13 June 1257; and 17 October 1259. The following article interviewing Colorado State University archaeologists estimates the date of the Chaco eclipse petroglyph as July 11, 1097, based on the size of the apparent helmet streamers:



<http://www.colorado.edu/.../chaco-canyon-petroglyph-may...>

Finally, Peter Faris proposes three more possible representations of solar eclipses in his Rock Art Blog. One of them is at McConkie Ranch near Vernal, Utah. See:

<http://rockartblog.blogspot.com/2014/04/a-petroglyph-of-solar-eclipse-with.html> and
<http://rockartblog.blogspot.com/2013/02/another-possible-solar-eclipse-symbol.html>

So do some petroglyphs depict total solar eclipses? We can't really say unless more evidence is found, but it is quite possible that rare astronomical events like total eclipses were identified in rock art by ancient Native people.

[Note: The original research on the Chaco Canyon petroglyph is by Paul Rodriguez, (2010), “Petroglyph Record of a Solar Eclipse?” in *Archaeoastronomy*, Volume XXIII, University of Texas Press, Austin, p. 132-140.]

See you at the September meeting! The DAS Board: Kaye, Gary, Carol, Jim and Chris



**Dixie Archaeology Society (DAS)
RELEASE OF LIABILITY 2017**



Send to: Dixie Archaeology Society PO Box 611 Washington, UT 84780
Include your dues

Name(s): Last First

Name(s): Last First

Address: Street Apartment #

City State Zip Code

Phone: email

I, the undersigned, participant(s) agree to abide by all rules and directions established by Dixie Archaeology Society (DAS), regarding all activities, tours, field trips, meetings etc. I do freely and voluntarily agree to release, save, hold harmless, and indemnify DAS from any and all claims of loss, injury or damage, suit action, demand, fine, judgment of decree and any expense thereof, including a reasonable attorney's fee, that may happen or occur to me as a result of or consequence of having attended and/or participated in any DAS meetings or activities. This release includes all representatives of said organization and/or sponsor(s), including the policy that only paid-up members who sign the Release of Liability form are allowed to participate in Field Trips and Activities. The undersigned named participant(s) agrees to bear the total cost of damages and fines resulting from his/her/their actions, thereby releasing Dixie Archaeology Society and its representatives from any liability whatsoever.

I understand that during my participation in the Dixie Archaeology Society outing, I may be exposed to a variety of hazards and risks, foreseen or unforeseen, which are inherent in each outing and cannot be eliminated without destroying the unique character of the outing. These inherent risks include, but are not limited to, the dangers of serious personal injury, property damage, and death (Injuries and Damages) from exposure to the hazards of travel: the Dixie Archaeology Society has not tried to contradict or minimize my understanding of these risks. I know that Injuries and Damages can occur by natural causes or activities of other persons, animals, trip members, trip leaders and assistants or third parties, either as a result of negligence because of other reasons. I understand those risks of such Injuries and Damages are involved in adventure travel such as Dixie Archaeology Society outings and I appreciate that I may have to exercise extra care for my own person and for others around me in the face of such hazards. I further understand that on this outing there may not be rescue or medical facilities or expertise necessary to deal with the Injuries and Damages to which I may be exposed.

I certify that I have read the Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement, fully understand its terms and sign it freely and voluntarily without any inducement. I freely and voluntarily assume all risk of such Injuries and Damage, notwithstanding such risks. I (we) certify that I am of legal age and competence to act in this manner. If any participant is a minor, the legal parent or guardian will certify that he/she is acting in behalf of each of them in this release.

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____