

INTERDISCIPLINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

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Abstract: Cultural Heritage, in all of its manifestations, is characteristic of anthropological research, and this is especially true for archaeology, the major research strength of Anthropology at Texas A&M University.

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The Anthropology Department focuses on nautical, paleoindian, and environmental archaeology, as well as the conservation of archaeological materials. Archaeology is cross-disciplinary and the studies we undertake involve the fields of botany, biology, zoology, entomology, geology, history, classics, languages, oceanography, engineering, sociology, geography, chemistry, and architecture. There are 14 archaeologists in the department's two archaeology programs, faculty with diverse specializations in prehistoric and historic terrestrial archaeology and in ancient, medieval, and early modern nautical archaeology. Affiliated with the department are the Center for Maritime Archaeology and Conservation (CMAC), and the Center for the Study of the First Americans (CSFA). The two Centers have endowments to support faculty, student research projects, and both have a proven record of raising project funds. Twelve laboratories provide facilities and equipment for a wide range of archaeological investigations and artifact conservation.

CMAC investigates the history of ship building technology, seafaring practices, and maritime activity through the excavation of shipwrecks and ports from all centuries and from all oceans and waterways. We work with scholars and research institutions from North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia; however, our principal research strengths are in the Mediterranean, Western Europe, and the Americas.

The research at the Center for the Study of the First Americans revolves around the first people to enter the Americas during the last Ice Age (ca. 20,000 -10,000 years ago). At CSFA intensive studies are conducted on stone tools, subsistence remains, geology. dating of archaeological sites, and the molecular genetic of human remains from archaeological sites in Northeast Asia, North America, and South America.

CSFA research explores the process of human settlement of empty landscapes, especially how the colonization process affects human groups, and how it impacts environments and ecosystems. This requires an understanding of ancient environments, climates, and ecology at archaeological sites. The Center's archaeological research is decidedly interdisciplinary and international in scope with strong working relationships with institutions and researchers in Russia, Japan, Canada, Europe, and South America.

Over the years, both Centers have been responsible for groundbreaking archaeological research. In Vision 2020 the Nautical Archaeology Program and its affiliation with the Institute of Nautical Archeology were touted as the best in the world. We continued to build on that reputation. The research accomplishments of department archaeologists are many and varied, and include the excavation of the 1300 BC Bronze Age shipwreck at Uluburun, Turkey (selected as one the ten most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century), and the recent cover story in the journal *Science* heralding the research of CSFA on the first inhabitants of the New World. There are strong connections with Cultural and Biological Anthropology Programs and departments throughout the University. The archaeological research conducted by the two centers will continue to be the major focus of the department (namely, the peopling of the Americas, the prehistory of indigenous cultures, and the maritime heritage of the World), in order to shed new light on the rise of internationalism, trade, and technological developments from prehistoric times to the recent past.

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