



JANUARY - 2025

PRESERVATION ♦ EDUCATION ♦ RESEARCH ♦ INSPIRE

Dear Member:

Happy New Year!

The Spring 2024 - 2025 Season starts with "Archaeology: The Year in Review" by Dr. David Miano. Please join us every month for coffee, cookies and powerful lectures.

Inside we have stories about "Dry Tortugas National Park" and a Mysterious 3,800-Year-Old Canaanite Arch excavated in Israel.

Darwin "Smitty" Smith, President
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A 16th Century helmet of Italian General Alessandro Farnese, Duke of Parma and Piacenza. (Kunsthistorisches Museum)

January 15th - at 5:45 PM at the Selby Library in downtown Sarasota



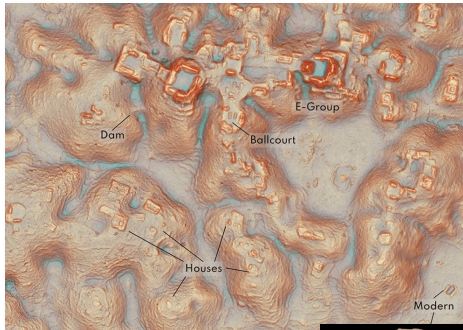
"Archaeology: The Year in Review

What's been Discovered & What's Being Talked About"

Dr. David Miano
Ancient Historian

This captivating lecture highlights the most groundbreaking archaeological finds of 2024, transporting you from the depths of the ocean to the remote corners of the Amazon. We'll highlight advancements made in archaeological technology, including new techniques in remote scanning and DNA analysis. Packed with stunning visuals, compelling stories, and expert analysis, the session will reflect on how scientific innovations are reshaping our understanding of ancient societies and will ignite your curiosity while we celebrate archaeology's role in connecting us with our shared human past.

David Miano is a historian of the ancient world. He studied Ancient



Photos: Luke Auld-Thomas, Greek Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Culture of Panama, arkeonews.net, Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology.

History at the State University of New York at Buffalo (B.A. 1999) and the University of California, San Diego (M.A. 2003; Ph.D. 2006). He has taught courses at many colleges over the last 20 years. Miano's chief research interests are in the history of the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean in

antiquity, ancient methods of time keeping, the chronology of the ancient world, the literary and intellectual history of ancient cultures, and comparative world history. He is the proprietor of the *World of Antiquity* YouTube channel, which has hundreds of thousands of fans from around the globe

Florida History

Dry Tortugas National Park

By Smitty, Time Sifters Board Member. Sources: Wikipedia, National Park Service, & National Geographic

The rich cultural heritage of the *Dry Tortugas* all begins with its location 70 miles west of Key West, Florida. The park preserves Fort Jefferson and the seven Dry Tortugas islands, the westernmost and most isolated of the Florida Keys. The archipelago's coral reefs are the least disturbed of the Keys reefs. The seven islands are Garden, Loggerhead, Bush, Long, East, Hospital, and Middle. They are situated on the edge of the main shipping channel between the Gulf of Mexico, the western Caribbean, and the Atlantic Ocean.

Comprising 47,125 acres (73.6 sq mi), *Fort Jefferson National Monument* was designated by President Roosevelt under the Antiquities Act on January 4, 1935. The monument was expanded in 1983 and redesignated as *Dry Tortugas National Park* on October 26, 1992, by an act of Congress.

The first European to see the Dry Tortugas was Juan Ponce de León, who visited on June 21, 1513. His Army caught 160 sea turtles there and subsequently referred to the islands as the "Tortugas" (turtles). They are called "Dry" owing to the absence of surface fresh water on the island.

During the 1600s and 1700s, the Straits of Florida was a prime hunting ground for pirates. Spanish treasure ships sailing between Cuba and Florida were easy prey. Later, "wreckers" made a living salvaging and recovering cargo from the sunken ships. The pirates and wreckers are gone, but hidden treasure still calls to those willing to search for it. In 1985, treasure hunters salvaged \$450 million in silver and gold from a sunken 17th-century Spanish galleon.

Florida and the Tortugas were acquired from Spain by the United



States in 1819. In 1846 construction began on the largest masonry fort in the Western Hemisphere. Surrounded by shallow water, Fort Jefferson juts out from the sea on Garden Key. Enslaved Africans were instrumental in the construction of Fort Jefferson until 1862, when the commander of occupying Union Forces declared the enslaved liberated from their owners. The fort turned to incarcerated laborers as it became the country's largest military prison. President Lincoln commuted Union deserters' executions in exchange for construction labor.

In 1867, of the 400 people living in the fort, 275 were infected and 38 people died of yellow fever. Dr. Samuel Mudd—who had been sentenced to Fort Jefferson for providing John Wilkes Booth medical treatment after he assassinated President Lincoln—became a hero during the epidemic. The hygienic practices he put into place as the prison's

doctor saved dozens of lives, earning him a pardon for his crimes and an early release. After the war, construction on Fort Jefferson came to a halt. Although unfinished, it is exceeded in size only by Fort Monroe, VA, and Fort Adams, RI.

The park is noted for abundant sea life, tropical bird breeding grounds, colorful coral reefs, and legends of shipwrecks and sunken treasures. Dry Tortugas is unique in its combination of a largely undisturbed tropical ecosystem with significant historic artifacts. The park is accessible only by seaplane or boat and has averaged about 63,000 visitors annually. Activities include snorkeling, picnicking, birdwatching, camping, scuba diving, saltwater fishing and kayaking.

Dry Tortugas National Park is part of the Everglades & Dry Tortugas Biosphere Reserve, established by UNESCO in 1976 under its Man and the Biosphere Program.

In the News

Mysterious 3,800-Year-Old Canaanite Arch and Stairway Unearthed in Israel

By Smitty, Time Sifters Board Member. Sources: Smithsonian Magazine, Live Science, & the Science Times.

Archaeologists in Israel have unearthed a Canaanite arch and vaulted stairway sealed inside a well-preserved mud brick building which dates to 3,800 years ago. They don't know the purpose of the structure, which was unearthed at the *Tel Shimron* archaeological site. They also don't understand why it was sealed off not long after its construction.

Archaeologists haven't historically paid much attention to Tel Shimron. Before the current dig which began in 2017, the site had never been extensively excavated. Recently, they stumbled upon a strange structure.

After excavating to a depth of 14 feet, they found the structure to be totally intact and realized it was the foundation of a building. The team uncovered mud brick walls up to 13 feet thick, but no rooms were found within them. Instead, the inside was made up of a long corridor – which led to an arch. Beyond it, researchers found a staircase leading deeper underground.

The arch is corbelled, meaning the vault was created by offsetting bricks like an inverted staircase rather than with wedge-shaped stones, which are typically used to build "true" arches. The arch and stairway stand more than 16 feet tall and includes at least 9,000 bricks.

The archaeologists continued to excavate beyond the arch and came upon stairs leading deeper underground and beyond the building's walls. They stopped at this point because of safety reasons and the fear of the walls collapsing. They figure it will take



Photos: eyecon, Ariel David

years to excavate to the end on the stairway.

They found that not long after the structures' construction, both were backfilled with sediments. What's clear is that its sealing off was intentionally done and was not done out of imminent danger due to potential collapse. Nevertheless, the quick backfill is the only reason why the structure remained incredibly preserved even after nearly 4,000 years.

Among the items that were discovered was a *seven-cupped*

pottery artifact known as a Nahariya bowl, which was used for ritual offerings in the Middle Bronze Age. Additionally, thousands of bones belonging to animals that may have been sacrificed were found in a nearby structure. This might be a clue as to the function of the structure.

In the future, the researchers want to learn more about the mysterious staircase, in the meantime, the site has been reburied to protect it from the elements.

A Time Sifters Book Review

Tacachale: Essays on the Indians of Florida and Southeastern Georgia during the Historic Period (Florida and the Caribbean Open Books Series)

by Jerald T. Milanich (Editor), Samuel Proctor (Editor), Paperback, first published January 1, 1978, reissued 2023.

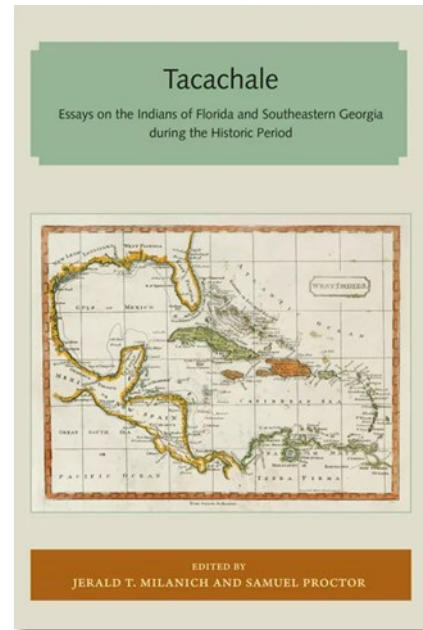
This is a collection of papers derived mainly from a symposium at the 1973 Society for American Archaeology meeting in San Francisco titled "Historic Indians of Florida and Southeastern Georgia: Ethnohistorical and Archaeological Correlations." The theme is "describing and interpreting the changes which occurred in the aboriginal cultures during the historic period."

Tacachale – a Timucuan word that means "to light a new fire" – refers to an Indian ritual that the Timucuan used to minimize impending change and maintain their way of life. In these essays it symbolizes the efforts of the aborigines of Florida and south-

eastern Georgia to deal with the destruction of their cultures during the period of European colonization.

The Florida and the Caribbean Open Books Series gathers the rich data available in these architectural, archaeological, cultural, and historical works, as well as the travelogues and naturalists' sketches of the area prior to the 20th century, making it accessible for scholars and the general public alike.

The Series is made possible through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, under the Humanities Open Books program.





Speakers for 2024/2025

All are at 6:00 PM live at the Selby Library
1331 First St., Sarasota

Time Sifters Archaeology Society is pleased to announce our 2024 - 2025 Fall schedule of presentations. All lectures will start at 6:00 PM and are free. Each presentation will be about one hour with time for questions and answers. Please come and join us.

January 15, 2025
Year in Review: What's been Discovered & What's being Talked About
Dr. David Miano

February 19
3D imaging of Pompeii
Eric Prendergast, RPA

March 19
"The Steamship St. Lucie: Lost in October 18, 1906"
Joshua Marano, M.A., RPA

April 16
Roman Villas
Dr. Dentse Cali

May 21
"Fantastic Archaeology: What Inquiring Minds Should Know"
Dr. Rob Tykot



Photos: José Miguel Pérez-Gómez, archaeology.wiki, floridamemory, sketchfab, Sardiniareveled, Pinterest

Time Sifters Archaeology Society - A Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society - P. O. Box 5283, Sarasota, FL 34277
www.timesifters.org President: Darwin "Smitty" Smith - HMSBeagle22@gmail.com

A ROYAL EVENING

WITH

DR. ZAHİ HAWASS

USA & CANADA LECTURE TOUR
MAY - AUGUST 2025



June 6 in Tampa and
June 7 in Orlando. You must preregister
online.

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