



THE DATUM POINT

May 2025

Newsletter of the
NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER (NVC) OF THE
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org



FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

PATRICK O'NEILL

Spring is here! This month's talk is on Zoom! Darius has been doing a great job getting presenters! Let him know if you have someone you would like to see give the chapter a presentation!

I am teaching my class at NOVA again on Field Methods of Recording Archaeological Sites. Lectures are on Zoom on Thursday evenings, field trips on Saturdays from Memorial Day weekend to July 4th weekend.

We have finished the field work at the Baldwin Ridge Cemetery. I need to have an artifact wash day, if you are interested, let me know.

I am starting another project in Fauquier County, mapping the Saint's Hill mansion and area, and hopefully a 1745 log house foundation and cemetery on the adjacent property. Let me know if you are interested. This project will require quite a bit of brush clearing.

This month's meeting at 7:30 PM, Wednesday, May 14th, via Zoom. To join follow this [Zoom link](#).

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88274460915>

Speaker: Audrey P. Davis, *Director of the African American History Division for the City of Alexandria*

Topic: Alexandria's African American History



Audrey P. Davis

Audrey P. Davis is the Director of the African American History Division of the Office of Historic Alexandria. Historic sites under her purview include the Alexandria Black History Museum, Freedom House

Museum, Watson Reading Room, and Alexandria African American Heritage Park.

Ms. Davis is a past President of the Virginia Association of Museums Council (VAM) and the Alexandria Historical Society. She is one of the founders and the current President of Virginia Africana Associates Inc. In 2016, The Washington Business Journal listed Ms. Davis on their top 100 list of Washington Power players. In 2021, Ms. Davis was appointed to the Board of Directors for the American Civil War Museum. She is also one of the cochairs for the Alexandria Community Remembrance Program (ACRP) which educates the city about its history of racial terror hate crimes and promotes social justice through its work with the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI).

In 2009, Ms. Davis was honored with the Salute to Women Awards Vola Lawson Award by the Alexandria Commission on Women as that year's City of Alexandria employee who had made the greatest impact to improve the role of women and girls in the City. In 2012 and 2023, she was an essential part of the Office of Historic Alexandria team that achieved accreditation of all departmental facilities, by the American Alliance of Museums. That designation confirms the achievement of the highest standards and best practices recognized in the museum field.

Davis was one of five authors of the History Press book, African Americans of Alexandria, Virginia: Beacons of Light in the

20th Century, which chronicles the lives of 63 African American men and women whose actions made a difference in the historic fabric of Alexandria, Virginia. The book was the fourth biggest seller for History Press in 2013. In February 2024, Davis was editor for Alexandria at War 1861-1865. African American Emancipation in an Occupied City.

A former board member of Preservation Virginia, Davis now serves as an Advisor and a Community Outreach Committee member for their African American Fellowship program.

Ms. Davis is a former gubernatorial appointee to the Board of Directors for Virginia Humanities (2004-2010) and is currently a member of their Commonwealth Humanities Circle. In 2018, Ms. Davis was appointed by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe to the Task Force for the Identification of the History of Formerly Enslaved African Americans in Virginia. In 2016, Ms. Davis was also appointed by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, to the State Historical Records Advisory Board. She was reappointed to this board in 2018 and 2021 by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam. It is her sixth gubernatorial appointment.

Ms. Davis is featured on the WETA Documentaries, Discovering Alexandria parts I and II, and Martyrs, Mayhem, and Martial Law: Life in Civil War Alexandria. She was an on-set historical consultant for the PBS drama Mercy Street which premiered

nationally in January 2016 and ran for two seasons.

In January 2022, Ms. Davis was a recipient of the City of Alexandria’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Spirit Award for her work on the preservation of Freedom House (now a museum on Alexandria’s role in the domestic slave trade), City equity initiatives and for promoting and preserving Africa American history in Alexandria, Virginia.

ASV Kittiewan Clean Up and Cookout!!

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED!

Hamburgers and Hotdogs
Sides
Water

(Please RSVP to kwtreas@gmail.com so we have head count for food)

WHEN: May 31st
WHERE: 12106 Weyanoke Rd
Charles City, VA 23030
TIME: 9:00 AM

WHAT TO EXPECT:


- Yard clean up
- Minor repairs
- Trash pick up

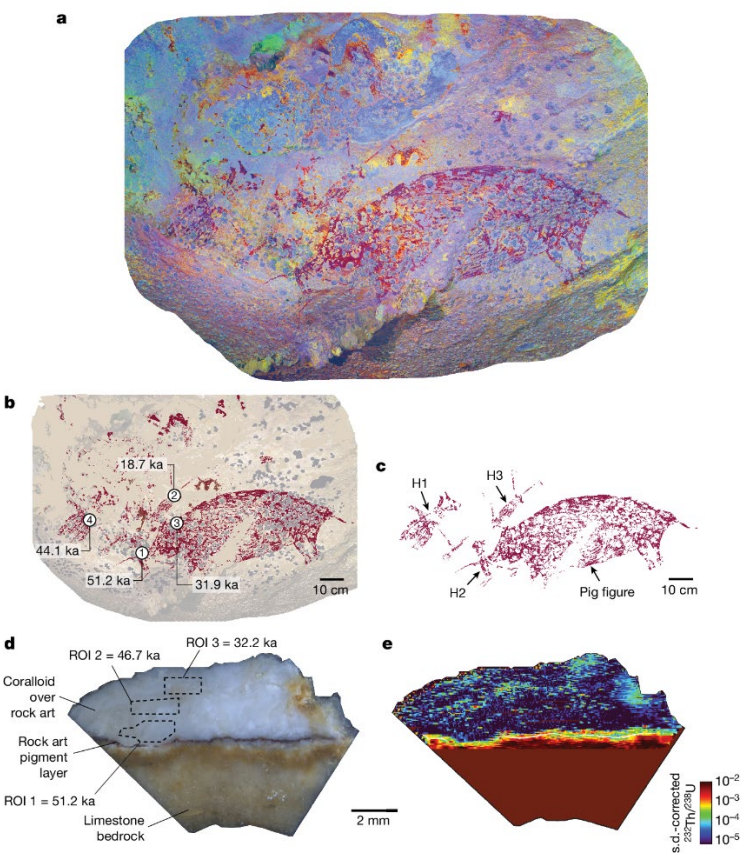
WHAT TO BRING (IF YOU HAVE):

- Gloves
- Shoes for yard work
- Water bottle
- Bug Spray

Questions? Please reach out to:

Carl at flyfischn@gmail.com
or
Beth at kwtreas@gmail.com





Dated rock art panel at Leang Karampuang, Joannes-Boyau, R. (2024).

48,000 Year Old Cave Artwork – Redated!

Dating of Indonesian cave art on the island of Sulawesi has recently been revisited by a team of researchers using thorium-uranium dating. Using an advanced technique known as laser ablation U-series, also known as LA-ICP-MS (Laser Ablation Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry), researchers were able to date better the material used to paint cave walls (Oktaviana, 2024). With the success of this analysis, researchers may have more accurate ways of absolute dating over previous methods, such as MultiCollector-Inductively Coupled

Plasma Mass Spectrometer (MC-ICPMS), which often require chemical purification, larger samples, and typically provide both lower precision and accuracy.

Using the increased temporal resolution of LA-ICP-MS, Oktaviana et al. have reevaluated the previously accepted dating for the artwork from 43.9 ka to 48 ka, over 4000 years older than previously believed. Importantly, using LA-ICP-MS presents a new and less destructive method for testing low-yield samples, especially those at the edge of or beyond the bounds of ^{14}C dating (Oktaviana, 2024).

The reader is encouraged to follow this [link to Nature](#) where they may learn much more about this exciting discovery and the techniques used to achieve it. Additional imagery is also available.

Joannes-Boyau, R. (2024). DATA: Narrative cave art in Indonesia by 51,200 years ago [Data set]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10960856>
Covered under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International.

Oktaviana, A.A., Joannes-Boyau, R., Hakim, B. et al. Narrative cave art in Indonesia by 51,200 years ago. *Nature* **631**, 814–818 (2024).
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-07541-7>



Gray wolf, by Gary Kramer, Public Domain

Who's a Good Dog?

New evidence for the first human-canine interactions in the Americas

New research out of Alaska from a team led by Dr. François Lanoë of the School of Anthropology, University of Arizona, has pushed the date for the first known interactions between humans and canines in the Americas back by nearly 2000 years (Radley, 2025).

Working at a site 70 miles southeast of Fairbanks, Swan Point, the team uncovered a canine tibia, which radiocarbon dated to 12 ka. The previous summer (2023), the same

team discovered a canine jaw bone dating to 8.1 ka at Hollembaek Hill (Radley, 2025).

The bones point to wolf populations, not modern dogs, so why do they suspect the wolves were interacting with the humans? Salmon proteins. Archaeologist Ben Potter of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, a study co-author, explained: “This is the smoking gun because they’re not really going after salmon in the wild,” (Radley, 2025) referring to the wild wolf populations not typically eating salmon, suggesting they were being fed by humans.

The research team has been working with the Healy Lake Village Council, representing the Mendas Cha’ag People, ensuring their research is acceptable and respectful of the area’s indigenous people (Radley, 2025).

For more information, please follow this link to [Archaeology News Online Magazine](https://archaeologymag.com/2024/12/human-dog-bonds-began-12000-years-ago/).

Radley, D. (2025, May 11). *Evidence reveals human-dog bonds in the Americas began 12,000 years ago*. Archaeology News Online Magazine. <https://archaeologymag.com/2024/12/human-dog-bonds-began-12000-years-ago/>



Illustration of the burial based on archaeological, anthropological, and archaeogenetic data (drawing by Luca Kis)

Female Medieval Carpathian

Archer: *First known burial of a likely female subject with a weapon from the 10th century Carpathian Basin*

Archaeologists in Hungary have uncovered what is believed to be the first sex-approximated female with a weapon from the tenth century CE Carpathian Basin. Within the 10th-century CE cemetery of Sárrétudvari, grave number 63 contained the inhumed remains of an individual believed to have been a middle-aged or older female person of the Magyars (Hungarian) ethnic group (Tihanyi, et al, 20024).

The burials date to the Hungarian Conquest Period, a time of significant cultural

admixing where Magyars arrived from the Eurasian steppe by way of the lower Danube. They mixed with the local Slavs and Avars, eventually forming the Christian Hungarian Kingdom during the 10th century CE (Tihanyi, et al, 20024).

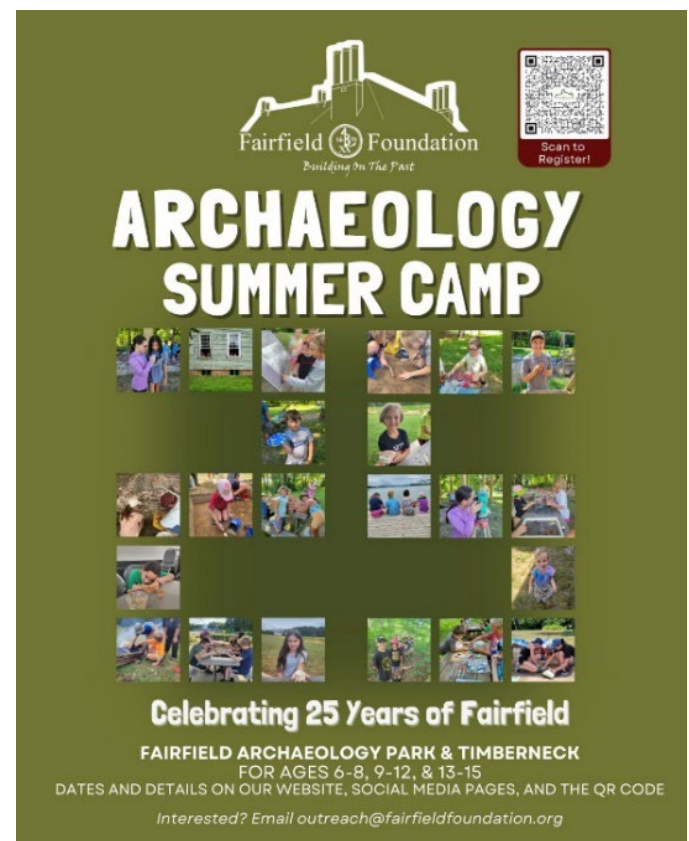
The individual was buried in a south-north orientation, lateral (right side) slightly flexed, both arms and legs slightly flexed. What sets individual 63 apart from other inhumations at the site is the presence of weapons among her grave goods. The individual had a silver penannular hair ring, three “bell” buttons, a string of beads, including faience, semi-precious stones, and segmented glass beads (Tihanyi, et al, 20024). But the individual also had the remnant of a bow, quiver, an armor-piercing projectile point (likely an arrowhead), and possibly the remains of other such projectile points. Curiously, the individual appears to have been buried holding the bow (Tihanyi, et al, 20024).

Burials of female or likely female individuals with indications of martial pursuits have been well attested in the region several centuries before, such as Sarmatians of the 1st-5th centuries CE, but these diminish in frequency as time progresses, so finding such a burial within a medieval context (Tihanyi, et al, 20024).

For more information, the reader is encouraged to read the full research paper at [PLOS One](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0313963).

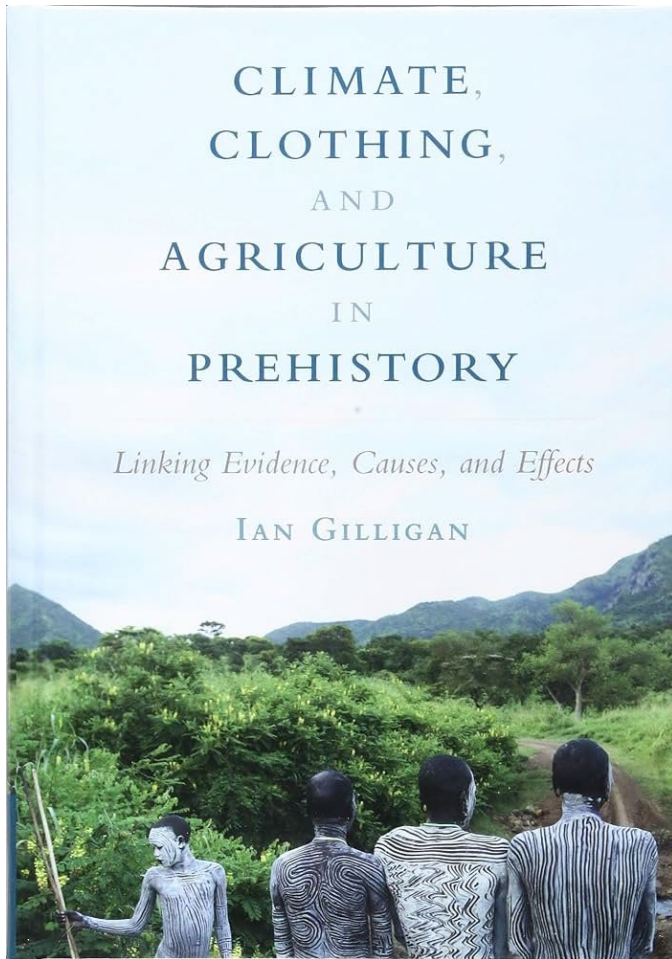
It should be noted that the authors’ use of sex determination is a bit outmoded. Sex approximation is probably a better term to use.

Tihanyi B, Maár K, Kis L, Gînguță A, Varga GIB, Kovács B, et al. (2024) ‘But no living man am I’: Bioarchaeological evaluation of the first-known female burial with weapon from the 10th-century-CE Carpathian Basin. PLoS ONE 19(11): e0313963. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0313963>



Monthly Book Review

By Ishtar Watson



Climate, Clothing, and Agriculture in Prehistory: Linking Evidence, Causes, and Effects (1st Ed.)

*2018, Cambridge University Press, 1st Edition.
By Dr. Ian Gilligan*

In his 2018 book, *Climate Clothing and Agriculture*, Dr. Gilligan presents a fascinating look into why our ancestors lost their body hair and began to wear clothing. Having an interest in experimental archaeology, especially ancient garments and adornments, I purchased a copy of this book

the moment it came out. The material covered is well explained with enough background and explanation to allow the lay reader to understand the topics while providing enough scientific data and analysis to interest those in relevant fields.

Quickly reading the book and then several books and papers referenced within the bibliography improved my knowledge of the topic greatly. Luckily for me, Dr. Gilligan turned out to be an approachable and insightful person, willing to answer several questions I had concerning his book.

Chapter Eight, entitled *The Value of Making Clothes Visible*, discusses the differences between simple and complex clothing, and how this relates to the kinds of tools used – ergo those we may potentially find when studying ancient peoples. The book discusses each topic using exposition and solid examples to help the reader grasp each topic, while extensive bibliography and notes sections provide further insight and resources (Gilligan, 2018).

Overall, I suggest reading the book if you are interested in why we wear clothing, why our ancestors lost most of their body hair, and how we transitioned our artwork from personal decoration to decorated clothing, structures, and more.

Gilligan, I. (2018). *Climate, clothing, and agriculture in prehistory: Linking evidence, causes, and effects*. Cambridge University Press.

Call for Content

- ❖ Working on a project?
- ❖ Found a fascinating article?
- ❖ Visited someplace interesting?
- ❖ Reviewed a book you have read?
- ❖ Have an artifact you want to discuss?

The Datum Point newsletter could use your content. Please contact Ishtar Watson with your ideas and content suggestions and submission. The deadline is the first of each month. Each submission will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.



The 2025 Conference on Public Archaeology will be held in Washington, D.C., from August 8 to 9, 2025. Archaeology in the Community is hosting this event for public-minded archaeologists and cultural heritage professionals. Don't miss out on a chance to join workshops, panels, and special events tackling key topics like:

- Public archaeology & Section 106
- Community science & site stewardship
- Climate impacts on heritage
- Digital outreach & education
- Engaging with schools & educators

This unique conference will skip traditional paper presentations in favor of discussions, hands-on activities, and networking opportunities. Let's shape the future of archaeology together!

<https://zurl.co/rz4yg>

2025 NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

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NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

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Dues:

Individual (\$15) _____

Family (\$17) _____

Student (\$5) _____

Please make check payable to NVC/ASV.

Return to:

Barbara Leven, Treasurer, NVC/ASV

9518 Liberty Tree Lane

Vienna VA 22182

The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the 2nd Wed. of each month. *Meetings may take place in-person and/or on Zoom. Details with start time and on-line/in-person information will be provided in the Datum Point newsletter prior to each meeting.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!