Dear IMS friends and associates,

Another year has passed here at IMS and, as the cold weather sets in, we can reflect on all of the accomplishments of our faculty and graduate student associates. Support of graduate student research has always been an important priority for IMS. As is highlighted by the four graduate-student grant awardees and the six graduate student updates, IMS student associates comprise a vibrant community of young Mesoamerican scholars.

As you will also read in the pages that follow, there is a great deal of research output from all IMS members with conference papers presented as well as books and articles published. In particular, I’d like to congratulate Bob Carmack for the publication of a new version of the Popol Vuj. As Bob notes, this project has taken a decade to see publication and was truly a labor of love. Twelve years ago, when I joined the UAlbany faculty, Bob had already retired and his continued curiosity, intellectual engagement and academic output is truly an inspiration to me.

IMS associates have recently received a number of research grants. As coincidence would have it, the National Geographic Society funded four grants to IMS archaeologists in 2018: Marilyn and Verónica for work in Mexico as well as separate grants to Yahaira and I for work in Costa Rica. Yahaira also had a NSF dissertation award for her doctoral project (early stages of which were supported by DeCormier awards) and I received a new, senior NSF award for three years of work in Belize.

Public outreach and education is a core mission of IMS and this year faculty associates have been active in this regard. The fifth Day Triqui Culture was spearheaded by Lauren and Walt who engage the Capital district Triqui community. Jennifer co-published an Op Ed and AAA blog countering US government propaganda regarding the plight of Central American refugees making their way through Mexico. Walt joined firefighters in Guatemala to respond to recovery efforts to a volcanic eruption, publishing a news piece on grassroots recovery efforts, followed by numerous interviews that spread the word. Louise launched an open-access website making colonial NahuaIt plays widely available. Further, Verónica is finishing a documentary film on traditional Oaxacan pottery making that IMS will screen in the spring semester. Kudos to all of you!

Finally, on a personal note, this will be my last “Letter from the Director” as, after four years, I will be stepping down as IMS Director in May. It has been a pleasure to serve during the past three and half years and I am excited that Verónica Pérez Rodríguez will be taking over the directorship. I am, of course, not going anywhere and look forward to interacting with everyone in the IMS community for many years to come.

Wishing you all a warm and relaxing holiday season,
In Spring 2018, IMS hosted two speakers. In February, Dr. John Schwaller (IMS Board Member) presented his current research entitled, *Panquetzaliztli* (Raising Banners): Mexico History Seen through the Rituals of one Month of the Xiuhpohual-iztli. In May, Dr. Heather Hurst from Skidmore College presented her research entitled, *Caves, Rocks, and Mountains: New Views of the Oxtotitlan Cave Paintings, Guerrero, Mexico*. Both talks finished with a reception where graduate students interacted with the guest lecturers. Additionally, Department of Anthropology hosted one speaker. In March, Dr. Ben Leeming (IMS Alumnus) From River School presented his current research entitled: *Mictlantlahtolli* (Hell Words): The language of loss and the trauma of colonialism. After Dr. Leeming’s talk, took place a reception and the first IMS Happy hour off campus.

In Fall 2017, IMS hosted one event. In November, Dr. Santiago Juarez from Colgate University his most current research entitled, *Archaeology at the Frontiers: the Preclassic Site of Noh K’uh*. During his reception talked with graduate students.

In April 2018, IMS co-sponsored the fifth annual Day of Triqui Culture with our friends from Triquis sin Fronteras (photo 1), drawing members of the UAlbany community, local politicians, and others from the greater Capital region. The event was held on the UAlbany campus in the Campus Center Ballroom. Three local Albany Oaxacan restaurants: Oaxaqueña Triqui, Viva Cinco de Mayo, and Cocina Vasquez, racially catered the event and many other Triqui community members contributed food too. In Triqui culture, sharing food is an important part of building community relations and celebrating the culture itself. As always, the food was delicious!

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In addition to presentations about the Triqui community and its relationship to UAlbany students and faculty, members of the Triqui community performed dances, recited original poetry, and demonstrated backstrap weaving techniques (photo 2). One of the highlights was Eleutario Martinez’s photo exhibition of everyday Triqui life in Mexico. Although an engineering student at Skidmore College, he conducted visual anthropology research with Prof. Bernardo Rios (Skidmore College) in Mexico. The next Triqui community celebration is currently being planned for Spring 2019. For the first time, IMS faculty, students, and Triqui members participated in the Albany Latin Fest in Washington Park (photo 3) and in a Day of the Dead event (photo 4) also at Washington Park.
Christopher DeCormier Memorial Scholarship

2018 Award Recipients

**Abelardo de la Cruz**

On May 4, 2018, Abelardo de la Cruz received an official notification from Dr. Robert Rosenswig that he had been awarded a Christopher DeCormier Memorial Scholarship in Mesoamerican Studies. Through the funding of this award, Abelardo travelled to Chicontepec, Veracruz, Mexico, between August 3 and 26. While there, he conducted ethnographic fieldwork in seven different Nahua indigenous communities at the Huasteca Veracruzana, (Veracruz Northern), with the approval from the Institutional Review Board.

Abelardo de la Cruz examined the current situation of the Christian religion in contemporary Nahua indigenous communities. He interviewed, from town to town, several Nahua catechists that have worked in favor of Catholic evangelization in their communities. He also interviewed various prayer specialists who believe in the Catholic doctrine, but also, they believe practically in the local religion known as “el costumbre” which they carry out in several indigenous ceremonies. All interviews and records were done in the Nahual language. With the new data that he compiled, more than twenty-five voice records, he returned to University at Albany, started to write his doctoral pre-proposal research, and finally presented his results to his doctoral committee on September 28.

**Jeff Bryant**

During the summer and fall Jeff sampled otoliths for isotopic analysis at the Union College Isotope laboratory as part of his DeCormier Award supported research. The process had a steep learning curve as he needed to be trained on the micromill and test and adapt the sampling strategy. The laboratory uses a system that requires a much smaller sample than is usually taken for isotope analysis, and this involves using a pair of scalpels under a microscope to pick up the 45 to 90 micrograms of powder and put in into a vial. This turned out to be a skill that takes weeks to reach minimal proficiency. Normally they drill a hole for samples on shell, however, with the size of the microdrill (300 microns) and the architecture of the otoliths, there were concerns about if the sampling strategy would be accurate. Materials of different age can be mixed with those methods. Otoliths are one of the harder things to sample accurately, and it took a good deal of reevaluation of my approach.

The strategy taken was to mill strips from the edge inward, taking only about 30 microns at a time, which is the width of a medium pollen grain. Jeff had to calculate a path that would be long enough to collect the necessary volume. Each individual path was interpolated to follow the architecture and reduce mixing of material that wasn’t contemporaneous. He tested the process using some of the baseline otoliths prior to sampling the archaeological otoliths. Each otolith would take about a day to sample once the workflow was established. He has completed sampling the selected archaeological otoliths and four of the baseline otoliths, and am awaiting the results, which the laboratory said should be run in Dec.

Jeff was originally hoping to get back to Mexico to collect winter reference samples during November, however the length of the laboratory process, health problems, and financial difficulties have necessitated delay. Luckily, the methods we are using for the isotopes may not require isotopic sampling of winter otoliths if the results from the current reference collection presents clear winter and summer signals while crossing transects of seasonal lines. He still plans to collect winter specimens either way for their reference slide value for seasonality interpretations if this is the case. It may also be useful to have initial isotopic results so that he could develop a more effective strategy for collection. Which samples have the greatest research potential has changed significantly during my familiarization with laboratories capabilities and limitations.
Jamilläh spent two weeks at the University of Florida, attending CoLang.

Jamilläh Rodriguez
During her first semester at Albany, Jamilläh Rodriguez presented her research titled “Syllabic Size Restrictions in Brazilian Portuguese” at the annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society. After attending the conference, she began to focus on work with the local community of Copala Triqui speakers, specifically with an interest in the interaction between the complex tone system and the syntactic structure of the language.

Jamilläh recently received the First Encounter Scholarship and spent two weeks at the University of Florida during the summer, attending the Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) institute studying techniques to improve her skills in language documentation and working with the communities of speakers of indigenous languages, especially within communities in Mexico. She spent the rest of the summer developing a Triqui dictionary app with a graduate student from Florida University and meeting with native Triqui speakers to conduct further research on the tonosyntax of the language. She hopes to attend the ICLDC conference in Hawaii to present about the progress of her summer work with members of the Copala Triqui Working Group.

She is currently working on a paper titled “Demographic Effects on Word Order in Ch’ol”, where she looks at the influence of bilingualism and other demographic variables in syntactic structures of various focus conditions in Ch’ol, a Mayan language spoken in Chiapas. She will present this paper at the Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas (SSILA) in NYC in January.

Holly Neville
With the help of the First Encounter Scholarship, this summer Holly was able to travel to Mesoamerica for the first time. Despite researching pre-contact Maya culture and hieroglyphic language for several years, she had not had the chance to do any actual fieldwork in the Maya region. This award afforded her the opportunity to stay in Mérida, the capital of the Yucatán state of México, for four weeks from mid-June to mid-July. Her goal for the trip was to immerse herself in local culture, improve her fluency in Spanish, and experience Maya history firsthand.

Using Mérida as a home base to take day trips to museums and archaeological sites focused on the Maya, Holly also familiarized herself with contemporary Mexican culture in the Yucatán. She rented a room located about a 30-minute walk from downtown Mérida, close to the Paseo de Montejo, where the Museo Regional de Antropología y Historia is located. The house is owned by three brothers, who became her unofficial guides to the area. The youngest brother accompanied her to a few archaeological sites, and took her to a couple of his favorite local cenotes, which were a perfect answer to the oppressive heat and humidity of summer in the Yucatán.

On Monday evenings, Holly would walk to the Mérida English Library to participate in “Conversaciones con Amigos” where she could practice her Spanish with locals, as well as help them with their English. Most people who run the tiendas and other businesses in her neighborhood spoke little to no English, but she was grateful that it forced her to speak Spanish in a more natural and fluid manner that she hadn’t
John Justeson's research focuses on Mesoamerican hieroglyphic writing, Mesoamerican historical linguistics, and Mesoamerican calendrics and astronomy. In the 1990s, Justeson and Terrence Kaufman produced a decipherment of epi-Olmec hieroglyphic writing, built linguistically on the reconstructed histories of Mije-Sokean grammatical patterns and vocabulary, and semantically on calendrical data and their astronomical correlates. The decipherment was largely based in on the two longest epi-Olmec texts, which were consistent with an ancestor of proto-Sokean. This year, they published a paper applying their previous results to a third long text, on a Teotihuacan-style mask, that came to the attention of scholars in 2002. This paper shows that its grammar and vocabulary conform to what was already known from other epi-Olmec texts, and that it is possible to understand much of the new text using their previously published results together with previously reconstructed Sokean vocabulary. The paper also demonstrates consistencies in ritual practices across these three long epi-Olmec texts. The texts on the La Mojarra stela and the Tuxtla Statuette are long enough that high-frequency grammatical patterns are detectable. The figure, presenting most of the verbs in the La Mojarra text, illustrates some of these. Besides being by far the longest known epi-Olmec text, it was generally expected to be a narrative text as it is accompanied by a richly dressed human figure. In narratives, most verbs have 3rd-person subjects. In Mije-Sokean languages, by far the most frequent grammatical prefixes are the 3rd-person subject markers, which begin the verb. There are two such
markers: one is nothing at all, a “zero” prefix, which occurs on intransitive verbs in independent (main) clauses; the other, pronounced \( \ddot{a} \), begins transitive verbs in all clauses and intransitive verbs in dependent (subordinate) clauses, and it also functions at the beginning of noun phrases as the 3rd-person possessive marker. The sign colored blue in the figure is uniformly understood to be by far the most frequent word-initial sign in the La Mojarra text. A similar pattern distinguishing transitive and intransitive verbs is found in Mayan languages, except for the pattern of person marking in dependent versus independent clauses. The red sign in the figure spells the rarer 1st person exclusive (= ‘I, but not you’) ergative and possessive marker (pronounced na) on transitive and dependent verbs, and the two-sign sequence in yellow spells the 1st person inclusive prefix (‘you and I’; pronounced t'en).

Syllabic spellings of grammatical suffixes are also recognizable. The last sign in the spellings of verbs in the completive aspect, both transitive and intransitive, is the most frequent sign in the La Mojarra text, and in almost all cases is universally recognized as the final sign in the word it spells. Most verbs that have ergative prefixes end with this sign, as do the clearly intransitive verbs – those lacking any prefix. This pattern is consistent with Mije-Sokean languages — but not with Mayan languages, in which transitive and intransitive verbs take entirely different aspect suffixes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent</th>
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<th>Incompletes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1st person exclusive</td>
<td>1st person inclusive</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>t'en</td>
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(Some verbs end with a different sign, for the syllable ji; this is the form of the completive suffix on verbs in dependent clauses. There are 22 different spellings for the incomplete suffix in dependent suffixes, because the syllabic spelling corresponds to the final consonant of the verb stem + the vowel i or e.)

Dr. Justeson continues working with epi-Olmec texts such as La Mojarra stela and the Tuxtla Stuette and in the Mije-Sokean languages.

Dr. Clemens was an invited speaker at Sogang University in Korea.

This year Dr. Lauren Clemens published an article on the derivation of verb-initial word order in Mayan languages in the journal Language and has an overview article on the structure of Mayan languages that is to appear in the Routledge Handbook of North American Languages.

In 2018, she presented work on the prosody and clause structure of Ch’ol as a plenary speaker at the annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society, the keynote speaker at the Cornell Undergraduate Linguistics Colloquium and as an invited speaker at a conference held at Sogang University in Korea.

She continues her work with the Copala Triqui community of the Capital District by helping to organize events such as the Day of Triqui Culture and by serving as the advisor to the student group Triquis Sin Fronteras, University at Albany.
For most of the past year, Walter Little conducted research on Mesoamerican textile production, consumption, and politics. Making trips into Kaqchikel Maya and K’iche’ Maya regions of Guatemala, he interviewed producers (photo 1), vendors (photo 2), and consumers of these textiles. In what initially began as a project about the fabrication of tourism-related handicrafts, their sales in Southern Mexico, and debates about collective community intellectual property rights, his research expanded to considered Guatemalan Maya textile production and consumption practices. He learned of computerized weaving techniques and emerging fashion trends that indicate shifting ideas about textiles as markers of identity, as well as what is considered handmade. The research reveals textile practices—wearing, selling, and wearing—continue to be vibrant and rich ways for Guatemalan Mayas to express their culture and earn viable livelihoods.

In the fall, Dr. Little presented the results of this research in several different forums: TEXTIM: 3ra. Encuentro de Textiles Mesoamericanos in Oaxaca, Mexico on October 20 in Oaxaca de Juarez (“La computarización de textiles guatemaltecos y los debates de lo que es hecho a mano”), the American Anthropological Association 117th Annual Meeting in San Jose, CA, on November 17 (Maya Artisans and Entrepreneurs’ Responses to Capitalism as Socio-Economic Responsibility), and at Tulane University on November 30 (Maya Clothing Consumption and the Problem of Handmade). So far, he has published one book chapter related to this topic, “‘Whatever We Weave Is Authentic’: Co-Producing Authenticity in Guatemalan Textile Markets” in Taking Tourism Seriously: Edward Bruner and the Anthropology of Tourism, edited by Kathleen Adams, Quetzil Castañeda and Naomi Leite (Lexington Books, In press). He is currently writing a monograph based on this research.

In between trips for textile research in Guatemala and Mexico, Dr. Little was in Guatemala when the Volcán de Fuego erupted in June. He joined volunteer firefighters (Photo 3), in the relief efforts and teamed up with Kerstin Sabine to write an article about local, grassroots organizations’ participation in the aftermath of the eruption (After volcano eruption, Guatemalans lead their own disaster recovery. The Conversation, (June 21)). He was also interviewed by Atlas Obscura, “How a Hurricane Prompted Guatemala to Prioritize Land Preservation” (October 3) and Sharaoble, “Disaster Collectivism: How communities rise together to respond to crises” (October 1) about his participation and, in general, how anthropologists can help. He also gave a presentation, “The Economics of Diversity: Collective Responses to Disaster in Guatemala” to Albany, NY Capital District Humanist Society chapter on September 9.
Dr. Burkhart is writing a new book titled: “Staging the Passion in Eighteenth-Century Nahuatl Mexico.”

My research this past year has centered on my collaborative project, with Daniel Mosquera of Union College, on eighteenth-century Passion plays from Central Mexico. We have committed ourselves to putting online, in an open-access website, a substantial archive of colonial plays and supporting materials. I previously published two Nahuatl plays (with Barry Sell) but four others (possibly a fifth, I have recently heard from a Mexican colleague) have never been published. Of four plays in Spanish, one has been published, but only in a Spanish-language edition. Performance practices in Nahuatl met with censure and suppression in the mid-eighteenth century, as Church authorities added an Enlightenment-era distaste for emotive religious spectacle to their longstanding distrust of Indigenous Christianities. The archbishop of Mexico ordered all scripts confiscated in 1757. At least three plays in my set of six were confiscated at this time. Substituting Spanish for Nahuatl proved an ineffective solution, as Spanish-language performances fell under the scrutiny of the Inquisition, prompting a 1768-70 investigation, its documents preserved in Mexico’s Archivo General de la Nación (AGN). The Spanish-language plays in our Passion archive were confiscated as part of this case. Eventually—over the next three years—all of these plays, and related documents on the investigation and suppression of this performance tradition, will be added to our website.

With a small faculty research grant from UAlbany, I was able to get the project website started, having recruited Dr. Rebecca Dufendach to be our website designer and developer. A student of Kevin Terraciano’s at UCLA, Rebecca is currently working at the Getty Research Institute on an online program with the Florentine Codex, and so has the requisite web skills. We are launching the website in December, at passionplaysofeighteenthcenturymexico.omeka.net (see Figure 1). The initial website has my paleographic and standardized transcriptions and English translation of a never-published Passion play from the Berendt-Brinton Collection at the University of Pennsylvania. It also links to the images of the original manuscript at the Penn library (see Figure 2). Representing the Spanish corpus are Daniel’s transcription and translation of a play from Ozumba. This is the first of the Spanish plays ever to be translated into English. We have just received permission from the AGN to add images of their texts to the website. During the summer of 2018, IMS Associate and UAlbany Ph.D. Nadia Marín-Guadarrama visited the AGN and was able to photograph a Passion play from Amacuitlapilco, Morelos, that had been unavailable during my previous visit (see Figure 3). The weekly Nahuatl workshop has been examining parts of this play with Nadia, who will be helping with the transcriptions and translations and future archival work.

I wanted to get a preliminary website online so it could be available to people reviewing the grant proposal. I have just submitted a proposal to the Scholarly Editions and Translations program at the National Endowment for the Humanities. If we receive the grant, it will provide some funding to me, Daniel, Rebecca, and Nadia, and also to IMS Graduate Assistant Abelardo de la Cruz de la Cruz, who will write some short essays in Nahuatl for the website, to make it more accessible and useful to speakers of the...
Robert Carmack

I have now been retired for more than 10 years, but continue participating in research, publications, and IMS events. My major accomplishment this year has been the finalization of our new version of the Popol Wuj, prepared by the National University in the capital of Guatemala. It required constant work over the past 10 years, by myself, Teresa Carranza, and James Mondloch. It has 415 pages, which include information on the University of Mesoamerica in the capital of Guatemala. Of course, the Department of Anthropology at SUNY Albany played a major role in the production of this book on the important Quiché-Mayan native American Peoples. We, the authors of the book, are profoundly grateful for the continual support by the Dept. of Anthropology of UAlbany. There are many versions of the Popol Wuj, but this latest version will stand out as the most complete and original of all the other versions.

language. We also propose to add some audio recordings, in Nahuatl, English, and Spanish, to the website. Daniel has shot extensive film footage of contemporary Mexican Passion performances that he is editing for publication on YouTube and the site.

I will also be writing a book on the Nahuatl plays, titled Staging the Passion in Eighteenth-Century Nahuat Mexico. The book will focus on the textual and performative options available to Nahuas when they put together their local script and staged their version of this core Christian narrative, selecting music, props, stage, sets, and costume elements as well as scripting speeches. Chapters will trace the major events in Christ’s story, and important supporting elements such as Judas’s story and the story of Mary and her female companions.

Figure 2. Nahuatl Passion play. Christ before Herod and Pilate. Undated (18th century). Berendt-Brinton Linguistic Collection, University of Pennsylvania.


Figure 4. Popol Wuj. Niuhu traducción comentado. Jems Mondloch, Robert Carmack.
In the last year, Schwaller has focused his research on three general topics: rituals and ceremonies in the Mexica [Aztec] solar calendar, *xiuhpohualli*; the introduction and popularity of the Christian devotion of the Stations of the Cross in seventeenth century Mexico; and the life and times of don Luis de Velasco, Viceroy of Mexico and of Peru, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Along these lines he has presented papers at the Rocky Mountain Conference of Latin American History (Reno, NV), the International Congress of Americanists (Salamanca, Spain) and the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Ethnohistory (Oaxaca, Mexico).

During the summer Schwaller was the Maury A. Bromsen Memorial Fellow, at the John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, RI. As part of his duties he conducted research on his Stations of the Cross project. In particular this book length manuscript looks at the development of the devotion of the Stations.

The devotion is actually rather new, having its origins in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was adopted in Mexico in the late sixteenth century where it had huge popular support. As part of this popularity, handbooks were written and printed to assist the faithful in the prayers and meditations associated with each station. By the seventeenth century, these had been translated into Nahuatl. Schwaller is focusing particularly on a Nahuatl version authored by Fr. Agustín de Vetancurt. Schwaller’s study then looks at the life of Vetancurt and analyzes the Nahuatl version he published. The book length manuscript will be delivered to the press in December, 2018.

Schwaller’s book on the Mexica / Aztec rituals (*The Fifteenth Month: Aztec History in the Rituals of Panquetzaliztli*) will be out in April, 2019, from the University of Oklahoma Press. As well, he is in discussions with the press about writing a history of the Mexica (Aztecs). Because of his earlier work on the Spanish invasion of Mexico (*The First Letter From New Spain*) Schwaller is engaged with a group of scholars planning a commemoration of the quincentennial (500th anniversary) of the conflict. High among the proposals is a new look at the hostilities and, most importantly, recognition that the conflict should be known by a more appropriate name such as “The Spanish – Mexica War” rather than the now misleading “Conquest of Mexico.” The planning includes the development of panels at major and regional conferences that will explore under-studied elements of the period.

Schwaller continues as the Editor of the Latin American section of the journal *Ethnohistory*. He sits on the Editorial Board of the Latin American History journal, *The Americas*, and also is on the Editorial Board of *Estudios de Cultura Nahuatl*. Annually, he and Louise Burkhart (Anthropology) organize the Northeastern Group of Nahuatl Scholars conference, which was held in 2018 at Yale University. The plan is to host the 2019 meeting on the UAlbany campus.
Jennifer Burrell

Dr. Burrell spent the fall working on a new book manuscript about migration and security, and various articles based on her research on security, paramilitarization and municipal governance. In response to the ongoing targeting of Central America and Central American migrants, Dr. Burrell was part of a group of anthropologists that published an Op Ed piece on in Counterpunch: “Where We Stand on the Caravan: 5 Things you Should Know” (November 2, 2018) and a collective statement on the AAA blog, “Five Things You Should Know About the Migrant Caravan (November 5, 2018). Drs. Burrell and Ellen Moodie (UIUC) have organized a special “Hot Spots” collection on Central America for the journal Cultural Anthropology.

Dr. Burrell and Dr. Mounia El Kotni (PhD 2016, DeCormier 2013) continue their research on corruption and grassroots anti-corruption activists in Guatemala. They presented their paper, “Mayan Anticorruption Activism Across Generations in Guatemala” at the meetings of the Latin American Studies Association in Barcelona, Spain in May 2018. Their panel, “Generation and Politics in Central America” was organized by Drs. Burrell and Moodie and the papers are being revised for publication.

Dr. Burrell attended the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) meetings in April and took part in a session organized by Dr. Masson, “Debt in Pre-Modern State Economies from an Archaeological Perspective.” The session took David Graeber’s “Debt: The First 5000 Years” as a starting point for critically assessing debt in the pre-modern Mesoamerican world from the viewpoints of archaeology, epigraphy, ethnohistory and cultural anthropology.

Dr. Burrell has just returned from Berlin, Germany, where she took part in a workshop organized by the Law and Anthropology Department of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. Leading experts who authored forty-eight chapters of the Oxford Handbook on Law and Anthropology convened to discuss contributions and the overall project. Dr. Burrell contributed the chapter on “Citizen Security and Vigilante Justice,” based on her long-term research on these topics in Guatemala. Together with Drs. Kamari Clarke (Carleton U, Canada and UCLA) and Sarah Kendall (Kent, UK), Dr. Burrell is involved in a research project on human rights and technology. The multi-sited project includes work in New York, Washington, the Hague, Africa and Central America. In March 2019, the team will convene a two-day event at UCLA, jointly sponsored by the Promise Institute for Human Rights at UCLA Law and the Department of Anthropology. The event will feature Theresa Harris and Jonathan Drake of the Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program, American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, discussing their recently-released report, “Geospatial Evidence and Human Rights,” and a screening of “Truth Detectives,” a film by Berlin-based filmmaker Anja Reiss.

Dr. Burrell finished a four-year elected position on the Committee for Human Rights of the American Anthropological Association. She continues to serve on the Rapid Response Network of the AAA, which investigates attacks on anthropologists’ academic freedom and advocates for the academic freedom of all scholars. Dr. Burrell has been appointed the American Anthropology Association liaison to the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, Human Rights and Science Coalition, and will begin her service in January, 2019.
2018 has been a busy year. It began with exciting preparations for a new research project focusing on the pottery-making community of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, in the Mixteca Alta region of Oaxaca. With the support of a National Geographic Society’s grant I put together a dream team of archaeologists and documentary makers to conduct the first systematic archaeological survey and ethnographic study of the Tonaltepec municipality and its pottery-making tradition. UAlbany doctoral students Aphizetl Lemus Medina and Antonio Martínez Tuñón were part of the archaeological research team. Also part of the team were experienced archaeologists Dante García Ríos and Jennifer Saumur, a recent doctoral graduate from le Centre d’Études Mexicanas ad Centre-Américaines. The archaeological survey not only recorded all signs of pre-Hispanic and early Colonial human activity in the area, but also systematically recorded and sampled, with the help of local potters and guides, the location of clay sources currently used in the community’s traditional craft. The collected clay samples (turned into test tiles) were sent to Oregon State University’s Radiation Center for INAA analysis. We are currently awaiting INAA results to test the long held, but until now untested idea that Tonaltepec’s pottery-making tradition may have pre-Hispanic roots. In tandem with the archaeological and clay survey, we conducted ethnographic interviews with the majority of potters who still practice this craft today. Working with the Oaxaca-based “Seremos Miles” production company we recorded hours of ethnographic interviews and pottery making footage, resulting in a documentary that will be presented to the Tonaltepec authorities and the greater public in late December 2018. We also hope to show the documentary at a UAlbany, IMS, and AGSO event during the Spring 2019 semester. During the Fall 2018 the team has been busy writing archaeological technical reports for the National Institute of Anthropology and History of Mexico and National Geographic, editing and subtitling the documentary, and preparing a poster that summarizes our main research findings for the local community.

In addition to my work in the Proyecto Etnoarqueológico de Tonaltepec, my research collaborators and I are continuing to write and publish results from the Cerro Jazmín Archaeological Project. While all this was taking place my oldest child started kindergarten and my youngest can now be called a full-time biped and a confident toddler.

Dr. Pérez Rodríguez was in the Mixteca Alta region of Oaxaca with a National Geographic Society grant conducting survey and ethnographic studies.
Robert Rosenswig and Ricardo Vazquez (UAlbany PhD, 2014) of the National Museum of Costa Rica undertook one month of excavations this November at the sites of Las Mercedes and Anita Grande on Costa Rica’s Caribbean coast. Las Mercedes was the capital of a chiefdom that lasted from AD 1000-1500 and Anita Grande was the chiefdom’s western-most secondary center. This collaboration began in 2009 with research undertaken as a series of UAlbany undergraduate field schools but the National Geographic Society funded the 2018 season.

This past summer, Rosenswig was awarded a new 3-year grant from the National Science Foundation. This project will reconstruct human occupation and forest species diversity in the lowlands of northern Belize during the Late Archaic period (4000-1000 BC) by combining archaeological excavation and lake sediment coring. Three centuries of climatic disturbance began at 2200 BC and reduced the diversity and biomass of plant and animal species on which humans subsisted. This period of climatic disturbance (known as the 4.2k BP event to climate scientists) resulted in widespread drought at mid-latitudes, which led to societal collapse of the Akkadian Empire in Mesopotamia, the Old Kingdom in Egypt, and Indus Valley civilization due to failing ability to feed the populations of ancient cities. However, climatic disturbance affects peoples with different adaptations in different ways. Late Archaic inhabitants of Mesoamerica increased population levels and intensified food production in response to the same climatic changes that caused Old World civilizations to collapse.

With the new Belize project gearing up, Dr. Rosenswig has been diligently publishing results from his Izapa Regional Settlement Project, that he has reported on in previous IMS Newsletters. The Izapa research combines nearly 600 sq km of lidar (light detection and ranging) data with pedestrian survey and excavations to document this early Mesoamerican kingdom. In the November issue of the journal Antiquity, he published: “Lidar reveals the entire kingdom of Izapa during the first millennium BC.” This paper received some media buzz and interviews with LiveScience, Atlas Obscura, Sputnik news agency as well as coverage in the December issue of American Archaeology. Dr. Rosenswig has co-organized a special issue in the Fall 2018 volume of Ancient Mesoamerica (with Dr. Julia Guernsey of UTexas, Austin) that brings together 10 new articles on the latest results from the archaeology and art history of Izapa. Rosenswig also just corrected the proofs of another article documenting the Izapa capital city that will appear in the March 2019 issue of Latin American Antiquity. Dr. Rosenswig gave a lecture at CUNY’s Lehman College on his Izapa research in November. Planned for the spring semester are two more invited lectures on Izapa: one to be delivered in February for UAlbany’s Emeritus Center and the other in March for the Pre-Columbian Society of New York City. Journal articles, public lectures and news coverage are all helping spread the word of the Izapa project results.

Robert Rosenswig was awarded a new 3-year grant from the National Science Foundation to study climate change and the origins of agriculture in Belize.
Over the past two years, Marilyn Masson has launched two new historical archaeology projects, one in Yucatan, and one in historical Albany. These projects extend her long-term interests in historical anthropology, drawing on history and ethnography to generate questions investigated through household archaeology. She continues to focus on household archaeology to reveal patterns of economic production and consumption, wealth, social identity, as well as facets of family organization and strategies enacted to contend with community and regional processes of social transformation. In Yucatan, she launched the “Maya Life in Early Colonial Yucatan” project in 2018, funded by a grant from the National Geographic Society, in collaboration with Carlos Peraza of INAH Yucatan, and UAlbany doctoral program alumni Timothy Hare and Bradley Russell. The contributions of field directors Pedro Delgado and Bárbara Escamilla made this research possible. This colonial project performed preliminary investigations of dwellings and chapel spaces at two sites, Yacman and Hunacti. Both sites were in rural locations, linked by roads, family ties, and political obligations to the center of Maní, located in the Xiu province (also known as Mani), during and after the Postclassic confederacy of Maya. The Xiu were one of the most influential factions at Maya, were implicated in the city’s demise, and they were also key players in events of the Spanish conquest process. These sites were selected because, unlike many Colonial era towns, they were abandoned by the early 1600’s and were not subsequently occupied, preserving archaeological remains for investigation. The two towns would have been founded during the Franciscan mission expansion of 1547-1571. They also provide a rural perspective on strategies enacted by, an conditions experienced by, Maya towns during this interesting early period. At Yacman (12 km southeast of Mayapan), we excavated a mass grave located within the foundations of rural chapel walls. Osteologist Stanley Serafin interprets this feature as a family mausoleum, with repeated interments that indicate that the church was considered a sacred space. Early cut nails within the burials date the grave to the late 16th century; radiocarbon dates will soon be available. No traditional Catholic burials were present at Yacman on the church grounds, unlike many other Colonial contexts in the Maya area.

Dr. Masson received a grant from the National Geography Society for her current project in Yucatan.

Marilyn Masson

Workers lay out the grid at the church in Yacman.

A unique ceramic vessel form from Yacman.

We also excavated portions of a (traditional Mayapan style) dwelling probably occupied by a town (noble) leader and were intrigued to discover fragments of buried
Maya effigy censers attesting to continued practice of traditional religion in this early period, as historical accounts also indicate. We found a miniature olla cup that combines European and Maya form elements.

Further south (an hour’s drive from Mayapan), is architecturally impressive, unlike Yacman. There, the small church and its domed roof still stand, framed by a Pre-Columbian (Preclassic - Terminal Classic) Maya monumental center. The walls and rooms of three large European style houses still stand, tested by our project, and seem to have been built by upper status Maya families in the early Colonial period, given the paucity of European artifacts; documents also suggest that Spaniards did not reside at Hunacti beyond brief visits. One of the Maya lords of Hunacti, Don Juan Xiu, was closely related to Don Francisco de Montejo Xiu, governor of Mani, who rallied thousands of laborers to build the convent there, and his capacity to mobilize labor may have benefited construction efforts at Hunacti. Despite its splendor, we suspect that Hunacti was quickly abandoned, as part of punitive measures enacted by Spaniards on the local nobility for apostate behavior. The abandonment of both sites is probably linked to ongoing shifting and consolidation of Maya subjects into different towns as part of Spanish efforts to control the population.

Analysis is currently underway to determine aspects of continued traditional pottery manufacture as well as technological and decorative changes observed in this early period, with the goal of refining Colonial era indigenous ceramic chronology of significance to the region.

Most interesting was the paucity of European artifacts (also unlike other Colonial Maya contexts investigated), at both sites, either due to their remoteness, or to their early status. Hunacti, located further south (an hour’s drive from Mayapan), is architecturally impressive, unlike Yacman. There, the small church and its domed roof still stand, framed by a Pre-Columbian (Preclassic - Terminal Classic) Maya monumental center. The walls and rooms of three large European style houses still stand, tested by our project, and seem to have been built by upper status Maya families in the early Colonial period, given the paucity of European artifacts; documents also suggest that Spaniards did not reside at Hunacti beyond brief visits. One of the Maya lords of Hunacti, Don Juan Xiu, was closely related to Don Francisco de Montejo Xiu, governor of Mani, who rallied thousands of laborers to build the convent there, and his capacity to mobilize labor may have benefited construction efforts at Hunacti. Despite its splendor, we suspect that Hunacti was quickly abandoned, as part of punitive measures enacted by Spaniards on the local nobility for apostate behavior. The abandonment of both sites is probably linked to ongoing shifting and consolidation of Maya subjects into different towns as part of Spanish efforts to control the population.

Dr. Masson launched two new historical archaeology projects, one in Yucatan and one in Albany.
In the last year, Jeff Bryant has been occupied with his dissertation on the historical ecology of the Maya Postclassic fish trade. His dissertation involves the analysis of fish otoliths (ear bones) from the sites of Mayapán and Caye Coco. His otolith research was originally a side project, but after realizing the profound data potential of otoliths, they have taken center stage. This effort involves the thin-section analysis of seasonal growth-rings to learn about the age, and season of capture, and size estimations, in combination with stable isotope analysis to compare past and present environmental conditions. Jeff is a paleoecology intern at the New York State Museum, where he conducted thin-section analysis, and osteometrics. This fall he performed the micromill sampling at the Union College Isotope Laboratory and is awaiting the final data to complete his dissertation. This analysis was made possible by the generous funding of the IMS DeCormier Award.

He presented preliminary analysis of otoliths at the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) meetings in D.C. this spring and has subsequently been accepted to present his full dissertation research next year in Albuquerque New Mexico. He and Nayeli Jimenez Cano are planning to co-organize a session at the SAAs in 2020 concerning human relationships with aquatic environments, and to collaborate on publications on the Mayapán fish trade. Jeff has also been recruited by the Costa Escondida project in the Yucatán, which has changed their excavation protocol to recover otoliths for analysis. He has identified and thinned an initial series of otoliths and plans to compare the results to Mayapán. Additionally, he continues to work as a data analyst with the Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology (BEOE) at the New York State Department of Health, utilizing his geospatial analysis expertise for environmental public health projects. These include analyzing traffic pollution exposure for the governor’s cancer initiative, designing statewide disaster response base maps, pilot testing new geocoding standards for the CDC, identifying daycare facilities within unsafe proximity to hazardous waste sites, and collaborating with NASA on geospatial analysis of heat related illnesses. His work with the department of health has allowed him an opportunity to apply his archaeological, anthropological, environmental, and geographic skills towards solving contemporary environmental problems. It has also continued to challenge him to develop his geospatial, computer coding, and quantitative skills.

Crystal Sheedy

For the past year, Crystal has been steadily working on her dissertation. Last spring semester, she presented a poster entitled, Home as a Symbolic Space: Examples from Yucatec Maya Women’s Oral Literature, at the inaugural Society for Linguistic Anthropology conference in Philadelphia, PA. The analysis presented in this poster discussed a speech genre utilized by Yucatec Maya women in their daily interactions. This speech genre is an integral aspect to her dissertation research, as well as her

Crystal hopes to finish writing her dissertation and graduate next year and return to Yucatán.
future work. She developed her analysis from this poster into a paper entitled, U T’aan Nukuč Máak (Advice of the Elders): An Entrance into Maya Women’s Symbolic World. She submitted this paper to three graduate student paper competitions, the David Scotchmer Essay Award for the Institute for Mesoamerican Studies (IMS), the John Gumperz Annual Graduate Student Essay Prize for the Society for Linguistic Anthropology (SLA) and the Annual Student Essay Prize for Society for the Anthropology of Religion (SAR). Her paper won the Scotchmer essay award for IMS, and it received honorable mention for the SLA paper competition and runner-up for the SAR paper competition. She presented a shorter version of this paper at the annual meeting for the American Anthropological Association held in San Jose, CA. Before the end of the year, she hopes to submit this paper to an academic journal for publication. Looking forward to next year, she hopes to finish writing her dissertation and graduate. She is hoping to return to Xocén to celebrate with her friends and family there.

### Yahaira Núñez Cortés

Yahaira started 2018 conducting excavations at Lomas Entierros archaeological site, with funding from a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant and an Early Career Grant from National Geographic Society. The fieldwork revealed a complex system of architecture that combined elevated rounded terraces (0.5-3 m high) with cobblestone walls and internal structures, along with humbler structures at the periphery partially built with cobbles and clay floors. Imported ceramic artifacts from Greater Nicoya were recovered in abundance and distributed throughout the site. The field season was a great success, which was possible due to the amazing team of archeologists that participated in it.

From June through August of 2018, Yahaira conducted her laboratory analysis at the Museo Nacional de Costa Rica (MNCR) and Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR). Through an internship with Centro de Investigaciones Antropológicas at UCR, Yahaira was able to collaborate with the botanical specialist María López and undergraduate students at UCR, to conduct microartifact and botanical analysis from soil samples recovered at Lomas Entierros. This analysis revealed the potential of micro-archaeology to identify remains deposited on house structures that were not easily found with more conventional methods.

A public outreach phase was an important component of the Lomas Entierros Archaeological Project. In July, Yahaira gave a talk during the Feria de la Lapa in Carara National Park, where Lomas Entierros is located. During August, she conducted workshops in neighboring primary schools about indigenous people, archaeology, and the importance of cultural heritage. Kids had the opportunity to learn about the past and to play archaeologist for a day!

Yahaira returned to the University at Albany in the fall of 2018 to start writing her dissertation. This semester she is also teaching “Archaeology of Central America and the Caribbean”. Being able to share her own passion with students has been a very rewarding experience.

Preparing a traditional food called “le’ek”.

Yahaira and the school kids looking at artifacts.

The fieldwork team of the Lomas Entierros Archaeological Project.
Rebecca Dinkel

Becky is a doctoral candidate in linguistics. In 2018, she presented some of her dissertation results in a poster session at the inaugural conference for the Society of Linguistic Anthropology in Philadelphia, PA. Her dissertation entitled The Materiality of Metaphor in Mayan Hieroglyphic Texts examines how metaphors in pre-Columbian Mayan texts materialize differently in the modalities of writing and art. The project uses a mixed-methodology corpus approach that integrates discourse analysis with corpus linguistics. The project is divergent from other interpretative approaches of pre-Columbian Mayan texts because it actively engages such linguistic methodologies. Specifically, the project examines how a metaphor that describes and depicts Mayan rulers as trees materializes differently in the different modalities of writing and art. In writing, she has found the metaphor correlates with distinct grammatical forms whereas in art, the metaphor materializes with the super-imposition or fusion of human body parts and plant parts. The metaphor also expresses distinct semantic structure when expressed in the different modalities. The project also examines how the metaphor varies across space and time, and what this can tell us about the history of the pre-Columbian Maya. Her dissertation work has implications for a reinterpretation of writing on Mayan vases, and for metaphor theory broadly, situating metaphor use in its social context. She will present the results of her grammatical analysis for the project at the Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas Conference, in New York, NY at the beginning of January, 2019. Becky is also continuing to revise her research on Copala Triqui’s syntactic causative to be submitted for publication.

Abelardo de la Cruz

This is Abelardo de la Cruz’s second year as a PhD student at the University at Albany. In terms of research, on June 11-13, he travelled to Oaxaca with a grant offered from the UCLA American Indian Studies Center and presented a paper titled “Tlaneltoquilli in Chicontepec: indigenous religion (el costumbre) confronts Protestantism and orthodox Catholicism” at the American Society for Ethnohistory (ASE). In both conferences, he presented his most notable advances of his preliminary doctoral proposal and part of his doctoral questions. In the summer, between June 17-August 1, he spent time at the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Utah, in Salt Lake City, where received a formal invitation to work as professor of Nahuatl. At the same time, in his free time, he carried out research at the library J. Willard Marriot, where began to develop his preliminary doctoral proposal. During that time, he visited Wyoming state, where interacted face-to-face with Shoshoni people, an indigenous culture that be-
long to the Uto-Aztecan family. At the beginning of this year, on March 8, he visited the Department of Latin American Studies at Stanford University where he received and presented a training about how to teach indigenous languages in USA. Also, in May he was invited to the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and participated in a panel titled “Educación, conocimiento e identidad: un movimiento social hacia la intelectualidad” organized by the Western Alliance for Nahuatl (WAN). He, recently, participated in another conference on the 2nd Symposium on Indigenous Languages and Cultures of Latin America (ILCLA) in conjunction with the 4th Symposium on Teaching and Learning Indigenous Languages of Latin America (STUILLA) in Columbus, Ohio, sponsored by the Center for Latin American Studies at the Ohio State University. In all these participations he received travel grants by the conferences’ organizers.

To conclude, he is an assiduous participant in national and international conferences, with the aim to present, develop and expand his research on Nahua indigenous culture, as a graduate student at the University at Albany.

Abelardo and his Nahuatl students. University of Utah Summer Session 2018.

Antonio Martínez Tuñon

This is Antonio’s first year as a PhD student at the University at Albany. After getting his BA and MA in Mexico, where he is from, he participated from 2013 to 2015 in the Cerro Jazmin Archaeological Project (CJAP) directed by Dr. Perez Rodriguez. He conducted excavations at different areas of the site, in particular households. He also performed analysis of the data and contributed to publications. In 2016 he obtained a Graduate Studies Certificate in Geographic Information Systems from the Department of Geography at UAlbany, and has used the skills gained in spatial analysis for understanding archaeological data patterns. After working in CRM for over a year and learning about New York State archaeology, last summer he went back to Mesoamerica as part of the survey crew at the Tonaltepec Ethnoarchaeological Project, which investigated the links between pre-Hispanic and contemporary settlements and the antiquity of the community’s pottery production. He is expecting to present the first results of this project in the next meeting of the Society of American Archaeology. As a student, he is working with Dr. Rosenswig in modeling the communication routes between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Coast, in particular for the Early and Middle Formative periods. His research interests for the near future include the analysis and hopefully the publication of data from the survey in Tonaltepec and his excavations in upstate New York, to participate in the Northern Belize Archaic Project with Dr. Rosenswig and Dr. Masson, and defining his dissertation research project.

Antonio spent time the summer in Oaxaca on the Tonaltepec Ethnoarchaeological project.

Antonio Martinez talking with local potters and guides from Tonaltepec, Oaxaca.

Abelardo and his Nahuatl students. University of Utah Summer Session 2018.
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