



Society of Antiquaries
of **Scotland**

THE RHIND LECTURES **2023**

What has Maya Archaeology done for us?

Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Graham



Friday 29 September to Sunday 1 October 2023

Free and open to all – registration required

Attend in person at the Augustine United Church,
41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL
or attend online

Please visit www.socantscot.org/events
to see details and register

*With thanks to AOC Archaeology Group
sponsor of the Rhind Lectures 2023*



THE RHIND LECTURES 2023

Sponsored by AOC Archaeology Group

What has Maya Archaeology done for us?

Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Graham

After introducing Precolumbian Maya civilisation, these lectures will cover Maya intellectual achievements as well as Mesoamerican contributions to modern diet and health. Elizabeth Graham will discuss what we can learn from Maya history about sustainable pathways for urban life, but also cover a more controversial topic concerning the powerful role of commercial interests in social change. These lectures will present an alternative view of the Christianisation of the Maya at Conquest and criticise the common assumption that people – especially the ‘Ancients’ – killed people for gods.

Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Graham

Elizabeth Graham received her BA degree in History from the University of Rhode Island, and her PhD in Archaeology from the University of Cambridge. She has carried out archaeological work on Maya civilisation in Belize since 1973 and was Belize’s Archaeological Commissioner from 1977 to 1979. She taught in the Anthropology Department at York University in Toronto until 1999, and then moved to the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL), from where she recently retired as Emeritus Professor of Mesoamerican Archaeology. Elizabeth received the Society for American Archaeology Award for Excellence in Latin American and Caribbean Archaeology (2020) and was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, Maya-at-the-Lago (2017).

Friday 29 September

5pm The masters of time: the Maya of Mesoamerica

This lecture will introduce the Maya: maps, timelines, environments, distinguishing features of Mesoamerican societies, and an overview of Maya history. Maya timekeeping and astronomy will be the vehicle for insight into Maya thought, and the huge variety of foods and aspects of agriculture will also be reviewed.

6.30pm Stone cities, green cities: what we can learn from Maya urbanism

Maya urbanism has been a major research interest of Elizabeth’s for years. More recently she has worked with a team – including city planners, those in development and food security – who are drawing from Maya urbanism in planning housing and especially the integration of greenspace, and in some cases agriculture, in cities.

Followed by a drinks reception.

Saturday 30 September

3pm **Not just trade but power: the British East India Company & the Maya collapse**

Elizabeth has excavated coastal sites for much of her career, and she is working on the coast at present. These sites were never abandoned and thrived through the Maya collapse – but they were commercial centres and benefited from the demise of the Maya dynasties. Elizabeth finds the British East India Company to be perfect inspiration for ideas about how Maya merchants were able to undermine traditional trading systems, manipulate those in power, and justify war for trade.

4.30pm **The idol rich: Spanish & Maya Christians in the land that became Belize**

Elizabeth wrote a book on the early conquest period, called *Maya Christians and Their Churches in Sixteenth-Century Belize*, and in this lecture she will describe her own point of view on how the Maya reacted to evangelisation and the ideas of Christianity.

Sunday 1 October

3pm **What's wrong with 'human sacrifice'?**

For many years Elizabeth has carried out research on human sacrifice and is still working on a number of implications. Many in her field have invested careers in trying to explain why the Maya and Aztecs practiced human sacrifice, but no one has thought to question the concept itself.

4.30pm **Past and future earth: clues from the Maya about sustainable soils**

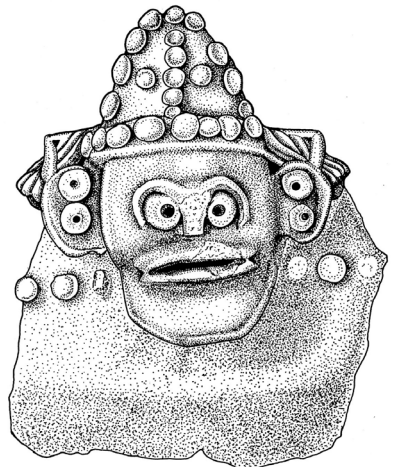
Elizabeth's recent research focuses on soils and soil security at the urban site of Lamanai, and on coastal sites on Ambergris Caye, Belize. She and her team are looking at gradual soil formation and increasing soil fertility where human occupation has been dense, with implications for what modern planners consider to be sustainable. Soil security may be more important than climate change, because even if the climate stabilised, soils remain threatened.

Tickets are free and popular, so early registration is advisable.

Please note that booking an in-person ticket gives you access to all six sessions of the 2023 Rhind Lectures, but due to limited capacity at the venue we recommend you book early to avoid disappointment.

All times in the event programme are British Summer Time (BST).

Image: Effigy vessel from the Spanish colonial period at Lamanai, about 1550–1600.



The RHIND LECTURES, a series of six lectures delivered annually on a subject pertaining to history or archaeology by eminent authorities on the subject, have been given since 1876. They commemorate Society Fellow Alexander Henry Rhind of Sibster (1833–63) who left a bequest to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland to endow the lectures which perpetuate his name.



AOC
Archaeology
Group

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
National Museums Scotland
Chambers Street
Edinburgh EH1 1JF

Email: events@socantscot.org

Web: www.socantscot.org

X (formerly Twitter): [@socantscot](https://twitter.com/socantscot) #Rhinds2023

Facebook: [/SocietyofAntiquariesofScotland](https://www.facebook.com/SocietyofAntiquariesofScotland)



Cover images: Decorated bowls featuring jaguar, flower, conch and deer. This image: Stela Temple at Lamanai, reconstruction by Claude Belanger and Louise Belanger. Standing ruler based on Stela 9, shown in the doorway. All illustrations by Louise Belanger (www.louisebelanger.com) and reproduced with permission of the Lamanai Archaeological Project and the Marco Gonzalez Archaeological Project.

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland is a Scottish registered charity, No. SC010440.