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Symbols

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DIGITAL IMAGING IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES

A frequently asked question at the Peabody Museum's Archives is: "Have you digitized the photographs in the photographic archives?" The short answer is that we are always chipping away at it. In fact, over the past five years, the Peabody Museum has undertaken several large-scale scanning projects. Last year, the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH)

awarded the Peabody Museum a two-year Preservation and Access grant to scan and make accessible the core negative collections, providing a boost to a much-needed comprehensive digital imaging program for the photographic archives.

Digital photography has been a mainstay at the Peabody Museum for the past decade. Most noteworthy is



Glass plate negative on a light table in the Photographic Archives.
Photo by David DeBono Schafer.

the multiyear collection inventory that began in 1999, which for the first time digitally captured most of the Peabody's three-dimensional collections with the objective of providing efficient electronic access to the collections.¹ Since 2001, the Peabody has expanded digi-

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THE HIEROGLYPHIC STAIRWAY CONFERENCE, FALL 2006

This year's Weekend of the Americas explored the veneration of indigenous New World ancestors, warriors, and kings, as manifested on the hieroglyphic stairways that graced some of the most storied temple-pyramids of ancient Mesoamerica. The event began with a well-attended lecture by Professor Stephen Houston of Brown University on the nature and meanings of this particularly Maya genre. On Saturday, six speakers discussed the most grandiose of such monuments, the Hieroglyphic Stairway of Copán, Honduras. The Peabody Museum is home to a long-term project of documentation, decipherment, and re-ordering of the hieroglyphs and pictorial sculpture from this monument (see *Symbols* 2006). The members of the research team to shared the results of their findings at a separate conference, co-sponsored by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University.

Barbara Fash, director of the Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions, showed the key role that the Peabody Museum's glass-plate negatives from expeditions in the 1890s have played in re-ordering the fallen segments of stairway glyph blocks. The stereoscopic photography she is presently directing on the stairway will also facilitate the study. When the images from the earlier glass-plate photographs, taken when the glyphs were still in an excellent state of

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tal imaging to include scanning and capturing critical data for the historical photograph collections in the photo archives. Projects so far include more than 55,000 images of the Carnegie Institute of Washington featuring Central American archaeology and 3,500 negatives of North American imagery,² available on the Peabody Museum website (www.peabody.harvard.edu).

Digital imaging projects require financial resources and personnel that are not part of most operating budgets, and the Museum relies heavily on grants and donations to carry out this activity.

Background

Over the years, scholars, faculty, and students have researched the vast photographic resources housed at the Peabody Museum. Those who ventured into the photo archives in the past will recall a dingy, dark basement chock full of boxes and old wooden cabinets overflowing with beautiful photographs and negatives featuring late nineteenth-century colonial photography, world cultures, Peabody expeditions, and Museum history. Those early days reflect a time when the photographs served as an adjunct to the Museum's three-dimensional collections and were utilized primarily as teaching tools, and storage condi-

tions were considered secondary. Access to the photographs trumped the need for security or climate control.

It was not until 1976 that former Peabody Museum photo archivist, Dan Jones, sought and received funding from the National Science Foundation to establish a photo archives workspace and install Harvard's first cold vault at the Peabody Museum.³ This addressed a critical need for climate control to preserve color negatives and film by providing ideal storage at a constant temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit with 37 percent relative humidity. In 1996, the installation of a cool vault (50 degrees Fahrenheit and 37 percent relative humidity) to store the irreplaceable nineteenth-century glass plate negatives and original black-and-white historical photographs furthered the Museum's commitment to preserving these important images. That same year, Head Conservator T. Rose Holdcraft coordinated a survey of the images and supervised the rehousing and inventory of the photography collections as they were removed from the open shelves and wooden cabinets and placed into the new vault.⁴ These pioneering efforts sparked a new interest in preserving the Peabody's historical photography as efforts to conserve and gain intellectual control of the images began taking shape.

In 1980, as part of a two-year plan to catalog the Museum's overall collection, former photography catalogers Lisa Kamisher and Melissa Banta spearheaded a project to catalog the core historical images. In the very early days of computer cataloging at the Peabody, the Museum had a

time-sharing system with the Children's Museum using a PDP/11-70⁵ computer; terminals were installed at the Peabody Museum, but printouts needed to be ordered and picked up at the Children's Museum.⁶ In 1981, the Peabody purchased its own computer system (an Onyx C8000), which allowed the Photographic Archives cataloging project to use software and hardware onsite!⁷ Because of Ms. Banta's diligent efforts, most of the 30,000 core negatives were indexed and cataloged onto 3 x 5 catalog cards, creating the first systematic record for each image or an early form of metadata.⁸ During 1996, the Museum began using the EmbARK (4th Dimension) database system, which is still used today. In the past several years, the catalog cards have been data entered into EmbARK under the direction of David Schafer, Senior Collections Manager. Inputting the cards meant that the Peabody has documented most of these 30,000 images electronically, allowing photos to be scanned and quickly linked with the associated metadata.

Of course, placing the historical photographs into climate controlled facilities meant that, although the photo collections were secure, they were no longer readily available for researchers to browse at will. Even so, the preservation efforts of Dan Jones and the cataloging efforts of Melissa Banta and Lisa Kamisher provided the first systematic preservation and access to the photo archives and paved the way for future digitization projects, since existing cataloging could be linked with the images, scanned, and ultimately placed on the website, reaching even wider audiences.

The Core Negative Collections

Of the estimated 500,000 images in the photo archives, the core negative collections total approximately 30,000 and include historical views of the Peabody Museum showing early interiors, exhibits, and Peabody Museum associates working in the field. Notable images also show Peabody-sponsored expeditions in the

Archives Technician Bart Admonius rehouses glass plate negatives into acid-free folders. Photo by India Spartz.



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FENGSHUI, LANDSCAPE, AND HISTORY IN RURAL HONG KONG

Rubie S. Watson

Curator of Comparative Ethnography, Peabody Museum

During the last forty years, Hong Kong's rural hinterland has been transformed from a patchwork of green hills and fertile valleys into a hodgepodge of new, purpose-built cities complete with forty-storey apartment blocks. Many old villages dating to the 1600s are now surrounded by four-lane highways and train lines, by huge drainage canals, by fields that have been converted into storage depots, and by massive housing estates. In a single generation, an agrarian landscape has been transformed beyond recognition. In this paper I explore how a cosmology that Hong Kong people call *fengshui* (literally "wind and water") informs local understandings of the environment.

Chinese *fengshui* (usually translated by the word geomancy) encompasses a set of cosmological principles that manifest themselves in ideas regarding the flow of wind and water—of vital energy or *qi*—in the environment. It is the job of the geomancer to place temples, houses, graves, and villages in a positive rela-

In Hong Kong's rural hinterland, each generation has been responsible for understanding wind and water to safeguard family prosperity and health.

tionship to this flow so that individuals, families, and whole communities can benefit. There is good *fengshui* and bad *fengshui*—bringing fortune or disaster, depending on environmental circumstances. Buddhists, Daoists, Christians, atheists, and followers of local gods all may observe the teachings of *fengshui*. Among the people of rural Hong Kong, geomancy

is deeply intertwined with the ancestor cult and can be considered integral to many local religious practices.

Geomancy not only allows humans to comprehend and take advantage of the forces of nature that surround them, but also guides the creation and maintenance of landscapes. Chinese geomancy has been called a religion, a cosmological system, a feudal superstition, a form of divination, and proto-environmentalism. Although geomancy can be found in some form among Han people almost everywhere in China, governments from imperial times to the present have often been hostile to its popular practice. Chinese geomancy is highly localized, and disputes involving *fengshui*, many of which pit the interests of ordinary people against government-inspired development projects, can and often do give voice to anti-establishment views.

Geomancy plays an important role in the formation and maintenance of communities. Geomancy offers a powerful and intimate form of local knowledge that arms its practitioners with the ability not only to diagnose a *fengshui wenti* (a geomancy problem) but also to overcome it. A family that suffers economic loss might suspect that their good *fengshui* has been altered; perhaps someone has built in front of their grandfather's grave or a stream has been blocked near their home. A geomancer can confirm their diagnosis (or provide another), and offer a solution—move grandfather's grave or redirect the stream so that wind and water can be reoriented and family prosperity renewed.

In Hong Kong's rural hinterland, each generation has been responsible for understanding wind and water to safeguard family prosperity and health.

The location of ancestral tombs was of utmost importance. Like many others in southeastern China, local



Old village house with red door gods, 1969. All photos by James Watson.

people practiced secondary burial. After death, the deceased was interred in a simple, unmarked grave. On an auspicious day chosen by a geomancer (usually seven or more years after the initial burial), descendants retrieved and cleaned the bones of their ancestor. The bones were then re-arranged, placed in a pottery urn (or *jin ta*); a geomancer was hired to find a good *fengshui* site, and a permanent tomb constructed. It is generally believed that descendants and ancestors interact through the medium of *fengshui*—thus connecting the living not only to the dead, but also to sources of cosmic power. Ancestral bones are thought to channel the generative forces of wind and water to male descendants through the medium of sacrificial pigs, which are offered and later consumed at annual tomb rites.

In the late 1970s, I lived in a Hong Kong village called Ha Tsuen, and for thirty years, I have continued to visit and conduct research there.

Established in the fourteenth century and consisting of a group of hamlets,

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many of which are walled, Ha Tsuen remains a large, prosperous, lineage-based community. In this discussion, I draw heavily on my knowledge of Ha Tsuen.

In 1898, the British leased a 365 square mile area—the New Territories—from the Chinese government to protect their burgeoning trading and financial center on nearby Hong Kong Island. The landscape that the British found when they occupied rural Hong Kong had been created during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368–1911), and fashioned by many human hands—Han migrants, local tribal people with whom the Han intermarried and eventually supplanted, and imperial officials. The reclamations that turned marshes into fields, the irrigation systems that nurtured the rice paddies, the waterways that made inter-village communication possible were highly complex. Their maintenance was crucial and allowed many to survive and some to prosper.

For hundreds of years, local geomancers and educated villagers had studied and mapped the contours of land and water. Stories relating to specific formation or geomancy sites, which were named and widely recognized, were deeply intertwined with family, lineage, and local histories. Into this landscape the British arrived, armed with ideas about land surveys and taxes, railroads and paved roads, district offices, and police stations. Initially, the British faced an armed resistance, but the uprising was soon put down. In the immediate aftermath of the occupation, concessions were made to the residents of the New Territories (and to their descendants) guaranteeing them, in the words of the presiding governor, that the new colonial government would not interfere with their “usages and good customs.” In effect, family affairs including patrilineal inheritance practices and matters relating to land, the British promised, would continue to be governed by Chinese custom and Qing Law. Land for burial sites, and

eventually plots for village house building, were also guaranteed. These prerogatives, no doubt, made it possible for British colonials and local villagers to reach an accommodation of sorts—a working relationship that was to last for nearly a century. New roads and a railway line were pushed through in the early years of British administration and a pattern of interaction developed in which New Territories villagers were compensated not only for relinquishing real estate, but

also for the *fengshui* disturbances that government construction projects inevitably entailed. In time, colonial officials, who until the 1980s were mostly British, became quite proficient in the language of wind and water and in New Territories’ customs in general.

Austin Coates, a one-time district officer in the New Territories, captures the complex dance that villagers and officials routinely executed as they collaborated in re-making the New Territories. With regard to mining operations on one of Hong Kong’s islands during the Korean War, Coates writes; “Did the [village head] really believe the dragon had become malevolent [indicating a *fengshui* disturbance]? Or was it that, partly believing it, and knowing that government in the New Territories...was more old-fashioned than in China, he considered he might use it as a convenient weapon or argument? Or was it that he did not believe it at all, but knew



View from Ha Tsuen Ancestral Hall to Tin Shui Wai New Town, 1977.

that Europeans thought Chinese did believe in such things, so that consequently, when a Chinese [village head] spoke of *fengshui*, it meant that a European official had to sit up and take notice?” Coates pondered these questions when he had to handle village *fengshui* cases, but he writes: “I do not think I ever gave myself an answer which I could have sworn was correct.”²

To be sure, the landscape of rural Hong Kong was changed during the first sixty or seventy years of British rule, but even as late as the 1970s, the locatedness of New Territories villagers—the common places of their everyday lives—remained largely intact. In 1977, I could still see in and around Ha Tsuen the outline of fields that had once produced rice, visit an old sugar refinery, sit in houses that had been built during the seventeenth century, walk along stone paths that dated to the early Qing dynasty, and make out the outline of reclaimed



New village houses and old temples, 1994.

“salt fields” (*han tian*) and canals that once served the local market. With the help of local villagers it was possible to visualize the outline of a lived-in past. Old men, who on sunny days could usually be found sitting outside the gates of Ha Tsuen’s main ancestral hall, imparted a physicality to the past as they talked of lineage history and historic sites. Sites, it should be noted, that were often distinguished by features of the landscape with *fengshui* names. Walks along village paths might occasion stories about lineage feuds fought in the surrounding fields. Visits to ancestral tombs in the hills behind Ha Tsuen provided lessons in judging the attributes of well-known *fengshui* sites. In David Lowenthal’s words, the landscape, both natural and built, was very much part of the “tangible past.”³

Nevertheless, the local landscape was changing and the pace of change was quickening. During the 1970s and 1980s, New Towns, housing hundreds of thousands, were built in the New Territories. Of course, environmental change was nothing new. For hundreds of years the Pearl River Delta, of which the New Territories is a part, has been a highly manipulated environment. The elaborate reclamation projects of Qing times that still survive from that era are testimony to the

environmentally transformative agendas of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century entrepreneurs. There are, however, significant differences between the low-tech conversion projects that characterized the delta until the 1950s and the mechanized, high-speed reclamations that convert marshes into new cities in a matter of four or five years. The development projects of the 1980s and 1990s moved at what New Territories villagers perceived as lightning speed.

By the 1990s, Ha Tsuen’s recognizable and intimately known environment had been transformed. Hills had disappeared, huge drainage systems altered the flow of streams, rail lines snaked through nearby fields, shipping container parks dotted the countryside, and a New Town—Tin Shui Wai—was taking shape just a few hundred yards from Ha Tsuen’s main ancestral hall and market. Tin Shui Wai was built on land reclaimed from an expanse of salt marshes that, in the view of local residents, had funneled prosperity-laden *fengshui* to Ha Tsuen for centuries. In 1993 and again in 1994, during my return visits to Hong Kong, Ha Tsuen villagers and colonial officials discussed the question of a *fengshui* corridor that would pass through Tin Shui Wai New Town and, in the official view, safeguard the flow

of wind and water. Villagers, however, were less than confident of the government’s corridor; and expected the government to pay for a special ritual of placation (*fasi*) that would at least propitiate the powers—spiritual and natural—from which they feared they had been cut off.

For their part, government officials were clearly proud of the Tin Shui Wai development, which would house tens of thousands of people. I was told that the flooding that once had been endemic in the Ha Tsuen area was no longer a problem because of the drainage network that had been constructed. Transportation had been greatly improved; and no major villages, the officials noted, had been relocated. Ha Tsuen was, in their view, intact. Of course, the surrounding hills and fields had been tunneled, huge drainage canals now passed through the village, and tens of thousands of “outsiders” were now on their doorstep; but, I was assured, there had been no major residential disruptions to the villagers themselves.

As my interviews with colonial officials continued, however, the language of the planner and property developer was increasingly interspersed with allusions to *fengshui*. In part this was due to my questions, but it also reflected the interests and enthusiasms of the officials themselves. Yes, they confirmed, a compensation payment for a *fasi* ritual had been made in 1991 after villagers claimed that tunneling in the Ha Tsuen hills had ruptured the “veins of the dragon.” Yes, a *fengshui* corridor had been built into Tin Shui Wai. But, the longer we talked the more it became clear that there was something more here than a concern with good government. These officials—by the 1990s, they were Hong Kong born Cantonese with university degrees—claimed that *fengshui* was a kind of technology or science. “There really is something to it,” they argued, “it is environmentally sound.” In their view *fasi* rituals, dragons’ veins, and compensation payments are quaint, coun-

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try ways of understanding what they believe to be more complex notions that underlay *fengshui*. They did not say: “We urban, educated people understand these matters on a higher plane,” but this was their implicit message.

There is no doubt that the geomancy practiced in urban Hong Kong is different in important respects from the *fengshui* of New Territories villages. The urban population consists primarily of (relative) newcomers, people who arrived in Hong Kong since the 1950s. Their tangible past, represented by squatter settlements, tenements, and factories of the early Cold War era, has been largely erased. Until recently, their identification with Hong Kong has been tentative, if indeed they thought about it at all. For many émigrés, Hong Kong was indeed “a borrowed place living on borrowed time.” Not surprisingly, the 1984 Chinese-British Accord on Hong Kong’s reversion to Beijing set off an identity crisis that reached a peak just prior to 1997 when Hong Kong rejoined “the motherland.” During the late 1980s and 1990s, the colonial government sinicized their administration, poured vast funds into the university system, and made large contributions to local art, music, and drama associations. New magazines and newspapers appeared and Hong Kong took on a kind of international caché during the last years of colonial rule. But, the formation of a Hong Kong identity (“we are different from those Chinese north of the border”) required a past, and Hong Kong’s history, which had been the preserve of New Territories villagers, a few anthropologists, and local historians, had been badly neglected.

In the 1990s, many in urban Hong Kong became keen preservationists whose “tangible past” was encapsulated in a museum, a restored temple, or a preserved ancestral hall. And, it should not be surprising that for many “the past” came to reside in the New Territories. In this vision, *fengshui* was acceptable if it was cleansed

of the political—anything that hinted at negotiation or stratagem. *Fengshui* had to be pure if it were to serve the social agenda of Hong Kong activists. For some intellectuals, geomancy was one of the things that made Hong Kong unique. In the view of many urbanites, who pay the high fees that popular, urban geomancers command, *fengshui* as it is practiced in the New Territories is superstition or, worse, extortion. Urban *fengshui*, by contrast, is technology (“it is like science”). It helps one live in a world that other people (governments, developers, urban planners) have created. The “wind and water” of the urban *fengshui* devotee does not course through an intimate, past-laden landscape.

Rather, it allows city dwellers to position themselves—to arrange their apartments or offices or shops—so that they can take advantage of new, rapidly changing opportunities or counteract danger from the built environment that surrounds them.

The relationship between Hong Kong urbanites and New Territories villagers has been fraught in recent years. Each side lays claim to places deeply inscribed in the landscape but they share little else. Much of the approbation urbanites direct at rural *fengshui* is aimed at the New Territories political leaders, who have worked to retain the privileges granted to villagers by the British colonial administration in 1898. Challenges to the “old ways” were often countered by the logic and language of village geomancy. To protect their special privileges, local leaders had to redefine what it meant to be an indigenous villager. For much of the twentieth century, literate villagers made claims to a special kind of pioneer heritage founded in the competitive logic of

Chinese history. They were *Tang-ren*, or the “People of Tang Dynasty,” and thus the living repositories of Han Chinese culture, which, they proclaimed, had disappeared in China itself. This was a claim that set local people apart from the aboriginal (non-Han) populations of the south and distinguished them from the Mongol and Manchu rulers who ruled from north China.

In 1994, however, New Territories



Ancestral tomb and elder, 1969.

leaders began to style themselves not as *Tang-ren* but as *yuanzhumin*, a term that translates literally as “original-residing peoples.” In full-page ads appearing in Hong Kong newspapers, New Territories *yuanzhumin* were likened to the Maori of New Zealand and to North American Indians. This special status, they argued, entitled them to maintain traditional cultural forms and political privileges by right of their heritage. Their long residence in the New Territories, their resistance to the British in 1898 (valorized in the run up to 1997), and their distinct customs (including patrilineal inheritance, secondary burial, and *fengshui*) led these villagers to expect special consideration from their new Communist masters. How deeply these particular claims resonated with ordinary villagers remains an open question. Many villagers of my acquaintance were either shocked or amused by comparisons between themselves and their putative allies in New Zealand and North America.

Hong Kong’s space wars and iden-

GUY TILLIM NAMED THE FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE ROBERT GARDNER FELLOWSHIP IN PHOTOGRAPHY

In December 2006, the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology announced that Mr. Guy Tillim, an award-winning documentary still photographer from South Africa, would be the first recipient of the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography, beginning January 2000. Tillim began his professional career in 1986 and worked as a freelance photo-journalist for the local and foreign media, including Reuters and Agence France-Presse. He has exhibited in more than a dozen countries and published in numerous volumes and journals. His work has focused on documenting social conflict and inequality in the countries of Africa. From teenage soldiers in Rwanda to civil war in Congo to the dislocation of entire populations in Angola, Tillim

returns to lands whose violence he once covered as a journalist to recover the shadows that violence produced in the people and lands. In the words of arts curator Michket Krifa, "Tillim ... combines a profound sense of historic documentation of African countries ravaged by conflicts and tragedies of all kinds and a very stringent formal aesthetic devoid of all mannerism."

Tillim has received many awards for his work including the Prix SCAM (Societe Civile des Auteurs Multimedia) Roger Pic in 2002, the Higashikawa Overseas Photographer Award (Japan) in 2003, the 2004 DaimlerChrysler Award for South African photography, and the 2005 Leica Oskar Barnack Award.

The Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography funds an "established

practitioner of the photographic arts to create and subsequently publish through the Peabody Museum a major book of photographs on the human condition anywhere in the world." The Fellowship committee invites nominations from experts around the world; nominees are reviewed and selected by a committee of three. The Fellowship provides a stipend of \$50,000. The fellowship is unique in its dedication to funding professional documentary photography. The Fellowship was given by Robert Gardner, award-winning documentary filmmaker and author, whose films including "Dead Birds" and "Forest of Bliss" and books *Gardens of War* and *A Human Document* have entered the permanent canon of non-fiction filmmaking.

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tivity battles are far from settled. Villagers continue to hire geomancers, to extract fees for placation rites, and to pay careful attention to the *fengshui* of their ancestral tombs. Nonetheless, much has changed. For some, geomancy is no longer a political resource; for them, like Hong Kong's urbanites, it now operates in the realm of personal meaning and local pride.

For Ha Tsuen villagers, most of whom continue to live in the New Territories, *fengshui* remains important. There is pride in the auspicious setting of their ancestral halls and tombs, but the transformation of their surrounding landscape and their increasing inability to engage local officials in meaningful discussions of "their *fengshui*" makes the heretofore familiar conversation one-sided. In fact, one might argue that they lack a conversation partner altogether as the Hong Kong government seems less and less inclined to listen to their claims for attention.

After considerable debate, protest, and behind the scenes maneuvering New Territories indigenes have retained some of the privileges that

they enjoyed under the British. At this writing, they can still claim land to build village houses, although this privilege is now subject to modification and increasing restriction. Ancestral halls and tombs continue to receive protection, and patrilineal succession to ancestral estates (which can carry significant financial rewards) is still recognized. Women, however, have been given inheritance rights to private (family) property, which was a bitter blow to many villagers.⁴

In what James Hayes refers to as the "transition from resident to citizen," indigene privileges have taken a beating.⁵ *Fengshui* no longer guides the creation of the New Territories landscape. It seems unlikely that geomancy can offer a creative response to the highly built environment that surrounds—in some cases envelops—many New Territories villages. Geomancy still guides the location of graves and tombs, but one suspects that unfettered access to the steep, green hills where ancestors are buried—and, in an important sense, the New Territories' past resides—will soon be challenged by new develop-

ments and development agendas.

1. The preceding discussion is based on my own field research in rural Hong Kong as well as the work of others: Ole Brun, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2003; Jack Potter, "Wind, Water, Bones, and Souls: The Religious World of the Cantonese Peasant," *Journal of Oriental Studies* 8:139–153, 1970; James L. Watson, "Presidential Address: Virtual Kinship, Real Estate and Diaspora Formation—the Man Lineage Revisited," *Journal of Asian Studies* 63:893–910, 2004; Rubie Watson, "Remembering the Dead: Graves and Politics in Southeastern China," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* ed. By James L. Watson and Evelyn Rawski, 1988; Peter Wesley-Smith, *Unequal Treaty, 1898–1997: China, Great Britain and Hong Kong's New Territories*, 1980.
2. Austin Coates, *Myself a Mandarin: Memories of a Special Magistrate*, 1968, p. 170.
3. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, 1985.
4. Sally Merry and Rachele E. Stern, "The Female Inheritance Movement in Hong Kong: Theorizing the Local/Global Interface," *Current Anthropology* 46:387–410, 2005.
5. James Hayes, *Friends and Teachers: Hong Kong and its People, 1953–1987*, 1996, pp. 280, 296.

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Americas and abroad, and early anthropological and archaeological fieldwork documenting many of the objects in the Peabody's vast three-dimensional collections. The core negatives also include 10,000 glass plates dating to the mid-1880s and 1890s: glass served as a support for light sensitive chemicals necessary to generate positives and was widely used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁹ Many of the Peabody's glass-plate images were taken in remote locations, processed in makeshift darkrooms, and hand-carried to the Museum from afar so it is remarkable that these fragile plates are intact today.

The bulk of the remaining 19,500 core negatives include nitrate and acetate (safety) film. Although nitrate is considered flammable, the Peabody has managed to preserve these original negatives by storing them in specialized industrial freezers that halt film degradation and mitigate potential fire hazards.¹⁰ Additionally, in 1984, Dan Jones and Christopher Burnett preserved these deteriorating negatives by copying more than 23,000 nitrate images onto archival 35mm black-and-white film.

Digital Imaging Projects

The first major digital imaging project began in 2001, when the Harvard College Libraries awarded the Peabody an initial grant to scan 10,000 of the 55,000 Carnegie Institute of Washington (CIW) original negatives featuring Central American archaeology and expeditions during the 1930s. Under the direction of David DeBono Schafer, The CIW scanning project was highly successful in part because cataloging or metadata existed for the images expediting the project. A second LDI awarded in 2006 funded the scanning of the remaining CIW images by the end of 2007.

In 2004, the Museum received a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) to scan more than 3,500 images of North America.

NEH Project Phases

A 2006 two-year NEH

Preservation and Access grant launched a new project to scan and catalog 30,000 core negatives in the Photo Archives, including the previously mentioned glass plates and nitrate and acetate film images. The grant

is broken down into three phases: phase I includes scanning and processing metadata for the 10,000 glass plate images; phase II covers scanning and processing metadata for the remaining 19,500 nitrate and acetate negatives, and phase III includes indexing and creating online finding aids to the images.

Phase I began in August 2006, when the Peabody contracted Boston Photo and Imaging to scan the 10,000 glass plates on-site. Special handling procedures were implemented to capture the best possible digital image while, at the same time, preserving the antique glass plates. In keeping with proper conservation techniques, Brenda Bernier, senior photograph conservator at Harvard's Weissman Preservation Center was consulted on re-housing and preparing the glass plates for scanning. Each glass plate was re-housed into newly labeled, acid-free folders. By combining the scanning and re-housing, the glass plates were handled only once and then returned to the cool vault for permanent long-



Professor Frederick W. Putnam, Peabody director and curator, 1874–1909, sitting in an office on the Museum's 5th floor.

term storage. Boston Photo scanned the glass plates using a special technique that eliminated the need for the glass to touch any surfaces. This included using a Betterlight Super 8 Scan Back to back light the images on a modified 4" x 5" enlarger that was placed over a custom light table with flat-filed lenses that digitally captured each negative.¹¹ The images were scanned as gray scale TIFF¹² files at various resolutions depending upon negative size: an image of 4" x 5" or smaller was saved at 1,500 pixels per inch (ppi); up to 5" x 7", 1,000 ppi; and larger than 5" x 7", 750 ppi. The resulting digital photograph is a 72 mega pixel (72,000,000 pixel) image capable of being turned into a 38" x 28" photograph. Once linked with the associated metadata, the TIFF files are

Peabody's second floor balcony, 1893.



Preserving and making available the negatives is one step toward furthering the goal of providing electronic access to the collections so they may be used efficiently.

backed up to Harvard servers and then ultimately saved to individual DVDs that are safely stored off-site. Although Boston Photo completed the first phase of glass-plate scanning in January 2007, several important tasks remain as the Archives staff continues to process the 10,000 digital files that must be linked with critical metadata before uploading them to the Peabody's website.

Phase II began in January 2007. Two staff assistants were hired to scan the remaining 19,500 nitrate and acetate negatives in-house. Archival assistants Kerri Kivolowitz and Sarah Otto are now scanning and cataloging the images and will continue through early 2008. The final phase of the grant includes creating indexes and publishing on-line finding aids using encoded archival description (EAD).¹³ The senior archivist, Patricia Kervick, associate archivist, and a part-time photo indexer who will be hired later

this year will oversee these projects.

Preserving and making available the negatives is one step toward furthering the goal of providing electronic access to the collections so they may be used efficiently. Much work remains to catalog and preserve the Peabody's Photographic Archives, including more than 300 photograph collections and approximately 15,000 additional historical prints. To find out more about how you can help, please contact the Museum's Office of External Relations.

1. Rubie Watson, "Opening the Museum: The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology," *Symbols*, Fall, 2001.
2. David Schafer, "Harvard LDI and the Carnegie Institution of Washington Collection of Maya Archaeological Photographs," *Symbols*, Spring, 2006.
3. 1976: The Modernization of the Peabody Museum Photographic Archives, NSF grant proposal submitted by Stephen Williams and D. Jones, 1976.

4. NSF Grant SBR-9057749: Summary of Progress, June 14, 1996.
5. Bond, Sally, "Computing the Peabody," *Symbols*, 1980.
6. Email from Melissa Banta, 2/28/07.
7. Karl Lamberg-Karlovsky, "The Peabody Renovates," *Symbols* 1984.
8. A laborious piece of any scanning project, metadata provides descriptive data for each image such as its content, creation and any technical file information such as resolution, compression, the scanning process and the files relationship to associated files, rights management and preservation.
9. *Looking at Photographs*, Gordon Baldwin, Paul Getty Museum, 1991.
10. In 1889, nitrocellulose or nitrate was used as the first flexible film base, beginning with Eastman Kodak products. Camphor was also used as a plasticizer for nitrocellulose film. Highly flammable, nitrate sheet film gained popularity in the early 1900s and remained in widespread use until the mid-1930s, when it was replaced by safety films such as acetate, diacetate and eventually triacetate films.
11. Boston Photo email: 2/23/07
12. Tagged Image File Format: Uncompressed TIFF's produce the highest quality digital image.
13. Encoded Archival Description (EAD) is an XML data standard for encoding archival finding aids.

Storied Walls: Murals of the Americas

The Peabody Museum Weekend of the Americas

FRIDAY OCTOBER 5—SUNDAY OCTOBER 7, 2007



Explore the murals of North, South, and Central America, their sources and traditions, the roles they played, and how their traditions are carried on today.

For information: 617-495-2269
email: linardos@fas.harvard.edu
www.peabody.harvard.edu/weekend.html

CONFERENCE continued from p. 1 preservation, are overlaid on 3D images produced with the stereo pairs, it will be possible in some cases to produce virtual replicas of the individual blocks. These images will be much more useful to scholars in the present and future. Howells Director William Fash discussed the long-term goals and results of the investigation of the stairway, including all the earlier, buried buildings and hieroglyphic monuments that verify the dynastic history recorded on the stairs. In particular, he discussed the archaeological verification of the textual references to the burial of Ruler 12, whose tomb Fash and his team discovered and documented in great detail. Molly Fierer-Donaldson, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology, discussed the investigations she conducted under W. Fash's direction, of the buried earlier pyramid (Structure 10L-26 3rd) where the original stairway had stood, and the evidence for its size and form.

Because of the renewed decipherment effort, several significant advances have taken place over the course of the past year. David Stuart, professor of the Art and Writing of

Mesoamerica, University of Texas, Austin, showed that there were two distinct components to the Stairway text: one referring above all to the life, death, and burial of Ruler 12 and a second, carved in a later style, with taller glyphs, that referred to the death of the ill-fated thirteenth king, and a series of other historical data. Stephen Houston noted that the famed death in battle of Ruler 13 of Copán was referred to in the Stairway inscription as occurring "at a place with no temples, no stelae, on Turtle Mountain." Simon Martin, research specialist at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, provided a tour-de-force of the symbolism of the so-called *principal bird deity* at Copán, so closely associated with the name and the memory of the founder of the Copán dynasty, within the context of the mythology surrounding this bird



Hieroglyphic Stairway blocks, Copán.

in imagery from other Maya sites and Mesoamerica broadly. Peabody Museum Associate Curator Castle McLaughlin treated the audience to a detailed analysis of Native American warrior art in a ledger book recently come to light at the Houghton Library, which will form the centerpiece for a forthcoming exhibition. Patricia McNany, associate professor of Archaeology at Boston University provided a masterly summary of the conference, drawing upon her own work with archaeological "ancestors" and living Maya communities engaged in the preservation and presentation of their own history.

TWO NATIVE AMERICAN ARTISTS APPOINTED HRDY FELLOWS

Two Native American artists were appointed Hrdy Fellows for 2007–2008. Wallace (Butch) Thunder Hawk (Hunkpapa Lakota) is a painter, sculptor, and stained-glass artist from the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota. Thunder Hawk graduated from Dickinson State University in North Dakota and studied graphic arts at the California College of Art and Crafts in Oakland. Thunder Hawk also studied tribal arts, including pipemaking, with elders at Standing Rock. He has taught tribal arts at United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, North Dakota, since the late 1970s.

During three visits to the museum in 2007, Thunder Hawk will work with Associate Curator Castle McLaughlin on an exhibit of Lakota ledger art. Thunder Hawk, who also assisted with the Lewis and Clark



Butch Thunder Hawk, photo by Castle McLaughlin.

project, will co-curate and develop the exhibit design.

Willie French Lowery (Lumbee) is a singer, songwriter, and guitarist. He has performed with Floyd Westerman, Ulali, and Clyde McPhatter and has recorded with several musical groups including Lumbee (Radnor Records).



Willie French Lowery. Photo by Melinda Maynor.

He has published over 500 songs that have been recorded by numerous gospel, rock, country, and R&B artists. He composed the original songs for *Strike At the Wind!*, a Civil War-era outdoor drama that tells the story of Lumbee culture hero Henry Berry Lowery.

MICHAEL ROCKEFELLER: NEW GUINEA PHOTOGRAPHS, 1961

Documentary Photographer and Guest Curator, Kevin Brukski

Gallery Talk Given November 15, 2006

In December of 2005, Robert Gardner, leader of the Harvard Peabody New Guinea expedition, asked me to review the large archive of photographs at the Harvard Film Study Center. I was initially drawn to the Rockefeller black-and-white 1961 New Guinea images, now permanently in the Peabody Museum's collections. After a long Sunday morning and afternoon looking over scores of the Rockefeller contact sheets, I remarked to Robert that there was a beautiful book of photographs in the Rockefeller body of work.

Growing up in a college town next to a science center with free black-and-white foreign films on week-nights, I remember watching Bergman, Rossellini, DeSica, Fellini, and Kurosawa films well before having the reading skills and life experience to understand the subtitles. Perhaps it was the strength of these black-and-white film images that gave me an intuitive sense of composition and visual counterpoint, and launched me on my own career as a documentary photographer. No doubt, Michael Rockefeller as a young person had similar encounters with the world on family travels abroad and in the halls of the great museums of New York and Europe. Michael was not necessarily a trained anthropologist or visual anthropologist, but as a young man he had a wonderful visual intuition that guided him and rewarded him well in his five months among the Dani. In choosing the works for this exhibition and the accompanying volume, my curatorial concerns were to discern and convey what Michael Rockefeller's images tell us as documentary photographs and what the photographs tell us about his way of visually interpreting his "other-worldly" experience among the Dani.

Michael was an extraordinarily enthusiastic and curious young man—always exploring new terrain, new events, and new experiences. This



youthful exuberance meant that he may have broken some of the rules of a professional anthropologist or photographer, for Michael's photographs exude an intimacy with the Dani men women and children that belie a scientific anthropologist's distance from his subjects. The image of the man weaving as he sits in the rough-hewn wooden gateway to his household or village has an incredible gentle matter-of-factness to it. The balanced composition of the image is a comfortable interplay of open and enclosed space

through the interwoven branches that make up the wall, and the placement of the man in the open entryway. While the man couldn't quite have been unaware of Michael and his camera, Michael releases the camera shutter at a moment that lets us as viewers feel that Michael is invisible and that he has captured an enduring moment that represents a timelessness of the Dani's daily life tasks. The close-up image of two young boys embracing in the darkness of the

continued on p. 12





Michael Rockefeller among the Dani, 1961. Photo by Jan Broekhuijse.

ROCKEFELLER continued from p. 11

house lets the viewer into an interior mysterious space where the affection between the two boys is undisturbed by what would seem to be the intrusion of the camera. Another image of young girls, who have just had their

fingers ritually amputated to appease the ghosts of family members lost in battle, sit quietly engaged in a gathering of older women in front of their simple house. The image works all at once on purely compositional, informational, and psychological levels.

Having the opportunity to view the 136 contact sheets of Rockefeller's Dani photographs carefully makes clear that these are not accidental images. Michael's notes from his sound logs have an enthusiastic and engaging energy equal to that of his photographs. Many of his notes in the sound logs refer to the specific events and encounters that he photographed while also rolling sound for Robert Gardner's film footage. In the scores of hours of sound recording that Michael made, one can only imagine the auditory treasures of Dani voices and music interwoven with the sounds of nature yet to be uncovered.

For each viewer who comes upon Michael's photographs there is a true sense of discovering a lost world. Looking at the photographs, many never before exhibited or published, can't help but awaken a sense of wonder at what the young twenty-two-year-old Michael Rockefeller felt while he was immersed in the vibrant world of the Dani.

REDESIGNING THE HALL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN

The Hall of the North American Indian is the Peabody's largest exhibition and currently one of its oldest. Since its conception in the 1980s and installation in 1990, there have been many developments in the field of anthropology, humanities and social science as well as in the Peabody's relationships with tribes across the United States. The Peabody is now looking forward to creating a wholly new exhibition space devoted to Native America. The Museum envisions a renovation to reflect scholarly thought, and the vibrancies and complexities of Native American identity, representation, and collaborative projects between descendant communities and the museum.

In 2006, the Peabody was awarded a consultation grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support a set of exploratory meetings on redesigning the Hall. The consultation process is the first phase of the redesign process,

conceptualizing the new Hall, which will be followed by planning and implementation phases. In January, curators gathered an international team of advisors to discuss potential themes for the space and to plan an assessment process and associated programming.

Advisors included humanities scholars, local Native American scholars and cultural specialists, and museum specialists with expertise in audience assessment, education, exhibiting, and programming. This consultation process is an essential foundation upon which to update this pivotal



Photo by Barry Hetherington.

exhibit space and to create a dynamic, evolving reflection of the relationship between museums and Native America. No date is set for a new installation, but the process is now underway.

Contributed by Associate Curators Patricia Capone, Diana Loren, and Castle McLaughlin

Theodore C. Bestor, Professor of Anthropology, Social Anthropology Wing, was elected President of the East Asia Anthropology Section of the American Anthropology Association (AAA). Bestor has also been named chair of the department of Anthropology beginning July 1, 2007.

William L. Fash, Bowditch Professor of Central American and Mexican Archaeology and Ethnology and Howells Director of the Peabody Museum, co-edited two volumes: *Gordon R. Willey and American Archaeology: Contemporary Perspectives* with Jeremy A. Sabloff (Univ. of Oklahoma Press) and *Copán: History of an Ancient Maya Kingdom* with Wyllys Andrews (School of American Research Press). He also began a new archaeological project in the Copán valley at the site of Rastrojan.

Peter T. Ellison, John Cowles Professor of Anthropology was elected to the National Academies of Science last spring.

Alain Houle, Lecturer on Biological Anthropology and Postdoctoral Fellow, spent his last two field studies in Kibale National Park, Uganda, where he studies mechanisms of coexistence among closely related species of monkeys as well as the nutritional benefits of social dominance among wild chimpanzee males and females.

Arthur Kleinman, Esther and Sidney Rabb Professor of Anthropology and chair of the department, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for Medical Anthropology in November 2006.

He co-chaired an NSF-funded Conference on Asian Flus/Avian Flus in December 2006, and he will co-chair a conference on Values in Global Health in May 2007. Six Ph.D. students in medical anthropology will

graduate in June 2007, making it the largest cohort to graduate in this sub-field that Arthur Kleinman initiated in 1982. Kleinman will complete his term as department chair at end of June 2008.

J. Lorand Matory, Professor of Anthropology and of African and African American Studies, was awarded The Melville J. Herskovits Prize for his book *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* published in 2005 by Princeton University Press, judged the best of the year by the African Studies Association.

Jeffrey Quilter, Senior Lecturer on Anthropology, Archaeology Wing, and Deputy Director Curatorial Affairs & Curator, Intermediate Area Collections, Peabody Museum continues to work on the excavation and analysis of remains from the early colonial church complex and town of Magdalena de Cao Viejo in the Chicama Valley, Peru. The town was a forced resettlement of native peoples occupied between about 1578 and 1690. Two field seasons (2005 and 2006) have been completed with two more planned. Investigations will examine both the biological and social changes that occurred among native populations and colonizers.

Mary Margaret Steedly, Professor of Social Anthropology, presented a keynote address, "Back to Culture?: Southeast Asian Studies in the 21st Century," for the Anniversary Symposium on The Future of Area Studies in the Department of Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University, Netherlands. Together with Professor Patricia Spyer of Leiden University, she has been awarded a grant from the School for American Research in Santa Fe for a seminar on the subject of popular

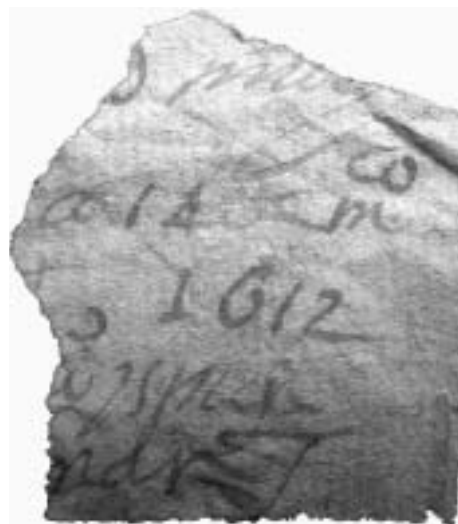
media and mass politics entitled Images Without Borders, to be held in May 2007.

Pauline E. Peters, Lecturer in Anthropology, received a Fulbright-Hayes award for research in Malawi, January–December 2006. This research fieldwork was also supported by grants from IFPRI-RENEWAL (regional Southern Africa program for social science research on HIV/AIDS) and from the Kennedy School Dean's Faculty Research Grants. Analysis and writing are now underway.

Peters also delivered the Keynote address "Anthropologists Debating Land: Tenure, Use and Reform", at the Workshop on Land Reform, Land Tenure, and Land Use: Assessing the Linkages, Humboldt University, Berlin, on May 25–27, 2006.

Jason Ur, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Archaeology Wing, has recently returned from a final study season at Tell Brak in northeastern Syria. His intensive surface collection has established its urban status in the late fifth millennium B.C., making it one of the earliest cities in the Near East.

Fragment of a hand-written document recovered from excavations at Magdalena de Cao, Viejo, Chicama Valley, Peru, bearing the date of 1612.

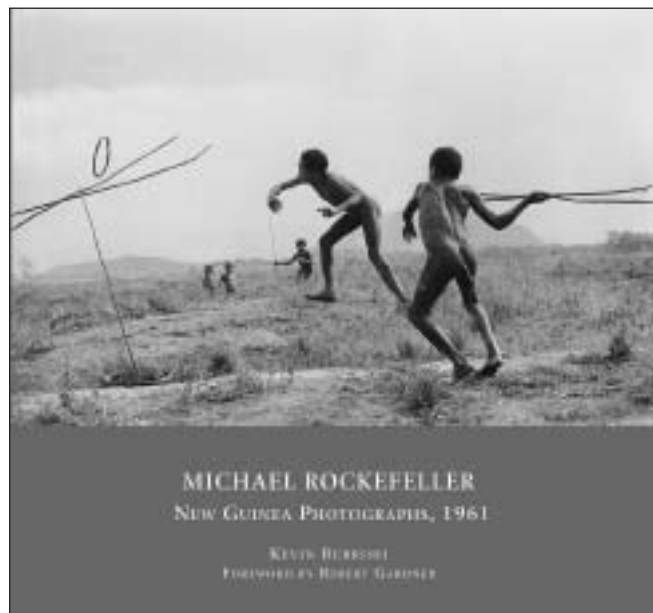


Forty-five years after the renowned Harvard-Peabody New Guinea Expedition came to a close, the book *Michael Rockefeller: New Guinea Photographs, 1961* was published in November by the Peabody Museum Press. This volume, the museum's first photographic exhibition catalogue, was launched with an exhibition (Michael Rockefeller's first solo show), a gallery talk, and a book signing at the museum. Catalogue author and exhibit curator Kevin Bubriski, a documentary photographer, spoke to an enthusiastic crowd about Michael Rockefeller's role as sound recordist and still photographer on the Peabody's remarkable multidisciplinary expedition to the Dani people of highland New Guinea. Tragically, Rockefeller died on a subsequent expedition to New Guinea later the same year.

Michael Rockefeller had graduated from Harvard just one year before he took these moving photographs. In the book and in his talk, Bubriski provided an insightful appreciation of young Rockefeller's growing fluency in the language of the camera, his rapport with the people whose lives he chronicled, and his development of a distinctive, personal way of seeing the Dani world around him. Bubriski and distinguished filmmaker Robert Gardner, 1961 expedition leader and author of the book's foreword, signed copies of the book at the opening.

Some projects produce such rich material that they continue to generate discussion—and new creative enterprises—long after they occur. Such is the case with the Harvard-Peabody New Guinea Expedition. In the decades after the expedition, Robert Gardner made his acclaimed film *Dead Birds*; Peter Matthiessen wrote *Under the Mountain Wall*; Karl Heider published numerous ethnographic works on the Dani; and Gardner and Heider brought out the photographic book *Gardens of War*. The press's new book of Michael Rockefeller's photographs will be followed up in 2007 with the publication of *Making DEAD BIRDS: Chronicle of a Film*—Robert Gardner's personal account of the creation of that film, from its inception as an idea in the basement of the Peabody Museum to its long-standing impact on independent cinema.

A new volume of the *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions*—Volume 9, Part 2, *Tonina*—was pub-



lished in fall 2006. Written by Corpus program director *emeritus* Ian Graham, in collaboration with other Corpus associates, the volume describes and illustrates most of the largely intact sculptures at the site of Tonina that had not been published to date. The autumn edition of the journal *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* (Volumes 49/50), was also published.

Peabody Museum Press books are now marketed and distributed by Harvard University Press, which exhibited the Peabody's publications at the American Anthropological Association annual meeting in San Jose, California, in November of 2006.

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Japanese samurai in colorful armor, Ca. 1870. Photographer unknown.

NEW IN 2007–2008

“A Good Type”: Tourism and Science in Early Japanese Photographs

Opens October 25, 2007

Delicately hand-tinted scenes of cherry blossoms, elegant kimono-clad geisha and fierce samurai warriors in early Japanese photographs captivated nineteenth-century travelers to Japan. Photographs were an instant hit among resident foreigners, tourists, and armchair travellers in the West.

The title of the exhibition is taken in part from the caption of one such photograph, written by William S. Bigelow. His captioning of the photograph began a process that transformed a typical tourist photograph from a souvenir to a “type” photograph housed in a museum of anthropology. The exhibition explores this theme using material from the Peabody’s rich archive of early Japanese photographs from the Meiji era (1868–1912).

Storied Walls: Murals of the Americas

Opens March 13, 2008

From Awatovi in New Mexico to San Bartolo, Guatemala, to the desert cities of Peru, murals painted on the walls of rooms and temples provide a rare and unique look into the past. In vivid colors, the murals were sometimes bold and threatening, sometimes exquisite and sacred. Murals were painted in palaces and temples or small interior ceremonial rooms. They were the province of the few, accessible to only a fraction of society, though their subject matter appears in many other artistic forms.

The exhibition explores the murals of North, South, and Central America, their sources and traditions, the roles they played, and conservation efforts.



Tree of Life, detail from a mural, San Bartolo, Guatemala. Drawing by Heather Hurst.



Closing November 30

Distinguished Casts: Curating Lost Monuments at the Peabody Museum

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Fall Conference on Murals

A prequel to the upcoming *Storied Walls: Murals of the Americas*, the Peabody Museum will host a weekend conference October 5–7, 2007.

The Storied Walls Conference kicks off with a free, public talk by Yale anthropologist Mary Miller on the newly restored Bonampak Murals. The Saturday and Sunday program offers talks and workshops on mural traditions from the American Southwest, Mexico, and Central and South America and their continuing impact on modern art and culture. Full conference information will be available in July. Contact the Peabody Museum at 617-495-2269 or see our website www.peabody.harvard.edu

Exhibitions

“A Good Type”: *Tourism and Science in Early Japanese Photographs*
Opens October 25

Storied Walls: Murals of the Americas
Opens March 13, 2008

The Way It Was: Nineteenth Century Maya Archaeology
Opens June 2008

Lectures and Events

Harvard Museums Community Day
All six Harvard Museums open free to the public! Special activities and tours at all museums
September 16

Irma Bailey’s Southwestern Show and Sale
October 11–14

Don Francisco’s Nose-Piece: Forming New Empires in Renaissance America
Felipe Ernesto, Tufts University
with the Society of Antiquaries
November 8

Trade Routes: Collecting Photographs, Making Anthropology, Elizabeth Edwards, University of the Arts, London with the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies
November 29