



PEABODY MUSEUM
of ARCHAEOLOGY & ETHNOLOGY

Harvard University, 11 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138-2019

PRESS RELEASE

- What:** FREE Lecture and Reception
- Where:** Lecture in Geological Lecture Hall, Harvard University, 24 Oxford St., Cambridge.
Reception follows in the Peabody Museum, 11 Divinity Ave.
- When:** Thursday, October 23, 2008, 5:30 PM
- Contact:** 617-496-1027 (Public Information)
- Lecture Title:** "Finding His Focus: The Extraordinary Robert Burkitt in Copán"
- Lecture by:** Elin Danién, Research Associate, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

(Cambridge, September 22, 2008) The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology presents an intriguing profile of "one of the most eccentric Mayanists of the twentieth century."

In January 1895, Robert Burkitt was an inexperienced but very willing second-in-command to the Fourth Peabody Museum Copán Expedition director, George Byron Gordon. They traveled from Boston to the famed Maya site Copán, located in Honduras. Later known as "the man who came to tea and stayed for thirty years," Burkitt's season at Copán was the start of a life as archaeologist, linguist, photographer, and ethnographer. Drawing on unpublished photographs, letters, and field notes, this illustrated talk will show how his time at Copán influenced Burkitt's career, and will include some of the highlights and contributions to Maya studies made by this little known but extraordinary figure.

Speaker

Elin Danien is a Research Associate in the American Section of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Her interest in the life and work of Robert Burkitt resulted in her 1998 dissertation, "Chama Polychrome Ceramic Cylinders in the University of Pennsylvania Museum," and most recently, with co-editor John Weeks, "Maya Linguist: The Lost Linguistic Notebooks of Robert Burkitt," as well as numerous papers and articles. She has also written extensively on George Byron Gordon, Sara Yorke Stevenson, M. Louise Baker, and other actors in the history of Penn Museum and Maya archaeology. Currently she is preparing an exhibition featuring the polychrome vases and other pottery collected by Burkitt, *Painted Metaphors: Pottery and Politics of the Ancient Maya*, to open at the Penn Museum in April, 2009.

About the Peabody Museum

The Peabody Museum is among the oldest archaeological and ethnographic museums in the world with one of the finest collections of human cultural history found anywhere. It is home to superb materials from Africa, ancient Europe, North America, Mesoamerica, Oceania, and South America in particular. In addition to its archaeological and ethnographic holdings, the Museum's photographic archives, one of the largest of its kind, hold more than 500,000 historical photographs, dating from the mid-19th century to the present and chronicling anthropology, archaeology, and world culture.

Location: *The Peabody Museum is located at 11 Divinity Avenue in Cambridge. The Museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station.*

Hours: 9 AM to 5 PM, 7 days a week. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Admission is \$9.00 for adults, \$7.00 for students and seniors, \$6.00 for children, 3-18. Free with Harvard ID or Museum membership. The museum is free to Massachusetts residents Sundays, 9 AM to noon, year round, and Wednesdays from 3 PM to 5 PM (September to May). Admission includes admission to the Harvard Museum of Natural History. For more information call (617)496-1027 or go online to: www.peabody.harvard.edu.

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