



# INSTITUTE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY (ISEAA) NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 3 FALL/WINTER 2016

## *ISEAA Celebrates*

### A NEW MONOGRAPH! (IN PEER REVIEW)

The biggest news for ISEAA these past 12 months is (drum roll...) handing the metals monograph manuscript in to Penn Museum's Publications Department for the next step—peer review! The volume, entitled *Ban Chiang, a Prehistoric Village Site in Northeast Thailand II: The Metal Remains in Regional Context*, has been in the works for a very long time. Elizabeth Hamilton is the lead archaeometallurgist, and other contributors include Joyce White, Vincent Pigott, Oliver Pryce, Samuel Nash, and William Vernon. Ardeth Anderson created the imagery including drawings and maps. Page Selinsky and Janice Barrabee undertook initial editing. We expect to be responding to peer comments in spring 2017, and in-hand final publication is expected spring 2018.

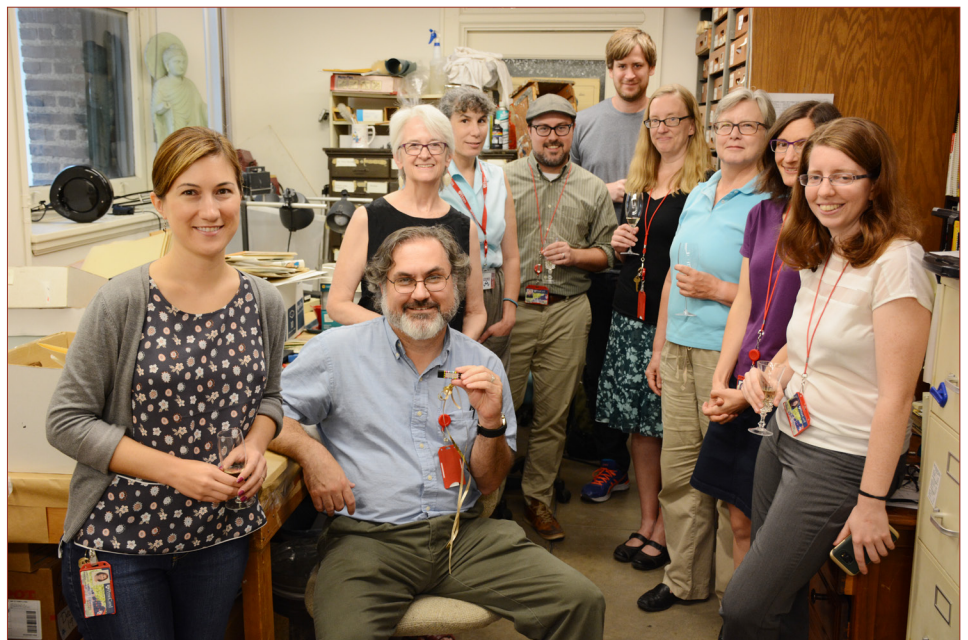
The year provided numerous occasions for presentations and outreach. The Fine Arts Department of Thailand hosted a wonderful 3-day symposium celebrating the 50th anniversary of Stephen Young's discovery of the Ban Chiang site in 1966. In addition to the presentation by Joyce White that provided an overview of the site's research, Stephen Young, Mike Pietruszewsky, Pisit Charoenwongsa, and many others gave talks putting the Ban Chiang Project data and issues of illegal trafficking

in Ban Chiang antiquities into a wider context of Thai prehistoric archaeology. White also had occasions to speak on these Ban Chiang topics in Washington DC at the residence of the Ambassador of Thailand His Excellency Pisan Manawapat, and at the Smithsonian Institution. She also spoke at the National Museum of Thailand in Bangkok. At the 2nd SEAMEO-SPAFA conference in Bangkok, White's paper gave a preview of the metals volume.

The U.S. Justice Department case known as Operation Antiquity that focused on smuggling of prehistoric artifacts from Thailand, especially of the Ban Chiang cultural tradition, had several notable advances this past year. Two of the California museums that

accessioned objects illegally exported from Thailand returned hundreds of artifacts to the Thai government. White testified at a sentencing hearing for two of the defendants, one of whom was sentenced to an astounding 18 months in jail.

The investigative team, including White, received a U.S. Attorneys' Award in recognition for distinguished service in the case. Joseph O. Johns, Chief of the Environmental and Community Safety Crimes Section of the United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California, stated that the "complex, international undercover investigation headed by these outstanding individuals determined that the... [defendants] were illegally importing and selling



On September 7th, we handed over the metals monograph for peer review and had a small party to celebrate! Photo by Tom Stanley.

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The etched glass award plaque from the US Department of Justice recognizes Joyce White for her “integrity, commitment, and outstanding service to the people of the United States of America.”



Dan LoMastro and Steve Lang examine a spool made from woven bamboo from the White ethnographic collection stored in Mainwaring storage at the Penn Museum.

ancient, archeological resources from China, Thailand, Burma, and Cambodia.” Johns furthermore said about Dr. White, “Typically, expert witnesses are not recognized—but then again, you were not the typical expert witness. Your experience, expertise, and advice were woven by... the agent team into the very fabric of the investigation.”

Check out the ISEAA website for more information on this case! <http://iseaaarchaeology.org/operation-antiquity/>

During the next year, Joyce White will be visiting Southeast Asia to lecture for an Archaeological Institute of America tour of the southern Mekong and to conduct a short field and study season in Luang Prabang, Laos. Stay tuned for news on those endeavors and hopefully the final submission of the Ban Chiang metals monograph for printing in our next newsletter!

***Your continued support remains crucial for our operations. We need YOUR contributions to maintain and strengthen ISEAA's basic operations. Please send your check or donate online today!***

Joyce C. White, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Institute for Southeast Asian Archaeology

## PAST RESEARCH BECOMES NEW AT THE PENN MUSEUM

### *Thai Ethnographic Collection*

ISEAA volunteer Dan LoMastro, under the guidance Stephen Lang, the Penn Museum’s Lyons Keeper of Collections in the Asian Section, spent 5 months engaged with the northeast Thai ethnographic collection brought to the Museum in the early 1980’s by Dr. Joyce White. The goals of the work were to improve cataloguing and enhance accessibility of the collection to both researchers and the public.

The work was divided into 2 parts: data cleaning and photography. The data aspect included verifying field numbers, measuring objects, and generally improving the online record information to ensure accuracy. The goal of the photography was to present a representative

sample of the tools, basketry, clothing, cookware, and craft items used in daily Thai life. Of the more than 400 objects in this Thai ethnographic collection, 137 have been photographed so far and information for every object is available on the Penn Museum’s online collection. A shortcut to the part of the collection with photographs is provided here: <http://bit.ly/2bxYmQx>

Not only is this work important for preserving traditional Thai material culture in the face of modernization, but improving the collection’s documentation increases the opportunity for future scholarship and research on Southeast Asia. Steve Lang noted, “It’s been great to see the collection get the attention it deserves. We spent a lot of time thinking about the museum’s web presence and how to make as much of the collection available online as possible. Any chance we get to include more data about an object and to provide an image usually results in more information coming back to us. Whether that’s through a class use request, a researcher request, or the public giving us feedback, everyone benefits.”

Posts on the collection to the ISEAA Facebook page, to the Thai/Lao Cambodia listserve, and to the Southeast Asian Ceramic Archaeology listserve generated comments from several key ethnographers and curators, alerting us to similar collections at the American Museum of Natural History and the Burke Museum.

Dan has moved on to a full-time job here at the Museum, continuing his work as an Inventory Technician for the Registrar’s Office. *Thank you, Dan, for all your years volunteering for ISEAA!*

### ***Study of Traditional Rice Cultivation***

This fall, CAAM (the Museum’s Center for the Analysis of Archaeological Materials) archaeobotanist Chantel White and Penn student Fabian Toro (’17) began a new project to microscopically

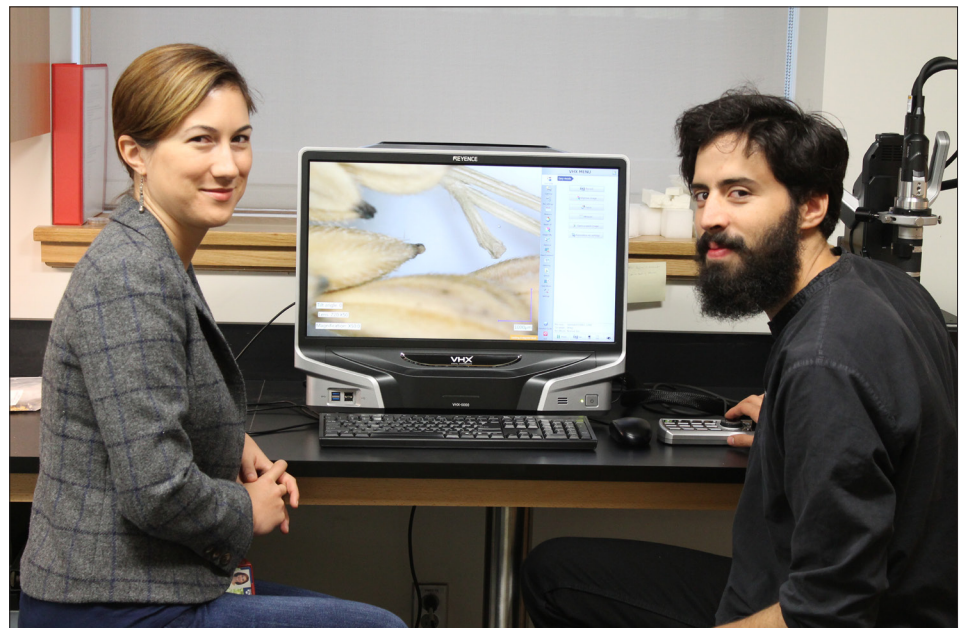
examine rice cultivars from northeast Thailand. This study is based on the field notes and rice samples collected by Joyce White near Ban Chiang in 1980. Each rice specimen is currently being photographed using the digital microscope housed in CAAM, along with the measurement of grains and spikelet bases. The study will incorporate crop information from local farmers (translated by Penn undergraduate student Claire Elliot) in order to identify correlations between plant morphology and crop management strategies, such as relationships between growing conditions, harvesting times, and grain size. These data will provide an important ethnobotanical perspective for understanding the process of rice domestication and cultivation within archaeological contexts. Fabian will present the results of this research at the upcoming Society for American Archaeology conference this spring in Vancouver, British Columbia. Chantel is also using Joyce's ethnobotanical collection for her course in fall semester 2016, *Plants and Society*.

### *Translating Thai Collections*

Claire Elliot is a senior at Penn in the College of Arts and Science majoring in religious studies, with a focus in Southeast Asia and Thailand specifically. She has studied the Thai language for some time, and has spent about 14 months living in Thailand over the past five years. Claire is now working with the museum, helping to translate, catalogue, and generally make available the museum's many different Thai collections. Right now she is focusing on Joyce White's ethnographic and ethnobotanical collections, and will soon be moving forward to translating the museum's mid-late 19th century amulets. ISEAA is thrilled to have Claire's special expertise contribute to our mission to expand scholarly and public access to Penn Museum's Thai collections!



Joyce White and Lung Li look over gathered plant specimens in 1981 in Ban Chiang.



Chantel White and Fabian Toro with close-up image of rice husks on the Keyence microscope in a CAAM lab at the Penn Museum.

### *Lab NOTES*

❖ The first ISEAA Early Career Award, which is actually the first academic award specifically for the discipline of Southeast Asian archaeology ever, was awarded to Alison Kyra Carter by ISEAA Executive Director at the SEAMEO-SPAFA meeting in Bangkok in May.

The second round of the ISEAA Early

Career Award has been announced with the deadline for nominations December 1, 2017.

❖ The Fine Arts Department of Thailand with the Provincial Government of Udon Thani hosted an international conference on Ban Chiang May 26-28, 2016 in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the site.

❖ Joyce presented "Implementing the new archaeometallurgy paradigm in

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*\*The Institute for Southeast Asian Archaeology is a program partner of the Urban Affairs Coalition (UAC). UAC administers ISEAA funds as a 501c3 nonprofit, so that ISEAA can focus on conducting and publishing research. The official registration and financial information of the UAC may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999, or go to [www.charities.pa.gov](http://www.charities.pa.gov): enter EIN237046393 and select "Charities". Registration does not imply endorsement.*



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Southeast Asia" in July at the European Association for Southeast Asian Archaeologists in Paris.

❖Joyce presented "Hot Pots, Museum Raids, and the Race to Uncover Asia's Archaeological Past" talk in Thailand June 3rd, at the National Museum Auditorium, Bangkok and at the Smithsonian in Washington DC on October 6th.

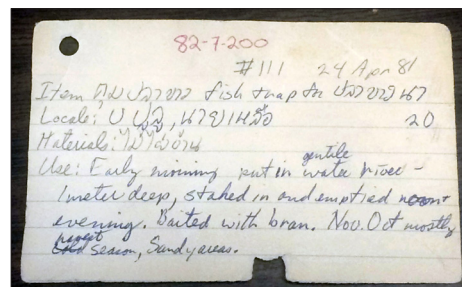
❖In an interview entitled, "The legacy of Ban Chiang," Joyce White talked about Thailand's most famous archaeological site to *The Isaan Record*, an online journal based in Khon Kaen, the northeast region of Thailand. <http://isaanrecord.com/2016/04/20/the-legacy-of-ban-chiang-archaeologist-joyce-white-talks-about-thailands-most-famous-archaeological-site/>

❖As the newsletter goes to press, the ISEAA Facebook "likes" have passed 1600!! Our Facebook posts are one of

our most successful outreach efforts, with strong international followings among both scholars and laypersons interested in news of Southeast Asian archaeology.

❖Cyler Conrad (Ph.D. student, University of New Mexico) visited the ISEAA and Penn Museum last April to sort and collect the Tham Phaa Caan (Steep Cliff Cave) zooarchaeological remains! This collection is being reanalyzed by Cyler as part of his dissertation research, along with fauna from Chet Gorman's excavations at Spirit Cave and Banyan Valley Cave.

❖Oli Pryce has received a large grant from the French National Research Funding Agency that will result in additional copper-base samples being studied for lead isotopes, as well as many of our glass samples. We are super excited for this expanded sampling of our Ban Chiang materials for scientific studies!



Top: Claire Elliot is translating notes in Thai from Joyce White's ethnographic and ethnobotanical collections at the Penn Museum. Bottom: Example of a field card for a fish trap from Joyce White's ethnographic collection.



Cyler Conrad visited the Museum in April to collect fauna excavated by Chet Gorman from Tham Phaa Caan. Photo by Beth Van Horn.

