

Introduction to Archaeology

Archaeology 100/Anthropology 100

Fall 2002

Problem 2: Exploring the *Recreating the Past* Interface

Thursday **24 October** (section)

Recreating the Past: Archaeology in Northwest Honduras is a web resource that illustrates many of the kinds of information and analytical strategies that archaeologists use to interpret the past. The data are real, drawn from John Henderson's long-term investigations in the lower Uluja valley.

This exercise is designed to introduce the interface and the kinds of data to which it gives access. It provides the tools for a series of problems in analysis and interpretation of archaeological data.

The system requires that your browser have the Flash 6 plug-in. If you do not have that version, go to the Macromedia website <<http://www.macromedia.com/downloads>> and download it.

Go to the main page <<http://instruct6.eit.cornell.edu/~j3000/main.htm>> which provides a capsule overview of *Recreating the Past*. You can also link to it from the **Arch100 CourseInfo** web site under **External Links**.

- From here you can follow links to
- 1 a series of pages with information on the valley, the history of archaeological investigations there, and the larger Maya and Mesoamerican cultural spheres of which it is a part
 - 2 a set of map-based tools for exploring the natural environment of the valley and the distribution of archaeological sites and features within it (**Flash Map Tool**)
 - 3 a set of tools for exploring the data from individual sites and for comparing sets of sites (**Site Explorer**)

Explore the Map Tool's map layers

Goal: Become acquainted with the interface and get a feel for the geography of the valley.

What does the valley look like geographically? Do you see any patterns between the distribution of sites and features such as rivers, lakes, valley edges etc.?

Click on the Flash Map Tool link. A map of the lower Uluja valley displays in the center of the screen with dots representing archaeological sites. The Toolbox at the upper left allows you to zoom in or out (magnifying glasses, crosshair zoom box, reset button), to change the size of the circles that represent archaeological sites (increase, decrease and reset), and to display detailed data from individual sites (shovel tool). Experiment with the zoom and symbol size tools.

The Map Layers box at the upper right works like a geographic information system (GIS) program, allowing you to view the valley in different ways. You can turn on site labels with the check box at the bottom of the menu. The labels display the site codes used by the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia, which lists sites by the Departamento (State) in which they are located. Sites in the western and southern parts of the valley are in Cortés (CRmm); those in the east are in Yoro (YRmm). The default view displays a small-scale (1:250,000) topographic map of the valley. You can turn on larger-scale (1:30,000) topographic maps of the central part of the valley, a satellite image, a map of elevation zones; and schematic representations of geomorphic zones (roughly equivalent to distinct environmental subareas), rivers and lakes, and abandoned channels (former channels of the major rivers). Slider bars

allow you to "dim" selected layers to see how various features correspond. Experiment with various combinations.

Graphically map archaeological data

Goal: Graphically represent different types of archaeological data.

Do you see any patterns? Do some sites seem to "stand out" from the others?

Hint: Look at site # CR372

The Map Data box at the lower left allows you to graphically "map" the distributions of different kinds of architectural features and artifacts as well as the distribution of sites. The default selection is All Sites, which displays the locations.

Select Architecture. The site circles on the map now indicate which sites have dressed stone construction, architectural ornamentation, ball courts, and stelae according to the color codes in the Legend box. You can turn the individual features on and off with the check boxes. Experiment with the other selections in the Map Data box. Links in the Legend box explain the features whose distributions are displayed.

Explore an individual site in greater detail

Goal: You can view more information on a specific site in "Site Explorer" by using the "dig" (shovel) tool.

View the site plans, site images, artifact images and site data.

Select All Sites and turn labels on. Zoom in on the central part of the valley until you see CR035 (partly obscured behind another label until you zoom in far enough). Select the shovel tool. Move it over the CR035 circle (not the label) and click on the site code link in the yellow box that pops up (if you click in the wrong place and get a link other than CR035, click on close and try again).

Site Explorer opens to the page for CR035, Travestia. Select the All Sites link at the bottom of the menu on the left; the Site Explorer main page opens; you could have gone directly here from the link on the *Recreating the Past* main page. From here you can browse site plans and photos; plans, profiles, and photos of excavations and images of artifacts. You can also compare profiles and data from different sites. Click on Compare Sites. On the comparator page, select CR035 and CR157; you could turn off some of the data categories, but leave them all checked; click on submit. A table appears showing the corresponding information for each site. You could click on Compare Sites again to make another selection.

Click on the Single Site link; select the CR035 link from the list; the Travestia page opens. Click on the Plans link under Site Views. Thumbnail images of three maps of Travestia appear. Click on the thumbnail on the left to display the full-size image of the site plan by Doris Stone who excavated at Travestia in the 1930s and 1940s. Click on the Photos link to display thumbnails of views of Travestia; again, clicking on the thumbnail displays the full-size image. Look at the Excavation Profile, which has a drawing of the stratigraphy in excavation unit 83A1 at Travestia and a table showing the frequencies of key types of artifacts recovered from each level. You will use this profile in a later problem. Explore the Artifacts links (the other links on the menu are not operational yet).

Explore the information links from the main page, and the features of Site Explorer at your leisure. This tool will be used for subsequent exercises.