

EXCAVATION & SKELETAL ANALYSIS

June 29, 2012 Nancy Lovell Day of Archaeology 2012, Osteology Ancient history, Archaeology, Asia, Bioarchaeology, Canada, Civilizations, Egypt, Excavation, Geography, Indus Valley Civilization, Mesopotamia, osteology, Pakistan, Western Asia

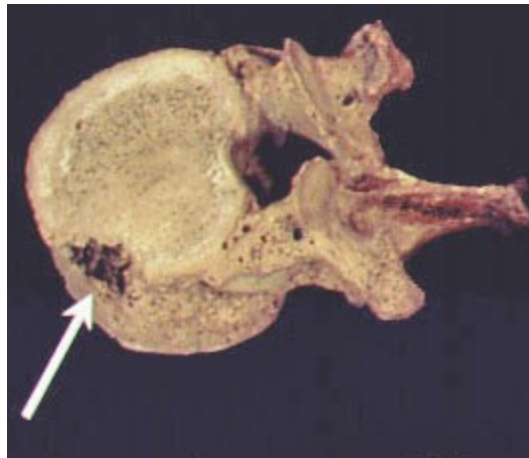
For many years I would be on my way to Egypt at this time of year, trying to figure out how to stretch the grant money to cover as much time in the field as possible. But this year I'm in my research lab at the university, working on the final stages of several projects.

As an archaeology student I discovered that I was mainly interested in the people themselves, rather than their garbage. So my specialization is in human skeletal remains (bioarchaeology). I'm particularly interested in how human skeletons reveal aspects of the interrelationships between culture, environment, and health. I have excavated ancient cemeteries in Egypt and Pakistan, and have studied human skeletal remains from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus Valley Civilization, and from historic cemeteries of the Fur Trade Period in western Canada.



A 2,000 year old cemetery in Egypt.

Today I'm examining 2,000 year old human bones and teeth for evidence of fractures and various forms of disease.



Tuberculosis in the spine.

Usually there are one or two interesting or important discoveries made in the field, but often the significance of your work isn't clear until you've had a chance to examine all of the finds and to determine where they fit in the big picture of the site, and of the ancient culture more broadly. That process usually takes years!

I also study the historic and prehistoric ways in which people dealt with their dead. With this research I don't excavate, but instead I examine the above-ground and archival record of historic cemeteries in western Canada in order to assess the fit between archaeological interpretive models for prehistoric cemeteries and the documented evidence for burial practices.

If you'd like to learn more about my research, please check the website on my profile.