

# 2012 TRAVEL ADVENTURES

## CAHOKIA, CHACO, AND MESOAMERICAN CONNECTIONS

*Trace the histories of two contemporaneous ancient societies—and explore their possible connections to Mesoamerica*

**October 6–14, 2012**

Chaco, located in northwestern New Mexico, and Cahokia, located in southern Illinois, were “capitals” of the two most impressive ancient societies north of Mesoamerica: Pueblo and Mississippian. The two were similar in many ways—their rise and fall spanned the tenth through thirteenth centuries A.D.; both are notable for their monumental architecture; and both were cosmopolitan urban centers, enjoying continent-wide connections. But (so far) archaeologists have found no evidence of direct contact between them.

This fascinating exploration will be among the first attempts to consider Chaco and Cahokia in their continental context, which includes the rich histories of Mesoamerican civilizations to the south. Are the parallel trajectories of Chaco and Cahokia the result of parallel evolutionary developments? Or are their histories linked through shared connections to Mesoamerica? Led by specialists in all three areas, we will explore these questions and many others as we travel to both Chaco and Cahokia, the two most important sites of their respective regions.



### SCHOLARS

**Dr. Stephen Lekson**, professor and curator of anthropology at the University Museum, University of Colorado, is a leading authority on Chaco. His theories, especially one in which he proposes a link between Chaco and fifteenth-century Paquimé in Mexico, have captured the attention of archaeologists and the public alike.



**Dr. Timothy Pauketat**, professor of anthropology at the University of Illinois, studies the historical relationships between identity, religion, politics, and everyday life in ancient North America. For the past 14 years, Tim’s research on Mississippian culture at Cahokia has influenced archaeologists’ understanding of the development of social complexity.



**Dr. Gerardo Gutierrez**, assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Colorado, specializes in Mesoamerican archaeology. His research interests include the spatial analysis of political and territorial competition of Mesoamerican polities previous to, and during the expansion of, the Aztec Empire.



Courtesy of the Illinois State Archaeological Survey, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



**CROW CANYON**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTER  
Discover the Past, Share the Adventure

800.422.8975, ext. 160 or 146 • [www.crowcanyon.org/travel](http://www.crowcanyon.org/travel)

**Dates:** Saturday, October 6–Sunday, October 14, 2012

**Tuition:** Member\* \$3,495 • Nonmember \$3,620

**Deposit:** \$400 • Balance due: August 6, 2012

\*Minimum \$100 membership required. For information on membership, visit [www.crowcanyon.org/membership](http://www.crowcanyon.org/membership).

## EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

- Chaco and Cahokia in their continental context—comparing each with the other and with Mesoamerican civilizations to the south
- The relationships between landscape, material culture, and identity, and the influence of ideology and power as reflected in exotic trade items and artistic expression
- How social stratification develops, and how it is identified in the archaeological record
- Global history and commonalities of the human experience, with an emphasis on histories, events, and conditions particular to North America

## TOUR DETAILS

**Tuition:** Tuition is per person and based on shared accommodations. Tuition includes accommodations, meals listed, entry fees and permits, most gratuities, and transportation from arrival in Durango, Colorado, on October 6, 2012, until departure from St. Louis, Missouri, on October 14, 2012, including one internal flight from Durango to St. Louis (one-way economy ticket; excludes luggage fees and upgrades). Transportation to Durango and from St. Louis is your responsibility.

**Accommodations:** All nights are spent in comfortable motels. Motel accommodations are double-occupancy; single accommodations are available for an additional fee of \$330.

**What to Expect:** This program begins in Durango, Colorado, and ends in St. Louis, Missouri. Travel in Colorado and New Mexico is by Crow Canyon van; travel in Missouri and Illinois is by mini-bus. Some drives are on remote dirt roads. There is also a one-way internal flight from Durango to St. Louis on Wednesday, October 10. Although this is not a hiking program, access to most sites will require walks of up to 2 miles roundtrip over uneven terrain.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

**B:** Breakfast

**L:** Lunch

**D:** Dinner

### Saturday, October 6:

Arrival in Durango • Introduction

Arrive in Durango, Colorado, by 4:00 p.m. for dinner and introductions. Steve, Tim, and Gerardo set the stage with an overview of the program themes. Overnight, Durango. **(D)**

### Sunday, October 7: Chaco Culture National Historical Park • Pueblo Bonito • Chetro Ketl

This morning we drive south from Durango to Chaco Culture National Historical Park, located in the high desert of northern New Mexico. From about A.D. 900 to 1150, Chaco Canyon was the center of a vast regional system that integrated the entire Pueblo world. High-status burials, exotic trade goods, and the construction of “great houses,” massive earthen platforms, colonnades, and roadways are clear evidence of a stratified society. Social hierarchy is a characteristic shared by Chaco and Cahokia, and the Chaco system may have been a northern manifestation of the Mesoamerican political form called *altepetl*—a hypothesis we discuss on-site. At the great houses of Pueblo Bonito and Chetro Ketl, we examine features that suggest Mesoamerican influence and discuss at least two different trade routes originating in Mesoamerica. Overnight, Farmington, New Mexico. **(B, L, D)**

### Monday, October 8: Aztec Ruins • Chimney Rock

We spend the morning at Aztec Ruins, where, after A.D. 1125, the center of gravity in the Chacoan world shifted north via the Great North Road. Though Aztec started strong, it faded fast. Prolonged drought and social and political upheaval caused the regional system to fragment. Archaeological evidence points to social disorder and violence, perhaps reflecting attempts by leaders to enforce a failing political system.

This afternoon, we drive northeast from Aztec to Chimney Rock, an imposing “outlier site” that towers above the upper San Juan River. Chacoan outliers were “small” great houses built throughout the northern Southwest and connected to one another and to Chaco via a system of roads. Steve’s 2009 excavations at Chimney Rock suggest it was a Chacoan “colony,” whereas some other outliers may



have been built by local elites emulating the Chaco style. As we explore this fascinating site, we discuss the role of great houses in unifying or even controlling local populations. Overnight, Durango. **(B, L, D)**

**Tuesday, October 9:** Museum Tour • Panel Discussion

This morning, we view the collections at one of the local museums housing ancestral Pueblo artifacts from area sites (dependent on exhibit schedules). After lunch, we participate in a panel discussion with Steve, Tim, Gerardo, and local guest scholars to examine the theme of ancient connections. Did the Pueblo people of the Chacoan world know of their contemporaries in the Mississippi River Valley, and did the people of Cahokia know of Chaco? We also consider evidence of a Mesoamerican link, including the presence of colonnades, platform mounds, roads, and extensive trade economies. Overnight, Durango. **(B, L, D)**

**Wednesday, October 10:** Durango to St. Louis

Today we fly from Durango, Colorado, to St. Louis, Missouri. An evening program introduces us to ancient Mississippian culture, in preparation for our tour of Cahokia tomorrow, on the Illinois side of the river. Overnight, St. Louis. **(B, L, D)**

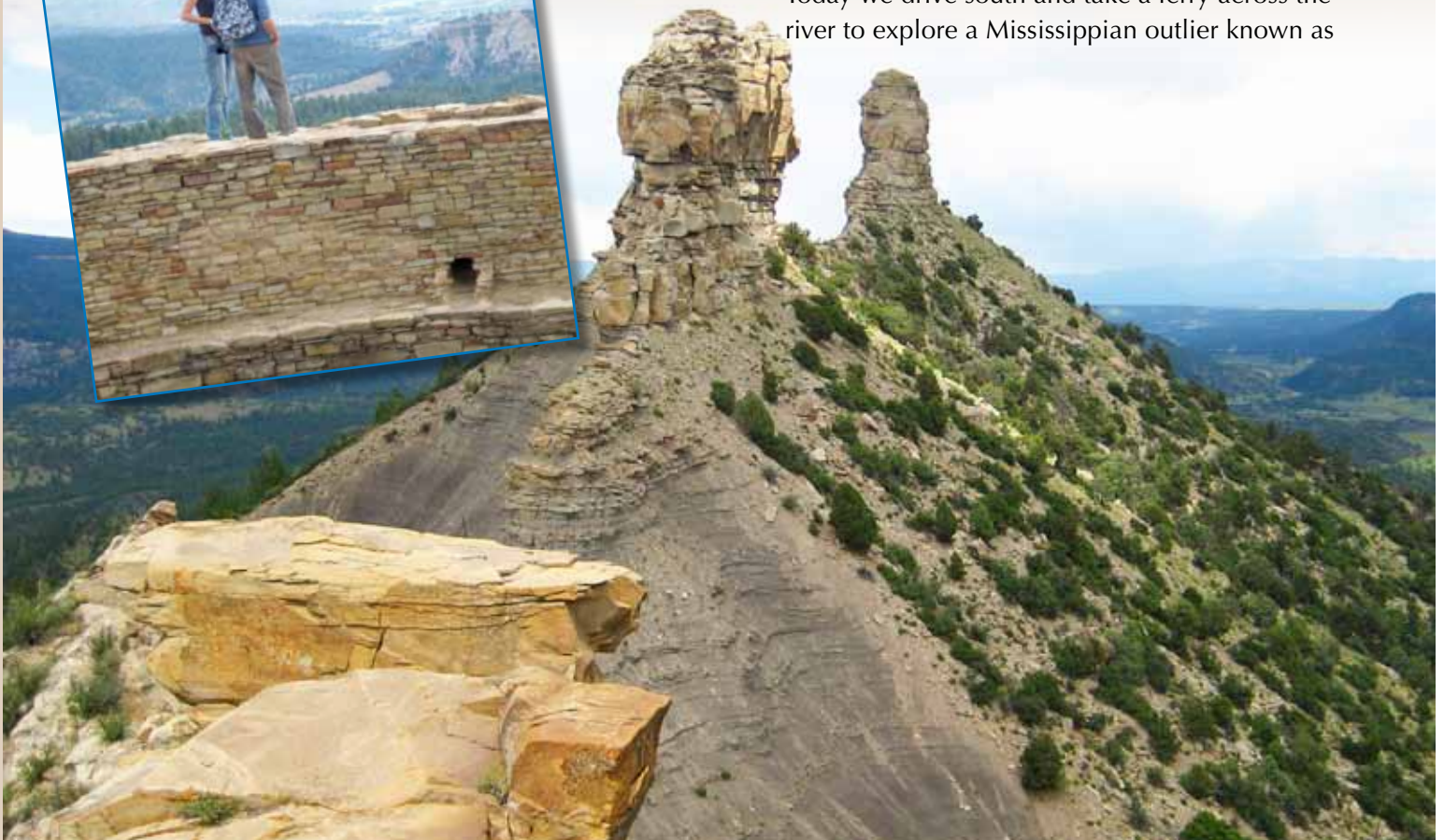
**Thursday, October 11:** Cahokia State Historic Site

• Monks Mound • East St. Louis Group

Cahokia, the earliest and largest Mississippian urban center, was the exact contemporary of Chaco. Located along the east bank of the Mississippi River, this massive complex has scores of earthen mounds, including pyramids, tombs, and monuments. At its heart lies Monks Mound—the largest precolumbian earthen construction in North America. The size and shape of a major Mesoamerican city, Cahokia has many features that are familiar to those who have studied the civilizations of Mesoamerica: a symmetrical center; large, four-sided pyramids; pole-and-thatch houses; and artifacts that bear a striking resemblance to those found to the south. Like Chaco and Mesoamerican civilizations, Cahokia developed a hierarchical society, as evidenced by public works, mortuary practices, and material culture indicative of feasting and the payment of tribute. Nearby is the East St. Louis Group, containing the ruins of 50 earthen pyramids and associated temples, huts, and walled compounds. Accompanied by project archaeologists, we tour the sites and learn what recent discoveries tell us about their relationship to the nearby capital of Cahokia. Overnight, St. Louis. **(B, L, D)**

**Friday, October 12:** Common Fields • Sainte Genevieve

Today we drive south and take a ferry across the river to explore a Mississippian outlier known as



Common Fields. Just as with Chaco, Cahokia's decline appears to have been associated with the movement of social energy from centralized powerhouses to other strategic locations in the region. Tim's recent excavations at Cahokian outliers suggest that major historical shifts involved ritual activities and the reorientation of houses and mounds. Tim also connects Cahokia to later indigenous history, drawing on both archaeological evidence and the oral history of Siouan-speaking peoples. We spend the evening in the historic French Colonial village of Sainte Genevieve on the Missouri side of the river. Overnight, Sainte Genevieve. **(B, L, D)**

### **Saturday, October 13: Panel Discussion**

This morning we participate in a panel discussion to examine the "big picture." What do apparent similarities between Chaco, Cahokia, and Mesoamerica signal in terms of influence or contact, either direct or indirect? What cultural or historic *differences* between Chaco and Cahokia might have shaped the extent and nature of their respective relationships with Mesoamerican civilizations? How is material culture used to assert power and authority? These and related questions have challenged archaeologists for decades, and though we cannot hope for final resolution today, the debate is sure to be lively, informative, and thought-provoking. This afternoon, we return to St. Louis for a farewell dinner. Overnight, St. Louis. **(B, L, D)**

### **Sunday, October 14: Departures from St. Louis**

Departures may be scheduled for any time after breakfast. **(B)**

***Itinerary subject to change.***



## **TOUR RESERVATIONS**

**Phone:** Call **800.422.8975, ext. 160 or 146**, Mon–Fri, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Mountain Time).

**Online:** Use the secure reservation form at [www.crowcanyon.org/travel](http://www.crowcanyon.org/travel).

**Please Note:** Online requests are subject to availability. Your credit card will not be charged until your registration is fully processed and confirmed by Crow Canyon.

**Late Reservations:** To secure reservations on a trip for which the final payment deadline has passed, full payment by credit card is required at the time of your reservation. Last-minute reservations are subject to space availability and may require the payment of late fees.

**Cancellation:** All cancellation requests must be made in writing to Crow Canyon Registrar, 23390 Road K, Cortez, CO 81321-9408, or e-mailed to [travel@crowcanyon.org](mailto:travel@crowcanyon.org). Cancellations become effective on the date received. The following penalty schedule applies: On or before August 6, 2012: \$200 handling fee; after August 6, 2012: forfeiture of all payments.

**Group Size:** Our programs are designed for small groups. A minimum number of participants is required for each trip. If this minimum is not reached by the final payment date, you may be offered several options: pay a slightly higher program price, select another program, or receive a full refund. Please contact us to check program status prior to making your travel arrangements.

The Crow Canyon Archaeological Center's programs and admission practices are open to applicants of any race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, or sexual orientation.

Crow Canyon is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization whose mission is to advance knowledge of the human experience through archaeological research, education programs, and collaboration with American Indians. Crow Canyon is nationally recognized for the quality of its archaeological research and education programs.

Crow Canyon reserves the right to withdraw, without penalty, any announced program (in which case, a full refund of the purchase price will be made) or to make necessary changes to a program or program schedule. Crow Canyon is not responsible, in the event of cancellation or alteration of a program, for any airline or other commercial transportation cancellation penalty incurred by purchasing a nonrefundable or restricted ticket. Please contact us about program status prior to making your travel arrangements. We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance; information about travel insurance will be sent to you as a service. Terms and conditions will be sent as part of your registration package; this information is also available online at [www.crowcanyon.org/travel](http://www.crowcanyon.org/travel).

Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California – CST 2059347-50.

© 2011 by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. All rights reserved.

**800.422.8975, ext. 160 or 146 • [www.crowcanyon.org/travel](http://www.crowcanyon.org/travel)**