2019 AIA-OC SOCIETY GRANT RECIPIENT

Amy Chan, CSULA

Biography
A native to Orange County, Amy Chan graduated summa cum laude from UCLA in Anthropology and is now pursuing her Master’s degree at California State University, Los Angeles. She has excavated at a medieval cemetery in Italy, an Egyptian fortress in Israel, and a Paleoindian bison-kill in Texas. Amy’s culminating thesis on New Kingdom Egyptian funerary food offerings was presented at the Society for American Archaeology Conference. She has won grants from the Cotsen Archaeology Institute and the Irving and Jean Stone Foundation. Amy is currently conducting and analysis on the dentition of Maya sacrificial victims from the Midnight Terror Cave, Belize.

Project Summary
Amy Chan is conducting an analysis of the dentition from 118 Maya sacrificial victims from the Midnight Terror Cave, Belize. The remains were excavated in 2008-2010 dating to the Classic Period (250 CE - 925 CE). Her research explores the health, social status, and geographic origin of the sacrificial victims through scoring dental wear, calculus, caries, enamel defects, and dental morphology of 1,193 teeth. Variations in dental morphology reveal familial relationships and population movements indicating the geographic spread of victims’ birthplaces. Dental pathologies, such as enamel defects and caries, provide information on the health and social status of the sacrificial victims. Dental wear, caries, and calculus indicate the grit, texture, and types of food consumed by the population. Preliminary examination of the dental collection however, make it clear that the individuals in the Midnight Terror Cave have lower rates of dental wear and caries than other Maya remains. Funding from the AIA-OC will go towards laboratory testing of dental calculus. Phytoliths, pollen, starch, and other microdeposits left by foodstuffs on the Maya will allow Amy to establish the diet of the Midnight Terror Cave victims and may indicate why the remains in the Midnight Terror Cave are different from the established trend in Maya dental health.