

Sylvia Deskaj, M.A.

Lab Coordinator & Staff Archaeologist
Cobb Institute of Archaeology

Cobb Building, Room 201
340 Lee Blv.
P.O. Box AR
Mississippi State University, MS 39762
sd115@msstate.edu
Phone: 662.325.7520

Education

Michigan State University M.A., Anthropology	2009 – 2011
Northeastern Illinois University B.A., Anthropology / Minor, Biology	2004 – 2008

Interests

- Anthropological archaeology
- European prehistory, specifically Neolithic – Iron Age
- Mortuary analysis
- Migration, trade, and social interaction
- Southeastern Europe, the Balkans

Honors, Grants & Fellowships Received

Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Scholar	2014
Elemental Analysis Facility Grant, Field Museum of Natural History	2014
Graduate Student Research Grant, Dept. of Anthropology, Michigan State University	2014
Graduate Research Enhancement Grant, The Graduate School, Michigan State University	2014
Archaeological Institute of America – Graduate Student Travel Grant	2014
Department of Anthropology Travel Grant, Michigan State University	2013
American Philosophical Society	2013
Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Scholar	2013
Linked Ancient World Data Institute Fellowship	2013
Michigan State University Graduate Student Research Grant	2013
Archaeological Institute of America – Graduate Student Travel Grant	2013

MSU's Campus Archaeology Fellowship	2012 – 2013
Cultural Heritage Informatics Initiative Fellowship	2012 – 2013
Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Scholar	2012
Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship	2011
Michigan State University Graduate Student Research Grant	2011
Department of Anthropology Travel Grant, Michigan State University	2011
Michigan State University Graduate Student Research Grant	2010
Scholar of the American Councils for International Education	2009

Teaching Experience

AN 1344: Introduction to Biological Anthropology <i>Mississippi State University</i> Instructor	Spring 2015
AN 4990: Introduction to Forensic Anthropology <i>Mississippi State University</i> Instructor	Spring 2015
AN 1344: Introduction to Biological Anthropology <i>Mississippi State University</i> Instructor	Fall 2014
AN 1001: CSI:MSU – Forensic Science Across <i>Mississippi State University</i> Instructor	Fall 2014
SO/AN 2203: Racial Minorities <i>Mississippi State University</i> Instructor	Fall 2014
ISP 217L: Water and the Environment Laboratory <i>Michigan State University</i> Lecturer: Lectured on relevant materials and led laboratory experiments. Supervisor: Orlando Sarnelle, Professor of Fisheries and Wildlife, MSU	Fall 2010
ISP 203L: Geology of the Human Environment Laboratory <i>Michigan State University</i> Lecturer: Lectured relevant materials and led laboratory experiments. Supervisor: Michael Gottfried, Associate Professor of Geological Sciences, MSU	Spring 2010
SOAN 3110: Archaeology of Selected Culture Area: "The Snake That Bites: History and Archaeology as the Basis for Albanian National Identity" <i>Albania and Montenegro</i> Teaching Assistant & Interpreter	June 8-22, 2008

Publications

2016 *Bioarchaeology and Mortuary Analysis: Developing Cultural Context*. Special issue of Open Archaeology. Editors: **Sylvia Deskaj** and Amy Michael.

2016 *Living Amongst the Dead: Establishing and Maintaining Community in Northern Albania*. In: Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association (in press). Author: **Sylvia Deskaj**

2011 Contributions regarding archaeology to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry on Kosovo written by Antonia Young.

2011 Chapter 21 contributed to *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeological Human Remains and Legislation: an international guide to laws and practice in the excavation and treatment of archaeological human remains* (with S. Schermer and E. Shukriu), edited by N. Marquez-Grant and L. Fibiger. Routledge, London. Authors: Shirley Schermer, Edi Shukriu, and **Sylvia Deskaj**.

2009 Translated and transcribed ethnographic audio files from the 2005 field season of the Shala Valley Project (SVP). Available at:
http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/svp_mellon_2009/overview.cfm?CFID=573996&CFTOKEN=39545028

2008 Contributions to the final report of the 2008 field season of the Shala Valley Project (SVP). Available at: www.millsaps.edu/svp.

Conferences and Workshops Organized

Balkan Bronze Age Borderland: Along Ancient Routes from the Aegean to Albania

Planning Committee Member

June 28 – July 11, 2015

Histology in Anthropology: Introduction and Practical Uses in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Research

Workshop Organizer

April 1, 2015

Symposia Organized and/or Chaired

Archaeological Institute of America

New Orleans, LA

2015

Symposium Organizer & Chair: Co-organized a symposium entitled *Moving People, Moving Goods, Moving Ahead: Reconsidering factors affecting socio-cultural developments from the Mesolithic through the Iron Age in prehistoric eastern Europe* at the 116th Annual Meeting, along with Danielle Riebe. Discussants: Dr. Lorenc Bejko (Professor, Department of Archaeology, University of Tirana) and Dr. Barbara Voytek (UC Berkeley).

Society for American Archaeology 2014
Austin, TX

Symposium Organizer & Chair: Co-organized a symposium entitled *The Link Between Mortuary Analysis and Advances in Scientific Methods: Developing Cultural Context* at the 79th Annual Meeting, along with Amy Michael. Discussant: Dr. Lynne Goldstein (Professor, Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University).

Society for American Archaeology 2012
Memphis, TN

Symposium Organizer & Chair: Organized a symposium entitled *Recent Trends in Albanian Archaeology: A Decade in Review* at the 79th Annual Meeting. Symposium consisted of national and international participants.

Conference Presentations

2015 “Entangled (Pre) Histories: Albanian Ethnic Identities, Past and Present.” Author: **Sylvia Deskaj**. Delivered at the 114th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 18-22, 2015, Denver, CO.

2015 “Biological Anthropology, Nationalism, and Archaeological Interpretation in Albania: The Search for an Illyrian Past.” Author: **Sylvia Deskaj**. Delivered at the 116th Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America, January 8-11, 2015, New Orleans, LA.

2014 “The Walking Dead: Establishing and Maintaining Community in Northern Albania.” Author: **Sylvia Deskaj**. Delivered at the 79th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, April 23-27, 2014, Chicago, IL.

2014 “Exploring the Relationship Between Sampling Loci and Developmental Age in Isotopic Studies of Human Teeth: A Pilot Study from Kamenica, Albania.” Authors: Amy Michael and **Sylvia Deskaj**. Delivered at the 79th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, April 23-27, 2014, Chicago, IL.

2014 “The Projekti Arkeologjike i Shkodrës (PASH): Results of the 2013 Field Season.” Authors: Michael Galaty, Lorenc Bejko, **Sylvia Deskaj**, Jamie Harris, and Stan Galicki. Delivered at the 79th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, April 23-27, 2014, Chicago, IL.

2014 “The 2013 Field Season of the Projekti Arkeologjikë i Shkodrës (PASH), Northern Albania.” Authors: **Sylvia Deskaj**, Lorenc Bejko, Michael Galaty, Stanley Galicki, Jamie Harris,

and Zamir Tafilica. Delivered at the *115th Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America*, January 2-5, 2014, Chicago, IL.

2013 “The Anthropological Significance of Cave Burial: A Comparative Approach.” Authors: **Sylvia Deskaj** and Amy Michael. Delivered at the *112th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association*, November 20-24, 2013, Chicago, IL.

2013 “Mapping the Spatial Distribution of the Mortuary Remains at Neolithic Alepotrypa Cave, Greece.” Authors: Anastasia Papathanasiou and **Sylvia Deskaj**. Poster delivered at the *82nd Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists*, April 2013, Knoxville, TN.

2013 “Spatial Analysis of the Neolithic Mortuary Landscape at Alepotrypa Cave, Greece.” Authors: **Sylvia Deskaj** and Anastasia Papathanasiou. Delivered at the *114th Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America*, January 2-6, 2013, Seattle, WA.

2013 “The Projekti Arkeologjikë i Shkodrës (PASH), Interim Report, 2010–2012.” Authors: Michael Galaty and **Sylvia Deskaj**. Paper delivered at the *114th Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America*, January 2-6, 2013, Seattle, WA.

2012 “The 2011 Field Season of the Projekti Arkeologjikë Shkodrës (PASH), Northern Albania.” Author: **Sylvia Deskaj**. Paper delivered at the *77th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Anthropology*, April 18-22, 2012, Memphis, TN.

2012 “Assessing Cultural Change and Continuity: The Application of Strontium Isotope Analysis Along the Eastern Adriatic Coast.” Author: **Sylvia Deskaj**. Paper delivered at the *Graduate Academic Conference*, March 30, 2012, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

2011 “In Search of Origins: The Application of Strontium Isotope Analysis Along the Eastern Adriatic.” Author: **Sylvia Deskaj**. Paper delivered at the *76th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Anthropology*, March 30- April 3, 2011, Sacramento, CA.

2009 “The Shala Valley Project, Northern Albania: Results of the 2008 Field Season.” Authors: Anna Cohen and **Sylvia Deskaj**. Paper delivered at the *74th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Anthropology*, April 23-26, 2009, Atlanta, GA.

2008 “Malnutrition and Disease: A Perspective on Late Classic Maya Health.” Author: **Sylvia Deskaj**. Presented at the *16th Annual Northeastern Illinois University Spring Symposium*, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL.

2007 “A Stroll Through Ancient Gardens: An In-depth Analysis of Ancient Maya Kitchen Gardens.” Author: **Sylvia Deskaj**. Presented at the *15th Annual Northeastern Illinois University Spring Symposium*, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL.

Invited Presentations, Lectures, & Panels

2014 “The Application of Strontium Isotope Analysis Along the Eastern Adriatic Coast: Assessing Prehistoric Social Interaction in Northern Albania.” Lecture delivered in the *Department of Anthropology and Middle Eastern Cultures Brown Bag Series*, November 7th, 2014, Mississippi State University.

2014 “Choosing a Thesis Topic and Writing a Thesis Proposal.” Lecture delivered to Dr. David Hoffman’s Professionalization Graduate Seminar, *Department of Anthropology and Middle Eastern Cultures*, September 5th, 2014, Mississippi State University.

2013 “Graduate School and Research.” Lecture delivered to undergraduate anthropology majors, October 16th, 2013, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL.

2013 “Neolithic Mortuary Landscape at Alepotrypa Cave, Greece.” Paper delivered in the *Department of Anthropology Brown Bag Series*, January 18th, 2013, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

2011 “In Search of Origins: The Application of Strontium Isotope Analysis Along the Eastern Adriatic.” Paper delivered in the *Department of Anthropology Brown Bag Series*, March 25th, 2011, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

2011 “Creating a Strontium Isotope Baseline Along the Eastern Adriatic.” Paper delivered at the *Michigan Archaeological Society-Upper Grand Valley Chapter Meeting*, March 16, 2010, East Lansing, MI.

2011 Panel discussant for Dr. Beth Drexler’s Anthropology Capstone Class. Invited to speak to undergraduate anthropology majors. September 27th, 2011, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

2010 Panel discussant for Dr. Beth Drexler’s Anthropology Capstone Class. Invited to speak to undergraduate anthropology majors. September 28th, 2011, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

Research Experience

Dissertation Fieldwork December, 2014
Shkodër, Albania

Ethnographer: Carried out oral history interviews with inhabitants of the northern Albanian plains of Shkodër.

Shkodër Archaeological Project 2014
Shkodër, Albania

Excavation Supervisor: Led an archaeological excavation team in the northern Albanian plains of Shkodër. Taught relevant excavation techniques to both Albanian and American students.

- DIROS Archaeological Project** 2012
Pyrgos Dirou, Greece
Field and Museum Assistant: Assisted in excavations of Neolithic burials and the analysis of human remains from nearby Alepotrypa Cave. Assisted in the processing and curation of survey and excavation finds in the Neolithic Museum of Alepotrypa Cave.
Project Directors: Anastasia Papathanasiou, Greek Ministry of Culture, Ephorate of Speleology and Paleoanthropology of Southern Greece; Michael Galaty, Professor of Anthropology, Millsaps College; William A. Parkinson, Associate Curator, Field Museum of Natural History; Daniel J. Pullen, Professor of Classics, The Florida State University
- Shkodër Archaeological Project** 2010 – 2013
Shkodër, Albania
Survey Team Leader: Led an archaeological survey team in the northern Albanian plains of Shkodër. In addition, surveyed and mapped burial mounds. Taught relevant survey techniques to both Albanian and American students.
Project Directors: Michael Galaty, Professor of Anthropology, Millsaps College; Lorenc Bejko, Professor of Archaeology, University of Tirana.
- The Butrint Foundation** 2009
Butrint, Albania
Field Assistant: Assisted in the excavation of a Roman cemetery.
Supervisor: David Hernandez, Assistant Professor, Department of Classics, Notre Dame
- Shala Valley Project** (www.millsaps.edu/svp) 2008
Theth, Shala Valley, Albania
Trench Supervisor: Assisted in excavation of a prehistoric, fortified settlement site, including the analysis of ceramic and lithic material.
Project Director: Michael Galaty, Professor of Anthropology, Millsaps College
- Proyecto Arqueológico Inka / Colonial Malata** 2007
Tuti, Colca Valley, Perú
Field Assistant: Assisted in excavations of an Inka to Colonial Period monastery and ecclesiastical complex, including the analysis of human remains and burial patterns.
Project Director: Tiffany Tung, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Vanderbilt University
- Three Rivers Archaeological Project** 2006 – 2007
Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL
Laboratory Assistant: Utilized the Economic Botany Neo-tropical Collection at the Field Museum of Natural History to determine ancient plant remains recovered from feasting contexts from Northwestern Belize
Supervisor: David J. Goldstein, National Park Service, United States
- Northeastern Illinois University Field School** 2006
Three Rivers Archaeological Project
Orange Walk, Belize

Field Assistant: Learned fundamental archaeological techniques of excavation, mapping, botanical recovery, and artifact preservation at an ancient Maya site in Northern Belize.

Supervisor: Jon Hageman de la Plaza, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Northeastern Illinois University

Academic Employment

Cobb Institute of Archaeology Spring 2014 - Current
Mississippi State University
Lab Coordinator

Department of Anthropology and Middle 2014
Mississippi State University
Graduate Writing Group Coordinator

Cobb Institute of Archaeology Fall 2013 – Fall 2014
Mississippi State University
Archaeological Research Assistant: Assist in survey and archaeological excavations throughout the state of Mississippi; create inventory of artifacts in curation facility; supervise and assist graduate student interns in the Forest Service.
Director: Joe Seger, Professor, Department of Anthropology and Middle Eastern Cultures

The Graduate School Spring 2013 – Current
Michigan State University
Peer Writing Group Facilitator: Nominated by the Graduate Program Director of Anthropology to serve as a writing group facilitator for fellow graduate students in the department.

Campus Archaeology Program 2012 – 2013
Michigan State University
Fellow: Served as a graduate student researcher for MSU's Campus Archaeology Program. Carried out standard survey and excavation throughout MSU's campus.
Program Director: Lynne Goldstein, Professor of Anthropology; Director of the Campus Archaeology Program.

Cultural Heritage Informatics Initiative 2012 – 2013
Michigan State University
Fellow: Developed and created a digital repository for the tumuli of northern Albania.
Program Director: Ethan Watrall, Associate Director of Matrix: Center for Digital Humanities & Social Sciences; Assistant Professor of Anthropology.

Department of Anthropology Spring 2011 – Spring 2013
Michigan State University
Research Assistant: Served as assistant to department of anthropology Chair, Dr. Jodie O'Gorman. Worked closely with faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students to organize

departmental events and functions. Collaborated with university-wide officials to assist in maintaining public relations.

Department of Anthropology Spring 2011 – Spring 2013

Michigan State University

Editor: Collected, compiled, and organized content for the department newsletter.

Society for American Archaeology, *American Antiquity* Spring 2010

Michigan State University

Editorial Assistant

Supervisor: Alison Rautman, Editor

NEIU Learning Center Spring 2008

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Anthropology Tutor

NEIU Accessibility Center Spring 2008

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Anthropology Tutor

Institutional Programs and Committees

Mississippi State University, Cobb Museum 2015

Committee Member

Michigan State University Science Festival 2012 – 2013

Advisory Board Member

Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) 2012 – 2013

Steering Member

Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) 2012 – 2013

Editorial Board Member

President of the Graduate Students in Anthropology 2012

Michigan State University

External Review Committee – Graduate Student Representative 2011 – 2012

Michigan State University, Department of Anthropology

Brown Bag Coordinator 2010 – 2011

Michigan State University, Department of Anthropology

Chair Selection Committee 2010

Michigan State University, Department of Anthropology

Internships

Cook County Medical Examiners Office 2007 – 2009
Chicago, IL

Field Assistant: Assisted Dr. Clyde Snow in reviewing crime scene photographs and human skeletal remains; served as liaison between M.E.'s Office and Field Museum staff.

Supervisor: Clyde Snow, Forensic Anthropologist, Cook County Medical Examiner's Office

The Field Museum of Natural History 2007
Zoology, Division of Mammals, Chicago, IL

Zoology Intern: De-fleshing, cleaning, labeling and cataloguing of small mammalian skeletons, and installation of alcohol-preserved specimens for the Field Museum's modern comparative zoology collection.

Supervisor: William Stanley, Collections Manager, Field Museum of Natural History

The Field Museum of Natural History 2006 – 2007
Zoology, Division of Mammals, Chicago, IL

Zoology Volunteer: De-fleshing, cleaning, and cataloguing mammalian skeletons at the Collections Resource Center.

Supervisor: William Stanley, Collections Manager, Field Museum of Natural History

Public Outreach

New Hope High School Spring 2014
Columbus, MS

Career Day: Interacted with students and engaged in conversations about archaeology.

Fenner Nature Center Spring 2013
East Lansing, MI

Archaeologist: Assisted in the excavation of the Fenner Farm House. Taught hands-on lessons in archaeology to children.

Michigan State University's Science Festival Spring 2013
East Lansing, MI

Archaeologist: Taught hands-on lessons in archaeology to children.

Darwin Day Spring 2013
Michigan State University Museum

Volunteer: Represented the department of anthropology; discussed anthropology with museum visitors at this annual event.

Letters to a Pre-scientist Fall 2012
www.prescientist.org/

Pen Pal: Exchanged letters with a 7th grader.

Stone Street Ancestral Recovery Project, Site 20GS136

Fall 2010

Flint, MI

Volunteer: Assisted in the recovery of ancestral human remains.

Michigan State Police Forensic Training

Spring 2010

East Lansing, MI

Volunteer: Assisted in the training of law enforcement officials in the excavation and identification of human remains.

Cultural Resource Management

R.C Goodwin & Associates

Fall 2008 – Spring 2009

New Orleans, LA

Contract Archaeologist: Conducted Phase I and Phase II of archaeological survey and excavation throughout the southeastern United States.

Supervisor: Jim Eberwine

Languages

Albanian: Fluent reading, writing, and speaking.

Serbo-Croatian: Proficient reading, writing, and speaking.

Professional Memberships

American Anthropological Association and the Anthropology of Europe Section
Society for American Archaeology and the Women in Archaeology Interest Group
Archaeological Institute of America