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IMS General Meeting May 21:



Sculpture documentation at Tak'alik Ab'aj, Guatemala.

"Three-Dimensional Spatial Technologies and Mesoamerican Archaeology"

with Travis F. Doering, Ph.D. and Lori D. Collins, Ph.D.



Jim Reed,
Editor

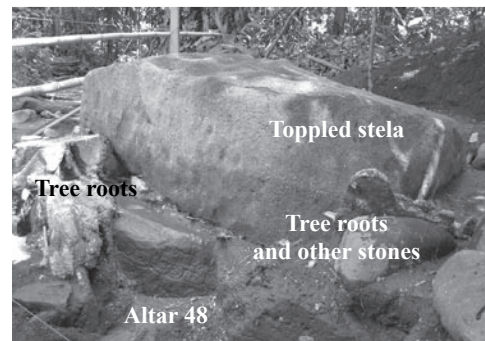
Important New Discovery at Tak'alik Ab'aj

New find sheds light on Early Maya Kingship

On March 10 of this year, researchers made an important archaeological discovery at the pre-Classic site of Tak'alik Ab'aj, which is located on the Pacific Ocean side of the Guatemalan mountain range in the department of Retalhuleu, Guatemala. The find concerns a large squared stone (probably an altar), the borders of which contain a short hieroglyphic text. The stone has been labelled Altar 48.

The text is said to be composed of four glyphic compounds and one of the compounds is said to record the ascension to the throne of a king of the city of Tak'alik Ab'aj.

An interesting side note is that your IMS newsletter editor Jim Reed led a group of Maya enthusiasts to the site of Tak'alik Ab'aj



Altar 48 is of great interest to researchers, as this pre-Classic site is emerging as a key to the transitional period between the pre-Maya and the Maya. The carved altar was found underneath another stone (perhaps a toppled uncarved stela) which is believed to have been intentionally placed over it to protect the imagery.



The carving on Altar 48 depicts a stylized crocodile or frog with a quadripartite cartouche (cave portal imagery) in its belly or on its back, in which an Izipan-style royal figure sits on a throne. Images on this page courtesy of Proyecto Nacional Tak'alik Ab'aj/DGPCN/IDAEH.

last summer. We walked on the trail that led by the toppled stela that also had a couple big trees growing right beside it. Little did we know one edge of the carved altar lay hidden below the trees' roots, under just a foot of soil!

The carved, squared altar is said to date from circa 200 BC, which at present is based solely on the style of the sculpture and the style of glyphic writing. At present, the earliest finds at Tak'alik Ab'aj date to 2,800 years ago.

Proyecto Nacional Tak'alik Ab'aj

Since 1987, Proyecto Nacional Tak'alik Ab'aj, on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Guatemala, has been excavating, consolidating, and conserving this important archaeological site and the national park in which it is located. The project is directed by Christa Schieber de Lavarreda and Miguel Orrego Corzo.

Once your IMS editor received notice of this great discovery, he personally contacted Christa. She kindly forwarded to him the two images that you see on this page and made a few comments about the significance of the find.

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