

INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

Newsletter



CHICCHAN

Hal C. Ball, Editor

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MEETING NOTICE:

The regular monthly meeting of the Institute will be held in the Museum of Science auditorium on Wednesday the 17th at 8:00 p.m. Program Chairman Bob Little has announced that following the business meeting, a special program will be presented that should be of interest to all attending. Come and bring a friend...

ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION MEETING:

The April meeting of the Archaeology Section will be held in classroom "C" in the Museum of Science building on Monday the 29th at 8:00 p.m. The topic for this month's meeting is "The Architecture of the Ancient Maya", and a program has been planned during which members will present short reports, slides, photographs and site plans pertaining to the principle architectural styles and building arrangements used by the Maya in pre-Hispanic times.

NOTE: The IMS Archaeology Section is basically a study group whose members participate in bi-monthly meetings by presenting special papers, slides and other material relative to a previously selected topic on some phase of Maya archaeology. Visitors are welcome, and if interested in joining, may obtain further information from the editor...

RECENT LECTURES BY IMS MEMBER:

Shortly after the publication of the March Newsletter, it was brought to the attention of the editor that one of our Board members, Al Rosenberg, had recently given lectures on "The Scientific Approach to Cultural Diffusion" and "The History of Man in the Americas Before Columbus", and we wish to congratulate him on his continued enthusiasm in presenting informative programs on Mesoamerica in the Miami area. Both Al and his wife Dorthy are especially interested in the Maya area, and in December spent 25 days in a jeep traveling through Mexico and Central America in order to obtain, as they say, "a real feel for the geography of the land once occupied by the ancient Maya"...



IMS MEMBER RECEIVES DOCTORATE:

Although it was known about previously, details recently received from Merida have prompted the belated announcement that Joseph W. Ball received his doctoral degree in anthropology in December of 1973. This was from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he had also received a M. A. degree, and his doctoral thesis was entitled, "Ceramic Sequence at Becan, Campeche, Mexico". At present Joe is residing in Merida, Yucatan, and working on a manuscript for publication by the Middle American Research Institute of Tulane University. In May he will present a paper at The Society for American Archaeology meeting in Washington, D. C., on the "Preclassic Architecture at Becan, Campeche, Mexico". This will include data from both the 1969-71 Tulane University expeditions and also the 1973 University of Wisconsin project. (See recent articles by J. W. Ball in the January issues of American Antiquity and Archaeology.)...

SAA ANNUAL MEETING:

The Society for American Archaeology will hold its 39th annual meeting at the Mayfair Hotel in Washington, D. C., on May 2, 3, and 4. As announced in the preliminary program, this year there will be three categories of contributions. (1) Symposia, with preplanned programs, (2) Contributed Papers, submitted in full manuscript form, and (3) Research Reports, for abstract submission and to be presented in 10 minute periods. As is the usual custom, the three day program includes information relative to all phases of American archaeology and provides an excellent opportunity for all interested to improve their knowledge on the subject. Registration begins at 4:00 p.m. on May 1, fee \$7.50...

RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON MAYA ARCHAEOLOGY:

The Kaminaljuyu Project - Part I - Mound Excavations

J. W. Michels & W. T. Sanders, editors - Penn. State University

Excavations at Actun Polbilche, Belize

David M. Pendergast, Royal Ontario Museum

The Corozal Project

Norman Hammond, editor, British Museum - Cambridge University

NEW DATING OF OAXACAN FUNERAL URNS IN ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM:

Until recently, art historians believed that at least 25 to 30 per cent of the Oaxacan sculptured urns outside of Mexico were forgeries, which included those in the collection of the St. Louis Art Museum. However, the resulting evidence from thermoluminescence-dating tests conducted in Washington University's Laboratory of Space Physics, left no doubt that 113 of the 120 Oaxacan urns in the Museum's collection are authentic. This was largely due to the use of a new technique developed by University physicists, which consists of isolating uranium-rich zircon grains and measuring them separately...



NEW CARVED STONE ALTAR AND STELA DISCOVERED AT LAMANAI:

On March 22, two previously unreported sculptured stones were discovered at the Maya site of Lamanai. This is the new name for the ruins know as "Indian Church", and this year is the first season of a seven year project of excavation and mapping under the auspices of The Royal Ontario Museum of Toronto, Canada. The Field Director of the Lamanai Expedition is Dr. David M. Pendergast, and the mapping will be supervised by Dr. Stanley Loten of Carlton University in Ottawa.

One of the newly found carved stones was a round altar, the first one discovered at the site, and the other was a stela, the top part of which is broken from the monument and at the time of writing has not been located. Both stones were first noticed by the director's wife, Esther Pendergast, while she and the editor and his wife were investigating one of the plazas and mounds in the southern section of the site. The altar is located about 15 feet in front of the base of a long rectangular mound that forms one side of a plaza area and apparently was directly in front of the center of the mound. It is of good quality hard limestone and the diameter is approximately 3 feet. Only the top of the stone appears to have been sculptured in any way, and this consists of a circular band of glyphs around the perimeter, with the remainder of the space taken up by what seems to be a stylized animal or some sort of decorative element. A preliminary search of the immediate vicinity did not reveal a stela or any other carved stones that may have been associated with the altar.

The second carved stone that was discovered was a stela, which was found on the lower side of a large pyramidal mound that encloses the north side of the same plaza in which the altar is located. It presently lies flat against the side of the mound with its sculptured side (front) facing upward. Unfortunately, the top portion, including the head of the figure, has been broken from the stela, possibly when it fell from its original position on the pyramid which may have been on a low platform or at the center of a stairway. There was no glyphic inscription that could be identified on the stone, but from the posture of the standing figure, with the legs spread far apart and both feet facing outward, the style suggests a Late Classic date. (More on this in a forthcoming Newsletter.)...

FOLKLORE --- GUATEMALA:

El Ocaso Del Folklore by Jose Castañeda M., Guatemala Indigena, Vol. VIII, No. 1, pp. 111-142. In this publication of the Instituto Indigenista Nacional, Castañeda states that investigators denigrate the anthropological values of the study of folklore in depth, considering it chiefly as an object of "popular art". In this study, however, the author has analyzed some of the works of Guatemalan folklore to show that much can be learned from it about the history, sociology, psychology, ethnology, religion and other aspects of the indigenous people and their way of life. (Courtesy, The Interamerican)



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT THE QUINTANA ROO MURAL PROJECT:

Continuing under the supervision of Director Arthur G. Miller, the Quintana Roo Mural Project is now in its third season, and in addition to the recording of the murals at Tulum and Tancah, archaeological excavations are now being conducted at Tancah's structure C-44. This is the "structure X" referred to in Miller's paper on the project's progress that was published in No. 18 (August, 1973) of "Contributions of the University of California Archaeological Research Facility". It is a three door "palace" type building where new murals were discovered on the east interior wall of Room 1 during the 1973 season. As the excavations proceed at Tancah, the staff is hopeful that enough ceramic and artifactual evidence will be found to substantiate Miller's Early Post Classic hypothesis presently based on architectural and mural seriation. Also, as it is possible that there was Puuc related occupation at Tancah, intensive archaeological investigation at the site may help in establishing a definite chronology for the east coast of Yucatan from Formative to Terminal Post-Classic times...

RE: MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:

Please cooperate with our secretary by renewing your membership on time so it will not be necessary to remind you by a special letter. Thanks...

NEWSLETTER

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