

# INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

## Newsletter



CHUEN

Hal C. Ball, Editor  
Vol. 3 No. 8  
12.18.1.1.11. 9 Chuen 4 Yaxkin  
(August 14, 1974)



YAXKIN

### MEETING NOTICE

PLACE: MUSEUM OF SCIENCE  
DATE: AUGUST 21, 1974  
TIME: 8:00 p.m.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION MEETING:

The next meeting of the IMS Archaeology Section will be held during the month of September in the Museum of Science building. The exact time and date will be announced in the next Newsletter. This meeting will be a continuation of the member's study of "The Art of the Ancient Maya" and will include a color slide program and the reading of various papers on the subject...

#### NEWS OF NARANJO STELA 24 IN ARCHAEOLOGY MAGAZINE:

On page 207 of the July issue of Archaeology magazine, there is a short account of the Museum of Science's exhibition of Maya stela 24 from Naranjo, Guatemala. Although there is no mention of the Institute of Maya Studies, whose members made the initial arrangements with the Guatemalan government for the loan of the stela to the Museum, there is a good photograph of the restored monument in the magazine, and we believe that such publicity to the Museum indicates the increasing interest in the Maya civilization that our organization has created in the Miami area...

#### "MYSTERY OF THE MAYA":

Those of you that had an opportunity to see the WNET film "Mystery of the Maya" on TV, may be interested in reading a movie review on the production that was written by Elizabeth A. Meese and appears on page 210 of the July issue of Archaeology magazine...

#### NEW CENTRAL AMERICAN MURAL IN PAN AMERICAN BUILDING:

A new mural painted by Teok Carrasco can now be seen on the north wall of the lobby of Miami's Pan American Building. It depicts the coat of arms and representative scenes from each of the Central American countries, including volcanos, animals, birds, flowers, coffee, bananas, etc. Archaeological sites shown are: Tazumal, Copan and Tikal...

Mrs. Mitza D. Block  
Mrs. Hans Markuse  
Orlando M. Reyes  
Esther Fernandez  
Olga Arguelles  
Diana Richardson  
George MacDonald

Margery Silbery  
Gloria Sacco  
Roman Menendey  
Mark Ginn  
Isadora Travieso  
Robert Phillips



THE MILWAUKEE MUSEUM'S NEW PRE-COLUMBIAN EXHIBIT HALL:

This year marks the opening of a new pre-Columbian exhibit hall in the Milwaukee Public Museum that is reported to be one of the best in the country. The exhibit covers 5,000 square feet and consists of 50 units, with some 2,000 type specimens placed on view. The hall occupies a specially designed third-floor mezzanine overlooking lower-level exhibits on Latin America ethnology and was planned by Lee A. Parsons. All exhibits were designed by Lee Tishler, museum artist. Parsons is also the author of an excellent handbook that was published for the exhibition hall. It is entitled Pre-Columbian America, and besides a short history of the principle cultures and civilizations that existed in the Americas prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, it contains more than 200 black and white photographs of various artifacts that are on display in the new hall. When visiting Milwaukee, this new exhibit is a "must"...

"VOLCANIC ASH" IN NORTHERN YUCATAN CERAMICS:

Ever since the first report that some form of volcanic ash was found in the Maya ceramics of northern Yucatan, the explanation of the presence, origin, and source of this material has long posed a problem. Thus a comprehensive study was made and X-ray diffraction analysis carried out by Wayne Isphording and Eugene Wilson to possibly shed more light on the subject. The interesting conclusion was that "volcanic ash" temper reported by Brainerd, Shepard and others is concluded to be either (1) chiefly palygorskite or (2) mixed-layer montmorillonite-kaolinite clays. Therefore, unless ceramicware from Yucatan is found that contains normal detritus (glass shards, amphibole, proxene, zircon and so on), reference to "ash temper" should normally be avoided. (See American Antiquity, Vol. 39, No. 3 for full report)...

NEW JOURNAL OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY:

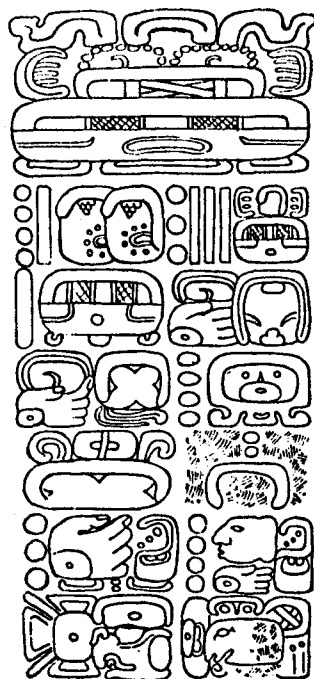
The Association for Field Archaeology and Boston University have announced the publication of a new periodical, the JOURNAL OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY. The aim of the journal is to provide a single publication outlet for reports and studies of special interest to field archaeologists and to other scholars who deal with primary excavation material. It will be especially concerned with publishing reports on excavations as quickly as possible, and also serve as an instrument for discussion of action relative to the recovery, restoration, and primary interpretation of excavation material and the protection of antiquities. If interested, write Boston University, 775 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215...

THE QUIRIGUA PROJECT - 1975:

According to information received in July from William Coe of the University Museum in Philadelphia, final arrangements have been completed for a five year archaeological project to be conducted at the well known site of Quirigua, in eastern Guatemala. The project will be under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the contract calls for the Museum to carry all research expenses and the government of Guatemala to be responsible for funding the costs of repairs and restorations. In addition, The Ministry of Defense and the Tikal Association are also making independent contributions.

Originally scheduled to begin this year, the project was delayed due to various factors, and actual work is now to begin in January of 1975. Although most of the work will concentrate on the site proper, tests will be conducted in the vicinity to define settlement patterns and other features relevant to Quirigua having been an architectural epicenter. Another aspect of the program will be the testing of the entire Motagua region from Gualan to Puerto Barrios.

The staff will consist basically of William Coe, Robert Sharer, David Sedat, Mary Ricketson Bullard, Timothy Nowak and Carlos Rudi Larios...



4. ZOÖMORPH P, QUIRIGUA

PREHISTORIC INTENSIVE AGRICULTURE IN THE MAYA LOWLANDS:

Although the ancient lowland Maya have been traditionally portrayed as swidden (shifting cultivation) agriculturalists, research during the last few years has indicated that in some regions the inhabitants were relatively sophisticated cultivators. Substantiating this theory in an article in Science magazine, B. L. Turner II reports on new evidence of intensive Maya agriculture based on research in 1973 within the Rio Bec region of southern Campeche and Quintana Roo, Mexico. Many examples of terraces and raised fields are cited and mention is also made of check dams and weir terraces that were laid across drainage channels to capture silt-laden runoff. Evidently the terraces and raised fields represent forms of land reclamation that was necessitated by the demand for increase agricultural production, which was most likely stimulated by the larger population in the region during the Late Classic Period. (See, Science, July 12, 1974 for full report.)...

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIZATION AT TIKAL, GUATEMALA:

For comments relative to stone monument carving as an occupational specialization at Tikal, see William Haviland's article in the July 1974 issue of American Antiquity...

BELGIAN RESEARCHER DECIPHERING THE MAYAN LANGUAGE

Antoon Vollemaere, a Belgian researcher from Mechelen, revealed in an interview with a United Press correspondent that he has "virtually deciphered" the Maya code and that "in two years it should be done entirely". If this be so, it will be a great break-through for archaeologists and scholars who have been attempting to solve the complete text of Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions for many years.

Vollemaere began his research of the Mayan language in 1966, and on the strength of his published works was admitted to Sorbonne University in Paris as a doctoral student. During his research he has come to the conclusion that the Mayan script had evolved almost entirely to a phonetic or syllabic and alphabetic system of writing. (In the past, others have also advanced this theory in varying degrees.) However, he believes that because its evolution was stopped by the Spanish conquest, it retains vestiges of picture writing and other characteristics of early scripts. He also has concluded that the Maya had discovered verb conjugation and that their writing can be reduced to a few dozen basic elements on which thousands of different characters are built. We await further information and developments...



**NEWSLETTER**

**Institute of Maya Studies  
Museum of Science  
3280 South Miami Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33129**

