

INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

Newsletter



MULUK

Hal C. Ball, Editor

Vol. 4

No. 4

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(April 9, 1975)



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MEETING NOTICE:

The Institute will hold its regular monthly meeting in the Museum of Science Auditorium on April 16th at 8:00 p.m. Our speaker for the evening will be Nicholas M. Hellmuth, who will present an illustrated lecture on "The Ball Game Ceremonialism in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica." Mr. Hellmuth is the Director of the Foundation for Latin American Anthropological Research in Guatemala, and he is currently conducting a research project dedicated to publishing an authoritative description of all known art which illustrates the ancient rubber ball game of the Classic Maya. During his research of photographing ceramic vessels depicting Maya ball game activities, he has found that scenes on certain vases give a new insight into some aspects of this popular pre-Columbian sport, and in his lecture he will discuss these in detail. As the Mesoamerican ball game has always been a particularly intriguing subject, we believe that this program will be of special interest to many people in the Miami area. Plan to attend and bring a guest this month...

IMS SPECIAL LECTURE SERIES FOR 1975 COMPLETED:

With the interesting illustrated lecture by Dr. William L. Rathje, relative to what he refers to as "The Last Tango on Cozumel," the Institute has now completed its special lecture series for 1975. We wish to thank Dr. Rathje and the other two speakers, Miss Elizabeth Benson and Dr. Munro S. Edmonson, for participating in this year's series of lectures on the Maya civilization. We are also grateful to the program committee and all of the other members who aided in making this series a success...

NEW DONATIONS TO IMS LIBRARY:

The following books were recently donated to our library by Daniel C. Meyer, a student member from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida:

"The Aztec-Man and Tribe" - Von Hagen "Realm of the Incas" - Von Hagen
"Gods, Graves and Scholars" - Ceram "American Primitive" - Lesberg (Ed)
We are grateful to Daniel for these contributions and welcome more books of this nature, even if they are duplicates of those now in our library...

A NOTE ON MAYA DATING: "Until the correlation problem is completely solved, most matters of general anthropological interest in the Maya area cannot be discussed except in vague terms." (The late Dr. E. Wyllys Andrews IV)...



FACSIMILE EDITION OF ALFRED P. MAUDSLAY'S
"ARCHAEOLOGY IN BIOLOGIA CENTRALI-AMERICANA"
NOW AVAILABLE FROM NEW YORK:

Now available for the first time in a magnificent facsimile edition is Alfred P. Maudslay's monumental work, *ARCHAEOLOGY IN BIOLOGIA CENTRALI-AMERICANA*. Maudslay's *ARCHAEOLOGY* is believed by many to be the most important, the most quoted and most sought after book ever

written on Maya art and archaeology. For more information, write: Arte Primitivo, Inc., 694 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021...

THE MAYA AND THE MARIMBA:

There is an old Maya legend handed down through the years, that a renegade had been cast out of his tribe, and in disgrace roamed aimlessly through the wooded mountains. After wandering many miles, he fell asleep exhausted at the foot of a great tree, and awakening later in a daze thought he heard the great tree moan. Rushing back to whence he had come, he had council with the High Priest, who "listened" to a piece of the wood, but no sound was heard from it. However, it was discovered that when the wood was stricken, a mellow sound was produced and by using several pieces of wood of different sizes, a melody was possible. The instrument was then declared to be the "Marimba," which translated into English, means "wail or cry of the wood." (Courtesy of the late Gabriel Cordovez)...

ANNUAL SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY MEETING:

The 40th annual meeting of The Society for American Archaeology will be held this year in Dallas, Texas at the Adolphus Hotel from May 8-10. The Program Chairman is S. Alan Skinner of the Department of Anthropology at Southern Methodist University. It is suggested that those planning to attend and stay at the Adolphus Hotel make their reservations early...

"THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF WEST MEXICO":

A new book on Mexican archaeology contains 19 different articles relating to the lesser known western part of the country. It is published by the "West Mexican Society for Advanced Study" in Ajijic, Jalisco. The editor is Betty Bell. 252 pp., with numerous illustrations, charts and foldout maps. \$7.00 U.S...

NEW EXHIBIT HALL AT SMITHSONIAN'S MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY:

A major new exhibit hall tracing the development of the Ice Age, including its geological aspects, flora, fauna and the evolution of man, is now open at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History. The new hall features the phenomena of gigantism, migration, isolation and the extinction of animals; and a special area recreates, in full scale, a Neanderthal burial scene...

MURALS COMPLETED IN THE MUSEUM'S MAYA GALLERY:

Murals depicting various pre-Columbian buildings and interior paintings of Tikal, Bonampak, Chichen Itza and Palenque have now been completed on the walls of the Museum of Science's new Maya Gallery. The interesting murals were all painted by the Museum's staff artist, Alice Semich, who previously painted the Palenque figures and decorative motif on the entrance hall to Maya Gallery. The most colorful and impressive of the new murals is a reproduction in approximate life-size form of a ceremonial scene that is on the lower wall in the first room in Structure 1 at Bonampak. It shows in clear detail a group of Maya musicians with their trumpets, rattles, and drums facing three elaborately dressed dignitaries with large quetzal-feather back pieces...



Maya musicians depicted in mural at Bonampak...

THE SACALUM CENOTE: A MAJOR SOURCE FOR THE ATTAPULGITE USED IN MAYA BLUE:

After considerable research and investigation of an ancient mine at the bottom of a cenote in the Yucatecan village of Sacalum, Dean E. Arnold and Bruce F. Bohor have concluded that this was at one time a major source of the attapulgitic clay used in the manufacture of Maya Blue. Sacalum is located 55 kilometers south of Merida and the cenote near the center of the village is known to still yield pure attapulgitic, although the local people now use it primarily for its medicinal properties. It was discovered in the 1960's, however, that attapulgitic was the other ingredient besides indigo blue that was used in making the distinctive and acid-resisting pigment with which the ancient Maya decorated pottery, murals and other types of artwork. It has been identified as a rare clay mineral, usually whitish in color, which has a fibrous morphology rather than the platy type which is characteristic of almost all other clay minerals. Arnold and Bohor report that a thick bed of attapulgitic lies in a chamber located near the northwest side of the cenote, and they believe that this is the deposit which was mined in antiquity. Thus, there is reason to believe that the village of Sacalum supplied much of the mineral used during the Prehispanic era, and might have also been an important center which manufactured the finished pigment that is now referred to as Maya Blue...

FORTHCOMING BOOKS ON THE MAYA CIVILIZATION:

"The Pre-Columbian Maya Ball Game"
 "Lubaantun"
 "Excavations at Seibal"

Nicholas Hellmuth
 Norman Hammond
 Gordon R. Willey

NEW SOLUTION TO "MAYA MYSTERIES":

Raul Pavon, Director of the Campeche Museum of Archaeology, says that he has found a new "Popul Vuh" oral tradition which is more exact than the present written versions, a new one of which was published just recently. Pavon says that he has taped several hundred feet of the tales and songs of the remaining Maya in Chiapas, and believes that historically, his recordings will present new and enlightening information relative to early Maya culture in this region of Mexico...

A NOTE ON PHOTOGRAPHING OBSEDIAN:

A simplified procedure for photographing obsidian to reduce the problem of glare, without the need for coating with any other material, is the use of a polarizing filter on the camera lens. By rotating the filter to the maximum dim position, close-up photos of features such as platform grinding, conchoidal ripple, flake scars, gull wings, and so forth, can clearly be reproduced without glare. (Per IMS member Irwin Rovner)...

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

People can be divided into three groups: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened!!!

NEWSLETTER

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