

INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

Newsletter



AHAU

Hal C. Ball, Editor

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DR. E. WYLLYS ANDREWS V TO SPEAK AT APRIL MEETING:

At the Institute's regular monthly meeting on April 21st, we will be privileged to have as our guest speaker, Dr. E. Wyllys Andrews V, Director of the Middle American Research Institute of Tulane University. The meeting will be held in the Museum of Science auditorium at 8:00 p.m. and Dr. Andrews' topic for the evening will be "Dzibilchaltun and the Northern Maya Lowlands," an area in which he has done considerable research and investigation. In addition to Mexico, however, he has also done archaeological work in the United States, Guatemala and El Salvador, and we feel certain that this will be an especially interesting and informative program on the Maya of Yucatan. Plan to attend...and remember the date: April 21st at 8:00 p.m.

IMS LIBRARY NEWS:

The IMS library committee held a special meeting on March 20th and elected the following members to serve for the remainder of 1976. Mrs. Fay Hochen, co-chairperson, Mrs. Mitza Block, librarian, and Mrs. Ethyl Teller, secretary. Other business conducted at the meeting included the approval of a few minor changes in the library rules, the acceptance of a plan to compile and have mimeographed copies made of a complete inventory of the library, and the ordering of 6 new books. The committee was also informed of the recent donation of books by Nathan Rood and John Rosseau, and we sincerely thank these members for their generous contribution. (As a reminder to those wishing to use the library, please note that it is now open every Saturday afternoon from 1 to 4, and on our regular monthly meeting night from 7 to 8.) Please read and abide by the rules that are posted adjacent to the top book shelf, and identify yourself by showing your IMS membership card to the librarian...

41ST ANNUAL MEETING OF SAA TO BE HELD IN ST. LOUIS, MO.:

The 41st annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology will be held at the Stouffer's Riverfront Towers in St. Louis, Mo. on May 6-8, 1976. The Program Chairman for this year's meeting is Frank Rackerby, of the University Museum at Southern Illinois University, and a number of papers are scheduled to be read on the archaeology and ethnohistory of the Maya area. (See IMS Editor's bulletin board for more detailed information.)...



Julius Bustein---Vera Kaiser---James D. Dean
 Joan C. Fonte---Mary S. Brenza---William Lee
 Barbara Martino---Deborah S. Richard

HAFTED MAYA AX DISCOVERED IN BELIZE:

Excavations of raised fields in northern Belize by the Rio Hondo Project (supported by the University of Minnesota and Canada Council) have yielded an essentially complete Maya ax or hatchet. Dennis Puleston, co-director of the project, reports that the hatchet, identical to those illustrated with such frequency in the codices, is made of black chert mounted in a handle of hardwood known locally as mylady. Excellent preservation and the relatively mint condition of the artifact reveal that the handle was finished with some sort of sandpaper, perhaps sharkskin. Associated artifacts have been dated to approximately 1000 B. C., and when on-going treatments with polyethylene glycol are completed, the ax will be released for exhibit...

CORPUS OF MAYA HIEROGLYPHIC INSCRIPTIONS:

Volume I (Introduction) and volume II, part 1 (Naranjo) of Mr. Ian Graham's Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions, has now been released by the Peabody Museum of Harvard University. This is the first of a new series of volumes in large quarto (12" X 15") that will contain photographs and meticulous drawings of all known Maya inscriptions, along with the figurative art associated with them. All of the media in which Maya texts are preserved will be included except codices and pottery vessels, so that in addition to those carved on stone, inscriptions on jade, bone, shell, wood, stucco and painted walls will also be covered. All volumes with the exception of No. I will be issued in three parts, and will concentrate on one of five particular sectors of the Maya area. Some are of the opinion that the volumes of this series may eventually constitute the most monumental compilation of scholarly raw material in the field of American archaeology. The two publications of the series that are presently available are listed as \$7.50 each, and IMS members may obtain copies through our librarian or by mailing their order direct to Peabody Museum, 11 Divinity Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138...

MAYA ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURINES FROM JAINA ISLAND, CAMPECHE:

This is the first number in a new series published by Ballena Press on Studies in Mesoamerican Art, Archaeology and Ethnohistory, and is the first study to attempt a microscopic scrutiny of Jaina ceramic sculpture. Coverage includes all figurines known with certainty to have been recovered on Jaina and presents detailed descriptions of the major stylistic trends developed over the four centuries during which burials were made on the island. Written by Christopher Corson. 218 pp., 134 photographs, biblio, paper covers. \$7.50. Ballena Press, P. O. Box 711, Ramona, Ca. 92065...

THE LAMANAI EXPEDITION---1976:

The third season of archaeological research and excavation at the Maya site of Lamanai has now been in progress for three months, and according to the director, Dr. David Pendergast, work is planned to continue until the end of July. (Lamanai is in central Belize and the project is under the auspices of the Royal Ontario Museum of Toronto.)



Exposed terraces of structure #9

Most of the excavations this year will be in the southwest part of the ruins, with particular emphasis on the large pyramidal mound that encloses the south end of the associated plaza. This structure, #9, and sometimes referred to as "Lip," rises almost 90 feet above the plaza floor and consists of at least two different building periods, both of which are believed to be Postclassic. As is the usual case, the last or most recent construction is in a very ruinous condition, but the stone terraces of the earlier structure appear to be in a fairly good state of preservation. Much of the plaster that was used to cover the terrace walls is still intact, and about half of the surfaces retain traces of red paint that was probably derived from cinnabar. The facing stones tend to be rectangular in shape, but are very irregular and seem to have been cut rather poorly. When the site was visited by the editor during the last week of February, 3 of the terraces at the northeast corner had been excavated, and 4 at the northwest. No specific evidence has been found that indicates any type of stone building had been constructed atop the pyramid, but a short distance below the summit on the north side, the floor and broken walls of a two room temple (?) have been discovered. A feature of special interest at the northwest corner, is a narrow stairway that changes direction 90 degrees at each terrace level. (A second progress report will appear in the Newsletter in June or July.)

TEOTIHUACAN---THE "BIG APPLE" OF MESOAMERICA:

A new view of Teotihuacan, based on a combination of archaeological investigations and computer analysis by Mexican, U. S. and Canadian researchers, indicates that between A. D. 400 and 700, this "place the gods call home," was the focus of a far flung empire that extended into Mesoamerica to the mountains of Guatemala. Much of the new information relative to the now well known Mexican site, was obtained by scientists from data on more than a million artifacts that were run through a series of computer programs designed by George Cowgill of Brandeis University. In preparation for computer analysis, all artifacts (mostly potsherds and stone tools) from each location were identified and catalogued, and the resulting information presented a

fascinating picture of an ancient urban center in Mexico some 1300 to 1600 years ago. However, there are still unanswered questions in regard to how and why the city died, although many archaeologists believe that the ancient urbanites may have desecrated the temples and abandoned their city in rage against their gods for permitting a prolonged famine...

THE "UNIVERSAL FLOOD" HYPOTHESIS:

In an article in SCIENCE magazine, University of Miami scientists have been quoted as giving strong support to the hypothesis that there was, indeed a "universal flood," as related in stories common to many ancient religions. Such conclusions are based on the geochemical study of deep-sea sediment cores raised from the floor of the northeastern Gulf of Mexico, which indicate that the flooding was caused by a sudden collapse and surge of the waning North American ice cap. This in turn pushed a large amount of ice into the Gulf, and as it melted, the result was a worldwide rise in sea level and the flooding of the world's lowlands. Basic information was obtained by the use of mass spectrometers to determine the concentration of the rare oxygen-18 isotope that was found in the fossil shells of the microscopic marine organisms contained in the core samples, and scintillation counters were then used for radiocarbon dating of the sediment...

NEWSLETTER

Institute of Maya Studies

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3280 South Miami Avenue

Miami, Florida 33129

