

INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

Newsletter



CIB

Hal C. Ball, Editor
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MEETING NOTICE:

The June meeting of the Institute will be held in the Museum of Science auditorium on Wednesday the 16th at 8:00 p.m. At this time the program that was originally scheduled for May will be presented by the members who participated in the March IMS archaeological tour. The program will consist of the showing of a series of color slides, and short comments relative to the architecture and stone sculpture at the sites. As always, guests are welcome.

RE: THE IMS GUATEMALA RELIEF FUND:

After returning from a recent trip to Guatemala, Hal Ball, coordinator of the Institute's "Guatemala Relief Fund," recommended to the Board of Directors that a portion of the fund be given to the Asociacion Tikal for their project of supplying building materials for the people in the Tecpan area that lost their houses during the February 4th earthquake. Subsequently, at a meeting of the board on May 5th, an amount of \$750.00 was approved for this purpose and sent with a letter to the president of the A/Tikal...

MEMBERS DONATE NEW BOOKS TO IMS LIBRARY:

Sincere thanks are extended to the following members who have donated books to our library during the past few months: E. Wyllys Andrews V, Luis E. Arochi, Samuel Block, Jack Eaton, Robert Kohler, Daniel Meyer, Nathan Rood, John Rosseau and Len Schafer...

MAYAN ISSUE FIRST OF NEW MONOGRAPH SERIES ON INDIAN LANGUAGES:

The first issue of a new series on Indian language and literature to be published by The University of Chicago Press is now available and other issues will appear irregularly, 3 or 4 per volume. The new monograph series was established to disseminate and preserve accurate, valuable specimens of American Indian language, and will include myths, legends, and fiction, as well as personal narratives. The first issue is devoted to Mayan languages and includes twenty-four texts in eight languages. \$3.60, postpaid...

FRANS BLOM. MAYA EXPLORER:

Archaeologist, explorer, author, and administrator, Frans Blom (1893-1963) was one of the last pioneers in the study of the ancient Maya. This first biography of Blom, by Robert L. Brunhouse, is an absorbing account of the man and his work. U. of New Mexico Press, \$10.00...

EDITOR'S NOTE:

It is the opinion of the Editor, that the present policies and by-Laws of the Institute of Maya Studies do not permit members to make any type of commitment or agreement, either verbal or written, on behalf of the Institute without prior approval of the Board of Directors. It is suggested therefore, that all members continue to conduct the activities of our organization in an orderly and business-like manner and not let individual enthusiasm take precedence over established procedures of the elected officers and the Board of Directors...

31 FOOT MAYA STELA DISCOVERED IN SOUTHERN BELIZE:

At the newly discovered Maya site of "Nimli Punit," approximately 8 miles northeast of Lubaatun, a large stela has been found that is reported to measure slightly over 31 feet! Designated as No. 4, the impressive monument is one of more than 20 that are located in front of the 4 structures that enclose the principal plaza of the site. It is a single block of unbroken greenish-brown sandstone that was found lying on the ground on the stela's left side, and archaeologists believe that for some unknown reason it was never erected. The stone is carved in typical Maya fashion and inscribed with an Initial Series date of 9.18.0.0.0. This should be correctly followed by 11 Ahau 18 Zac, but in the opinion of one archaeologist who examined the stela, this is not the case and it is thus possible that an incorrect Maya date was sculptured on the stone. Besides #4, there are four other stelae having IS dates, the earliest being 9.14.10.0.0...

EARLY DATED MAYA STELA FOUND AT ABAJ TAKALIK:

During the excavation of carved stone monuments at the site of Abaj Takalik, near Retalhuleu, Guatemala, a Maya stela was recently unearthed by John Graham and Robert Heizer that bears a hieroglyphic inscription corresponding to June 3, A.D. 126. This is 166 years older than the oldest recorded date at any of the Lowland Maya sites, and it is considered the most important of the 50 carved stones that have been found at Abaj Takalik as of this date. Among the Maya monuments discovered at the site there were several others that were produced by the Olmecs, and according to Graham "This is the first time that extensive Olmec and Maya carvings have been found side by side." Excavations will resume next January...

DECIPHERING THE MAYA SCRIPT:

This new book by David H. Kelley summarizes and evaluates the progress that has been made in glyphic studies and sets forth new approaches to the study of the script. The author also presents a general discussion on Maya phonetics, along with information on the grammatical structure of the script. 9 X 12 in., 360 pages, 120 illustrations, 1 map, U. of Texas Press, \$27.50...

NINE MAYAN WOMEN: A VILLAGE FACES CHANGE

By Mary Landsay Elmendorf. \$5.95 paper, \$12.50 cloth. Halsted Press, 605 Third Ave., New York, N. Y. 10016...

PRE-COLUMBIAN DESIGNS FROM PANAMA:

This is an original Dover (1976) publication that contains 591 illustrations and encompasses all of the Coclé artifacts in Samuel Lothrop's 1942 Peabody Museum Vol. VII Memoir, entitled "Coclé-An Archaeological Study of Central Panama." Today these illustrations are highly prized by ceramists, leather workers, textile designers, and others who need to use strong, sophisticated, fantastic designs. Included are beautifully composed polychrome stylizations of gods, birds, crabs, fish, monkeys, serpents, jaguars and a host of geometric and abstract patterns. 108 pp. 8½ X 11½. Paperbound \$3.50. Dover Publications, Inc. 180 Varick St., New York, N. Y. 10014...



ILOPANGO VOLCANO AND THE MAYA PROTOCLASSIC:

In a recent report on the 1975 field season of the Protoclassic Project of El Salvador, Director Payson Sheets discusses the testing of a hypothesis that sometime between A. D. 1 and 300, a massive volcanic eruption devastated a large part of the southeast Maya Highlands with an intensity sufficient to warrant migration out of the area. He suggests, therefore, that the sudden appearance of new styles of artifacts in the Lowland sites about the time of Christ, may have been because one or more eruptions rendered a substantial area of the SE Maya Highlands inhabitable, thus forcing the people to migrate towards the Peten and southern Belize. The testing of the Protoclassic-volcanologic hypothesis, however, involved obtaining the answers to many questions, one of the most important of which was "What was the source of the eruptions that deposited the tephra that buried the Preclassic materials of El Salvador?" Some investigations have indicated that it may have been from a single source--the Ilopango volcano--while others favor the idea that there was a series of eruptions. So, in order to find their relation with a specific geologic event, hopefully the eruption of Ilopango, samples of tephra were taken from 12 archaeological sites. After an analysis of the samples by Virginia Steen-McIntyre, it was determined that the tephra shroud that blanketed the southeast Maya Highlands, was not a series of local, unrelated events, but a massive complex eruption, with Ilopango the likely source. The conclusion of the report is, "that based on present data, the environmental impact of the tephra-fall was greater than the Preclassic Maya technological capacity to adjust and continue their agricultural adaptation over at least 3,000 km., and thus some 30,000 people would not have been able to continue living in the highlands of El Salvador"...

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: He who deliberates fully before taking a step, will spend his entire life on one leg!!!

MEXICAN ARTIFACTS MAY HAVE ONCE BEEN USED AS MEDICAL TEACHING AIDS:

At a meeting of the American College of Physicians in Scottsdale, Arizona, Dr. Enrique L. Labadie gave a talk in which he discussed the possibility that some pre-Columbian stone sculptures and artifacts portraying neurologic and other medical diseases, may have been used as teaching aids in pre-Hispanic Mexico. It is believed, said Dr. Labadie, that the physicians of the Maya, Aztecs, Toltecs and Mextec-Zapotecs, probably commissioned craftsmen to depict interesting cases for later use in teaching. He stated that many of the artifacts suggest a highly sophisticated level of empirical clinical observation and that the pre-Columbian people used hair as a suture material, rubber for bandage dressings, and splinting for fractures...

JOURNAL OF NEW WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY:

The inaugural issue of this new publication series was made available in May and four additional numbers in volume 1 should be out by early summer. The journal will be published at irregular but frequent intervals and the price will vary according to length. The inaugural issue was #3, "An Olmec Sculpture from the South (Pacific) Coast of Guatemala," by Edwin M. Shook and Robert F. Heizer. For price lists and subscriptions, write to: Journal of New World Archaeology, U. of Cal., Los Angeles, Ca. 90024...

NEWSLETTER

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