

# INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

## Newsletter

Hal C. Ball, Editor

Vol. 5

No. 12

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(December 8, 1976)



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### MEETING NOTICE:

The December meeting of the Institute will be held in the Museum of Science auditorium on Wednesday, the 15th, at 8:00 p.m. Our speaker for the evening will be Dr. Harold B. Haley, who will present a program on "Current Archaeological Studies in Northern Belize." Included in his presentation will be a series of slides on the Cuello site that was reported in the November issue of the IMS Newsletter, and the flint workshop found at Colha. (Dr. Haley is Associate-Dean in the School of Medicine at the University of Virginia in Roanoke, and has been making archaeological trips to Latin America since 1964. He has made a study of bone disease of the ancient Maya, and was co-author on a recent publication on medical anthropology.)...

### ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION MEETING:

The December meeting of the IMS Archaeology Section will be held in Museum Classroom "C" on Monday, the 20th, at 8:00 p.m....

### IMS MEMBERS TO CONDUCT MUSEUM'S ADULT CLASS SERIES ON THE MAYA:

Beginning on January 3, and continuing thereafter each Monday night for six weeks, Institute of Maya Studies members will conduct a series of lectures on the Maya for the Museum's Winter Session of adult classes. The classes will be held in classroom "C" between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. and will consist of the following topics:

"The Maya Culture" Hal C. Ball  
"Maya Archaeology" Irving Eyster  
"Art and Ceramics" Ellen Jacobs

"Maya Architecture" Len Schafer  
"Hieroglyphics" Charles Lacombe  
"Cultural Diffusion" Al Rosenberg

### DR. FROELICH G. RAINEY, SUPERVISOR OF TIKAL PROJECT, RETIRES:

An announcement has been made by the Board of Managers of the University Museum of Philadelphia, of the retirement of the museum's long time director, Dr. Froelich G. Rainey. He served as the museum's director from 1947 to 1976, and one of the most noteworthy projects under his direct supervision was the excavation and reconstruction of the Maya ruins of Tikal during the period of 1955-1972. Dr. Rainey was a thorough-going practicing archaeologist, and we extend best wishes to him as he retires from a distinguished career...

THE MAYA SALT PROJECT, 1976-1978:

This is a relatively new project that is being conducted by Anthony P. Andrews for a doctoral dissertation at the University of Arizona at Tucson. The field research, which was begun in the summer of 1976, is sponsored by the National Geographic Society, and will conclude in 1978. The project deals with the history of the economics of the Maya salt trade, from its inception in Formative times to the present. The emphasis lies in an attempt to reconstruct the trade in prehispanic times through available archaeological, ethnohistoric, ethnographic and modern industrial data. The methodology includes a combination of quantitative data (production vs consumption) and analogical models. Existing trade models and known patterns of trade in the Maya area throughout its history provide the theoretical framework and comparative background of the project, and the field work involves a detailed survey of salt sources of the Maya, (primarily in southern Guatemala and Mexico), their mode of production, and the quantities of salt they produce. A study will also be made of archaeological sites which were (1) salt-producing centers, or (2) nodes of trade along presumed salt trade routes. In summary, the goal of Andrews' project is twofold: (1) to synthesize the available data for reference purposes, and (2) to reconstruct as much as possible the volume of Maya salt trade in prehispanic times...

PAINTING PRACTICES AT PALENQUE:

During her research of the painting practices at Palenque, Merle Greene Robertson has now determined that they evidently followed a definite sequence. This was: (1) plain painted walls, (2) mural painted walls, (3) stucco sculptured "murals" which she refers to as narrative sculpture, and (4) painted stucco sculpture on weight-bearing columns. Her study of the plain painted walls indicates that during the early Otolum period at Palenque, the color was a deep, dark red, but between about A. D. 636-731, lighter red/pinks seem to have become popular. Finally, near the end of Palenque's illustrious history, almost every building and piece of sculpture, including roof and roof combs, were painted over in a deep dark red similar to that used some two hundred years before. (For more detailed information on this interesting subject, see copy in IMS library of a paper presented by Mrs. Robertson at The Second Cambridge Symposium entitled "Painting Practices and Their Change Through Time at Palenque: Part II")...

FIRST SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION MEXICO CITY AND YUCATAN PROGRAM ANNOUNCED:

A study program in Mexico City concentrating on the Aztec and Toltec cultures, with later visits to the Maya sites of Chichén-Itzá, Uxmal and Palenque, will be sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution in January of 1977. For more information, write: Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., 20560...

THANKS TO "OUR MAN IN ANTIGUA":

On behalf of the members of the IMS, the editor would like to take this opportunity to extend sincere thanks to Don Willever, of Antigua, Guatemala, for sending us copies of the numerous articles on Maya archaeology that have appeared in the Guatemala newspapers during the past year...

"PETROGLYPHEN DER FINCA LAS PALMAS":

In the spring of 1976 an extensive survey was made by the German archaeologists Matthias Strecker and Gertrud Weber, of the Las Palmas region in the lower Grijalva river valley of Chiapas, Mexico (Fig. 1). Their principal interest was in the mounds and carved monuments of the site of Lopez Mateos, which they had previously investigated in 1971, 1972, and 1974. However, although they found a new unrecorded small Maya stela (height: 90 cm.) with a long count date of 9. 12.(?) 9. 5. -. , their most interesting discovery was an extensive petroglyph site in the vicinity of km. 60 on the highway between Chontalpa, Tabasco and Malpaso, Chiapas. According to Strecker, "the number of engraved boulders was found to be at least 110 and consisted of a considerable variation in subject and technique." The petroglyphs ranged from simple geometric designs to stylized human representations, and one closely resembles a glyph from Oaxaca. One particular face carved in relief reveals what Strecker refers to as "Olmec traits," and because of the number of skeletons and death heads, he believes the site had a ritual function. Detailed documentation and discussion of the petroglyphs will be found in a forthcoming book on subscription by "Akademische-u-Verlagsgesellschaft," Graz, Austria. (See IMS Bulletin Board for details)...



Fig. 1. Location of Las Palmas site

"ARCHAEOLOGICAL ATLAS OF THE STATE OF YUCATAN":

This is a project that began in January of this year and which to date has compiled a list of more than 750 different Maya archaeological sites located in the state of Yucatan, Mexico. The director of the project is Sylvia Garza T. de Gonzalez, who with the assistance of Edward Kurjack designed the system of locating and recording the sites. Their work, together with that of Anthony P. Andrews, David Vlcek and students from both the United States and Mexico, is part of an ongoing program of research of the Centro Regional del Sureste of the Instituto Nacional de Anthropologia e Historia. The location of the sites was done primarily with the aid of air photos and ground survey, and were ultimately plotted on large plastic sheets. Every site was checked in the field and the plottings are considered 100% accurate. Also, as each new site was reported, a special folder was begun, which included a field report and any other information (published or unpublished) that related directly to the site. The material obtained during the first season (January-August) is now being organized and plans formulated for eventual publication of the atlas, and if funds are available, the second phase of the project will begin early in 1977...

HEREDITARY ANEMIA AMONG THE MAYA?:

In an article in the Calgary Archaeologist, Rene R. Gadacz presents a case for the existence of Thalassemia among the present historic Maya. He suggests that, like sicklelike anemia, it may have been a malaria inhibitor, but in the alleged words of the U. S. Surgeon General, it was also "dangerous to your health." Gadacz also suggests the possibility that this may have been a major cause of the Classic Maya collapse near the end of the eighth century. Although some authorities have long since agreed that there is no evidence for hereditary anemia among the present-day Maya, and have likewise dismissed the idea that it was present among the Pre-Columbian Maya, Gadacz believes otherwise. This is based on information that skeletal lesions in Maya of all periods are not those of osteoporosis, but are porotic hyperostosis and that the lesions produced by the latter are almost identical with those produced by thalassemia. (Thanks to THE INTERAMERICAN, Denton, Texas)...

AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING---1976:

The American Anthropological Association held its 75th annual meeting at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington D. C., November 17-21. Symposiums of special interest to Mayanists were: "Measurement of Energy Trends in Archaeology: Mesoamerica" and "Pattern and Process in the Maya Middle Classic Period". A number of papers were read relative to Maya archaeology and an interesting series of slides of Coba were shown by George Stuart...

NEWSLETTER

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TIME VALUE

