

INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

Newsletter

Hal C. Ball, Editor

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YAX

MEETING NOTICE:

The October meeting of the Institute will be held in the Museum of Science auditorium on Wednesday, the 19th, at 8:00 p.m. The program for the evening will be presented by IMS member Gene Dynner who will speak on the subject of "The Structured Art of the Maya." It will be an analysis of the aesthetic elements which make Maya art fascinating to both the casual and scholarly viewers, and will be illustrated by slides taken by Gene over the past 17 years, many of which were made during recent IMS tours. His discussion will also relate peak Maya achievements to those of the primitive cultures as well as advanced civilizations of antiquity...

NEW MEMBERS:

A cordial welcome is extended to the following new members: Marcia E. Blocker, Lawrence & Elena Hajek, Margo Muccino, Beverly M. Owler, Cecele Chatlin, Helen Knapp, Viena Margulies, Mrs. Vincent (Ruth) Miller, Roman & Judy Quiros, James L. Sievers and Billi Wagner...

"CHAC" - AN UNUSUAL MOVIE OF MAYA RITUAL AND MAGICAL POWERS:

Several of our members attended this interesting and suspenseful movie during its limited showing in the Miami area and all had words of praise for what has been described as "an intriguing journey deep into the isolated and exotic culture of the descendents of the ancient Maya tribes." The dialogue is in the Mayan language (with English titles) and it is a refreshing change from the type of movies made available to the public during recent years...

GUATEMALA CONDUCTING CAMPAIGN FOR PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURES:

An article in a Guatemalan newspaper reports that the country is now conducting a new campaign to protect the country's archaeological treasures. This consists of two methods: the first, a prevention of looting, and the second, the recovery through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of valuable pieces that have been taken out of Guatemala illegally. The latter requires the participation of Guatemalan representatives abroad and the following carved stelae are to be reclaimed by this effort: El Naranjo stela #8 (St. Louis Art Museum), El Naranjo stela #6 (located in Indianapolis), and fragments of another Maya stela in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C....

"THE MUSHROOM STONES OF MESOAMERICA":

Now available from ACOMA BOOKS in Ramona, California, is a new publication on The Mushroom Stones of Mesoamerica. It was written by Karl H. Mayer of Vienna, Austria, and is a translation from German of his earlier book on mushroom stones that was published by the "Friends of Ethnology" in 1976. The book covers the subject of mushroom stones from its first appearance in the literature in 1898, at which time Karl Sapper described and commented on "the idols shaped like mushrooms," up until April of this year, when Richard M. Rose presented a paper at the New Orleans SAA meeting on "Mushroom Stones and the Maya Ball Game." Mayer bases much of the information in his book on his personal cataloguing of some 290 of what he refers to as "mushroom shaped artifacts," and comments of their distribution, chronology, typology, stylistic development and classification by size. In addition, he discusses the many theories pertaining to the possible significance and function of the unusual shaped stones and concludes that a convincing explanation of them has not as yet been made. (Copies of the book may be obtained from: ACOMA BOOKS, Ramona, California 92065. \$4.95)...

"MAYA LITHIC STUDIES: PAPERS FROM THE 1976 BELIZE FIELD SYMPOSIUM":

This is a recent publication that is available from the Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Texas at San Antonio for \$8.00 per copy. It is edited by Thomas R. Hester and Norman Hammond and consists of a series of 14 papers (190 pp.) that were presented at a Maya lithic symposium held in Orange Walk Town, Belize, on April 16-20, 1976. The papers contain interesting information on Maya lithic objects of flint, chert, obsidian and granite, and also discuss in detail such subjects as the controversial "orange peel" flakes...

NEW MUSEUM OF MAYA ARCHAEOLOGY AND COLONIAL ART NOW OPEN IN GUATEMALA CITY:

A new museum in downtown Guatemala City (9 Calle 3-26) called the "Popol Vuh" opened this summer and a visit is highly recommended for visitors to Guatemala interested in Maya archaeology. All of the objects on exhibit (over 2,000) are from the impressive Jorge Castillo collection, and in addition to the many Maya artifacts that may be seen, there are also two rooms that display colorful masks, costumes, paintings, toys, and old musical instruments of the Colonial Period.

The principal Maya archaeological collection is on exhibit in five different rooms, called the Peten, Motagua, Kaminaljuyu, Area Sur and the Quiche, and there is also an open patio where a large variety of pre-Columbian stone objects are located. Almost all types of Maya artifacts are represented in the museum, including polychrome ceramic vessels, eccentric flints and obsidians, figurines, articles of shell, mushroom stones, hachas, yokes, stelae and various other smaller objects. Of particular interest are the large different shaped incensarios and burial urns on exhibit, some of which are almost five high and decorated with modeled animal heads and painted in orange, blue, white and red...

LARGE MAYA TYPE ECCENTRIC FLINT DISCOVERED AT THE EL SALVADOR RUINS OF SAN ANDRES:

On August 16, workmen digging under the supervision of archaeologist Stanley Boggs at the ruins of San Andres, El Salvador, discovered a cache that contained a superb scepter figure type of eccentric flint. The cache was located near the center of an axial trench that was being dug into structure No. 8. It was about one meter below the base of the mound and had been cut into a layer of white ash. In addition to the large eccentric flint, the cache also contained a triangular piece of obsidian, several bones (not yet identified), a few shells, and three ceramic vessels, two of which were polychrome bowls (probably Copador ware) and the third a ladle type censor.

The newly found scepter flint is black and is 44 cm. high and at its widest point measures 14½ cm. It is exquisitely carved on both sides and portrays a figure in profile posed with one arm raised and bent at the elbow. The figure is depicted wearing a large ornamental headdress, on the front of which is an animal head that appears to be that of a deer. The figure's long nose and general appearance is typical Maya, and of special interest are the finely carved protruding lips that curl slightly away from the mouth. It has been suggested that the personage may be seated on some sort of bench or throne, but this observation still remains speculative.

Another interesting feature of the flint is the tiny saw-tooth notches carved on the back of the headdress and on the element projecting upward and in back of the figure's body. Other eccentric flints similar to this have previously been found in the Maya area (see: Before Cortez, plate #200), but the San Andres one is 9 cm. higher than those reported in the literature and considered a particularly important discovery in El Salvador. (NOTE: The editor extends his sincere thanks to Sr. Roberto Huezo and other staff members of the Museo Nacional "David J. Guzman" for allowing him to personally examine and photograph the San Andres flint and several of the other artifacts in the museum)...

INSTITUTE FOR MAYA AND NEW WORLD RESEARCH:

This is a relatively new organization established by Prentice M. Thomas, who is presently serving as director. The Institute is involved in "Contracting and subcontracting for the archaeological portions of environmental impact statements," and at this time has two primary objectives. The first is contract work here in the United States, and the second is a continuation of Thomas' work in the Maya area. The Institute is also in the process of



beginning a publication series and intends to publish a report on recent excavations at Rio Bec Temple B, and other excavations under the direction of Mary Nievens that were conducted at El Pozito in Belize. Correspondence from Thomas indicates that once the publication series is established, manuscripts will be accepted on other work done throughout the Maya area...

TWO NEW NUMBERS OF THE CORPUS OF MAYA HIEROGLYPHIC INSCRIPTIONS:

Now available from Harvard University's Peabody Museum of Archaeology, are Vol. 3, Part 1 and Vol. 4, Part 1 of the Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphics. Part 1 of Vol. 3 contains photographs, line drawings and basic information on 25 of the carved stone lintels at the important Maya site of Yaxchilan, and Part 1 of Vol. 4 describes and illustrates the carved stelae, lintels, and other miscellaneous stones at the sites of Itzimte-Bolonchen, Pixoy, and Tzum. Highly recommended for those interested in hieroglyphics. \$10.00 each.

NEW EDITOR FOR "AMERICAN ANTIQUITY" ANNOUNCED:

Jeremy A. Sabloff (Utah) has recently been named as Editor-elect of American Antiquity and will succeed Frank Hole (Rice) as Editor in 1978.

DON'T FORGET the "Columbus Day Eclipse of the Sun" on 7 Cimi 4 Yax (Oct. 12).



NEWSLETTER

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TIME VALUE

