

INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

Newsletter



AKBAL

Hal C. Ball, Editor
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MEETING NOTICE:

The regular monthly meeting of the Institute will be held in the Museum of Science auditorium Wednesday, May 17th, at 8:00 P.M. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Dr. Esther Pasztory, who will present an illustrated lecture on "Teotihuacan Influence on Maya Art". Dr. Pasztory is a professor in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University, and has done considerable research on both Teotihuacan and Maya art in Mesoamerica, and we believe that this is a program that all members will find of particular interest. Also, remember that guests are always welcome...

ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION MEETING:

A meeting of the IMS Archaeology Section was held on April 26th at the home of the chairman, Hal Ball. The study of "Stone Sculpture of the Ancient Maya" was continued, with emphasis on a comparison of the stone sculpture of the Maya with that of other cultures of Mesoamerica and South America. The next meeting is scheduled for May 24th...

TRAVEL SECTION MEETING:

The May meeting of the IMS Travel Section will be held in the home of Lewis Meyer on Wednesday the 10th at 8:00 P.M. Mr. Meyer will show slides and present basic information on the archaeological sites of Kaminaljuyu and Tikal. This program is primarily for members who have not previously visited these two Guatemalan sites, but are tentatively planning to do so in the near future. Any members interested, however, are invited to attend. (9240 S.W. 66th Street, Miami)...

LATIN AMERICA MAPPING PROJECT PROPOSED:

Information is currently being gathered by The Pan American Institute of Geography and History for a proposed 1:250,000 scale unified Latin American topographic mapping project. As there are large areas of Latin America for which there are no topographic maps presently available, while others may only be obtained at a scale of 1:1,000,000, there appears to be a definite need for a unified series of maps at a scale useful to international development agencies. The proposal, by Jack Staples of the Interamerican Geodetic Survey in Panama, is for the new series of maps to have a 50 to 100 meter contour interval and a sheet size of 1 x 5...



ARCHAEOASTRONOMY AND MAYA CALENDRIAL STUDIES:

In an article entitled "Archaeoastronomy in America" that appeared in the latest volume of The American Archaeologist (Winter-Spring 1978), the author, Peter Skiff, cites an example of Maya calendrical studies that he believes goes far beyond the solar and lunar cycles (or observations of Venus). This according to Skiff... "arises in a correlation of serpent positions in glyphs of the Madrid Codex with the path of the constellation Draco in the evening sky (M. P. Hatch)". He is of the opinion, however, that the later Maya used as a calendar star the obscure (to us) eta Draconis. If this be the case... "it would suggest an unusual astronomical sophistication that would allow accurate correlation of the theological 260 solar day cycle with the practical agricultural cycle of the seasons". Continued studies are in progress of the role that astronomy played in the Maya and other pre-Columbian cultures, and for up to date information see: Archaeoastronomy Bulletin, edited by John B. Carlson and Ray A. Williamson, U. of Maryland...

M.A.R.I. PUBLISHES TWO NEW PAPERS ON MAYA SITE OF BECAN:

Two new papers on the fortified Maya site of Becan have just been published by the Middle American Research Institute of Tulane University. The first, No. 2 in the Institute's "Occasional Papers" series, was written by James B. Stoltman and is entitled "Lithic Artifacts from a Complex Society." The second, No. 3 of the same series, is by Joseph W. Ball and E. Wyllys Andrews V, and is on "The Preclassic Architecture at Becan, Campeche, Mexico". The two papers are bound together and the cost is \$3.50. Other earlier publications on Becan are also available from the Institute and a catalogue and order form may be obtained by writing to: M.A.R.I., Tulane University, New Orleans, La. 70118...

MAYA MONUMENTS; SCULPTURES OF UNKNOWN PROVENANCE IN EUROPE:

This is the first of three books written by Karl H. Mayer on Maya monuments of unknown provenance, all of which will be published by Acoma Books, P.O. Box 4, Ramona, Cal. 92065. This first book of the series consists of 103 pages (8x11), 55 plates and a catalogue of the collections. It is now available for \$12.00, plus .55¢ handling charge...

THE MONKEYS OF TIKAL:

During the summer months of June, July and August, Earthwatch will conduct a study of "The Monkeys of Tikal". The project will be under the direction of Dr. John G.H. Cant, who plans to capture adult monkeys in the Tikal area so that they can be marked by collars for long term monitoring. As he continues his research on the evolution of social behavior, Dr. Cant will seek the answers to such questions as: why and when do individual monkeys change groups?, how extensive is their range?, and how do females choose their mates? Anyone interested in spending long days following troops through the forest to observe and document their social behavior and feeding habits, should write Earthwatch, Box 127, Belmont, Mass. 021178...

TRADE IN ANCIENT PERU TRACED WITH OBSIDIAN:

Obsidian artifacts from various parts of Peru have now been dated by chemical analysis to the extent that scientists have been able to determine which particular mine each piece came from and how widespread the obsidian trade was in pre-Columbian times. The study was made by nuclear chemist Frank Asara and anthropology graduate student Richard L. Bergern and confirms theories of trade in Peru that were originally based on comparisons of style in pottery, buildings and other artifacts.

The results of the study now indicate that the most important source of obsidian for a large part of Peru appears to have been from a mine at Quispisisa. This mine is considered as the northernmost of the obsidian mines located in the southern mountains of the country, and obsidian from Quispisisa has been found at sites nearly 100 km. from the mine, and dates back to about 10,000 B.C. Besides this evidence of very early long distance trade in the Andes, obsidian from Quispisisa was also found at sites in a large region of Peru that dates from the period of Chavin influence (ca. 900 B. C. to 0). However, it seems that after Chavin times there was a definite decline in the use of obsidian until the rise of the Huarí empire (500 to 900 A.D.), at which time obsidian again became widespread throughout most of Peru. (Chemical and Engineering News).

THE CIHUATAN PROJECT---1978:

The second full season of excavation and mapping at Cihuatan, Dept. of San Salvador, is scheduled to begin in early June. Last summer the project, led by Dr. Karen Bruhns of San Francisco State University, finished mapping the settlement on the south and east sides of the two main ceremonial centers. This portion of the site, which is estimated to be only about 1/5 of the total habitation area contains some 800 domestic and minor ceremonial structures located on a series of large artificial terraces. Six houses were excavated, revealing a great deal of information on domestic architecture and activities, and indicating that the inhabitants of Cihuatan were involved with trade as far afield as Mexico and Costa Rica. An offering cache in one house contained a Mixteca-Puebla polychrome cup containing a piece of worked jade, and in another house in the same mound cluster, 19 whole vessels, some containing unusual stones, had been placed on the floor with grinding stones and other artifacts. These had been broken in place and a new floor built on top. The initial analysis of the artifacts indicates that Cihuatan was occupied in the terminal Classic or early Post-Classic and may have been

CIHUATAN (continued)...

founded as a center for large scale cacao growing. In addition, a series of subsidiary centers, presumably dependent on Cihuatán were also located.

Excavations in the habitation zone will continue in the 1978 season, and an environmental study of the Cihuatán area will also be initiated, including a close investigation of the subsidiary centers. As Cihuatán was apparently the most important early Post-Classic site on the southern frontier of Mesoamerica, the project is expected to yield much more information on events in this area and on Mesoamerican and Central American interaction relative to this politically tumultuous period. The project is currently being sponsored by Earthwatch, The Center for Field Research, and San Francisco State University...

COLLECTION "ETUDES MÉSOAMÉRICAINES".

Several books on Mexican, Central, and South American archaeology, may now be obtained from Mission Archéologique et Ethnologique Française au Mexico at Virreyes 135, Mexico 10 D.F. Write for list of titles...

EDITOR'S NOTE: All the information in the IMS NEWSLETTER has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, but is not necessarily complete and cannot be guaranteed...



NEWSLETTER

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