

# INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

## Newsletter



IX

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(August 16, 1978)

Hal C. Ball, Editor

No. 8



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### MEETING NOTICE:

The Institute's August meeting will be held in the Museum of Science auditorium at 8:00 P.M. on Wednesday the 16th. The program for the evening will be a lecture and slide presentation by Dr. Allan Kaplan and Charles Lacombe on "The Popol Vuh: Sacred Book of the Quiche Maya"...

### IMS TRAVEL SECTION MEETING:

There will be a meeting of the IMS Travel Section in the library of the Ponce de Leon Jr. High School at 8:00 P.M. on Wednesday August 9th. A program will be presented by Mariana Beeching de Prieto...

### NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED TO IMS BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

At the June IMS Board of Directors meeting, the president appointed Karyn Kaplan and Bob Kohler to fill the unexpired terms of the two vacancies on the board, and both will serve until the next Annual Meeting. Bob Kohler was also appointed to the new position of Purchasing Agent...

### MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE OFFERS COURSE ON PRECOLUMBIAN MEXICO-MESOAMERICA:

As part of its Fall-Winter Cultural Enrichment Series, the Library of the North Campus of Miami-Dade Community College, is offering a new course on Precolumbian Mexico-Mesoamerica. Classes will be held twice a week, either in the afternoons (4:30) or evenings (7:00), and will begin on Sept. 10th and end Nov. 13th. The course may be taken for credit or audit and applications for the fall term are now being accepted. For details, telephone the Library (685-4252) or Mr. Donald Baron, Coordinator (658-4592)...

### AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING:

The American Anthropological Association will hold its 77th Annual Meeting on November 14-19 at the Los Angeles Hilton and Hyatt Regency...

### KATUNOB: VOLUME IX, NUMBER 4:

This latest issue of George E. Fay's Newsletter-Bulletin consists of over 100 pages of various articles on Mesoamerica. Of particular interest is a reprint of Bernard Lowy's paper on "Mushroom Symbolism in Maya Codices" and John Sorenson's two articles on Mesoamerican chronology. Other topics covered are: "Yucatan Caves with Rock Art" and "Telling Tongues"...



THE MAYA GLYPHIC STAIRWAYS OF EL ARESBALON:

During the recent Mesa Redonda meeting at Palenque, Noberto Gonzalez, I.N.A.H. Director of Yucatan, presented a paper and series of slides pertaining to the three glyphic stairways found at the Maya ruins of El Aresbalon. The site is located in Quintana Roo about 55 km. west of Bacalar, and although discovered over two years ago, excavation under the direction of Patricio Davila was not begun until the latter part of 1977. It has proven to be much larger than the preliminary survey indicated, and consists of several pyramidal platforms, temples and other stone structures. One tomb has also been found, but the most interesting architectural features have been the remains of three different glyphic stairways.

Each of the three stairways were constructed of limestone blocks that averaged about 30 x 40 cm. Of the 220 riser stones that were cleaned and recorded, 201 were found to be sculptured with Maya glyphs. A few of the stones contained as many as 3 separate glyphs, but the majority had only one. All of the carvings, however, appear to have been the work of a skillful sculptor, and besides the easily recognizable bars and dots, many of the individual glyphs have already been identified. At present the site is believed to be of the Early Classic Period, but much work remains before this, and other data relative to the glyphic inscriptions, can be firmly established. We will keep you informed of new developments...

NEW RANK ORDER SUGGESTED FOR MAYA SITES:

In a paper presented at the May SAA meeting in Tuscon, R.E.W. Adams suggested a new method of determining the relative rank of Maya archaeological sites, with particular emphasis on those located in the Peten area of Guatemala. He believes that..."the application of a rank ordering technique to the problem of hierarchiacal relationships among the Maya centers yields suggestive patterns", and using numerical assessment based on courtyard and acropolis counts, he lists the sites accordingly. Thus, each site is given a factor, with Tikal having the highest (85) and such sites as Uolatum and Yaltitud having the lowest (1). This method of ranking sites, of course, results in a considerable difference when compared to the one used earlier by Morley, who determined the importance of a site by the number of carved monuments that were discovered among the ruins. Comments welcome...

"MAYA STUDY GROUPS":

Readers interested in learning about new organizations devoted primarily to research on the Maya civilization, will be pleased to know that there are at present two that use the name "Maya Study Group". One is in Chicago, Illinois, and the other in Tuscon, Arizona. For more information, write: Allan Koss, 2652 Halsted, Chicago, Ill. 60614, and Mrs. Carol Tufts, 810 S. Fordham Drive, Tuscon, Arizona 85710...

EDITOR'S NOTE: When writing to the Editor requesting additional information on items published in the Newsletter, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Thanks...

QUIRIGUA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT COMPLETED:

The 5 year program of archaeological investigations at Quirigua has now been completed, and it is the opinion of the Director, Robert J. Sharer, that the excavations and research have provided a considerable amount of new data on this important lowland Maya site in eastern Guatemala.

The project was begun in 1974, and was a joint undertaking of the U. of Penn. and the Ministry of Education of the Government of Guatemala. It had two basic objectives: the first being... "to document the cultural-historical development of Quirigua by reconstructing the constructional and occupational activity". The second objective consisted of two parts: (1) obtaining a better understanding of the factors affecting the location of Quirigua, and (2) learning more of the site's role within the lower Motagua Valley. This research, combined with information deciphered from the hieroglyphic inscriptions, has now led to a new interpretation relative to the origins, growth and eventual abandonment of Quirigua.

The overall project was divided into six principal divisions, namely, The Site Map Program, The Site-Core Program, The Site-Periphery Program, The Valley Program, The Monument Program and The Laboratory Program. Excavations within the core-area were concentrated on the largest and most complex entity at the site, the Acropolis; where a sequence of some 300 years of construction and occupation were recorded (ca. 550-850 A.C.). River silt and cobbles from the adjacent Motagua were found to have been used for the earliest construction, followed by the use of cut rhyolite blocks, then sandstone, and finally marble. The largest building, however (Str. 1B-5), was built of both marble and rhyolite. Excavations also brought to light a decorated wall between Structures 1B-3 and 1B-4 which still retained a well preserved mask of Kinich Ahau, the Maya sun god. The eventual cessation of building activity is estimated to be the mid-9th century, but it has not been established whether this corresponds to the abandonment of the site, as there is some evidence that occupation persisted into the Postclassic era. From: Journal of Field Archaeology. Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1978...

MAYA ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOHISTORY:

The University of Texas Press has announced that a new book entitled Maya Archaeology and Ethnohistory will be released in December of this year. It is edited by Norman Hammond and Gordon R. Willey and consists of a series of essays... "that offer new views on the intellectual history of Maya archaeology and ethnohistory and the processes operating in the rise and fall of the Maya civilization". Ca. 328 pp., illustrations, \$20.00...

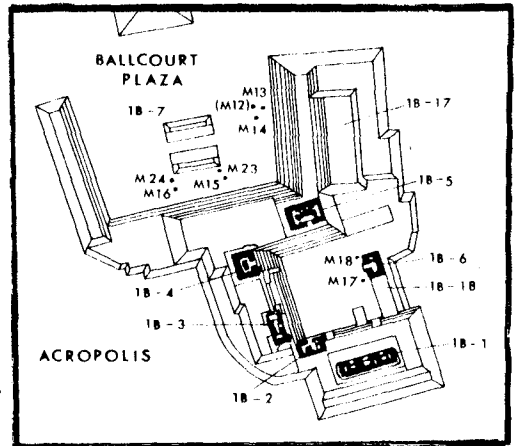


Fig. 1. The Acropolis

THE MAYA "DICCIONARIO DE SAN FRANCISCO" (YUCATAN):

Presently available from AKADEMISCHE DRUCK- u. VERLAGSANSTALT, in Graz, Austria, is an enlarged edition of the Maya dictionary of the convent San Francisco. It has been published as No. II in the series BIBLIOTHECA LINGUISTICA AMERICANA and edited by Oscar Michelon. It consists of one large volume (788 pp.) divided into two parts: Maya-Spanish and Spanish-Maya. The first part lists over 6,000 Mayan words and terms and the second part about 2,500 Spanish words. A preface by the editor describes the two different parts of the dictionary and a prologue by J. Pio Perez tells of its history and background. There is also a key to the pronunciation of Mayan words. It is highly recommended for the library of all serious Mayanists. The list price is öS 1.600, (ca. DM 230). A.D.-u.V., POB 598 A-8011, Graz, Austria.

EXCAVATIONS AT SEIBAL: VOLUME 14, NUMBERS 1, 2, & 3:

This is the second volume of the PEABODY MUSEUM MEMOIRS on the Excavations at Seibal, Dept. of Peten, Guatemala. The General Editor and Project Director is Gordon R. Willey, and the three parts included in this volume are: No. 1 The Artifacts, No. 2 A Reconnaissance of Cancuen, and No. 3 A Brief Reconnaissance of Itzan. 250 pp., 256 figs., 14 tables. \$30.00...

AND DON'T FORGET: If you die in an elevator, be sure to push the UP button!



NEWSLETTER

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TIME VALUE

