



INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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IMS General Meeting September 17:



“Another Tale of Two Cities: Palenque and Toniná”

with Marta Barber



Jim Reed,
Editor

1,000 Ancient Tombs, Unique Remains Found in Colombia

Builders clearing land for a housing project in Colombia have uncovered an ancient burial site containing nearly a thousand tombs linked to two little-known civilizations. The site covers some 12 acres (5 hectares) in the impoverished Usme district in southeastern Bogotá and includes one set of remains that some researchers believe could be a victim of human sacrifice.

The possible victim is a young woman who seems to have been buried alive, said Ana Maria Groot, one of the lead anthropologists from the National University of Colombia working at the site.

“Her mouth is open as if in terror, and her hands seem contracted as if she had tried grabbing hold of something,” Groot said. Another tomb contains the remains of a man with a curved tibia, or shinbone, possible evidence that the man was a shaman, she added.

Spanish observers in the 1500s wrote of indigenous shamans spending long



An anthropologist from the National University of Colombia excavates one of about a thousand ancient tombs recently discovered in Bogotá, Colombia. Both photographs on this page taken 4/22/2008, courtesy of Fernando Vergara/AP.

periods in caves with no exposure to sunlight. A lack of sunlight would produce a shortage of vitamin D, causing curving of the bones, explained Groot’s colleague, Virgilio Becerra.

Two mysterious cultures

Aside from such unusual finds, the site is unique for its age and length of occupation, the anthropologists say. The tombs range in date from around the first century to the 16th century AD, based on analysis of pottery found with the remains.

The first 500 years of the site’s use date to the so-called Herrera period, when several small, obscure groups thrived in this region of the Andean highlands during the development of agriculture.

“The agriculture became more intensive, more systematic at this time,” Groot said.

“We have high expectations about finding what kinds of plants they cultivated.”

From around AD 500 to 1500, the site seems to have been occupied by the Muisca, another culture that is one of Colombia’s most important but least understood civilizations, Groot said.

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Pottery found with the remains – which date from the first to the 16th century AD – mostly includes fragments of decorative and simple pitchers, cooking pots and cups. Researchers also found stones for grating vegetables and for grinding grain.

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Crystal Skulls Revisited

In Volume 37, Issue 7, July 2008, we published an article entitled: *Crystal Skulls at the Forefront Once Again*. In it, we retold the tale of the famous Mitchell-Hedges “Skull of Doom,” we mentioned pirate treasure, and we left it up to the reader to determine the validity of any of the claims – but, we were explicit in our use of the term “according to legend”! Now one reader, D. Clark Wernecke, in a letter to the editor, expressed his concern that the IMS could have gone farther to present some of the

scientific research on crystal skulls that has been done over the years, research that discredits the fact that any of the more or less “life-sized” crystal skulls we might be familiar with, were ever of ancient Mesoamerican origin.

Investigators find lots to ponder

Writer and crystal skull investigator Brian Dunning, in his article “The Crystal Skull: Mystical, or Modern?”¹ says:

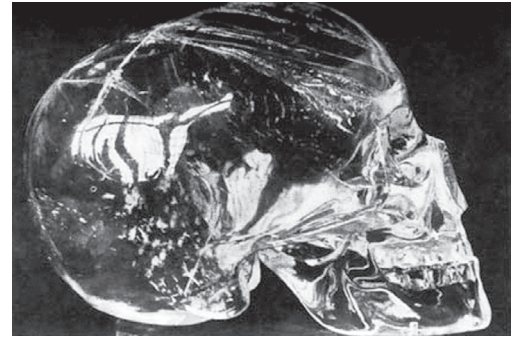
“Some believers in mystical energy feel that the crystal skulls have a broad range of powers. They can be used to aid in divination, in healing, and even psychic communication. Some even speculate that when thirteen crystal skulls are brought together (2012?), it will bring about the end of the world.

“Now, I’m reluctant to burst anyone’s bubble, but before going further, it’s necessary to clear up a few misconceptions. The Mitchell-Hedges skull is not quite 3,600 years old, and Mitchell-Hedges found it a little closer to home than Belize. In fact, he bought it from Sydney Burney, a London art dealer, through a Sotheby’s auction on October 15, 1943, as determined in hard black and white by investigator Joe Nickell² and others. This explains why neither Mitchell-Hedges nor his daughter ever said anything about it following their alleged 1926 discovery. They had never heard of it, until they bought it 18 years later, and then invented their Maya altar story.

“There is additional hard evidence that Burney owned the skull as far back as 1933, because he wrote a letter about it to the American Museum of Natural History, which they still have. Three years later, the British anthropological journal *Man* published an article about Burney’s skull. (see photo at top)

“It seems clear, but has never been proven, that Burney bought the skull from French collector Eugene Boban. The timing was right; the two men knew each other; and Boban is known to have sold at least two other crystal skulls about the same time Burney acquired his.” These two skulls eventually made their way to and are the ones currently on display at the British Museum and the Museum of Man in Paris.

“In Boban’s case, he simply purchased them in bulk from the manufacturer. This time,



The Mitchell-Hedges “Skull of Doom” – carved from a block of rock crystal, allegedly by the ancient Maya – is shown as it appeared in the July 1936 issue of *Man* magazine, at which time it was owned by art dealer Sydney Burney.

the manufacturer was Germany’s so-called “capital of the gemstone industry” Idar and Oberstein, a bucolic hamlet where artisans and craftsmen chip away at semi-precious stones in their workshops like so many Gepettos. In the 1870s, craftsmen in Idar and Oberstein made a large purchase of quartz crystals from Brazil, from which to make carvings. Nobody has ever found documented proof, but at about the time the Idar and Oberstein craftsmen were selling their cunningly carved art objects of Brazilian quartz, Eugene Boban left from there with at least three, and possibly as many as thirteen, freshly carved skulls made from Brazilian quartz. Any connection you choose to draw is purely speculative.

“For decades, the British Museum and the Museum of Man displayed their crystal skulls with the provenance originally provided by Eugene Boban, which was that the skulls were of pre-Columbian Aztec origin. But then, in separate studies in the 1990s, both the British Museum and the Smithsonian examined a number of crystal skulls, including all of those in museum collections attributed to Eugene Boban. Analysis of the cut and polish marks by electron microscope proved that they were made using 19th century rotary cutting tools, identical to those in use in Idar and Oberstein at that time. The British Museum now lists their skull as ‘probably European, 19th century,’ and ‘not an authentic pre-Columbian artifact.’

“There is enough of a gap in the early history of the Mitchell-Hedges skull that we cannot absolutely trace its lineage from the Idar and Oberstein workshops in the 1870s to the hands of Sydney Burney in 1933. But, everything known about the skull is consistent with that history, and no evidence has ever been presented that the skull might have any other origin.”

Source: Condensed from ¹“The Crystal Skull: Mystical, or Modern?” by Brian Dunning, at: <http://skeptoid.com/episodes/4098>. Also check out ²“Riddle of the Crystal Skulls” by crystal skull investigator Joe Nickell, at: www.csicop.org/si/2006-04/nickell.html. Links submitted by D. Clark Wernecke.

2008 IMS Directors and Officers:

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silobarber@bellsouth.net

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rod44@comcast.net

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Treasurer/Subscription List
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Recording and Corresponding Secretary; Public Relations
dianamark@juno.com

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bekka75@gmail.com

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786-246-5918

Juan L. Riera

jlr05k@fsu.edu

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frm@frm.com

Jim Reed

Newsletter Editor
mayaman@bellsouth.net
Tel: 404-680-1644



University of Central Florida Research Project Uses New Technology to Revolutionize Archaeology

Archaeology is going high tech, with lasers set to unlock the secrets of the Maya civilization hidden by dense forest canopy.

A University of Central Florida (UCF) study under way in the Central American country of Belize involves using LiDAR which stands for Light Detection and Ranging and refers to a collection of laser-based sensors that transmit and receive signals. The work could revolutionize the field by allowing archaeologists to map in a few months what traditional methods have taken decades to do.

“The lasers we’re using to map the site have never been used before,” said UCF archaeologist Arlen Chase. “And it’s going to make a world of difference because traditional methods of mapping are very time consuming, very laborious and very slow.”

Arlen and Diane Chase, both Anthropology professors at UCF, are working with UCF Biology Professor John Weishampel, two University of Florida professors, an archaeologist from Belize and a UCF research scientist.

In 24 years of digging at Caracol, Belize, the Chase team has mapped 24 square kilometers in the dense rainforest, but the researchers believe the site is 177 square kilometers. The laser approach promises to enable them to gain the data necessary to produce a map of the entire area in about two months. The Chases will combine the complete



UCF anthropology professor Diane Chase sifts through the contents of a tomb at Caracol. Photo courtesy of UCF.

landscape record with actual archaeology to better define the socio-economic, cultural, political and religious systems of the ancient Maya.

In this study that involves using LiDAR, a plane will fly over the site and shoot signals to sensors on the ground. The combination will produce an image of the topography. What’s unique about this approach – designed by Weishampel – is that LiDAR promises to provide a complete map of the canopy and surfaces below the canopy, which includes buildings, roadways and even terraces once used for farming by the Maya.

Weishampel has been using lasers to study forests and other vegetation for the past several years, but archaeologists are just starting to tap into the more advanced lasers and other modern equipment. Most archaeologists today use the same survey equipment that city workers use for roadwork. They cut through vegetation with machetes to prepare the area for the line-of-sight calculations the surveyors need.

Is there any connection to global warming?

Weishampel is interested in the results because it will give him a snapshot of forest vegetation today and how it was influenced by land use practices of 1000 years ago. This understanding will be useful in analyzing trends in how humans impact the levels of carbon storage. Rainforests play an important role in understanding and managing global warming.

“It’s very exciting,” said the biologist who, in combination with the Chases, landed the \$412,000 NASA and Space Research Initiative grant that is made this project possible. “I’ll be in the plane as we make passes over the terrain this summer. It’s my opportunity to be Indiana Jones in a very high-tech way.”



UCF Professor Arlen Chase works at Caracol in Belize. He will be joined by Diane Chase and John Weishampel this summer to begin work on the mapping project. Photo courtesy of Jerry Klein.



Your IMS editor visited Caracol on July 29, 2008. In this aerial view, you can see the archaeologist’s camp in the far background. Photo courtesy of UCF.

NASA is interested because, if the project is successful, the same technology and techniques could be applied to scan and map other archaeological sites.

The University of Florida’s National Center for Airborne Laser Mapping will provide the research-grade elevation and topographic data from the data collected in Belize. The partners at UF are Professor Ramesh L. Shrestha and Assistant Professor K. Clint Slatton. Jason Drake, a UCF adjunct assistant research professor and Jaime Awe, the director of the Institute of Archaeology in Belize round out the group. The team brings together experts in three different fields to revolutionize archaeology.

“Someday, we may all be using this technology routinely, and that could mean huge progress in learning about our past and applying lessons learned to our future,” said Diane Chase.

Diane and Arlen Chase will be some of the featured speakers at this year’s Maya at the Playa Conference. See page 6 for details.

Source: Combined by the editor from an original article by Zenaída Gonzalez Kotala at <http://news.ucf.edu>, and also a similar report posted at www.photonics.com.



Guazábara: Notes on Warfare in the Pre-Columbian Caribbean

By Francisco J. González

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the islands of the Caribbean were inhabited by two principal ethnic cultural groups: the Taino and the newly arrived Carib, who had displaced the Arawak-speaking Taino from the Lesser Antilles.

In order to defend their *yukayekes* (villages) from Carib raids, the Taino employed an array of deadly weapons: for hand-to-hand combat, the weapon of choice was the *macana*, a hardwood warclub about three feet long similar in shape to the Aztec *macuahuitl*, but without the obsidian cutting edge.

Other characteristic missile weapons included bows and arrows, several examples of which have been recovered in Cuba. Bows tended to be about five feet tall, made from a single piece of wood; arrows were about three feet long, with shell, fire-hardened wood, stingray spines, or fish teeth as points and as barbs.

Light spears or javelins, about six feet tall, and dart-throwers (similar to the Mesoamerican *atlatl*) were also employed, the latter launching darts four-to-five feet in length with great penetrating power at close range. A toxic coating of *ajies* (hot chili peppers), or poisonous tree sap was added to both arrows and darts. The Taino also employed a form of tear gas grenade in the form of hollow gourds filled with a mixture of crushed *ají* seeds and ashes.

Taino rituals and organization

Spiritual ceremonies or *areytos*, which included song, dance, poetry, and the inhalation of *cohoba* (hallucinogenic herbal mixture) and tobacco smoke, dancing enhanced the morale of the young warriors preparing for *guazábara*, or armed combat.

There is little evidence of fighting among the Taino, so presumably their main (and perhaps only) enemy prior to the arrival of the Europeans were the fearsome Caribs, and their tactics were thus designed to frustrate enemy raids or to recover captives.

The *cacique* or chieftain would usually lead any retaliatory expedition or counter-raid. The Taino favorite tactic was to ambush the

Carib warrior with butu warclub and barbed poisoned arrows. 17th Century French illustration.

enemy, raining arrows on an unsuspecting enemy party or encampment before rushing in for combat at close quarters.

In combat with the Europeans, however, Taino tactics and weaponry proved to be no match for the highly trained and experienced Spanish soldiers, and by 1520 AD, effective Taino resistance had ended.

The Carib way of war

The Caribs may be called the original pirates of the Caribbean, whose enslaving raids and ritualistic cannibalism struck fear amongst their neighbors, both indigenous and later European. However, the reality is more nuanced than that, since the Caribs were also merchants and traders engaged in long-range trade networks across the region. Nevertheless, Carib society was indeed geared towards promoting and rewarding raiding and success in battle.

A particularly brave and respected warrior could be recognized by his village as an *ubutu*, or “captain,” who could persuade other warriors to follow him on further expeditions. These were usually composed of between eight or ten large canoes or *piraguas*, and between 300 to 500 warriors.

The characteristic Carib weapon was the *butu*, or warclub, and was similar to the *macana* used by the Taino. The Carib were renowned archers, with large bows that were described as similar to the famed English longbow, capable of accurately firing poisoned arrows at great distances.

Carib raiders, however, were more interested in taking captives, so they stressed surprise attacks on unwary or poorly defended villages. Painted in black to blend with the shadows, the Carib raiders would wait until just before sunrise to land and attack, rounding up as many villagers



of any age and sex as possible, and moving out quickly before a counter attack would be launched.

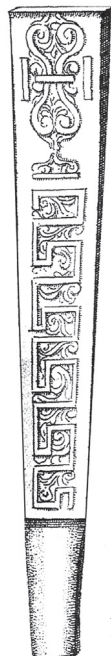
Upon returning to their home island, the warriors would divide the captives among themselves and a feast would take place in which selected male captives would be cooked and eaten as part of the victory ritual.

After the arrival of the Europeans, the Caribs continued to raid Spanish, French, English and Dutch settlements. Many Taino from Hispaniola and Puerto Rico, escaping the *encomiendas* and harsh Spanish rule, sought refuge among the Caribs and served as guides for raids into Spanish settlements on those islands. Runaway African slaves also joined the Caribs. Carib raids lasted until the 18th century, when they were finally defeated by the British.

Further reading:

Samuel L. Wilson, Ed., *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997); Irving Rouse, *The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the of the People who Greeted Columbus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Hulme, Peter and Neil L. Whitehead, editors, *Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Sebastian Robidou Lamarche, *Tainos y Caribes; Las Culturas Aborígenes Antillanas*, (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial Punto y Coma, 2005).

Francisco J. González, from Isabela, Puerto Rico, currently living in Minnesota; BA in history from the University of PR-Mayaguez, MA in history from Minnesota State University-Mankato.



Butu or macana, Taino/Carib wooden warclub.



1,000 Ancient Tombs, Unique Remains Found in Colombia

continued from page 1

Rife with artifacts from both periods, the Usme site is a potential treasure trove of information, she added.

“A settlement like Usme offers the chance to research the settlement’s development through different moments in a prolonged occupation,” she said. “We can identify those changes as expressed in their cultural practices. Ongoing analysis should reveal more about life expectancy, diet, disease, and other aspects of daily life and social organization in the settlement”

Temple site and other discoveries

Anthropologists also found ruins of a human settlement next to the burial site, including what may be evidence of a temple. Holes for posts suggest a large circular structure, Groot said.

Pottery found with the remains mostly includes fragments of decorative and simple pitchers, cooking pots, and cups. The decorative pitchers combine geometric designs with images of animals such as frogs, birds, and snakes.

Researchers also found stones for grating or cutting vegetables and for

One skeleton is of a young woman who seems to have been buried alive, possibly in a ritual of human sacrifice, said Ana Maria Groot, one of the lead anthropologists from the National University of Colombia working at the site.

Photograph by Fernando Vergara/AP.



grinding grain, though no evidence of the settlers’ diet has yet been determined.

Local authorities are considering making the site into a museum.

Excavation began in January and will continue while anthropologists await results from radiocarbon sampling of human bones and other objects to determine their ages.

“Invaluable” find

Guillermo Cock is an archaeologist and Andean expert whose work has been partly funded by the National Geographic Society.

He cautioned that apparent evidence of human sacrifice seen at Usme likely has other origins.

In the case of the young woman who looks to have been buried alive, her contracted hands may be explained by early arthritis, he said.

Likewise, her opened jaw may be the result of the body having been moved before or after burial, he said.

Nonetheless, the Usme site should prove “invaluable” to science, said Cock, whose work has helped unearth burial sites with thousands of tombs in Peru.

“Conservation [of graves and other archaeological material] in Colombia and Venezuela tends to be poor because of the soil’s humidity, which quickly destroys organic remains,” Cock said.

“If the period that each tomb belongs to can be identified, even if they are in a poor state, it would be an invaluable amount of information about this Muisca population.”

Source: From an original report by José Orozco in Caracas, Venezuela for National Geographic News (05/09/2008) at: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com>. Submitted by Scott Allen.

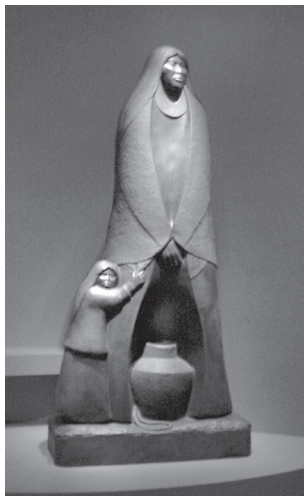
Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) Celebrates Its Fourth Anniversary

September 21 marks the fourth anniversary of the much needed National Museum of the American Indian. This spectacular modern edifice blends in with the surrounding gardens like

a natural rock cliff among the trees. Nowhere else in the world is there a structure such as this which exists as an eternal invitation to millions of Native and non-Native people who want to learn and share the cultures and accomplishments of the original inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere.

On a rotating schedule *all* of the hundreds of indigenous cultures, past and present, from

Native Modernism: This beautiful sculpture by Allan Houser was a part of the inaugural exhibition.



The National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C., is located on the National Mall between the Smithsonian’s National Air & Space Museum and the U.S. Capitol Building. Both photos courtesy of Ory Cuellar.

the Arctic to Tierra de Fuego, from the Arawak to the Zapotec, will have their “15 minutes of fame,” be it in the format of exhibits, film, video or live performances. Some of the “live” shows included modern-day Maya from Guatemala displaying their skills as weavers, plus Shamans and Day Keepers. Activities for children have been story telling of the Maya culture and weaving friendship bracelets. Representing South America, we’ve seen reed boat makers from both Ecuador and Peru dressed in their traditional, colorful outfits.

This museum stands as a monument to all the First Americans and their descendants and sparks a feeling of pride and optimism. It alone is worth a special trip to Washington to learn more about where the Americas’ heritage begins.

Thanks to Pat Manfredi for this NMAI update.



The Second Annual
MAYA AT THE PLAYA
Conference • October 2-5 • Flagler Beach, FL

You're invited to learn about the splendors of the Maya culture from the best and by the beach! Be a part of the Second Annual Maya at the Playa Conference, where professionals and enthusiasts are offered a chance to learn from and interact with a host of the world's most accomplished scientists in the field of Maya archaeology and culture ... all while relaxing in a peaceful seaside setting. The lineup of participants is second to none and their southern hospitality will make you want to extend your stay until 2012! This four-day event will be filled with workshops, lectures and performances that all experience levels will enjoy. Just take a peek at what Maya at the Playa 2008 has to offer. They're big on memories and small on cost. Please consider attending.

Lectures:

- Child Sacrifice and the Perception of Childhood in Classic Maya Culture** – with Dr. Traci Ardren
- Caching and Trashing Animal Bones: Why Maya Zooarchaeologists Don't Find Enough Faunal Remains in Middens** – with Dr. Kitty Emery
- Privilege or Pitfall? The Politics of Health and Identity at Waka', Guatemala** – with Dr. Jennifer Piehl
- The Maya and the Year 2012** – with Dr. Robert Sitler
- The Truth in Small Matters: Determining Stone Tool Use and the Reconstruction of Maya Life in Two Communities** – with Dr. James Stemp
- Human Sacrifice Among the Ancient Maya: Evaluating the Evidence** – with Dr. Gabriel Wrobel
- La Rejolla Project 2008 Season** – with Ramzy Barrios
- Architectural Manifestations of Power and Prestige: Examples from the Classic Period Maya Sites of Cahal Pech, Xunantunich and Caracol, Belize** – with Dr. Jaime Awe
- Thoughts on the Personification of Diseases Among the Ancient Maya** – with Dr. Christophe Helmke
- Introduction to Mundo Maya** – with Dr. Harri Kettunen
- Ritual and Performance in the Formation of Collective Memory: Examples of Social Continuity from El Perú-Waka', Guatemala, and Cahal Pech, Belize** – with David Lee

Overview of 2008 A.F.A.R.

- Investigations at Cahal Pech** – with Jim Pritchard
- Understanding of Local and National History in Public Primary Education in Guatemala** – with Reiko Ishihara

Workshops:

- Zooarchaeology** – with Dr. Kitty Emery (University of Florida)
- Maya Queens** – with Dr. Traci Ardren (University of Miami)
- Maya Ballgame** – with Dr. Ramzy Barros (University of Sorbonne)
- Calendrics** – with Dr. Robert Sitler (Stetson University)
- Maya Mythology** – with Patricio Balona (from the village of San Antonio, Cayo, Belize)
- Archaeological Field Techniques** – with Jim Pritchard (Brockington & Associates); and Christy Pritchard (Florida Public Archaeology Network)
- Hieroglyphics** – with Dr. Harri Kettunen (University of Helsinki); and Dr. Christophe Helmke (University of Copenhagen)
- Lithic Production** – with Dr. James Stemp (Keene State University)
- Illustration** – with Mark van Stone (Southwestern College)
- Context in Archaeology** – with David Lee (Southern Methodist University)
- Bioarchaeology** – with Dr. Jennifer Piehl (currently the assistant director of the El Perú-Waka' Archaeological Project); and Dr. Gabriel Wrobel (University of Mississippi)
- Understanding 2012** – with Jim Reed



This year's entertainment will be Pablo Collado, an internationally famous flutist from Benque Viejo, Cayo District, Belize, October 4, 7 pm in the Flagler Auditorium.

Extra activities:

Maya Ballgame Recreation
 Sunday, October 5, 5 pm
 Flagler Palm Coast Gymnasium
 Come and watch as participants are fitted with reproductions of traditional ballplayer gear and proceed to simulate an actual game.

Still to be announced is the topic and time for Diane and Arlen Chase's presentation, and, if like last year, Dr. Jaime Awe, Director of the Institute of Archaeology of Belize, will give a ceramics workshop.

How to get there:

Flagler Auditorium is located between Daytona Beach and St. Augustine on the Northeast Coast of Florida. From the South, take I-95 North to Exit 284, turn left onto Highway 100 heading West. The Flagler Auditorium is about one mile on the right situated on the campus of Flagler Palm Coast High School.

www.mayaatthep Playa.com

Check out their Website for a complete program schedule and a downloadable registration form. The conference is very economically priced with a four-day all-access pass and gift bag for only \$100.

Editor's pic: Determination



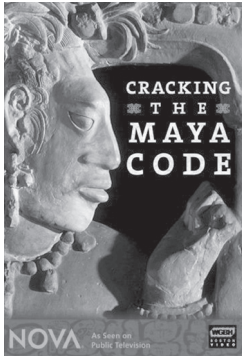
Moses Hudon, a participant in last year's event, surprised himself while taking the lithics workshop. He learned some techniques of flint tool knapping and became really good at it rather quickly.

Institute of Maya Studies' Line-up of Presentations!

September 10: Travel, Art & Archaeology

DVD Presentation of "Cracking the Maya Code"

with commentary by Steve Mellard



This is a definitive look back at how a handful of pioneers deciphered the intricate system of hieroglyphs developed by the Maya. One of the greatest detective stories in all of archaeology, it had never been told in depth before. With glorious footage of Maya temples and art, this documentary culminates in the fascinating account of this once magnificent ancient civilization's ingenious method of communication.



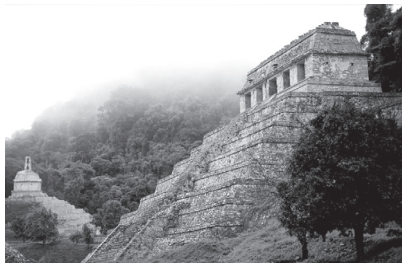
Glyphs on a carved stone bench at the Maya site of Copán in Honduras.

The ancient Maya civilization of Central America left behind an intricate and mysterious hieroglyphic script, carved on monuments, painted on pottery, and drawn in handmade bark-paper books. For centuries, scholars considered it too complex ever to understand – until recently, when an ingenious series of breakthroughs finally cracked the code and unleashed a torrent of new insights into the Mayas' turbulent past. Now, NOVA presents the epic inside story of how the decoding was done – traveling to the remote jungles of southern Mexico and Central America to investigate how the code was broken and what Maya writings now reveal.

September 17: IMS General Meeting:

"Another Tale of Two Cities: Palenque and Toniná"

with Marta Barber



Palenque sits in the mist-shrouded jungles of eastern Mexico. The Temple of the Inscriptions, shown here, is the site's most impressive structure. Deep within the temple is an ornate, vaulted chamber containing the crypt of the ruler Pacal.
Photo courtesy of Kenneth Garrett.

Palenque – one of the most visited archaeological sites in Mexico – is a modern wellspring from which researchers have drawn some of the most detailed information about Maya culture. Its importance lies in its naturalistic sculpture, architectural inventiveness, and detailed epigraphic record.



View from the sixth level of Toniná, overlooking the Valley of Ocosingo.

Named by indigenous people in Tzeltal, Toniná means the House of Stone.

Metaphorically, the name refers to the home of celestial lights and deities of time: Toniná was a site of calendars and rituals. The site is built on the side of a large hill in seven terraces producing the overall effect of a stepped pyramid.

The Institute Maya Studies • All meetings are Wednesdays • 8-9:30 PM • Miami Science Museum
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Upcoming Events at the IMS:

September 3: *IMS Board Meeting*
All IMS members are welcome to attend.

September 10: *Travel, Art & Archaeology DVD Presentation of "Cracking the Maya Code"* – With glorious footage of Maya temples and art, this documentary culminates in the fascinating account of this magnificent ancient civilization's ingenious method of communication. This is a definitive look back at how researchers deciphered the system of hieroglyphs developed by the Maya, with commentary by **Steve Mellard**.

September 17: *IMS General Meeting "Another Tale of Two Cities: Palenque and Toniná"* – The importance of Palenque lies in its naturalistic sculpture, architectural inventiveness and detailed epigraphic record. Toniná was a site of calendars and rituals, built on seven levels of a large hill. **Marta Barber** takes us on a tour of two of the Maya sites the IMS group will visit in November.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

September 13: *Symposium "Power and Politics in the Late Aztec Period"* – Theme of symposium by the Pre-Columbian Society of Washington, D.C. Location to be announced. Get more info at: www.pcswdc.org

October 11–12: *Symposium "Recordkeeping in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and the Andean Region"* – A Pre-Columbian Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. The symposium is intended to gain critical and comparative insights into the types of sign, script, and notational systems devised by indigenous Americans for the purposes of recording and conveying knowledge and information. Speakers include: Elizabeth Boone (Tulane Univ.), Oswaldo Chinchilla (Museo Popol Vuh), Stephen Houston (Brown Univ.), Alfonso Lacadena (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), David Stuart (Univ. of Texas at Austin), Karl Taube (Univ. of California, Riverside), Javier

Urcid (Brandeis Univ.) and Gary Urton (Harvard Univ.).
Get more info at: <http://pre-columbian@doaks.org>

October 18: Symposium "**Mesoamerican Mythologies**" – Theme of symposium of the New World Archaeology Council (NWAC) at the Beckman Center of the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering. Big names here too! Get more info at: <http://mesoamericanmythologies.info>

October 31, 2008 – April 19, 2009
"**The Aztec World**" – Exhibit at The Field Museum of Chicago, Chicago, IL. Get more info at: www.fieldmuseum.org

November 7–11: Conference "**It's Good to be King: The Archaeology of Power and Authority**" – Theme of the 41st Annual Chacmool Conference at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Get more info at: www.arky.ucalgary.ca/chacmool2008



Please note that all articles and news items for the IMS newsletter must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor by the second Wednesday of the month. E-mail news items and images to mayaman@bellsouth.net or forward by postal mail to: Jim Reed, 936 Greenwood Ave NE, Apt.8, Atlanta, GA 30306



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Institute of Maya Studies

3280 South Miami Avenue
Miami, FL 33129

Call the Maya Hotline
at 305-235-1192
<http://mayastudies.org>



September 17: IMS General Meeting:

"Another Tale of Two Cities: Palenque and Toniná"

with **Marta Barber**

*Palenque sits in the mist-shrouded jungles of eastern Mexico.
The Temple of the Inscriptions is the site's most impressive structure.*