



# IMS Explorer

It's a 9-level pyramid named "El Castillo" with a seasonal Serpent Descent effect, but where?

A monthly newsletter published by the **Institute of Maya Studies**



October 21, 2009 • Maya Long Count: 12.19.16.14.3 • 4 Ak'bal 1 Sak • G4

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## Dancing with Tzijolaj: Maya Crossroads from Miami to Chichicasteñango, Guatemala

By **Dr. Andrea Mantell Seidel**

Associate Professor, Dance and Religious Studies, Florida International University

Of relevance to Maya cultural studies is an international cultural exchange project that took place between an American modern dance artist from Miami, FL, and Grupo Cultural Uk'ux Pop Wuj, a Maya folkloric dance and music group from Chichicasteñango (ChiChi), Guatemala, sponsored by the Intercultural Dance and Music Institute (INDAMI) at Florida International University in Miami, FL (FIU).

The project explored the anomalies of Grupo Cultural Uk'ux Pop Wuj's participation in a predominantly professional, post-modern theatrical dance festival in Miami, FL, a world far removed from the highlands of Guatemala where Maya dance is deeply interwoven with complex, ritual observances, communal life, and humble reverence and servitude to the patron saints and the Creator God. At the



*Dance of the Deer, a folkloric dance based on an ancient hunting dance. For the past decade, Grupo Cultural Uk'ux Pop Wuj ("the heart of the writings of the ancestors"), has actively been "putting their best feet forward" in "rescuing" as well as performing traditional Maya dance forms.*

other end of the exchange, American artist Andrea Mantell Seidel, Director of INDAMI, traveled to Chichicasteñango to participate as the first Westerner in an all-Maya Folkloric Dance Festival during the festival week of the "Feast of Santo Tomás," the patron saint of ChiChi.

In this exchange, the intercultural intersections between a contemporary Maya world of dance, myth and ritual, and the sensibilities of a contemporary western artist emerged as sometimes fluid and sometimes colliding. The exchange embodied and embraced the us/them dichotomy of western, post-modern theatrical dance and the pre-modern sensibility of contemporary Maya folkloric dance, and sought to create a connecting thread that traversed invisible lines of nation and culture.

Famous for its adherence to pre-Christian religious beliefs and ceremonies, ChiChi's religious life is centered in the religious brotherhoods of the *confradias*. The *confradias*, meaning "work-service," maintain the community's spiritual relationship with the layers of Gods and continuity with the past through their complex, prescribed rituals (Cook, p. 63).

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*Maya shaman in preparation for a ritual at the shrine of Pascual Abaj, located on a hilltop overlooking Chichicasteñango.*

### IMS Presentation October 21:



**"Radical Reform in the Maya Worldview at Mayapán, Mexico's Last Maya Capital"**

with **Susan Milbrath, Ph.D.**



**Jim Reed, Editor**

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# Exciting Excavations in the Plaza at Chichén Itzá

by IMS Explorer editor Jim Reed

During the last part of July, 2009, a small group of IMS members and I experienced a wonderful adventure to Mexico that included three days at Teotihuacan and a week touring around the Yucatán. At Teo, while archaeologist Kim Goldsmith explained it all to us,

we witnessed new excavations going on in the plaza of Quetzalcoatl's compound as well as ongoing restoration of some of the beautiful murals uncovered there.

Yet it was in the Yucatán where we had our biggest surprise. We arrived at Chichén Itzá on Tuesday, July 21 and entered the site from the back entrance. We then approached the Pyramid of Kuk'ulkan (El Castillo) from the southeast. The first thing we witnessed were these amazing excavations going on, right in the main plaza!

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Revealing an interesting wall and passageway.  
Photo courtesy of Diario de Yucatán (7/22/09).



Three views of separate excavations in the plaza between El Castillo and the Temple of the Warriors.  
Left and center photos courtesy of IMS member Luis Janania (taken 8/12/09). Image above right by Tony Rojas (7/24/09).

An archaeological team, led by INAH archaeologist Rafael Cobos, was in the process of digging eight test pits in the area between the eastern side of the pyramid and the Temple of the Warriors. They are investigating the earlier "Maya" architecture, prior to the Itzá (Toltec) influence (990s CE), when they filled in the plaza to its current level and built the pyramid that you see today over the pre-existing Maya pyramid. Named "The Great Leveling", a massive amount of construction filler material used by ancient Maya to level the terrain has been found, as well as five different floor levels covered with stucco and lime that reach the base of El Castillo's south staircase.

Cobos and his colleagues are also doing reconstruction work on structures that are just to the north of the Temple of the Tables (Structure 2D6), a small ballcourt and the structures surrounding it in "Old Chichén", as well as revealing architectural remains along the western plaza wall. We now await final analysis.

Excavations were continuing through September 2009. As of 9/23/09, the most up-to-date report with additional new photos and comments by Rafael Cobos can be accessed at: [www.americanegypt.com](http://www.americanegypt.com).



A lot of activity is going on with the restoration of the smaller ballcourt and temples around it, back in the area known as "Old Chichén".



Here we get a view of the excavation and restoration of structures along the west plaza wall, in an area behind today's main entrance and site museum. It is where an inner-site sacbe intersects the plaza, south of the great ballcourt.  
Both photos above by Luis Janania.



## On the Cover:

A Maya adventurer snaps a shot of an "El Castillo" pyramid at Mayapán that has a Serpent Descent effect on solstices.

Murals found there are the subject of our October 21 general meeting with Susan Milbrath.



## Dancing with Tzijolaj:

continued from page 1

It is an obligation of citizenship for adult males to hold one of these posts for a year at a time. Many of the leaders of the *confradias* are also members of the voluntary dance groups (Bunzel, p. 165).

Despite five centuries of colonialism, oppression and military occupation, contemporary Maya life is still marked by a profound reverence for life and a sense of continuity with their ancient past that is deeply encoded in their contemporary song, dance, music and ritual.

Julio Mateo Tecum, the group's leader, describes his efforts and the group's commitment, as acts of "rescuing" and "remembering" Quiché culture, especially preserved in the memories of Maya priests and elders. The successful efforts to bring Grupo Cultural to the west for the first time emerged as a potent economic and political force in the act of "remembering and recreating" the culture of the Quiché Maya, generating new economic resources and prestige in their community.

In the sacred ritual of the *Bendición del Altar* (Blessing of the Altar), a pre-modern world is remembered and re-enacted through gesture, prayer, the burning of copal incense, lighting candles, and making offerings of flowers and blessed water. In this ceremony, that initiates all performance events, the members of Grupo

*"I was reminded to surrender to the eternal order of nature, to not force the world to conform to my independent authority, but rather to flow with its dancing rhythms."*

– Andrea Seidel

Cultural ask for permission to dance from the Creator. On the other hand, as a modern dancer, Seidel dances because it has been her choice, an expression of her individual will and passion.

Linking arm in arm as they walk through the marketplace, to hilltop shrines in the highlands of Guatemala, or along the bustling streets of Miami, the members of Grupo Cultural symbolized the close bond of *la comunidad*. For the tightly knit Maya community, historically before the devastating wars of the 1980s, there had been no orphans or isolated individuals – all were members of a large extended family.

On the other hand, the western modern artist, traveling to Guatemala and later dancing a strange, solitary dance, became an anomaly, a poorly fixed appendage, in the context of the all-Maya audience and participants whose staged folkloric dances reflected the highly codified Maya religious, social and cultural conventions.

Despite the dichotomies, the project was committed to the ideal that dance and music are the great levelers between diverse cultures. The by-product of such cross-cultural encounters and exchange has the potential to enrich the lives of both, fostering greater cohesiveness for artistic communities in the west and enhanced creativity and self-determination for indigenous peoples.

Fluid and malleable, bodies in motion have the potential to cross national boundaries, to bridge these deep gaps of understanding and cultural differences. As such, in the rhythmic patterns of the dancing body, in the desire to mutually exchange the gifts of one's art and culture, boundaries of nation and race are transcended for a fleeting moment.



*Everyday Maya life functions around highly defined and hierarchical roles for men, women and children within the structures of a communal life.*

### Selected References:

Bunzel, Ruth, 1952. *Chichicastenango: A Guatemalan Village*, Locust Valley, New York: J.J. Augustin Publisher.

Cook, Garrett W., 2000. *Renewing the Maya World: Expressive Culture in a Highland Town*, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

**Andrea Mantell Seidel** is the founding director of the Intercultural Dance and Music Institute housed in the Latin American and Caribbean Center; Senior Director of LACC's Academic Programs, and a tenured associate professor of Religious Studies and Dance at Florida International University. As artistic director of the critically acclaimed Isadora Duncan Dance Ensemble and a dance and religious studies scholar, Dr. Seidel has lectured, presented papers and performed at prestigious national and international conferences and festivals throughout the U.S., Canada, Latin America, Russia, Europe and Asia, including the Internationales Tanzfestival in Germany; the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington; Hong Kong International Conference and Festival; NYC Lincoln Center Festival Out-of-Doors; International Festival de las Mujeres en la Danza, Ecuador; and the International Goethe Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia, among numerous other venues. She holds a doctorate in dance from New York University and has published articles on the indigenous rituals of the Americas and intercultural, interdisciplinary issues in the arts in higher education. At Florida International University, she currently teaches a course in Native American Religion in the Department of Religious Studies. Dr. Seidel is the recipient of over 70 national, state and local grants, including a U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, three-year grant (\$225,000) for Dancing Across Disciplines: A 21st Model for Educational Reform in the Academy.



Andrea sharing a meal with a Maya family. *"I was painfully aware throughout my trip of my inability to grasp all but surface impressions of a complex Maya world. And yet, in the impenetrable silence of a thousand years of history unveiled, and in the (to me) unintelligible sounds of the Quiché language, there is an ineffable understanding that comes through the heart, when souls touch in their common humanity, in the rhythmic patterns of the dancing body, in the fervent and mutual desire to exchange the gifts of one's art and culture."* Photos submitted by Andrea Seidel.



## IMS Lecture Series Summary:

By Beth Wein and Steven Mellard

This is a new series summarizing the lectures from our recent guest speakers. Each month, the Institute of Maya Studies presents two educational and informative presentations for the public.

At our Explorer Session on August 12, we featured **Dr. Michele Williams**. She is an ethnobotanist who works with Florida Public Archaeology and gives lectures to inform and educate public awareness regarding Florida's past. She also recently returned from Nicaragua where she conducted a field study in collaboration with previous IMS speaker Dr. Clifford Brown. The title of her presentation was "**Medicines: They're Not For Breakfast Anymore**".

Williams has studied how pre-Columbian cultures used herbs and other plant products available to them for uses other than food. She has so far identified over seventy different plants and herbs that were used by these ancient indigenous people for medicinal purposes by studying seed remains and their locations found within these early settlements.

Michelle's program was not only educational and informative, but her sense of humor kept the audience's attention. Florida Public Archaeology can be found at: [www.flpublicarchaeology.org](http://www.flpublicarchaeology.org).

At our general meeting on August 19, we featured a program by **Dr. Edward Kurjack** entitled "**Interpreting the Art at Chichén Itzá**". Kurjack is Professor Emeritus from the University of Illinois. He has spoken to our group many times and his lectures are always interesting and enlightening. He has spent a good deal of time in the Maya area, and has accompanied the IMS on some of our yearly adventures to the Mundo Maya. It's like having our own personal archaeologist traveling with us! Kurjack started by emphasizing the need to understand the Maya through their art and the significance of its imagery.

Previous researchers have left their mark regarding the art and iconography of Chichén Itzá. Desire Charney first reported on the Toltec influence at Chichén as compared to that found at Tula. Eduard Seler reported on the religious symbolism such as that related to Quetzalcoatl, which was further elaborated upon

by Alfred Tozzer,

who theorized that the art represented the conflict between the Toltec and the Maya.

The famous diplomat explorer, John Lloyd Stephens, was the first to recognize similarities between the architecture and iconographic scenes found at sites in the highlands of Mexico and those at Chichén, an example being the bas reliefs found there depicting jaguars, and of eagles devouring hearts. Another example was the similarities of the respective ballcourts.

Kurjack interprets the art and iconography from a material perspective as compared to action and consequence. An example of this is to be found at the Temple of the Warriors in Chichén. There are numerous columns that appear in front of the temple of uniform height and spacing. Each column is divided into three sections, or registers. The bottom register features a depiction of the deity Quetzalcoatl/Kuk'ulkan. The top, or superior register, features an aspect of the Venus deity.

The middle register is perhaps the most important. Taken individually, the middle registers depict a richly attired person. Taken as a whole, however, these individuals are all part of a grand scene capturing a significant moment in the history of the city. Each column depicts either a warrior, a prisoner, an attendant, or an onlooker. They are grouped accordingly with the warriors and prisoners at center stage in front of the temple, while the attendants and onlookers are relegated to the periphery.

Many structures at the site are clearly showing the adverse effects of acid rain, as first reported by Dr. Merle Green Robertson. She and Kurjack embarked on a project of rubbings to copy the Chichén Itzá sculpture some time ago that preserved detailed reproductions of many of the reliefs.

According to Tozzer, the iconography adorning the walls of the Great Ballcourt depict the struggle between the Maya and the Toltec. It records two victories in the ball game for the Maya, and four

*Around the Temple of the Warriors, the middle register of each column depicts either a warrior, a prisoner, an attendant, or an onlooker.*



for the Toltec. What is interesting is that the main relief in the center of the ballcourt wall features a Maya victory. The Toltec victories are recorded on the margins of the court and are not as detailed. Kurjack explained that this is not something one would expect to see if the Toltec were rulers of the site.

The Temple of the Jaguars has what are considered the finest friezes at Chichén. The lower part of the temple is adorned with a frieze that indicates a procession, and features what appears to be individuals from Chichén Itzá in their typical costumes. In the upper part of the temple the registers record diversely dressed people in "Maya" dress. A ruler and his advisors are depicted in the top register. This ruler is also carved on the wooden lintels at the structure. The lower register depicts a ceremonial scene with mostly Maya individuals in pairs, perhaps delegates from surrounding sites, as one pair of dignitaries have headdresses similar to those found at Uxmal.

Kurjack states that rather than Maya on Maya conflict, it is Maya-Toltec conflict that is reflected in various ways in the art of Chichén Itzá. This idea supports current tendencies by historians and ethnographers to modify our thinking about Maya organization.

Kurjack is currently involved with the IMS on a project with our Director of Research, Joaquín Rodríguez, and Ad-Hoc Membership chair, Rick Slayzik. They are putting the final touches on a soon-to-be-released research paper regarding architectural aspects of the Temple of the Seven Dolls at Dzibilchaltún in the northern Yucatán. Look for it soon!

# The Use of Bricks by the Maya

By Joaquín J. Rodríguez III, P.E., SECB

Most ancient civilizations began masonry construction with some form of adobe. That is mud with high clay content mixed with a binder, like straw, often with other additives, including dung. Often this adobe was cast into brick like blocks. Much of Mojenho-daro in the Indus civilization as well as pre-dynastic Egypt, such as Hierakompolis were constructed with these unfired bricks. In Mesoamerica, we see the use of these mud blocks in use in early Teotihuacan and adobe construction is found in the lower level at Copán.

The next common step in masonry construction is megalithic stone blocks. So called "dry" masonry is named for its lack of mortar. The large blocks of stone are kept in place by their weight. Most famous of these are Mycenae and Tyrins in the Argolid of Greece and, of course, the great pyramids of Egypt. The majority of imperial Inca construction is megalithic also. Megalithic construction is evident in many early Maya sites also. Lower level of Aké and Xocnache in Yucatán as well as El Pilar in Belize are built with huge megalithic stone blocks.

Soon thereafter most civilizations begin using mortar, a bedding material that "glues" the stones and evens out their seating. This mortar also means the units in the masonry do not need to be the well hewn "ashlar" blocks. This leads to un-hewn rubble masonry units in thicker and thicker mortar beds until presently the mortar dominates the mass over the small stones and you have real concrete. This limestone in lime mortar masonry is what we are mostly familiar with in Yucatecan Maya masonry.

## Fired Clay Bricks

Parallel to these developing technologies most cultures experiment with clay ceramics. Better knowledge of clay mixes as well as firing techniques lead to stronger, better fired pots and figurines to the point that fired structural units are possible. Aahhh ... the true "brick". Most Roman imperial construction was fired brick. The Pantheon in Rome has a concrete dome, but all the walls, pilasters and buttresses



On the southeast corner of Temple 1 are exposed layers of fired-ceramic bricks and a long stucco relief made of sand and carbonized clam shells.

are brick. The multistory apartment buildings, insula, of Rome, Ostia and Pompeii are all fired brick. Many apparently marble columns in Pompeii are actually brick pilasters, clad in a thin marble finish.

In Athens, it is easy to distinguish the classic Greek construction from adjacent Roman imperial by the masonry. The classic Greek was marble ashlar, the Roman, fired brick.

Well-fired clay bricks are actually harder than marble or limestone blocks, stronger and less susceptible to environmental degradation. The rub is the "well-fired" part. Thick ceramics are hard to fire without exploding. Most early bricks are therefore small and relatively thin.

For years it has been known that at Comalcalco, fired ceramic



Temple 1, North Plaza Cluster. Comalcalco, Tabasco, Mexico. Notable because it is the westernmost Maya settlement.



Many of the bricks created at Comalcalco are decorated with iconography and/or hieroglyphs. A very intriguing fact is that the special

bricks were not viewed, but turned inward to protect their design and special message. In some cases, the brick makers' fingerprints were still clearly visible.

Photos courtesy of George and Audrey DeLange.



bricks had been used extensively. As expected they are thin ceramic units for better firing. It has recently been discovered that at Jonuta (see story below), fired brick masonry units were being developed. These bricks are also small thin units. Apparently the use of bricks was not extensive, but their use at all shows a beginning of a new spreading material technology.

## Jonuta: More Maya Bricks Uncovered

The discovery of remains of domestic architecture and an offering of ceramic and marine elements found at Jonuta Archaeological Zone, in Tabasco, Mexico, confirms the partial use of bricks in ancient Maya settlements in the Tabasco plain around 850 CE.

Excavations by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) have uncovered four parallel masonry walls, built with little thin bricks, as well as two small slabs placed vertically in front of the last wall, as a kind of stela, made out of powdered shell mortar.

Researchers believe that the Jonuta population was in the initial phases of brick use in architecture, unlike sites like Comalcalco, where



Masonry walls were found on the site located at the right bank of Usumacinta River. Photo: INAH Center in Tabasco.

well-achieved masonry was already in use during the same time period. The local and long-distance trade of bricks is also being investigated.

Source: From an article released 8/9/09 at: [www.artdaily.org](http://www.artdaily.org). Submitted by Marta Barber.

## IMS Presentation follow-up: The Maya's 312-Year Cycle and Burner Ceremonies

The almanac on pages 33c-39c of the Dresden Codex is largely concerned with Burner stations.

On July 15, 2009, the Institute of Maya Studies had the great pleasure to welcome Dr. Harvey Bricker and Dr. Victoria Bricker to our auditorium to present a program. The presentation was entitled "Zodiacal Beasts of the Pre-Columbian Maya". At this lecture and for the first time, the Brickers outlined their interpretation of glyphic identifications representing specifically named constellations as they appear in the Paris Codex. It was an exciting presentation and portrayed the manuscript in a very enlightening manner.

In a follow-up e-mail regarding certain Maya calendrical cycles, specifically the 312-year Ahau Katun and the Burner Ceremony cycle, Dr. Victoria Bricker was kind enough to respond. Herewith is her reply:

It turns out that I have done some research on the Maya's 312-year calendar cycle, which was a result of a modification of the katun cycle that was made in the late 18th century in order to have the end of a katun coincide with the end of a European century in 1800. This change was probably made in 1776, when the Maya changed the length of the katun from 20 360-day tuns to 24 365-day haabs. 13 katuns composed of 24 365-day haabs equal 312 years (13 x 24 = 312).

A Katun 2 Ahau was scheduled to end on June 1, 1776 in the traditional system. On the previous day, a new haab began on 1 Cauac 1 Pop. This fortuitous convergence of the beginning of a haab within one day of the end of a katun is what triggered the calendrical reform that would result in a katun ending in the same year as the European century.

The calendrical change made in 1776 was far-reaching in several respects. From then on, the katun was named after the day on which it began, rather than the day on which it ended. This meant that the first 24-year katun had the same name as the last 20-tun katun: 2 Ahau.

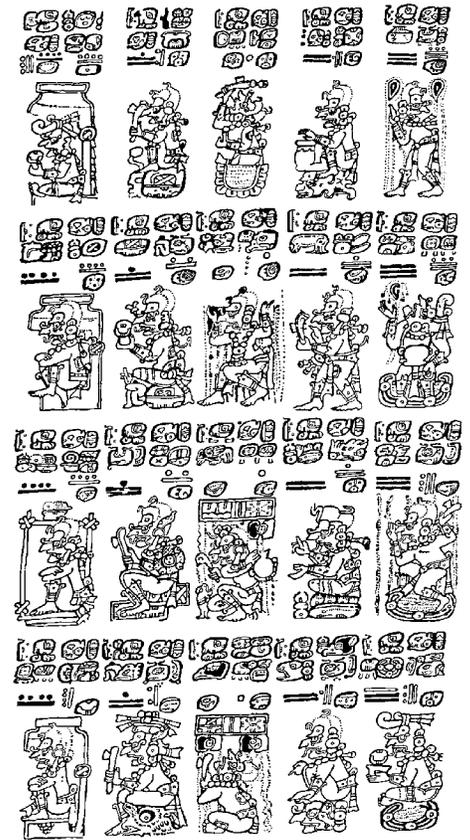
Once having made the change, some Maya scribes decided to project the new system back into the past. As a result of this practice, some European dates were assigned to 24-year katuns, whereas others were assigned to katuns in the traditional system. Most of the "problematic" dates in the *Books of Chilam Balam* make sense if they are interpreted in terms of 24-year katuns, which are not labelled as such.

The 312-year cycle is discussed in the book co-authored by Helga-Maria Miram and me, that is entitled:

*An Encounter of Two Worlds: The Book of Chilam Balam of Kaua.* Miram was the scholar who first showed that many of the apparent calendrical errors in the *Books of Chilam Balam* made sense in terms of the 24-year katun system. These "aberrant" dates are considered at length in Harvey's and my forthcoming book on Astronomy in the Maya Codices.

Turning now to the Burners, you are right that there are no almanacs in the Maya codices with a 20-20-20-5 structure. This is because almanacs usually refer to several different kinds of events, which may necessitate smaller or larger intervals. The almanac on Dresden pages 33c-39c is largely concerned with Burner stations, with intervals of 9, 11, 20, 10, and 15 days.

I have attached an interesting representative page of this almanac (above right) from our forthcoming book that shows that it is divided into four rows and five columns. The intervals in each row sum to 65 days, and the pictures in individual columns are, for the most part, thematically related to each other. The first 20-day period



in each row is divided into 9- and 11-day intervals to accommodate dates of solstices or equinoxes that fall within it.

Other pictures in each row can refer to Burner stations, although the third picture in the two bottom rows refers to eclipse seasons. Individual Burner stations are mentioned and pictured in other almanacs, along with other kinds of ceremonies or astronomical events. I have covered Burner ceremonies at length in our forthcoming book, relating them to relevant texts in the *Books of Chilam Balam*.

- Victoria Bricker

Thanks to Steve Mellard for initiating and forwarding this informative communication.

### Editor's Corner: Ancient Maya Village Located Deep Underwater in Lake Atitlán, Guatemala

Photo of an in situ  
Samabaj  
artifact.



It all started back in the early 1990s when amateur Guatemalan scuba diver Roberto Samayoa discovered a submerged site, which is now called Samabaj, just off the lake's south coast, not far from Santiago Atitlán. Now, in formal investigative dives, house foundations, smooth stelae and ceramics are being mapped at

a depth of 17 meters (about 55 feet) below the present lake level. It appears that the village was once situated on a small island, and then the lake level rose dramatically. Next month, IMS Explorer Mark Cheney and the editor bring you the exciting story.

## Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!

October 14, 2009: IMS Explorer Session (Classroom-style):



David Stuart (1987b) was the first to identify God K's name as K'awil. K'awil, with his diagnostic long, up-curving nose and scaly body, has been a part of the Maya pantheon since its earliest expressions. Stuart believes K'awil was worshipped in the Yucatán since the Protohistoric period. Classic and Early Post-Classic monuments present K'awil with wings, identifying him as a celestial deity. He is also associated with lightning, rain, fertile maize and dynastic descent. Image of K'awil from the Dresden Codex.

### "Intro to Archaeoastronomy and the Astronomical Correlation of K'awil"

with **A. Katherine Morales**

This lecture will present an introduction to archaeoastronomy, by pointing out some of the major factors that were typically observed by ancient societies, in particular, the Maya. Katherine will also discuss some of the research she has conducted that leads to an interesting correlation between K'awil and his correlation to astronomical events.



Machaquilá Stela 8 shows a king holding a K'awil scepter. Drawing by Ian Graham, MARI, Tulane.

October 21: IMS Presentation (in the Museum Auditorium):

### "Radical Reform in the Maya Worldview at Mayapán, Mexico's Last Maya Capital" with Susan Milbrath, Ph.D.

Maya murals at Mayapán in Yucatán provide a rich picture of the changing nature of religious imagery, reflecting waves of foreign influence in the late Postclassic capital of the Maya world.

Mixteca-Puebla traders from Central Mexico may have introduced foreign religious cults as early as 1325 or 1350. Two waves of foreign influence are evident in murals incorporating Mixteca-Puebla stylistic elements. One may have spread via trade along the East Coast of Yucatán. Another wave came more directly from Central Mexico or neighboring Oaxaca.



Surviving murals located under one side of El Castillo pyramid at Mayapán.



Structures at Mayapán include a circular observatory and a pyramid of Kuk'ulcan, just like at Chichén Itzá. Photo by Susan Milbrath.

Still later, Aztec stylistic elements were introduced in architectural sculpture and murals, circa 1400 to 1450 CE, most probably through itinerant artists accompanying traders from the Valley of Mexico.

Susan Milbrath, Ph.D. is Curator of Latin American Art and Archaeology Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida.

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## IMS Explorer

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### Coming up next month:

The *IMS Explorer* will present an article by Mark Cheney on the Panti Medicine Trail at Rosita Arvigo's Ixchel Farms in Belize.



It is said that the fruit of the Calabash Tree when roasted is a good treatment for menstrual cramps or to induce childbirth and that the leaf can be used in tea to treat colds, dysentery, headaches and more.

**Thanks for helping the IMS "Go Green"!**

### Upcoming Events at the IMS:

October 7, 2009: **IMS Board Meeting**  
All IMS members are welcome to attend.

October 14: *IMS Explorer Session*  
**"Intro to Archaeoastronomy and the Astronomical Correlation of K'awil"** – Our own **A. Katherine Morales** has involved herself with a lot of Maya research lately. Beyond a basic intro into the archaeoastronomy of the ancient Maya, Katherine will share what she has learned concerning an astronomical correlation of K'awil, a celestial being associated with lightning, rain, fertile maize and dynastic descent.

Oct. 21: *IMS Main Event (in the Auditorium)*  
**"Radical Reform in the Maya Worldview at Mayapán, Mexico's Last Maya capital"** – The IMS is happy to present an evening with **Susan Milbrath**, Ph.D., a great Maya scholar. Her recent research involves the remarkable Maya murals at Mayapán in Mexico's Yucatán. She has uncovered a rich picture of the changing nature of religious imagery, reflecting waves of foreign influence in the late Postclassic capital of the Maya world.

### Upcoming Events and Announcements:

October 9–10: *Symposium*  
**"Past Presented: A Symposium on the History of Archaeological Illustration"** – Theme of the Dumbarton Oaks Annual Symposium in Washington, D.C. Speakers include Barbara Fash, Stephen Houston, Bryan R. Just and Leonardo López Luján. Get more info at: [pre-columbian@doaks.org](mailto:pre-columbian@doaks.org)

November 7–8: *Symposium*  
**"The Art of Teotihuacan & Its Sphere of Influence"** – Theme of the 9th Annual Mayer Center Symposium at the Denver Art Museum in Denver, CO. Speakers include Saburo Sugiyama and Karl Taube. Get more info at: <http://mayercenter.denverartmuseum.org>

November 9–14: *Conference*  
**"Maya Political Relations and Strategies"** – Theme of the 14th European Maya Conference in Cracow, Poland. Speakers include Charles Golden, Andrew Sherer, Elizabeth Graham, Nikolai Grube, Simon Martin and Robert Sharer. The conference will be preceded by a three-day Maya hieroglyphic workshop. Get more info at: [www.wayeb.org/conferencesevents/emc\\_now.php](http://www.wayeb.org/conferencesevents/emc_now.php)

Nov. 18: *IMS Main Event*  
**"Calakmul: The Power of the Kingdom of Serpent Head"** – An ancient Maya site that extends over 10 square miles, Calakmul administered over a large domain, with its emblem glyph of a serpent head amply found around the site. The Serpent Head Polity saw its peak during the Classic period, and during that time it became a rival of Tikal. Our own **Marta Barber** has the whole story.

Through December 18: *Museum Exhibit*  
**"Art of Sky, Art of Earth: Maya Cosmic Imagery"** – Theme of a Maya pottery exhibit at the Wake Forest University Museum of Anthropology, in Winston-Salem, NC. Get more info at: [www.wfu.edu/moa](http://www.wfu.edu/moa)

Through Jan. 24/2010: *Museum Exhibit*  
**"Moctezuma: The Man, The Myth and The Empire"** – Rediscover the world of the Aztecs and trace the foundation of modern Mexico in these major exhibitions at the British Museum, London, England. Get more info at: [www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org)



## IMS Explorer

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