



IMS Explorer

A famous epigrapher and Maya glyph expert, also the author of a new book available on our planet about 2012 ... but who is he?

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



May 26, 2010 • Maya Long Count: 12.19.17.7.0 • 13 A'haw 13 Sip • G5

An affiliate of the Miami Science Museum

Yucatán Purchases Chichén Itzá for \$17.6 Million

by **Evan J. Albright**

With the quick sweep of a pen, Mexico's state of Yucatán purchased 200 acres constituting the central archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá, a UNESCO heritage site and Wonder of the World.

Unknown to the millions of tourists around the world who visit the site each year, Chichén Itzá has been privately owned for the past 500 years.

On March 29, 2010, Hans Jurgen Thies Barbachano, owner of the 200 acres upon which some of the world's most recognizable monuments rest – El Castillo, the Great Ball Court, the Caracol Observatory, the Temple of Warriors – agreed to sell his property to the state of Yucatán for \$220 million Mexican (\$17.6 million US). The transaction ends more than a decade of controversy between the property's owners, the state and federal governments, and various stakeholder groups, all of which have been vying for control of the restored ancient city.

Private property since the Conquest, Chichén Itzá was Yucatán's



After 500 years of private ownership, Chichén Itzá is now the property of the state of Yucatán. What took so long?

first capital. During the Spanish Conquest, Montejo the Younger, whose father had received a patent for the region, captured the city in 1532, renamed it Ciudad Real, and declared it capital of the Yucatán Peninsula.

Several months later the Maya rose up and drove Montejo and his conquistadors not only out of the city, but entirely out of Yucatán. When the conquest resumed several years later, the Montejo family instead took the more amenable Maya city of T'ho, renamed it Mérida, and from there subdued the rest of the peninsula.

Chichén Itzá became part of a Spanish land grant, and by the 1580s was a cattle ranch. The site, for the most part, was ignored, both by the Spanish government and by the owners of the property, except as a source of stone for the hacienda buildings and as a place for cattle to forage.

In 1841, the explorer John Lloyd Stephens visited the ancient city and the account of his visit, published as *Incidents of Travel in the Yucatán* (1843), brought Chichén Itzá to the attention of the world. Yucatán was unable to capitalize on the attention because four years later, the Maya rebelled and Chichén Itzá became occupied territory. The owner at the time was slain, the hacienda destroyed,

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The 200 acres purchased include the most prominent structures of Chichén's central ceremonial precinct.

IMS Presentation

on the fourth Wednesday!
8 pm, May 26:



From page 28a of the Dresden Codex

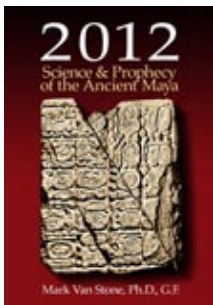
"Passageways to the Underworld: Ritual Use of Caves and Cenotes in Pre-Hispanic Yucatán"

with **Dr. Gabrielle Vail**



Jim Reed,
Editor

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New Book Release:

2012: Science and Prophecy of the Ancient Maya

by **Mark Van Stone, Ph.D., G.F.**

"This book should lay to rest wild speculations about the supposed fate of our planet as one Maya great cycle comes to an end and another begins. Van Stone brings to this subject the skills of a true renaissance man – not only an authority on the incredibly complex Maya calendar and writing system, but a master calligrapher and accomplished artist as well. This is true scholarship that goes beyond false prophecies, crystal skulls, galactic alignments, and all the other mountains of hype about the 2012 phenomenon.

Beautifully illustrated and full of insights about this great and ancient civilization, this book will be of deep interest to all lovers of archaeology, both amateur and professional."

– Michael D. Coe,

Professor emeritus, Yale University

"... a colorful résumé of 2012 evidence in the Maya inscriptions."

– Dr. Anthony Aveni,

The End of Time, the Maya Mystery of 2012

Comments by editor Jim Reed

As we approach the critical year, it is time to offer a more viable account of the Maya prophecy and expose both the fallacies and ethnocentrism tainting the current sensational accounts – and Van Stone does just that. In his own words, he intends to explain what we actually know about (1) Maya prophecies and expectations both ancient and modern, about the future; (2) the "end-date" 13.0.0.0.0, which we correlate to 12/21/2012; and (3) their many creation stories and prophecies. He draws from recent decipherment, ethnography, interviews with Maya priests and knowledge-keepers, and especially from their surviving prophetic literature.

For over two decades, Van Stone has focused his scholarly research specifically on Maya writing and culture, making some surprising discoveries that can add some new perspective on the prophecies of the ancient Maya seers.

Four years in the writing, the book is non-linear. It is arranged in a relatively logical progression, and contains 38 separate articles and observations covering some very interesting topics.

I particularly enjoyed reading and seeing his coverage of the now famous Tortuguero Monument 6 (see above) that does have the December 21, 2012 calendar end-date carved in stone.

12/21/2012
carved in
stone? –
Drawing of the
final passages
of Tortuguero
Monument
6 by Sven
Gronemeyer,
mentioning the
2012 event.



Most important to me is that Van Stone provides an article supporting his belief that the Maya were aware of and did celebrate the Precession of the Equinoxes. In the first public release of new research that I've seen, Van Stone relates groundbreaking insights by Mayanist Barbara MacLeod concerning Precession.

MacLeod has been working with an unusual Maya concept, a significant interval of time they called "3-11-Pik" (or "3-11-Baktun", to use the traditional epigrapher's name for the 144,000-day/400-year period). 3 x 11 x 144,000 days is 4,752,000 days, or 13,010.5 years, slightly over half the length of the Precession cycle. Van Stone adds images and photos to back up MacLeod's claims.

Overall, it's a great book; contact Mark directly to order your copy.

A personal note from Mark

Dear Friends and Maya Enthusiasts:

I'd like to let everyone know that my self-published book *2012: Science and Prophecy of the Ancient Maya* is finally ... finally ... hot off the presses!

It's richly illustrated in full color, about 170 pages, softcover 8.5" x 11", and ships for \$49 postage included.

My book is more expensive than any other book on the subject, because it is beautiful. As an artist, I feel that any book about the Maya should revel in their art.

Though the first incarnation of most of this material was my FAMSIS .pdf slide-show, I completely revised it and added much new material. I designed the book to be as digestible as possible, divided into 38 short essays, which can be read in any order. And, oh, yes, to the best of my ability, it is based on facts.

For those who wish to minimize their physical burdens, I also offer it on a CD, in an attractive bookshelf-ready DVD case. \$25 postpaid. The best way is to order directly from me. (PS: Once I get it on Amazon, a shipping charge of \$3.99 will be added.) My thanks to you all, contact me soon ...

Yours sincerely, Mark Van Stone
mvanstone@swccd.edu

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On the Cover:

Mark Van Stone is the author of a new book about 2012,

note article at right. Mark is seen here with *IMS Explorer* editor Jim Reed at last year's Maya at the Playa conference. They'll both be there again this year – the event to take place 9/30–10/3.

Yucatán Purchases Chichén Itzá

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and the site was abandoned except for occasional visits by explorers. The uprising, known today as the War of the Castes, lasted more than 50 years.

In 1894, an American, Edward Herbert Thompson, purchased rights to the Hacienda Chichén. Thompson already had conducted several explorations of ancient Maya sites in Yucatán on behalf of the sponsors behind the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, the Field Museum in Chicago, the Museum of Natural History in New York City, and others. Thompson restored the hacienda and turned the site of Chichén Itzá into his personal archaeological laboratory.

From 1904 to 1910, he dredged the Cenote Sagrado (the Sacred Well), one of two giant sinkholes at Chichén Itzá. During ancient times the Maya sacrificed objects of gold, carved jade, pottery and other treasures into the well, as well as human beings. Thompson removed thousands of objects from the cenote and shipped them to the United States, where they were eventually donated or sold to Harvard's Peabody Museum.

In 1926, Mexican federal authorities charged Thompson with theft of artifacts, and seized Chichén Itzá. In 1944, the case reached the Mexican Supreme Court, which ruled that Thompson had broken no laws, and the property reverted to Thompson's heirs, who in turn sold the Hacienda Chichén to tourism entrepreneur Fernando Barbachano Peón.

Barbachano Peón already had built a hotel, the Mayaland, on five acres of Thompson's property, just a few hundred meters from the monuments of El Castillo, the Temple of the Warriors, and the Caracol. He now owned everything.

Delicate balance between owning and possessing

During much of the tenure of Barbachano's ownership, the relationship between the owners and the government was, if not cordial, at least stable. The federal government's agency that oversees archaeological zones, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia



Editor's comment: Continuing to let the vendors tout their wares any where inside the site is a total disgrace to tourists and archaeologists. Keep the vendors out, like at Uxmal!

(INAH), managed the site and conducted archaeological investigations. The Barbachano family was permitted to operate the Mayaland and the Hacienda Chichén as profit-making tourist enterprises.

Barbachano Peón died in 1964, and his property went to his two children, Fernando Barbachano Gómez Rul and Carmen Barbachano y Gómez Rul. Eventually Fernando came to own the land that contains the most famous monuments of the archaeological zone.

According to Fernando Barbachano Gómez in interviews conducted in 2005 and 2006, he received a portion of ticket receipts generated by tourists entering the site. The family also had its own entrance to the park on the east side, next to the Mayaland Resort and opposite from the main tourist entrance in the west. The Yucatán state agency, Patronato Cultur, also received a portion of ticket revenues and eventually took over managing the ticket selling process.

Discord broke out when, according to Fernando Barbachano Gómez, the state began withholding his percentage of ticket receipts. In retaliation, the owner of Chichén took over operation of two large *palapas* inside the site. For years, the families of the men who provided security and maintenance at Chichén Itzá, most, if not all descended from the indigenous Maya, had operated these *palapas*, selling snacks and trinkets to tourists visiting the site.

Ten years earlier, hundreds of Maya vendors had invaded Chichén Itzá to sell handicrafts and trinkets to tourists. The Mexican Army eventually had to be called in to drive them out and keep them out.

Now, more recently, with the *palapas* run by Fernando

Barbachano Gómez's organization, the Maya vendors once again invaded all of Chichén. This time, the president of Mexico was Vicente Fox, the first opposition candidate to win election since the Revolution of 1910. He had won, in part, on his pledge to respect indigenous rights. This time, there would be no army to drive the Maya out of Chichén Itzá. The vendors were there to stay.

The Maya once again invade Chichén Itzá

The vendors and their aggressive sales techniques ("Hey lady! Only a dollar!") have become legendary. Their tables and blankets line the major pathways throughout the site. If asked, the vendors will tell you that all the items for sale are handmade, but table after table, blanket after blanket, they all offer the same objects.

Last year a group of individuals who claim to be the leaders of the vendors announced they had organized into a union called New Kukulcan (named after the Maya feathered serpent god). They made numerous demands, one of them being the "expropriation" of Chichén Itzá.

The newest Barbachano

In 2007, the federal government investigated taking the property using a mechanism called expropriation, the same process that was used to seize the oil industries in Mexico from foreign interests in the 1930s, a move which deterred foreign investment in Mexico until NAFTA. By law, the federal government in an expropriation case can only pay what the property is valued. Chichén Itzá is officially listed as "agricultural" land, and valued at \$5 million Mexican (approximately \$400,000 US).

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Maya Sites in El Salvador and Xipe Toltec

by Chris Smoot

On a recent Maya adventure through Central America, we happened, literally, upon the tiny country of El Salvador. It was a whistle stop between Belize City and Panama City, a mere plane change. We opted to spend a few days in the capital, San Salvador, my wife for some pampering and me to visit the southeastern-most Maya sites yet discovered. Her needs were immediately taken care of by the able staff at the Sheraton Hotel, while the hotel put me in touch with Nahuat Tours.

Armed with 100% desire and almost zero information, I was met the following morning by Roberto in a private car, as I was the only passenger on this tour. Roberto was a currently unemployed architect who was helping his family make ends meet, a fairly common occurrence there as well as here. He was extremely knowledgeable on all things Salvadorean.

Joya de Cerén

Our first stop was at the "American Pompeii," Joya de Cerén (the Jewel of Cerén [the region]) which lies on the banks of the Río Sucio (Dirty River).

Cerén's significance is that around 1,350 years ago, a volcano spewed forth its contents and completely covered the Late Classic/Early Pre-Classic Maya city of about 10,000 inhabitants. As of yet, no body casts have been found, so their population seems to have escaped unharmed. However, most of their worldly possessions were covered by a 4-meter thick layer of volcanic ash. Inhabited since 900 BCE, the area was discovered by workers excavating for a government silo in 1976. Serious work began in 1980 and continues to this day.

Uncovered so far are a shaman's home and several other homesites. Most of the homes consist of a sleeping area, a cooking area, and a storage outbuilding. Sweat baths also dot the landscape. All buildings are wattle-and-daub in construction. No roofs remain, but one is able to see the ante-rooms, the sleeping areas and platforms, storage areas, and even the



drainage holes.

Remains of wattle-and-daub structures are uncovered from volcanic ash at Joya de Cerén.



All are under cover, meaning under a large tin roof.

I was assured by Roberto that many artifacts had been recovered, and that they reside in the currently "closed-for-renovations" on-site museum. But I was impressed with some vendor wares for sale nearby, and promptly bought a replica of an eating dish – complete with the finger marks through the red beans and up the sides of the bowl. Apparently, that person dropped his/her meal and ran! At only \$6 US, Joya de Cerén was certainly a jewel.

San Andrés

Next, my new-found amigo Roberto took me about six miles down the road to the ceremonial center for Joya, San Andrés. This is El Salvador's second largest Maya site – a Classic city of around 12,000 people. The place was discovered by Americans in the 1940s.

San Andrés is the southeastern-most of all the Maya ceremonial sites so far discovered. Indigo dye was processed there. The center shows two ceremonial plazas and ballcourts, a temple, and the usual for such a small site. San Andrés is presumed to have been directly on the trade route between the Toltecs of Mexico and the Incas and other civilizations of South America.

Tazumal

Then, my driver/friend Robert offered to modify the advertised tour to include, in his view, the most important Maya site in El Salvador, that of Tazumal, the "place-where-the-people-were-burned" in the Q'aqchi Mayan language. The site was occupied continuously from about 100–1200 CE. Only partially excavated, a large temple and ballcourt have been cleaned. An on-site museum houses many pottery forms as well as pictures of different phases of the excavation processes. Many replica artifacts also lie within, as the site has been famously raided over the years by the many excavators and looters.



Left: Architectural model of the main plaza of San Andrés. Right: Xipe Totec, ancient Mexico's "flayed god", adorned in a human skin, at the on-site museum of Tazumal.



Aerial view of Tazumal. All images submitted by Chris Smoot.

Interestingly, the Mexican god Xipe Totec is represented here. The other earliest images of Xipe Totec had been found in Xololpan (near Teotihuacan) and Texcoco according to the Encyclopedia Britannica. Being the intermediary in a North/South American trade route may be a clue as to the presence of the large Xipe Totec statue found here, although we may have to stretch a few dates to accommodate this idea.

Three layers of the main temple have been uncovered. Of primary interest here is the later addition of a Toltec-like edifice built perpendicular to and adjoining the main temple, which is assumed to be a sacrificial temple. The stonework approximates that of Machu Picchu in general but not cut so fine specifically. The concrete work is rougher too. Roberto said that the Maya priests were not so stupid as to sacrifice the farmers who kept them fed. This concept is counter to many interpretations, but it makes sense to me. It leaves the collapse in the hands of the climatologists.

Later, we saw what *National Geographic* has called one of the five most beautiful crater lakes in the world, Coatepeque Lake. I consider my \$100 US Maya adventure as well worth my effort!

Thanks to IMS member Chris Smoot.

The Floating Villages of Key Marco and Perdido Bay, Florida



Calusa mask

Actually, the villages probably did not float on water like house boats, but were anchored to timber pilings that had been driven into the bed of freshwater ponds, swamps and coastal marshes. The coastal platform villages were possibly able to move up and down in response to the tides. These sophisticated wooden communities represent a unique form of architecture for the United States. There were probably many other villages like them in Florida and along the coastal rivers of Georgia, but they have not been discovered.



In 1896, the ruins of a timber platform village were discovered in a Florida bog. VR image by Richard Thornton, Architect.

The region around Tampa, FL, was booming in the 1890s. Railroad tycoons and land speculators viewed Florida as one of America's last frontiers, in which fortunes could be made. In particular, coastal islands could be purchased for cents per acre; connected by bridges and causeways to the mainland, and then converted into real estate holdings worth millions of dollars.

When a real estate developer began grading roads of a planned "upper crust" community on Key Marco Island, his workers immediately began finding many Native American artifacts of exceptional quality. There was very little mechanized road building machinery in that era. Most of the work was done by mules and manual labor. In the 20th century, bulldozer operators would have probably never noticed the artifacts that they were uncovering and destroying.

The developer decided that the indigenous artifacts would make an excellent "marketing theme" to attract wealthy Northerners to build winter and retirement homes on the island. He hired an archeologist to retrieve the best artifacts and catalogue them, so they could be placed in a museum on the island. Of particular interest was a marshy area, ill-suited for house construction that appeared to contain several mounds.

Archaeologist Frank Cushman excavated the mounds and platform

village in the bog during 1896. He immediately found hundreds of vertical cypress timbers buried in the muck. There were also thousands of cypress planks and sawn lengths of sapling. The mounds appear to have been below the water surface when built, and were used as anchors for particularly large or tall buildings. The tannic acid in the ground water and lack of oxygen in the muck had preserved the wood structures so that they appeared to be only a few years old.

Since the publication by Cushman of an illustrated book on his findings, the world has been in awe of the beautiful wood carvings preserved by the acidic & anaerobic muck. Some of the designs and motifs found on the wooden art are similar to copper and stone art found elsewhere in the Southeastern United States. Others are not.

It is not clear whether the people who built the platform village at Key Marco were ethnically the same as the Muskogean (ancestors of the Creeks, Seminoles, Alabamas, Choctaws, etc.) who built most of the mounds in the remainder of the Southeast. Almost no skeletal remains were found at the Key Marco Site. DNA analysis of bones has only been possible in recent decades, so even if partial skeletons had been found, it would have been difficult to ascertain their ethnic identity. Recent radiocarbon dating of the Key Marco artifacts has placed

them mostly between 500 CE and 800 CE. This is a time period in which the Classic Maya Civilization was developing, and Mesoamerican sailors were expanding their trade routes into the entire Caribbean Basin and Gulf of Mexico.

In 2003, evidence of another timber platform village was found along the edge of Perdido Bay, near Pensacola, FL. One day, an especially low tide revealed a series of small mounds along the water's edge. Underwater archaeologists were dispatched to do a cursory examination of the mounds. They clearly once supported timber posts like the house mounds at Key Marco.

The artifacts found here suggest that the site was occupied concurrently with Key Marco and then up until approximately the time of Spanish Contact, 1500s CE. The time of abandonment coincides with a horrific smallpox plague that killed hundreds of thousands of Maya in the Yucatán Peninsula. It is known for a fact that there was trade between lower Florida, Cuba and the Yucatán. Perhaps the smallpox plague spread northward.

When the Tristan de Luna Expedition arrived at Pensacola and Perdido Bays in 1559, the Spaniards discovered recently abandoned ruins of an extensive and advanced culture, but very few actual residents. The current residents were rather

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A cross-section of Key Marco artifacts (dated to 700-1500 CE) on display at the Florida Museum of Natural History on the campus of the University of Florida. 1) Vessel with decorated handles, gumbo limbo wood; 2) Thatch cutter, barracuda jaw (handle missing); 3) Pestle, lignum vitae wood; 4) Bone bead. Check out the FLMNH website at: www.flmnh.ufl.edu

The Floating Villages of Florida

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primitive folks, who did little farming and lived primarily on seafood and wild plants. It is possible that a plague, introduced by earlier Spanish explorers to Florida, had wiped out the more advanced culture.

What is quite intriguing about this section of the Gulf Coast is that the Natives called it *Am Ixchel*, which the Spaniards recorded as "*Amischel*". A team of Creek Indian scholars is currently translating all of the indigenous words written down by Spanish explorers in the 16th century as they traveled through the Creek's ancestral lands of the Florida Panhandle, eastern Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, western North Carolina and southeastern Tennessee.

A surprising number of the words are pure Maya or of Maya origin. *Am Ixchel* is an example. The words mean "Place of the Moon Goddess" in Chontal Maya.

The Chontal Maya were from Tabasco in Mexico, and lived on islands in coastal marshlands. Although illiterate, they developed true ocean-going sail boats that were similar in size and construction to Viking long ships. With this technology, they eventually obtained a monopoly on all Mesoamerican trade routes in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Basin.

Could Chontal Maya trading posts have been founded at Key Marco and Perdido Bay and occupied by hybrid indigenous-Maya peoples?



The Key Marco Cat is a 6-inch figure carved in native Florida buttonwood using shark teeth and shell scrapers. It may have been the handle of a ceremonial knife (a replica seen at top-right) and depicts a mysterious half-human, half-panther figure – thought to be a spiritual icon of the Calusa tribe.

It is a question that archaeologists have yet to answer.

Source: From an original article by Richard Thornton of the *Architecture & Design Examiner*, released 4/2/10 at: www.examiner.com

Yucatán Purchases Chichén Itzá

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Don Fernando Barbachano Gómez Rul had said in interviews that he was not opposed to selling Chichén Itzá. He wanted a fair price, which he estimated at \$250 million – in US dollars, not pesos.

In 2006, the federal government had appropriated \$14 million Mexican pesos to enable INAH to purchase land under "archaeological sites" (the monuments themselves have been owned by the government since 1972). According to the director of INAH at the time, Alfonso María y Fields, INAH made a formal offer for Chichén of \$8 million Mexican pesos, but received no response.

By the end of 2006, Fernando Barbachano Gómez Rul had passed away. He had deeded his Chichén Itzá property to his grandson, Hans Jurgen Thies Barbachano.

Since the passing of his grandfather, Thies Barbachano has taken several controversial steps to protect his property rights at Chichén Itzá. He installed two small trailers at the site to sell snacks to tourists; he began charging the vendors every day to enter the archaeological zone to sell their wares; there were charges that his *palapa* was discharging septic waste into the Cenote Sagrado, which, if true, was

actually a practice that predated his management of the area. As a result of these actions and others, the Barbachano name began appearing on banners hoisted by the vendors to protest what they perceive as oppression. The voices grew louder for expropriation.

The state takes charge

At the same time, the state of Yucatán began to take a more active interest in Chichén Itzá. Over the past two years the state has hosted large concerts at the site, bringing Plácido Domingo, Sarah Brightman, and most recently, Elton John. Paul McCartney will be performing next year. The current governor of Yucatán, Ivonne Ortega Pacheco, is building a Maya museum nearby and wants to run a high-speed rail line between the capital Mérida and Chichén Itzá.

The biggest coup occurred in 2006 when, after spending millions of pesos, the state successfully persuaded enough people around the world to vote to name Chichén Itzá one of the seven new Wonders of the World.

The governor has been criticized for what some call the "Disneyfication" of Chichén Itzá. But while federal funding has been spotty, she has ponied up real money to the table. And on March 29, 2010, she made the biggest investment of all: She bought the central ceremonial zone of Chichén Itzá. Although

The Mayaland Hotel retains its private entrance to the site.



money has yet to change hands, the principal parties signed a purchase agreement at a press conference. The price much less than the \$250 million US sought by Fernando Barbachano Gómez Rul. His grandson accepted far less, \$220 million Mexican or \$17.6 million US.

For his part, Thies Barbachano said all the right things at the press conference. "I reiterate my support that every day and in the times to come ahead, to play a positive and productive role in the future of Chichén," he announced. "The transfer of property does not conclude my responsibility and affirms my desire of continued support."

Jorge Esma Bazán, director of Yucatán's Cultur, outlined a 10-point plan for the future of Chichén Itzá, that described close cooperation with INAH, negotiations with the vendors, better opportunities for residents of surrounding communities, and a greater role by the state in the investigation and restoration of Chichén Itzá.

Source: Thanks to author Evan J. Albright for this informative report, released 3/31/10 at: www.americanegypt.com

Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!

May 12, 2010: IMS Explorer Session: "Food for the Gods: Aztec Sacrifice" with Dr. Batia Cohen

The 16th century Spanish and Indian chronicles written in Mexico describe gruesome and shocking human sacrifices. In order to understand why the Aztecs believed in those practices, we need to comprehend their beliefs and their values towards life and their view of how the universe works.



From the Duran Codex.

Their calendar was divided into 20 months of 18 days. Each month was dedicated to a deity in particular and special rituals were performed for that occasion. Those included self-sacrifice, animal and human sacrifices, intended to have different effects and results for Aztec society and the afterlife. Thanks to codices and ancient manuscripts that illustrate some of these pre-Hispanic traditions, we can take a peek into the Aztec mind and culture and try to understand their reasons of perpetrating sacrifices to honor their gods.

Dr. Batia Cohen has a Ph.D. in Mesoamerican Studies from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and a Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from the Universidad Metropolitana in Mexico City. She worked as a researcher in the Museo de Antropología in Mexico City and has published numerous articles in specialized Art and History magazines. She is a faculty member at Florida International University and teaches at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at FIU.

May 26: IMS Feature Presentation: on the fourth Wednesday of the month!

"Passageways to the Underworld: Ritual Use of Caves and Cenotes in Pre-Hispanic Yucatán" with Dr. Gabrielle Vail, New College of Florida



Chaak and Chak Chel.

A number of different data sets point to the importance of caves and cenotes as the loci of important rituals from the Pre-Hispanic period to modern times. Research conducted over the past two decades throughout the Maya area supports the idea that these spaces were believed to represent entrances to the underworld and a means of communicating with deities and ancestors residing within the earth.

This presentation examines the ritual use of caves during the Pre-Hispanic period in a new light, based on an analysis of iconography and hieroglyphic texts from the Classic period and Post-Classic sources. Emphasis will be placed on the generative role played by a pair of deities, Chaak and Chak Chel, in primordial time, and the re-creation of these generative acts by ritual actors in sacred spaces such as caves (*ch'é'en*) during specific calendrically-timed rituals. *Read Dr. Vail's full bio at the bottom of the next page.*

The Institute Maya Studies • All meetings are Wednesdays • 8-9:30 PM • Miami Science Museum
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IMS Explorer

Newsletter of the
Institute of Maya Studies

3280 South Miami Avenue
Miami, FL 33129

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New website address:

www.instituteofmayastudies.org

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Coming up next month:

In our June issue, we'll present an archaeological project report by Antonio Benavides C. of INAH

Campeche, concerning recent restorations at the site of Uxul, located within the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve.



NAACHTUN

Working on the Western side of Structure A2 at Uxul. Stela 2 is in front of it.



We will also feature excerpts from Shawn Gregory Morton's thesis on "Procession and Ritual at Naachtun", a pre-Classic Maya site in Guatemala. Morton is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Calgary.

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

May 5, 2010: **IMS Board Meeting**
All IMS members are welcome to attend.

May 12: *IMS Explorer Session*

"Food for the Gods: Aztec Sacrifices"

– Come and watch the action with **Dr. Batia Cohen**. The Aztecs dedicated each month to one of their Gods. They held special rituals to honor that deity which included self-sacrifice, animal and human sacrifices, intended to have different effects and results for Aztec society and the afterlife.

Program change: Our second public presentation in May will be on the fourth Wednesday of the month!

May 26: *IMS Presentation*

"Passageways to the Underworld: Ritual Use of Caves and Cenotes in Pre-Hispanic Yucatán"

– with **Gabrielle Vail, Ph.D.**, of the New College of Florida. Different data sets point to the use of caves and cenotes as the loci of important rituals from the Pre-Hispanic period to modern times. These spaces were believed to represent entrances to the underworld and a means of communicating with deities and ancestors residing within the earth.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

June 16: *IMS Presentation*

"Weeds and Seeds: The History of Dining in Florida"

– with Michele Williams, Ph.D., RPA. This lecture examines various plants utilized by early Floridians as well as some of the "meatier" issues of early diet in South Florida. Learn how the wealth of natural resources in southern Florida has made it a unique dining experience for over 10,000 years.

June 19: *Smithsonian Seminar*

"The Ancient Maya World"

– with George Stuart. George Stuart is an archaeologist and the past vice president and chairman for research and exploration at the National Geographic Society. To take place at the S. Dillon Ripley Center, Washington D.C. More info at: <http://residentassociates.org>

June 26–October 31: *Museum Exhibit*

"Jaguar Spots: Ancient Mesoamerican Art from the Lowe Art Museum"

– Exhibition of art from the Olmec, Maya and Aztec. This comprehensive exhibition of masterpieces from ancient Mexico through Panama is accompanied by a scholarly catalogue, lectures and educational programs for

the public. Curated by Dr. Traci Ardren, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Miami. Exhibition at the Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables, FL. Info at: www.miami.edu/lowe/art_ancient_americas.htm

June 30–July 2: *Symposium*

Belize Archaeology Symposium

– The eight installment of this annual symposium will be held in San Ignacio, Cayo District, Belize. More info at: <https://sites.google.com/site/belizearchaeologysymposium/>

Through July 18: *Museum Exhibition*

"Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea"

– Over 90 works, many never before seen, offer exciting new insights into Maya culture that focus on the sea as a defining feature of the spiritual realm and the inspiration for the finest works of art. The exhibition is scheduled to travel to the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, and the Saint Louis Art Museum. At the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. Get more info at: www.pem.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 or forward by postal mail to: Jim Reed, 936 Greenwood Ave NE, Apt. 8, Atlanta, GA 30306

IMS Presentation on the fourth Wednesday: May 26, 8 pm

"Passageways to the Underworld: Ritual Use of Caves and Cenotes in Pre-Hispanic Yucatán"

Dr. Gabrielle Vail full bio:

Gabrielle Vail specializes in Pre-Columbian studies, with an emphasis on the iconography and hieroglyphic texts of the screenfold manuscripts (codices) painted by the Pre-Hispanic Maya. She has also been involved in collaborative projects focusing on the Borgia group of codices from central Mexico, Post-Classic murals from

the Maya area, and ethnohistoric documents from the Maya region. Her recent publications include *The New Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs, Volume 2: The Codical Texts* (with Martha Macri); *The Madrid Codex: New Approaches to Understanding an Ancient Maya Manuscript* (with Anthony Aveni); and *Astronomers, Scribes, and Priests: Intellectual Interchange between the Northern Maya*

The birth of the rains (Chaak) from a serpent cenote.



Lowlands and Highland Mexico in the Late Post-Classic Period (with Christine Hernández). She and Dr. Hernández are currently completing the Maya Codices Database Project

(www.mayacodices.org), and a new commentary of the Maya screenfold manuscripts. Dr. Vail received her Ph.D. from Tulane University and holds a research and teaching position at New College of Florida in Sarasota.