



IMS Explorer

Our Explorer of the Month and her husband Jay discovered the whereabouts of the ancient Maya jade quarries. Can you name her?

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



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Fig. 1: Main façade, Structure 18, Sac Nichte, Yucatán. Image by Karl Herbert Mayer.

The Maya Site of Sac Nichte, Yucatán

by **Karl Herbert Mayer**, *Mexicon*, Austrian Bureau

The Yucatec Mayan term Sac Nicté, also written Saknikté, translated as "white" and "little flower", refers to the tropical evergreen shrub named in Spanish *flor de mayo blanca*. Botanically it is *Plumeria alba* L.

Sac Nichte is also a very frequent toponym and there are at least two archaeological sites with this particular name. The best-known ruins called Sacnicte (and also erroneously and confusedly spelled Sannacte, Sanacte or Sennacte) are located on the grounds of the Rancho Sabacche in the Puuc Zone of the Mexican state of Yucatán (Stephens 1963: 19-20; Pollock 1980: 138; Mayer 1986; Dunning 1992: 243-244; Andrews 1995: 24, 49).

There is another Puuc ruin with this same name, but spelled Sac Nichte, a name here applied, in order to distinguish it from the ruins of Sannacte/Sacnicte discovered by John Stephens in 1842.

The little-known ruins of Sac Nichte were first registered under the designation code 16Qd(10):96, and are located at 16Q BT515415 in the municipality of Akil, Yucatán (Garza and Kurjack 1980:104; Mayer 1986: 31). The site lies approximately 100 km south of Mérida.

In the course of the construction of a paved road near the town of Oxxutzcab, concerning the section between the town of Akil and the site of Loltún, a salvation project by archaeologists of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), was conducted in 2001 at Sac Nichte. They registered and excavated a total of 22 Precolumbian structures and restored one masonry building, denominated Structure 18. A respective, informative and illustrated report on the Centro INAH Yucatán work was published six years later (Peraza Lope *et al.* 2007).

I briefly visited Sac Nichte Structure 18 in February 2008, taking photographs and notes. The Puuc ruin is situated at km 95.4 on the Kanasín-Loltún road, only 8 meters northwest of the asphalt road and therefore of very easy access. The precise geographical coordinates of Sac Nichte were determined with a hand-held GPS receiver, that provided the following readings: 20° 15.93' North, 89° 22.65' West.

When first investigated by INAH personnel, headed by Carlos Peraza Lope, Structure 18 represented a rectangular mound measuring 44 m in length, 8 m in width, and approximately

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IMS Presentation 8 pm, August 18:



**"1,500 Years of
Maya Literature:
From Classic
Texts to Chol
Folktales"**

with
Nick Hopkins



**Jim Reed,
Editor**

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Modern Maya Spirituality: Re-activation at Izapa by Jim Reed

Photos by Oscar Palencia. See www.opalencia.com for 1,000 superb photos of our adventure.

During the week of the summer solstice in June of this year, twenty participants in a journey entitled "Mission Izapa 2010" supported thirteen Maya Ajq'ijaab' on a spiritual quest of ceremony and ritual. On behalf of The Maya Conservancy,*

we were able to perform special fire ceremonies at Antigua, Iximché, Tak'alik Ab'aj and Momostenango, all in Guatemala, and Izapa, in Mexico.

The Relevance of Izapa

Izapa is an important ancient site that is located in the Suconusco Pacific piedmont, just inside Mexico, near its border with Guatemala. Established in the Early Preclassic (c. 2000- 900 BCE), or the period identified with the Formative era, the ancient settlement established and maintained one of the earliest and longest-lived periods of civic-ceremonial and urban proliferation known anywhere in Mesoamerica. Izapan civilization became the heart of a phenomenal cultural development, including early writing and calendrical customs.

Located along the major Pacific-coast trade route, Izapa absorbed the Olmec culture and transmitted it to the Maya settlements in the southern Guatemala highlands. They traded cacao, sea food, tropical fruits and vegetables. The language of the ancient inhabitants was Tapachulteco and not Mayan, but it could also be classified as Early Preclassic Mayan. Here, the Olmec Long Lipped God was transformed into the Maya rain god Chaac.

Izapa is a very large site with 160 pyramids and platforms and some 250 stone monuments including 89 engraved stelae and altars. Many of the sculptures feature scenes and images of what seems to be early versions of stories that appear 1,500 years later in the K'iché Maya version of the *Popol Vuh*.

Where the Idea for Mission Izapa Began

Back in July 2008, Mary Lou and Jay Ridinger, the discoverers of the whereabouts of the ancient Maya jade quarries, sponsored a 2012-themed calendar conference in Antigua, Guatemala. (See pages 4-5 of Vol. 37, Issue 10, October 2008.) Fifty-two Maya spiritual guides (or daykeepers) showed up and we learned that they were somewhat aware of the 2012 phenomenon but not at all aware of Izapa.

*The Maya Conservancy (TMC) is a new non-profit entity with its goal to help preserve modern Maya cultural traditions and protect archaeological sites and vestiges of the ancient Maya. Join the effort at: www.themayaconservancy.org



We arranged to perform the ceremony in what is actually a privately-owned cacao grove, but still atop an ancient platform overlooking Plaza F (where the famous ballcourt is aligned to the Winter solstice).



As a poignant offering for the ritual, editor Jim Reed hands a pair of freshly-cut cacao pods to our principal K'iché spiritual guide Tat Rigoberto Itzep Chanchavac.



The importance of the event was recognized by local governmental and tourism officials. The Mayor of Tapachula welcomed our group as "distinguished visitors", held a press conference in our honor, and invited us to lunch!



Realizing that the site and its ancient images could offer an important connection to the modern Maya's interpretation of their cultural history, I offered to help organize a journey to Izapa that would take a dozen or more Ajq'ijaab' there. *continued on page 6*

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Who is she?

Mary Lou Ridinger is our latest IMS Explorer of the Month and a founding board member of The Maya

Conservancy. She stands next to a giant sacred ceiba tree around which she participated in a Maya blessing ceremony. Plans are to build a visitor center and museum on land recently acquired by TMC that lies within the ceremonial precinct of Izapa.

Sac Nichte, Yucatán

by Karl Herbert Mayer

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1.5 m in height, the remains of a totally collapsed vaulted structure, erected more than a millenium ago. The subsequently excavated, consolidated and restored building is 17 m long and 11 m wide.

On the surface of the mound and in its vicinity, various carved vault stones were found and diverse plain and banded colonnettes and "spools" were encountered which originally formed complex façade decorations and also embellished the exterior of a bench inside a room.

Many architectural elements of the collapsed vaulted building were fortunately fallen in compact entities and therefore relatively easy to re-erect and to restore. When excavated it became clear that Structure 18 has an L-shaped plan, encompassing four rooms. The building was evidently built in a single construction phase.

The main section of the structure with three rooms in a line has a north-south axis with the façade looking east. The annex with Room 4 is situated on the east side, its façade with the doorway is oriented to the south. Room 1 is on the south side of the architectural complex, Room 2 is the centre chamber, and Room 3 is at the northwest corner, connected by an inner doorway to the adjacent eastern Room 4 (Peraza Lope *et al.* 2007:224, Fig. 3).

Room 1 measures 4 x 3 m and the entrance is 95 cm wide. The central Room 2 is 7 x 2.90 m large, the entrance is 1.20 m wide and 1.80 m high; in the interior is a rectangular bench decorated with low tripartite spool elements. Room 3 measures 3.15 x 2.75 m and has a step at its entrance of which the door jambs are missing.



Fig. 3: Structure 18, interior of Room 2.

Fig. 2: Structure 18,

entrance to Room 2.

All photos by Karl Herbert Mayer, 2008



East of Room 3 is Room 4, with an east-west axis, measuring 4.40 x 2.90 m, also without jambs. The masonry walls of the four rooms have a thickness varying between 60 to 80 cm. Structure 18 rests on a low platform formed of large, dressed limestone blocks, presently visible on the north and west sides. In front of the entrance to the central room is a large rectangular bench, 4.40 m x 1.60 m, and 40 cm high (Fig. 1).

The two decorated façades of the building, one facing east and the other south, are in the typical Puuc Classic Colonnette style and embellished with many banded, split column elements and short, plain columns (Fig. 2).

The door jambs of Room 2, one monolithic, the other one consisting of two slabs, were found *in situ*, as well as a monolithic stone lintel. Of Rooms 1 and 4, only some cut stones of the lower decoration of the exterior walls were found in the debris. Within Room 2, several boot-shaped vault stones were excavated, as well as capstones. One slant row of stones of the lower section of the vault of Room 2 has been restored (Fig. 3). The upper part of the building, the vaults and roofs and the upper wall zone are destroyed and of unknown architectural shape. The bottom façade decoration that remains of Room 4 implies that its general design was identical to the eastern main façade configuration.

George Andrews (1995: 42-62) has defined within the different Classic architectural styles in the Puuc Zone the particular "Colonnette" style describing masonry structures whose exterior decoration displays several varieties of half-round columnar forms, also called split columns. These characteristic short half-round columns with tenons exist in two basic shapes, namely in plain or banded types. Plain and banded colonnettes appear in lower and upper wall zones, and in base, medial and cornice moldings. The distinct Colonnette style is distributed

over all parts of the greater Puuc Zone, and major centers featuring buildings of this style are Labná, Kabah, and Sayil (Gendrop 1983: 164-175; Andrews 1995: 42-62). The colonnette motif overwhelmingly decorates the upper exterior wall zones, whereas the lower wall zones in the Puuc region are generally plain or decorated only by simple sets of two or three horizontally arranged slender columns. A few examples of this can be found at Sayil, Kabah, Sacnichte, Santa Ana Xlabpak, Huntichmul I, Xcalumkin, and Xcocha.

The main façade of Structure 18 of Sac Nichte shows, as restored, in the lower wall zone, flanking the entrance to the centre room, a series of continuous three-banded half columns, a peculiar architectural feature that occurs extremely rare in the Puuc region. Notable exceptions of such decorated lower exterior wall zones occur at Sayil, particularly on Structure 4B2 (Pollock 1980: 124-129). Therefore, the façade decoration at Sac Nichte represents an exceptional and important example of the Puuc Colonnette style in the Northern Maya Lowlands.

During excavations by the INAH staff three burials were revealed and besides human bones and thousands of ceramic and hundreds of lithic artifacts, several *manos* and *metates*, ten complete ceramic vessels and a jadeite axe were discovered.

The majority of the ceramic shards collected date to the *Cehpech* complex of the Late Classic period, ca. 600-900 AD. The ceramic analysis also evidences a Late Classic date for Structure 18, and the Classic Colonnette style of its architecture implies a more specific dating of the Puuc site of Sac Nichte to between 830 and 950 AD.

See **References** on page 5





The Lord of the Night: Jaguar Iconography

An excerpt from the forthcoming catalog to accompany the exhibition, *The Jaguar's Spots: Ancient Mesoamerican Art from the Lowe Art Museum*

by Traci Ardren, University of Miami

Within today's Western scientific community, jaguars remain a poorly understood and understudied large cat, but

the ancient peoples who lived in Mexico and Central America prior to European contact were very familiar with the habits of the largest and most powerful land predator of the region.

Olmec and Maya art are both known for their striking images of this fierce and beautiful creature, and indigenous people from southern Mexico all the way through to Panama chose to portray the jaguar in their artistic creations.

One of the themes explored in *The Jaguar's Spots* exhibition is the close interconnection between the ancient peoples of Central America and the natural world in which they lived – a largely tropical world, of rainforests and mountains, rich in animal life, and embraced by the sea. Scholarship has shown that the cultures represented in this exhibition did not exist in idyllic harmony with their natural environment – the urban centers of central Mexico and the Maya area show clear evidence of environmental degradation – yet they also had a respect for the ambient world that far exceeds our own today and were better able to balance human and environmental needs.

Objects were selected that span a period of more than two thousand years, from the earliest signs of social complexity in the Olmec area to the height of cosmopolitan urbanism in the Aztec capital, but throughout this massive span of time the powerful creatures of the natural world remained a primary metaphor in artistic expression and the communication of social values.

The jaguar, *Panthera onca*, is the third-largest cat in the world and the most powerful predator of the New World tropics. Jaguars live

solitary lives deep

in the forest and are primarily nocturnal, becoming active just after sunset. An adult female jaguar will want up to thirty square miles for her range, with an adult male occupying up to fifty square miles, and territory is aggressively defended by each adult male.

Jaguars are famous for their ability to swim and catch water-borne prey, and they are the only large cats to live in swamps and wetlands, as well as deep jungle and mountain scrub. During the time when the art in this exhibition was produced, jaguars roamed from the southwestern United States through Mexico and Central America and deep into South America.

Jaguars love the water, and will often bathe or play in rivers and springs, stopping only to snack on fish or turtles. Although one of the very few animals capable of killing a human in the tropical New World, jaguars are shy and documented reports of attacks against humans are exceedingly rare.

The admiration for jaguars shown in the art of the ancient indigenous peoples of Central America was most likely inspired not by fear of actual attack, but rather on the mutual respect and accommodation that scientists think characterizes the normal (non-industrialized) interactions of humans and jaguars throughout the region. They point out that jaguars have the full spectrum of forest animal life available for food, and that humans are the least common animal of the forest. In many ways, the art displayed in *The Jaguar's Spots* confirms this finding – from the pumice jaguar figurine from Panama to the Maya ceramic vase with a jaguar-head decoration – the art of pre-contact indigenous Mexico and Central America emphasizes the majesty of this impressive cat rather than its fearsome or ferocious aspect. A palpable sense of awe is conveyed for the cat who loves water, the elusive lord of the night, the territorial loner.

Olmec culture had one of the most complex conceptualizations of the jaguar and is famous for art that depicts an anthropomorphized



jaguar cub, or what some have called a "were-jaguar." One of the most visually impressive objects in this exhibition is the jadeite celt (figure 1), an excellent example of this artistic tradition that formed one of the core components of how leadership and authority were expressed. This piece, an excellent example of the fine lapidary technique achieved by early artisans, displays the principal iconographic elements of the Olmec style. The figure is carved in the shape of an axe head, although it clearly was not intended for a utilitarian purpose. The nose is wide and the snarling mouth, perhaps the most distinctive trait, opens with a curled upper lip to show a pair of fangs at each corner. The contours of arms and legs have been incised into the figure, helping achieve a harmonious balance of two and three-dimensional elements. Several perforations in the corners of the mouth, the hands, and the ears probably were inlaid with shell or another contrasting material.

It has long been proposed that these figures represent the combined features of a human baby and a feline, a mythological "were-jaguar," with the cleft forehead indicating vegetation emerging from the earth or certain anatomical traits of jaguars. Other interpretations link the cleft with the regenerative process by which a toad sheds its skin. The large repertoire of hybridized supernatural beings in Olmec art demonstrates a complex understanding of the visual representation of power in metaphors drawn from the surrounding natural environment.

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The Jaguar Spots

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This beautiful jade piece conveys authority both through the precious material of jade, and also through reference to the powers of the natural world. Precious masterpieces like this object were painstakingly crafted by master artisans to be used in rituals where a local leader conveyed his supernatural abilities to the populace through a mystical association with the powers of the jaguar.

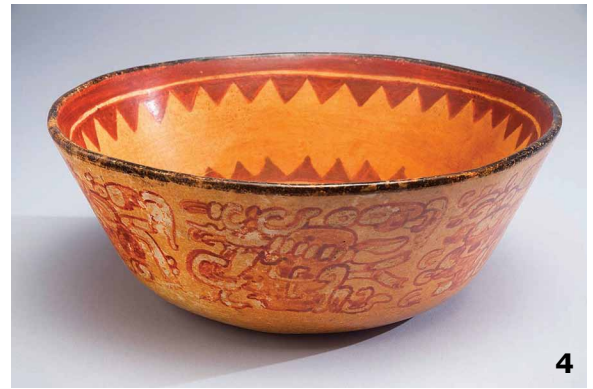
The identification of the jaguar with leaders persisted in Mesoamerica for thousands of years, and in the Classic Maya period the jaguar was both a spiritual companion for certain dynastic rulers and a totem of royal power as seen in the use of jaguar pelts on kingly thrones or dress, depicted in vases (figure 2).

Royals also wore jade pendants in the form of jaguar claws (figure 3) to demonstrate their association with one of the most dangerous aspects of this great cat.

Respect and even awe for the jaguar is also communicated through the various myths and stories of ancient Mesoamerica in which deities take on jaguar characteristics.

On a Classic Maya polychrome bowl (figure 4), we can see a series of head-variant glyphs, and of the seven deities portrayed on the bowl, two take jaguar form. One is the Jaguar Paddler, an assistant to the Maize Deity on his path of rebirth, and the other is the famous Hero Twin Xbalanque, who is always distinguishable by the black jaguar spots on his face and body (see chapter 4 of the catalog for more on this bowl). Xbalanque is often shown with his twin brother and their probable father the Maize Deity, as seen on the Miami Vase, where Xbalanque is dressed as a hunter in a ritualized reenactment of the rebirth of the Maize Deity. Look for his jaguar spots and you will find him.

A fearsome aspect of jaguar power is conveyed by a Postclassic Maya censor, a clay vase designed to hold burning resin incense. The figure is part woman, part jaguar, and as Gabrielle Vail notes in chapter 4 of the catalog, may portray the female creator/destroyer



deity Chak Chel in her wild aspect as the uncontrolled forces of the jungle.

Sadly, today jaguars are greatly threatened by human encroachment. Although they were placed on the U.S. endangered species list in 1997, there was never an effort to recover much of their native habitat. The last known wild jaguar within the United States was tragically killed in a bungled snaring incident in 2009. The following year the Center for Biological Diversity won a legal battle to protect jaguar habitat in the United States, and the Obama administration pledged to develop a recovery plan and protect essential habitat for the great cat.

Protection efforts in Central America have been more successful, where the first jaguar preserve was established in 1990 at the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary in Belize. The 128,000-acre reserve was established as a result of the pioneering research on jaguars conducted by Alan Rabinowitz and chronicled in his popular memoir

Jaguar: One Man's Struggle to Establish the World's First Jaguar Preserve.

Jaguars are also protected in reserves within Mexico, Brazil, and Peru. One lesson we can learn from the diverse and beautiful art displayed in *The Jaguar's Spots* is that humans have long looked to powerful animals for lessons and inspiration – a quest that requires mutual respect and accommodation in order to yield answers.

The Jaguar's Spots: Ancient Mesoamerican Art from the Lowe Art Museum

University of Miami runs from June 26 – October 31, 2010 at the Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables, Florida. Dr. Matthew Looer will speak on textile imagery in the art of Costa Rica on September 23, and Dr. Gabrielle Vail will speak on hieroglyphic inscriptions in the exhibition on October 28. The full color, bilingual catalog is available by contacting the Museum Store at 305-284-6988 or via email: Istassun@miami.edu.

Sac Nichte, Yucatán

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The ceremony at Izapa was really something special. No one has been doing rituals here for more than 800 years.



IMS Explorer subscribers were in attendance. Here Georgeann Johnson, Mary Lou Ridinger and Amelia Borge receive a cleansing blessing.



Flautist Pablo Collado enhanced our trip. See him soon at the annual Maya at the Playa conference.

Re-activation at Izapa

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The original idea of Mission Izapa 2010 has now blossomed into so much more. Mary Lou Ridinger and her sister Georgeann Johnson were inspired to start up the U.S.-based The Maya Conservancy (TMC). Archaeologists, Maya scholars and Maya aficionados were recruited in support of preserving Maya cultural traditions as well as protecting endangered Maya sites.

The first major goal of purchasing a piece of land at Izapa has occurred and architects have started on plans for a visitor center and museum. Sister non-profits of The Maya Conservancy have been set up in Mexico and Guatemala. Fundraising events in all three countries will begin soon. A new seed of cooperation "with purpose" has been planted and is starting to take root and grow in many ways.

A Week of Interaction

Participants arrived on or before Saturday, June 19, to our home-base of Antigua. In the evening, we had a nice "meet-and-greet" with cocktails, a dinner and music with a marimba band and flautist Pablo Collado.

In the morning, we met at *Casa Concepción*, a partially-restored 16th century convent, where the Maya performed a short blessing of our mission ceremony. We then enjoyed presentations by Marion Popenoe Hatch, John Major Jenkins and V. Garth Norman. Norman has studied the site of Izapa for more than 35 years. He shared a video and some of his exciting new insights. Later in the evening, we grouped together for another sit-down dinner along with presentations by renowned author Gaspár González,

a Q'anjob'al Maya spokesperson, and

Eleven of the thirteen spiritual guides are K'iché Maya from Momostenango. The first couple on the far left, Antolín González Sancir and his wife Nicolasa, are Kaq'chikel Maya from Iximché, Tecpán.

Dr. Robert Sitler of Stetson University. Sitler has a new book out this month entitled "The Living Maya."

On Monday morning, we proceeded to the site of Iximché where Kaq'chikel spiritual guide Antolín led our first major fire ceremony. From there, we made our way, constantly skirting around damages from hurricane Agatha, to beautiful Lake Atitlán.

In the morning, some of us went for an encounter with the Tut'zujil Maya idol Maximón. Then, our Maya group performed a beautiful fire ceremony next to the lake with San Pedro volcano looming up in front of us. To get there, we walked through a magical cornfield with stalks growing 18 feet high!

After lunch, we headed to the Pacific coastal town of Retalhuleu. In the morning, we went to the pre-Maya site of Tak'alik Ab'aj where our Ajk'ijaab' performed a third fire ceremony. From there, we journeyed into Mexico and arrived for a two-day stay in the Tapachula area.

I have posted many short videos of our re-activation ritual at Izapa, as well as the press conference sponsored by the Mayor of Tapachula on YouTube. Please go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=grwI8KzV-bc to see the first part of our ceremony at Izapa, and from there you can click on my YouTube channel to see all that transpired which my words here can hardly express.



At Tak'alik Ab'aj, not only did we meet with archaeologists Christa Schieber de Lavarreda and Miguel Orrego Corzo, but we performed a very intense and beautiful fire ceremony right in the main plaza.



Experts John Major Jenkins, Dr. Robert Sitler and V. Garth Norman shared their insights with our group at the ballcourt in Group F at Izapa.

After our experience in Mexico, we returned to Guatemala and arrived in Momostenango, the hometown of most of our Maya. There our Ajk'ijaab' performed the final fire ceremony.

Mission Izapa 2010 was a very intense, spiritually uplifting experience for all. Many eyes were filled with tears as we bid farewell to our Maya friends. Check out my new website at: www.mayaspirituality.com

Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!



August 11, 2010: IMS Explorer Session:

"Indigenous Writing in the Americas: History, Ritual, Maps and Myths"

with **Arthur Dunkelman**, past IMS President and currently curator of the Jay I. Kislak Foundation in Miami, FL.

Writing was independently invented in five areas of the ancient world: Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, the Indus Valley, and Mesoamerica. To learn about the indigenous peoples of the Americas, scholars draw on the texts that survived the European encounter, as well as objects used by indigenous peoples. The Maya and other native cultures often embellished their texts with illustrations, recording or carving them on objects of stone, ceramic, wood, and other surfaces. This lecture will present several indigenous systems of writing, cartography and record keeping. Perhaps the richest source of Pre-Columbian historical information comes from the ancient Maya, who developed the most sophisticated writing system in the Americas.



The Maya glyphic system stands out, according to one scholar, "for its creation of syllabic and pictorial writing, in one of the most visually diverse scripts ever conceived." The talk will feature the "Exploring the Early Americas" exhibit at the Library of Congress based on the Jay I. Kislak Foundation Collection donated in 2004.

August 18: IMS Presentation:

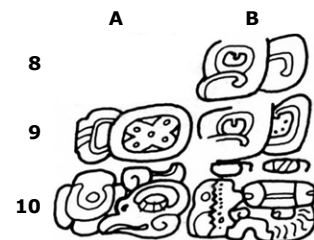
"1,500 Years of Maya Literature: From Classic Texts to Chol Folktales"

with **Nick Hopkins, Ph.D.**

The tremendous advances in the reading of Classic Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions that took place towards the end of the 1900s have made it possible to treat Classic Maya texts as we would treat the texts of any written language. These Maya texts, while mostly devoted to the historical record, are not just lists of historic events but carefully crafted stories, and we can see the basic elements of a narrative style that constitutes a literary tradition that constrains the writers to a set of norms. This presentation will depict the basic rules of Maya narrative with examples from both Classic and modern texts.



Nick Hopkins holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Chicago, and has been engaged in field work in the Maya area since the 1960s, with a focus on native languages. See his full bio on our IMS website under the Programs tab.



The First Recorded Maya Poetry:

[B8-A9] *On the Seating of Yaxk'in*, [B9-A10] *was seated "Zero Bird." Chum Yaxk'in, chumlaj "Mi-mut."* This "couplet," the basic structure of Maya formal speech, plays the month position (seating) against the verb (was seated), likening the succession of kings to the succession of time periods. Leiden Plaque, 320 CE.

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IMS Explorer

Newsletter of the
Institute of Maya Studies

3280 South Miami Avenue
Miami, FL 33129

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Coming up next month:

In our September issue, we'll present the recent discoveries of two royal tombs. In May of this year, a team of Guatemalan and American archaeologists uncovered a tomb of a ruler of the Maya city of El Zotz, located in the Petén jungles of Guatemala, 23 miles west of Tikal. The tomb also held many fine artifacts of jade, mosaics, masks, olive shells from a belt used for ritual dances, textiles, wooden objects and the beautiful bowl lid (above).



Archaeologists in Peru have unearthed the remains of a high ranking official of the Sican culture who lived about 1,200 years ago in the northern Lambayeque region. Finds include a winged eye mask, a ceremonial knife and a metal cup.

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

August 4, 8 pm:

IMS Board Meeting

All members are invited to attend.

August 11, 8 pm: *IMS Explorer Session*

"Indigenous Writing in the Americas: History, Ritual, Maps and Myths"

– with **Arthur Dunkelman**, an IMS President of the past, and currently curator of the Kislak Foundation in Miami, FL.

August 18, 8 pm: *IMS Presentation*

"1,500 Years of Maya Literature: From Classic Texts to Chol Folktales"

– with **Nick Hopkins, Ph.D.** Nick is an expert in Maya hieroglyphs and has taught workshops for many years on Maya inscriptions.

Sept. 8, 8 pm: *IMS Explorer Session*

"Inka Coya – The Queen" – with **Dr. Carol Damian**. In Inka society, both women and men were entitled to varying degrees of services, herds, and estates based on their ranking within the system with the Sapa Inka and the Coya at the top. This illustrates the link between the political power of women, and the Coya, to economic power.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

September 25: *Symposium*

"Under Cover of Darkness: The Meaning of Night in Ancient Mesoamerica"

– Theme of the 17th annual symposium of The Pre-Columbian Society of Washington, DC. At the U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center, Washington, DC. More info available at: www.pcswdc.org

Sept. 30–Oct. 3: *Conference*

Fourth Annual Maya at The Playa Conference

– This year's conference will take place at the same venues in Flagler Beach, FL. Keynote speaker: **Michael Coe**. Get more info at: http://mayaattheplaya.com/M@P_2009/Home.html

July 24 through Oct. 30: *Exhibition*

"Ancestors and Descendants: Ancient Southwestern America at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century"

– The New Orleans Museum of Art in collaboration with Tulane University's Middle American Research Institute and Latin American Library sponsors this photographic exhibition featuring selections from the George

Pepper Native American Archive at MARI, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. Get info at: www.noma.org/exhibitions.html

Through October 30: *Exhibition*

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

– Exhibition of art from the Olmec, Maya and Aztec, curated by Dr. Traci Ardren. Dr. Matthew Loper will speak on textile imagery in the art of Costa Rica on September 23, and Dr. Gabrielle Vail will speak on hieroglyphic inscriptions in the exhibition on October 28. The full color, bilingual catalog is available by e-mail, Istassun@miami.edu. At the Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables, FL. Info at: http://www6.miami.edu/lowe/calendar_events.htm

Ongoing: *Museum Exhibition*

Pre-Columbian Works of Art

– A stellar assemblage of more than 180 pre-Columbian works of art from the collection of Jean and David Colker of South Florida, ongoing exhibition at the Boca Raton Museum of Art. Get more info at: info@bocamuseum.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