



IMS Explorer

Our Explorer of the Month is a wonder woman of underwater archaeology in Belize. She recently presented a program at the Maya at the Playa Conference. Who is she?

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



October 20, 2010 • Maya Long Count: 12.19.17.14.7 • 4 Manik' 0 Sak • G8

An affiliate of the Miami Science Museum

Kiucic, Yucatán: Archaeologists find new clues as to why the Maya may have left

Bird calls ring from the forest, echoing amid the crumbling ruins whose darkened doorways have long beckoned explorers and scholars. The Maya ancients who built the ruins of Kiucic (kee-week) here fled those doorways in a hurry, an international archaeology team now realizes. Left behind may be frozen-in-time clues to the fabled collapse of their civilization.

"Why did they leave? That's the question," says archaeologist

George Bey of Millsaps College in Jackson, MS. The ancient Maya fled Kiucic, nestled in the Puuc (pook) foothills of the Yucatán, around 880 CE. "Things were going full-bore, construction was underway ... and things stopped," Bey says.

Archaeologists have explored the site of Kiucic for more than a century, but working since 2000, Bey and colleagues are now reporting the first evidence of this rapid abandonment.

The "Classic" Maya peopled the lowland forests of Central America during Europe's Dark Ages, building a civilization of pyramids, palaces and slash-and-burn "milpa" farms made by burning trees and planting seeds in the ash. Maya rulers oversaw city-states that warred with one another, created elaborate calendars and lasted centuries. The abandonment of those monument-strewn centers stands as one of archaeology's most-debated mysteries. The "collapse" was underway in many parts of what is now modern-day Guatemala by 800 CE, but didn't occur at Kiucic until almost a century later.

Preserved almost like Pompeii

Farther north, at centers such as Mayapán, pyramids and temples stayed in business until the arrival of Spain's conquistadors in the 1500s. The Maya people themselves



Archaeologist George Bey examines a shard of pottery found buried in the floor of a home at Kiucic.

remained, of course, with millions living today in Central America, from modern-day El Salvador to Mexico.

Scholars are entranced with the ruins at Kiucic that still bear the last traces of their owners' flight, a Maya version of Pompeii, the entombed town of Roman archaeological fame. Overlooked and overgrown for more than a millennium, a variety of clues now beg for interpretation:

- Walls, perfectly laid out with corner and vault stones, lying flat on the ground and waiting to be erected atop the second floor of a palace.
- A half-finished plaza, one side stuccoed and completed, the other composed of bowling-ball-sized stones.
- Pots and grinding stones left neatly in homes, awaiting their owners' return.

At Kiucic, "the evidence for rapid abandonment now appears more compelling," says archaeologist

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"Archaeology on Public Lands in Florida"

with
Juan L. Riera, Ph.D.



**Jim Reed,
Editor**

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AIA Site Preservation Grant Will Protect Underwater Maya Wooden Structures

The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) announced that the only known Classic Maya wooden structures, located in Paynes Creek

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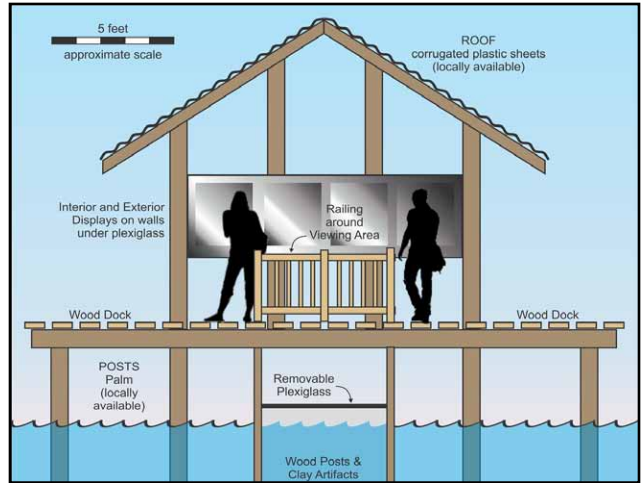
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National Park in Belize, will benefit from a \$25,000 Site Preservation Grant. The project, led by Louisiana State University Professor, Heather McKillop, will help protect the underwater wooden structures and make information available to area residents and visitors.

The Classic Maya period extended from around 250 to 900 CE. Generally wood and other organic materials from this period do not survive in the archaeological record; however, the waterlogged environment at Paynes Creek created unique preservation conditions, giving us a rare glimpse of how the ancient Maya used timber.

Maya Archaeologist and AIA Programs Director, Ben Thomas, believes "this project will have a tremendous impact on the local population of southern Belize where many descendants of the ancient Maya still reside today and on the tourists who come to the area. It will be great for people to see the wooden artifacts created by the ancestors of the local inhabitants – this kind of awareness is critical for the protection of the site."

With the three-year grant from the AIA, McKillop will construct an



Elevation view of Underwater Maya observation platform
Courtesy of AIA/Heather McKillop; created by Mary Lee Eggart, Research Associate Dept. of Geography & Anthropology, Louisiana State University.

observational platform in Paynes Creek National Park. Visitors will be able to observe the underwater archaeological site through a Plexiglas window in the platform without damaging the fragile remains at the site (see schematic above).

Additionally, McKillop plans to host a series of workshops and talks in the region to raise awareness of the site in conjunction with an exhibit and a website for archaeological tourism with educational information for schools, tour guides, and the public. The exhibit, to be displayed in the nearby town of Punta Gorda will highlight one of the project's best finds – a wooden Maya canoe paddle.

Source: From an original AIA press report released 7/28/2010 at www.archaeological.org. For more information contact: Meredith Anderson, AIA Site Preservation Program Coordinator at manderson@aia.bu.edu

Archaeologists Discover Intriguing Items Under the Melting Arctic

Sheets of ice along the Arctic have continued to melt at alarming rates and with that melting has come a new discovery. Archaeologists at a melt site in Norway have discovered a wealth of items that include weapons and shoes among other everyday items. The find is believed to be from thousands of years ago, well before Vikings roamed the area.

As glaciers continue to melt and ice retreats in areas around the world, archaeologists continue to discover new civilizations. Last summer, a 10,000 year-old *atlatl* (a hunting weapon) was found as ice thawed.

Among the items they are attempting to preserve are a 3,400-year-old leather shoe and a perfectly preserved arrow, complete with a feather. They can't

On-site at the melt site in Norway.



wait to release ancient smells from preserved reindeer droppings.

The front edge of this particular glacier has retreated 18 meters in the last year, making the race against collecting artifacts a desperate one for archaeologists in the area, as some items are destroyed before they are discovered.



The frozen shoe.

Source: From an article by James Johnson, released 9/14/2010 at: www.forevergeek.com, and a notice re-released at: www.topix.com.



Who is our mystery woman?

Dr. Heather McKillop is a Professor of Archaeology in the Department of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University. Read about what she is up to lately in the article above. Check out her personal Maya archaeology site at www.ga.lsu.edu/Maya_Night.htm



Kiuc, Yucatán:

continued from page 1

Takeshi Inomata of the University of Arizona-Tucson, who heads efforts to investigate the Maya settlement of Aguateca in Guatemala, a site suddenly abandoned in 830 during warfare. "It is a very important discovery."

Pumas roam the forest lining the overgrown trail leading out of Kiuc. Stones crumble underfoot on the tree-bedecked hillside, threatening to tumble visitors to the forest floor. Once a stair built of the stones, the *Escalera al Cielo* (Stairway to Heaven) leads to ruins of a temple courtyard and many homes that await 200 feet above.

"The climb kept away looters, and also sometimes older archaeologists," says Tomás Gallareta Negrón of Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History, a co-director of the site with Bey and William Ringle of Davidson (N.C.) College. Gallareta Negrón has pioneered efforts to turn the site into a nature reserve and education center.

Kiuc has been visited by archaeologists since at least 1841, when John Lloyd Stephens, the so-called American Traveler, recorded the site for his *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán*, a best seller of the pre-Civil War era. Some of the ruins he noted at that time still stood there this summer, such as the three-story-tall Yaxché pyramid and Kuche palaces.

But the Stairway to Heaven homes high above the site now attract as much, or more, attention from the archaeologists. During excavations last year, archaeologists found pottery and stone tools left in place inside homes, including a wealthy farmer's kitchen room perched on the edge of the hill. Corn grinding stones called *metates* still rest on their sides next to doorways, at the ready for preparing another meal.

In June, excavations revealed more pottery left neatly under another collapsed roof in the farmer's home. And under the floor of the main room, researchers found the site of a double burial. "We think these are ancestors of some kind," a burial arrangement in line with the practices of the ancient Maya, says archaeologist Stephanie Simms of Boston University. "They certainly

merited special treatment," she says, buried with jade beads and elaborate stone tools.

The owners never returned, Simms says. "People left the hill in haste, they didn't take everything with them, a lot of artifacts were found."

Drought, disease, warfare, corn-borers, worn-out soils – almost as many theories as ruins abound to explain the collapse.

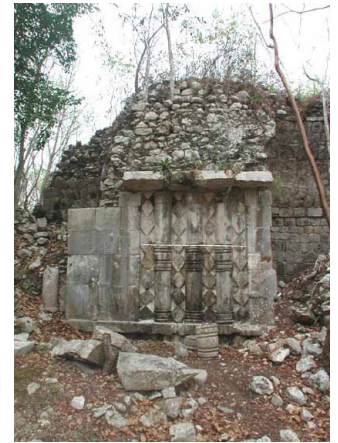
"The Maya were not a single people. There were numerous regional languages and numerous regional cultures," Ringle says. Whatever led to the rapid abandonment at Kiuc will offer only clues to collapses elsewhere, not some sort of final word on the large-scale emptying of centers that took place across the Maya world.

The Puuc region has its own particular architecture, marked by small columns along tops of walls, the "colonette" style. But the palaces and temples conform to classic Maya styles, long row-houses facing each other across a central plaza. They built rooms whose narrow stone vaults simply leaned into each other, unlike true arches.

Maya elite took the high ground

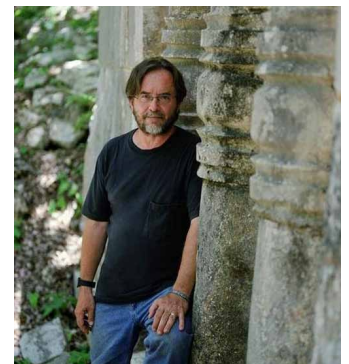
Towering trees bite into the limestone blocks fronting the ruins at Kiuc, and they hide dozens of ruins there from visitors' eyes. Once the trees only hugged the ridge tops, and the land below was cleared for plazas and corn. Today the site is thick with trees, vegetation and ticks, and years of swallow droppings have left a signature stench.

Kiuc's population boomed, reaching perhaps 4,000 inhabitants, just as the centers more than 200 miles farther south, at Tikal, Copán and Aguateca, suffered abandonment. "Undoubtedly there were some people who arrived here from that time, but Kiuc had already been thriving then for centuries," Bey says. The growth saw the elites move up the Stairway to Heaven (Gallareta acknowledges



During the 1840s, Kiuc and nearby Labná were visited by Stephens and Catherwood. Left: Catherwood's drawing of the Diamantes Building (Structure N0970E0850); Right: The same structure as it appears today.

George Bey, professor of sociology and anthropology and associate dean of international education at Millsaps College, is co-director of the archaeological project at Kiuc. Photo courtesy of Dan Vergano/USA Today, released at: <http://beta.clarionledger.com>



he is the Led Zeppelin fan behind the name) from which they could survey their fields.

Around that time, 850 CE, populations swelled throughout the Puuc foothills, perhaps most notably at the city of Uxmal. Now a World Heritage Site about 20 miles north of Kiuc (as the crow flies, not by driving), Uxmal became a capital of the Yucatán Maya for centuries afterward. The newcomers likely added to already-growing populations.

But that growth just stopped in the hills at Kiuc and nearby sites, which had been occupied from 900 BCE, onwards by the Maya. "When they left, they didn't come back," Bey says. "Kiuc is just one of many sites; what's important is the research there. What we are learning at Kiuc is crucial for a rethinking about the rise and fall of the Maya civilization in this part of the world."

Source: Condensed from an article by Dan Vergano released 8/25/2010 at www.usatoday.com. Additional photos at: www.courier-journal.com. Also check out: www.kiuc.org and field season reports by William M. Ringle at www.famsi.org. Submitted by Mike Ruggeri and Scott Allen.



Archaeologists Extract 10,000 Year-Old Skeleton from Flooded Cave in Quintana Roo

One of the earliest human skeletons of America, which belonged to a person that lived more than 10,000 years ago in the Ice Age, was recovered by Mexican specialists from a flooded cave in Quintana Roo. Researchers anticipate that information gained from further study of the remains will reveal new data regarding the settlement of the Americas.

The *Young Man of Chan Hol*, as the skeleton is known among the scientific community, due to the slight tooth wear it presents, which indicates an early age, is the fourth of our earliest ancestors found in the American Continent, and has been studied as part of a National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) project.

After 3 years of studies conducted *in situ* to prevent information loss, the Chan Hol skeleton was extracted from the water by a team of specialists headed by biologist Arturo González, coordinator of the project *Study of Pre-Ceramic Men of Yucatán Peninsula* and director of the Museum of the Desert of Coahuila, with the participation of speleodivers Eugenio Acévez, Jerónimo Áviles and Luis García, part of the recently founded Institute for American Prehistory, funded by INAH.

UNAM (National University of Mexico) physical anthropologists who studied the remains think they were placed in the cave after a funerary ceremony that took place by the end of Pleistocene, when the sea level was 150 meters lower, before the caves, probably walked in by this person, got flooded.

Sixty percent of the skeleton was collected: representative bones of four extremities, vertebrae, ribs and the skull, as well as several teeth. Physical anthropologists find this "great," since in cases of 10,000-year-old samples, usually only the skull or jawbone is found, and sometimes, only 20 or 30 percent of the skeleton.

Along with the skeletons of the *Woman of Naharón*, *Woman of Las Palmas* and *Man of El Templo*, discovered as well in flooded caves near Tulum, Quintana



The Young Man of Chan Hol, named after the cenote in which it was found, was recovered in a 542-meter-long and 8.3-meter-deep cave where stalagmites abound, and is reached after going through flooded, dark and difficult labyrinths. Photos: DMC INAH. M. MARAT.

Roo in recent years, the *Young Man of Chan Hol* is a key factor to understand the settlement of the Americas, since its finding strengthens the hypothesis of the American Continent being populated by several migrations from Asia.

Arturo González, paleobiology specialist, mentioned that the four skeletons found in Quintana Roo flooded caves "reveal that migrations from Southeast Asia happened earlier than the Clovis groups, who would have crossed from Northern Asia through the Bering Strait as well, by the end of the Ice Age.

"Our dating confirmed that skeletons collected in Quintana Roo caves belonged to members of Pre-Clovis groups and are part of the few human remains found from the American Terminal Pleistocene, with physical features similar to those of people from Central and South Asia, suggesting there were several migrations to our continent".

The first physical anthropology report, conducted by physical anthropologists Alejandro Terrazas and Martha Benavente, from the UNAM Institute of Anthropological Investigations, indicates the skeleton belonged to a young adult, probably a male; legs were flexed to the left and arms extended to both sides of the body, which is a "new fact to be studied", since no skeleton had been found before in this position.

The skeleton of the *Young Man of Chan Hol* must remain as it is for several months until its consolidation, before undergoing morphological studies (of the skull and bones) to verify if it shares



One of the four oldest skeletons in the Americas, "The Woman of Las Palmas" dates from 10,000-12,000 years ago. The skeleton of the woman was found in a flooded cave near Tulum. Her skeleton has now been reconstructed.

She was between 44-50 years of age when she died. Her body, skin and eyes corresponds to Southeast Asian populations. There is an older skeleton known as "La Mujer de Naharón" which they are still reconstructing.



morphological and physical features with the other three skeletons found in the caves; the gender, age, cause of death and age at the time of death will also be confirmed. Carbon 14 dating will be conducted as well as Computed Axial Tomography (CAT) studies to determine the composition, density and interior form of the bones.

Ancestors underwater

In 2006, two German speleodivers named Thursten discovered the skeleton while exploring the Chan Hol ("small hole" in Mayan) cave. They saw the osseous remains and informed the Quintana Roo INAH Center, whose specialists began registration immediately.

Taking the remains out of the water context was not easy. It took three years after the Thurstens found it to conduct *in situ* archaeological and physical anthropology studies that finally allowed the extraction with minimum conservation risks.

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Belize Maya Prepare for 2012 Celebrations

Belize's Maya are not the only members of the population who are awaiting the winter solstice of 2012 – the entire country is gearing up for a year of reflection, renewal and celebration. "Imagine a New Year's party that comes only once every 5,200 years, and you'll get an idea of what this means to those of us living in the Maya heartland," said Dr. Jaime Awe, Director of Belize's Institute of Archaeology.

Dr. Awe, one of Belize's foremost archaeologists, was speaking at a preliminary launch of a new Belizean website dedicated to the 2012 celebrations planned for this tiny Central American nation. Dr. Awe also laughed off suggestions that the Maya feared 2012 would herald in the Apocalypse, as suggested by the popular film 2012 and numerous internet sites.

"Hollywood drama has very little to do with the reality of what the Maya Calendar and Long Count calculations are all about. This represents the ending of one cosmological cycle, and the beginning of another. It is an event that will mark the completion of a great cycle and a time for reflection, and for considering future direction," he said.

Seleni Matus, Director of the Belize Tourism Board, agrees. "This

region is where the Maya Calendar began and continues to be read. You won't find too many people worried about 2012 here. In fact, we're looking forward to a year of celebrating and highlighting Belize's vibrant Maya culture and history."

Belize, on Central America's Caribbean coast, has a large per capita Maya population and a huge number of Maya archaeological sites for a nation only some 70 miles wide by 180 miles long. Three Maya dialects are still spoken in Belize, and traditions such as farming methods and cooking have continued largely unchanged for centuries in Maya villages.

Ms. Matus said that rather than a doom and gloom scenario, 2012 presents an opportunity to highlight the achievements and rich cultural history of the Maya of Belize. "It's always been said that you can barely dig a posthole or clear land in Belize without uncovering some Maya artifact. Belize was a huge population and administrative center during the peak of Maya civilization, and they left behind a rich legacy that we are proud of, and wish to share with the rest of the world," she said.

To this end, Belize will be hosting scientists, academics and an expected influx of visitors throughout 2012, with a range of special tours, cultural activities and Maya-themed sporting events planned. One initiative, for instance, involves visitors being issued with commemorative Maya "passports" and collector's cards which give



entry and are stamped at each of Belize's Maya temples and archaeology sites. Along with information kits and knowledgeable guides, they ensure visitors a well-rounded and memorable Maya experience during 2012.

There are also special tour packages on offer, with most resorts enthusiastically participating in the national celebrations. Events such as the annual La Ruta Maya canoe race, one of the longest in the world, will emphasize Maya culture as it passes through the country.

"Everybody in Belize is getting behind our Maya celebrations and we're really looking forward to a very special year. With so much to see and do, we're confident that our visitors will go away with a better understanding of Maya culture while having a great time learning about and experiencing life in the heartland of the Maya," Ms. Matus said.

Dr. Awe agreed, "It's been a long time coming, but 2012 is certainly going to be something very special in Belize. We're all looking forward to an incredible year."

Source: www.travelvideo.tv

10,000 Year-Old Skeleton

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Studies included photographic and video registration of the remains and their context. More than 50 exploration immersions in the cave were conducted to study the possibilities of moving the skeleton, since each centimeter of the skeleton and its context represented an irreplaceable piece of the millenary history puzzle.

Recollection was conducted in two days, with a total submersion time of five hours, during which the last registration took place. The bones were placed in plastic bags with water from the cave to avoid temperature and acidity changes, and after that, the remains were

brought to the surface in previously numbered boxes.

A stalagmite was collected with the bones, since it had fallen on the left humerus of the skeleton. This is important for anthropologists because it allows assuming that the human remains were placed in the cave more than 10,000 years ago, before Chan Hol filled with seawater as Ice Age ice caps melted. Since that time, mineral formations do not accumulate in flooded caves.

Arturo González surmises that in the Ice Age, the Peninsula of Yucatán must have been a desert pastureland that turned into rainforest due to climate change. The whole Yucatán area was dry, and there were no rivers or lakes on the surface. The *Young Man of Chan Hol* and his peers found refuge in the caves and drank rainwater that

filtered into the depths of the most profound caves.

Since 2002, evidence of such a lifestyle has been found: lithic tools, fireplaces, remains of extinct animals from the Pleistocene era, as well as the three other human skeletons previously mentioned, named: *Woman of Naharón*, *Woman of Las Palmas* and *Man of El Templo*, with ages that vary between 10,000 and 14,000 years old.

The particular placement of these four skeletons is evidence of the funerary use given to caves, since the arrangement of the remains do not correspond to natural positions, but to a Post Mortem ritual assemblage.

Source: From an original INAH report by Arturo González (translated) released 8/24/2010 at: <http://dti.inah.gob.mx>. Submitted by Scott Allen.

Archaeologists find huge artificial lake with a ceramic-lined floor

Maya Pool in the Rainforest

Since 2009, researchers from Bonn and Mexico have been systematically uncovering and mapping the old walls of Uxul, a Maya city. "In the process, we also came across two, about 100 m square water reservoirs," explained Iken Paap, who directs the project with Professor Dr. Nikolai Grube and the Mexican archaeologist Antonio Benavides Castillo. (See *Vol. 39, Issue 7, July 2010: Uxul: A Southern Campeche Archaeological Project*, by Antonio Benavides C.)

Such monster pools, which are also known from other Maya cities, are called "aguadas." Similar to present-day water towers, they served to store drinking water. But the people of Uxul seem to have thought of a particularly smart way to seal their *aguada*. "We conducted a trial dig in the center of one of the water reservoirs," explains Nicolaus Seefeld, a young scholar. "We found that the bottom, which is at a depth of two meters, was covered with ceramic shards – probably from plates – practically without any gaps. But we don't know yet whether it's like this throughout the entire *aguada*."

If so, that would be a minor sensation – merely due to the quantity of ceramics required. The *aguadas* in Uxul were each as large as ten Olympic-size pools. Maybe there used to be even more artificial lakes. After all, the precious commodity had to be enough to last a population of at least 2,000 through the 3-month dry season.

The Mayan term "uxul," by the way, means "at the end" in English. Karl Ruppert and John H. Denison from the Carnegie Institution of Washington, who discovered the city, had named it that in 1934 – exhausted and sick after a long expedition through the jungles of Mexico's Yucatán peninsula.

If Uxul was "at the end of the world" in the 1930s, not much has changed today. "You can only get to the site via 120 km of jungle paths clear across the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, far from modern roads and settlements," explains Dr. Iken Paap. These are difficult conditions for the archaeologists and the German-Mexican excavation team. This year, they spent three months in the forest to explore the Maya city.

Flourishing trade center

What is becoming more and more obvious as the excavations progress is the fact that Uxul was nowhere near "at the end" or isolated in the jungle during its heyday in the Classical period (250 to 900 CE). Uxul was located in a densely populated area between the big Maya cities of El Mirador to the south and Calakmul to the north-east. It had trade connections as far as present-day southern Guatemala and the Central Mexican Plateau.

Uxul was settled for several epochs of the Maya culture. So much was concluded by the Bonn scholars after analyzing the dig and its settlement layers. "This year, we were able to excavate



The German-Mexican excavation team exposes the floor of the Maya pool, covered in ceramic shards. These would have sealed the reservoir. Images courtesy of the Institute for Ancient American Studies, University of Bonn.

a sequence of layers that was over three meters deep, ranging probably from the late Pre- to the End- or Post-Classical periods," explains Iken Paap.

Inscriptions report that, around 630 CE, Uxul was annexed under the rule of Calakmul, which was at a distance of about 26 km. To what extent was life in the city and the surrounding area affected and influenced by such changes in power? Did Uxul have its own trade connections that continued to exist during Calakmul's rule? Did the population experience the crises of the elites directly in their own daily lives? Or were these disputes between the ruling powers, which have been given more importance due to being recorded on stelae and altars than they were accorded by contemporary strata of the population?

"This Spring, for the first time we found tombs that had not been destroyed by grave robbers in their search for ceramics and jade jewelry," said Professor Dr. Nikolai Grube. "We are hoping that this and new studies on the drinking water system and history of vegetation will provide us with new insights into the living situation of the population of this Maya city."

Source: From an article posted 8/26/2010 by Dr. Iken Paap at: www.eurekalert.org. Submitted by Scott Allen.

Maya Funerary Tapestry Restored

An intricate Maya tapestry made from 8,000 shells and beads that were part of the funerary attire of a noble from Calakmul, created between 375-450 CE, discovered in 1998 and painstakingly restored, will be on display in a special exhibit at the National Museum in Mexico City. The piece had the aim of helping the dignitary to transcend in a spiritual way the three levels of cosmos: celestial, earthly and underground. The kernels of thousands of seeds were extracted using a flat griddle and then sewn to a cloth that disintegrated in time. Many stylized designs can be



bacabs that are linked to cults of water and the support of the cosmos, related to the concept of the underground river one must traverse into the underworld.

Source: Released 7/30/2010 by INAH at <http://dti.inah.gob.mx>

found in the pattern. Some of these are the faces of

Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!

October 13, 2010: IMS Explorer Session:

"Archaeology on Public Lands in Florida"

with **Juan L. Riera, Ph.D.**



Florida has a rich human past, dating back at least 10,000 years. Over 95% of this past is buried in archaeological sites. State archaeologists and other professionals working in Florida have developed Florida Historical Contexts that outline the prehistoric chronology of Florida. The Florida Division of Historical Resources and the Bureau of Archaeological Research work with state agencies and local communities to manage, preserve, and interpret Florida's irreplaceable archaeological sites for citizens and visitors.

Archaeologists excavate three of 86 canoes recorded along a two-mile stretch of exposed lakebed around Newnan's Lake, just east of Gainesville in Alachua County – the largest group of prehistoric canoes found to date in North America.

Juan Riera has a B.A. from the University of Florida, an M.A. from Florida International University, and a Ph.D. from Texas Tech University. He has fifteen years of museum experience, six years of University teaching, and five years of archival experience. Juan will be talking about archaeological sites in Florida that are owned by Federal, State, and County governments. Check out: www.flpublicarchaeology.org/faq.php

October 20: IMS Presentation:

"Venus in the Art and Calendars of Ancient Mexico"

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



Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli was the twin/dual deity of the planet Venus, as Morning Star (Quetzalcóatl) and Evening Star (Xólotl).

This presentation explores the role of Venus cycles in the pre-Columbian images from both the Maya area and Central Mexico, focusing especially on codices and architecture. Calendar counts and calendric notations related to Venus are documented in the architecture of Uxmal and Chichén Itzá, and these in turn are related to the well known Venus calendar in the Dresden Codex, which features a sequence of Venus gods representing different seasonal aspects of the Venus cycle. Central Mexican codices of the Borgia Group also record similar calendars with gods of the Morning Star spearing victims. This is one of a number of different Venus cycles documented in the Codex Borgia, which also includes a unique narrative showing Venus events over the course of a year.

Susan Milbrath, Ph.D., is curator of Latin American Art and Archaeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida. Author of *Star Gods of the Maya*.

The Institute Maya Studies • All meetings are Wednesdays • 8-9:30 PM • Miami Science Museum 3280 South Miami Avenue, across from Vizcaya • \$6 donation requested from non-members <http://instituteofmayastudies.org> • Maya Hotline: 305-235-1192 • Check us out on FaceBook!

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October 20, 2010: IMS Presentation:



"Venus in the Art and Calendars of Ancient Mexico"

with
Susan Milbrath, Ph.D.

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New website address:

www.instituteofmayastudies.org

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Coming up next month:

In our November issue, we'll bring you a report that focuses on an apparent child sacrifice discovered during a 2004 dig at an Inca site called Choquepukio in Peru.

Items surrounding the remains of six youngsters buried together include gold and silver female figurines, red shell figurines of females and llamas, fancy pottery and a piece of clothing covered in gilded metal discs.



We'll also share an article about the life and times of Arthur Demarest. Demarest recalls that, at the tender age of four, he declared his intention to become an archaeologist. Now the Ingram Professor of Anthropology at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, he is one of the world's leading Mayanists.



Upcoming Events at the IMS:

October 6, 8 pm: **IMS Board Meeting**
All members are invited to attend.

October 13, 8 pm: *IMS Explorer Session*
"Archaeology on Public Lands in Florida" – The Florida Public Archaeology Network is dedicated to the protection of cultural resources, both on land and underwater, and to involving the public in the study of their past. Regional centers around Florida serve as clearing-houses for information, institutions for learning and training, and headquarters for public participation in archaeology. Our own **Juan L. Riera, Ph.D.**, will discuss sites in Florida that are owned by Federal, State, and County governments.

October 20, 8 pm: *IMS Presentation*
"Venus in the Art and Calendars of Ancient Mexico" – with **Susan Milbrath, Ph.D.** The Maya tracked the cycles of the planets Venus and Mars in relation to the sun and incorporated these planets into their mythology associated with other gods. The movements of Venus, in particular, signaled to the Maya important cultural events, such as the timing for certain rituals and even appropriate times to go to war.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

Through October 23: *Exhibition*
"Art and Myth in Ancient Peru" – This exhibition organized by the Museo de Arte de Lima (MALI) presents an important selection of pre-Columbian objects that span from the time of the Cupisnique Culture to the Inka conquest. At the Americas Society, 680 Park Avenue, New York, NY. More info at: http://as.americas-society.org/areas.php?k=current_exhibition

October 28: *Lecture/Exhibition*
"Jaguar Spots" – Dr. Gabrielle Vail will speak on hieroglyphic inscriptions in the exhibition at 8 pm on October 28. The exhibition runs through October 30. At the Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables, FL. Info at: http://www.miami.edu/lowe/calendar_events.htm

October 29-30: *Nahua Workshop*
"Recent Developments in Nahua Studies" – The Latin American Studies Center of the University of Maryland, College Park, is pleased to announce the Second Nahua Workshop, that will address issues in both historical and contemporary research. For more info, contact Jim Maffie at: maffiej@umd.edu

Through January 2, 2011:
Rainmaker Kings: Masterpieces from Ancient Mexico – An exhibition of 18 sculptural masterpieces from Mexico's ancient civilizations that flourished between 900 BCE and 1521 CE at the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL. Get additional info at: www.artic.edu/aic/exhibitions/exhibition/Ballplayers

Through January 3: *Exhibition*
"Painted Metaphors: Pottery and Politics of the Ancient Maya" – An exhibit of 145 pieces on loan from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. At the Frank H. McClung Museum, University of Tennessee. More info at: <http://mclungmuseum.utk.edu/>

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