



IMS Explorer

This November issue is dedicated to Robert J. Sharer, recently deceased. Bob was an internationally renowned archaeologist. See our IMS tribute to Bob, starting on page 2.

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



November 21, 2012 • Maya Long Count: 12.19.19.16.10 • 13 Ok 13 Keh • G6

An affiliate of the Miami Science Museum

Archaeologists Analyze Tomb Offerings from Chiapa de Corzo to Determine Early Regional Trade Patterns

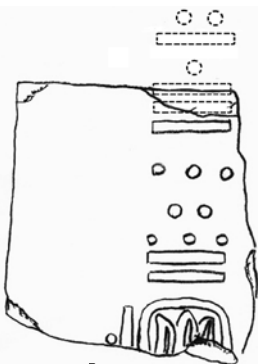
Researchers from the U.S. and INAH Mexico are studying the jade ornaments, amber, pearls, pyrite and shells, Olmec-style spoons and pendants, among other materials found in Tomb 1 at the Zoque culture site of Chiapa de Corzo, which dates to 700 BCE, in order to understand the trade routes in the region 2,700 years ago.

Chiapa de Corzo is located in the Central Depression of Chiapas of present-day Mexico. It rose to prominence during the Middle Formative period, becoming a regional center or capital that controlled trade along the Grijalva River. The site is believed to have been settled by Mixe-Zoquean speakers, bearers of the Olmec culture that populated the Gulf and Pacific Coasts of southern Mexico. Chiapa de Corzo and a half dozen other Western Depression centers appear to have coalesced into a distinct Zoque civilization by 700 BCE, an archaeological culture that became the conduit between late Gulf Olmec society and the early Maya.

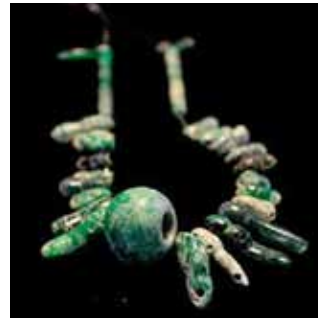
The cache being studied has jade from Guatemala, amber from the region, obsidian and pyrite mirrors from the highlands and hematite from Oaxaca. The pyramid containing the tomb was in use from 900 BCE to 600 CE. The male found in the tomb was between 50-60 years old. There was an infant sacrifice

in the tomb, and a male of 18 years of age. A woman was buried in

Fragment of Stela 2, showing the date of 7.16.3.2.13, or December 36 BCE, the earliest Mesoamerican Long Count calendar date yet found.



A sampling of the more than 1,100 pieces of jade found in Tomb 1.



Formative Period sites in Southeastern Mesoamerica, ca. 900 BCE.

a neighboring chamber. The male had bracelets and a necklace with jade from many areas. The amber jewelry the woman was wearing is the oldest designed amber ever found in Mesoamerica, dating to 700 BCE.

More than 250 Formative period burials have been scientifically excavated at Chiapa de Corzo. Many derive from a unique Late Formative burial ground below the Mound 1 plaza. Chiapa de Corzo has the largest and perhaps the best chronologically subdivided Formative period burial sample in southern Mesoamerica.

Source: From an INAH report posted 9/12/2012 at: www.inah.gob.mx. Submitted by Mike Ruggeri.

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IMS Presentation: November 21, 8 pm



University of Bonn researchers have discovered the tomb of a 1,300-year-old Maya prince at Uxul, in Campeche, Mexico

"New Discoveries in Pre-Columbian Archaeology in 2012"

with Marta Barber



Jim Reed,
Editor

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On the Road to Xibalba:

Robert J. Sharer (1940–2012)

Birth: March 16, 1940; passing: September 20, 2012

Robert J. Sharer, an internationally renowned archaeologist and Mesoamerican scholar, was the Emeritus Curator, American Section, Penn Museum, and the Emeritus Sally and Alvin Shoemaker Professor

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IMS Explorer of the Month: Robert J. Sharer

Trampling through jungles and climbing down claustrophobic tunnels in search of the remains of the ancient Maya civilization was what Robert J. Sharer did for a living. It was how he got his fulfillment and what earned him an international reputation in his field. Read of his accomplishments on

pages 2, 4 and 5.

in Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, who officially retired in 2009. He conducted research in Central America for nearly 50 years. His research career focused on two major Penn Museum excavation projects at two UNESCO World Heritage Maya sites – Quirigua in Guatemala (1974-79) and Copan in Honduras (1988-2003).

Sharer was author, co-author, and editor or co-editor of more than twenty books and monographs including, in 2006, with Loa P. Traxler, *The Ancient Maya* (Sixth Edition, revised), Stanford University Press, and in 2004, *Understanding Early Classic Copan*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum.

On Saturday, April 25, 2009, at the SAA Meetings in Atlanta, two symposium sessions were made up of participants with papers in honor of Bob and his retirement. An article in the Penn Museum's *Expedition* magazine, Volume 51, No 1, entitled "Meet the Curators", focuses on Dr. Sharer (see page 4).

Bob's strong desire was to see all the archaeological research from his many projects through to publication. The Robert J. Sharer Maya Publications Fund, newly established, is available for those who would like to honor his memory by supporting the publication of his research. A memorial service is planned for November 10 at the Penn Museum (see page 5).

An Archaeologist's Archaeologist

Excerpts from the obituary by John F. Morrison, posted 9/27/2012 in the Philadelphia Daily News, now at: <http://articles.philly.com>

Robert Sharer was well known for his fieldwork in Maya sites, such as Copan, Quirigua and El Mirador. He directed the Early Copan Acropolis Project (E-CAP). His team created more than three miles of tunnels into the early levels of the city, and in 1993, discovered the founder's tomb. Sharer was always intrigued by how advanced the Maya civilization was and how it produced major findings in astronomy, mathematics, art and agriculture.

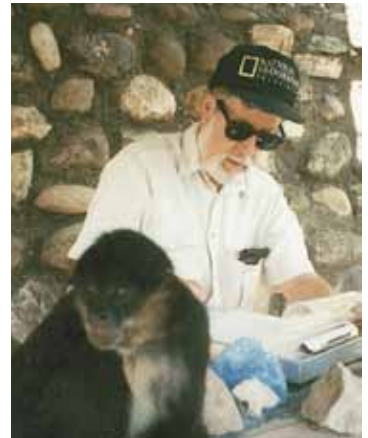
Among Sharer's discoveries about the Maya was how much they loved and treasured chocolate. Chocolate was important to the Maya, he noted



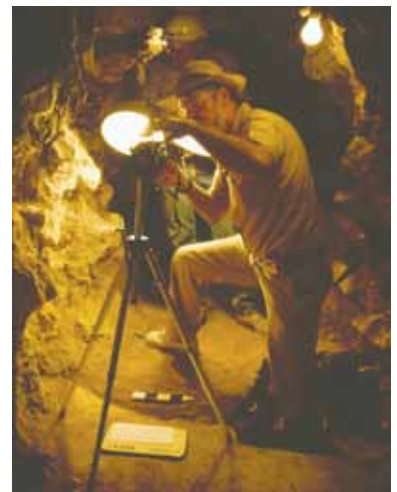
A noble man sits atop a double-headed serpent throne as the center of his universe (actual ceramic artifact from a tomb at Copan). Bob Sharer superimposed over the jaguar maw of the underworld (entrance to the onsite Copan Museum of Sculpture). Composite image by the editor.

Robert Sharer writing excavation notes in the field office of the Early Copan Acropolis Program with Pancho, honorary project field assistant in 1997.

Photo by Eleanor H. Coates, Early Copan Acropolis Program, from Penn Museum publication Vol. 51, No. 1.



Robert Sharer at work photographing the remains of buried architecture in the tunnel excavations deep beneath the Copan Acropolis, at the site of Copan, Honduras, in 1992. Photo: Eleanor H. Coates.



in an article in the *Inquirer* in 2002. "Chocolate was associated with wealth and power," he said. "Many chocolate vessels have been found in the tombs of the elite. It was traded and also used as monetary exchange."

Sharer was often accompanied by Loa P. Traxler, a Penn graduate student whom he married in 1997. She also tramped through jungles and down those claustrophobic tunnels with Bob and as part of other teams. She was part of an expedition that discovered another royal tomb in 1992. Bob can be seen and heard discussing his work in an interactive kiosk

continued on page 4

Maya Amphitheater Uncovered in Plan de Ayutla, Chiapas

Researchers at Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History have announced the discovery of what they believe was a "theater" at the ancient site of Plan de Ayutla. Plan de Ayutla is located 128 km from Palenque, in the Selva Lacandona, in the state of Chiapas.



Director of research at the site, Luis Alberto Martos López, believes the space around the forum could hold about 120 people and might have been in use for hundreds of years. Artistic, religious and politically symbolic presentations were possibly used by the elite to legitimize their power. Located in the North Acropolis, the whole complex has been the subject of seasonal excavations in preparation for opening the site to visitors, and the theater has recently been consolidated.

Martos López explained that the theater was built between 250 and 550 CE by reconditioning an existing patio space that was positioned among other structures in the palace complex, and set 42 meters above the main plaza level. Three tiers of wide steps led up to the staging area. A three-meter-wide façade

was removed from one of the buildings to create the forum that worked like a band shell.

"It was a unique theater, and intended for a rather small restricted audience. That makes it very different from others that have been studied, which are usually in places that were intended for the public or much larger crowds," noted Martos López.

Theatrical platforms have been identified at many other sites including Tikal in Guatemala, Chinkultic in Chiapas, as well as Pechal and Edzna in Campeche. Unlike these public viewing spaces, the theater at Plan de Ayutla was strategically located out of sight of the main population.

The function of these spaces has been studied since 1985 by



The forum was perhaps created for the exclusive use of the royals and had reduced seating capacity.

The design of the whole theater complex is unique among those identified at other sites.

archaeologists such as Armando García Gutierrez, UNAM, and more recently by the researcher Takeshi Inomata of the University of Arizona, but references to them can be traced from the XVI century. For example, Diego de Landa, Bishop of Merida, in his comments recording a visit to El Castillo at Chichen Itza, said "there were two small theaters made of stone and mortar. There were comedies and farces to the delight of the people," probably in reference to presentations performed atop the Venus Platform and Platform of the Jaguars.

Martos López said that musical instruments like ocarinas and whistles have been uncovered in the vicinity of the stage area and that the pieces of stucco sculpture encountered, with representations of a captive, maize deities, the sun and a bat, probably decorated the frieze around the enclosure.

The archaeological research conducted at the site has resulted in two hypotheses as to the original identity of Plan de Ayutla. It might be the ancient city of Sak T'zi that is mentioned as being involved in conflicts with Tonina, Piedras Negras and Yaxchilan between 600 and 800 CE, or Ak'e', the political center of the departed founder of the Bonampak lineage.

Indeed, Martos López concludes that Plan de Ayutla, located in the heart of the Upper Usumacinta River basin, was a settlement of long occupation. The oldest architecture dates from 150 BCE, and ceramic evidence has been dated through 1,100 CE, which speaks of at least a millennium of history.

Texas Tech Digging at Chan Chich

Associate professor Brett A. Houk led an archaeological field school this summer to the ancient Maya site of Chan Chich, a medium-sized ruin nestled in the jungle of north-western Belize.

The 2012 season of the Chan Chich Archaeological Project marked a return to the site where Houk conducted research from 1996 to 2001. The field school included three Texas Tech graduate students and 13 undergraduate students.

Half of the group excavated in the Upper Plaza at Chan Chich where the research focused on the earliest days of the Maya. Excavations targeted a deeply buried midden, or trash deposit, previously radiocarbon dated to 770 BCE. The other half of the group worked at Kaxil Uinic, a smaller ruin about 1.6 miles west of Chan Chich.



Brett Houk and the 2012 TTU team.

Plans for 2013 include completing the Upper Plaza work and conducting an intensive investigation of a large building in the Main Plaza using a variety of remote sensing techniques combined with extensive excavations.

Source: From Texas Tech University press releases at: www.depts.ttu.edu. Submitted by Mike Ruggeri.

Source: Condensed by the editor from an INAH report, released 8/28/2012 at: www.inah.gob.mx

On the Road to Xibalba: Robert J. Sharer (1940–2012)

continued from page 2

at the “Maya 2012: Lords of Time” exhibit now at the Penn Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Loa Traxler is the exhibition curator.

A Lifetime of Accomplishments

From Penn Publication, Vol. 51, No. 1, in the Curator In-Charge – American Section, by Deborah I. Olszewski:

Robert J. Sharer became interested in archaeology as an undergraduate when he took a summer job at the Michigan State University Museum. The fascinating stories of Arctic field archaeology told by his boss, the noted Arctic scholar Moreau Maxwell, prompted Sharer to broaden his history major by taking additional anthropology classes.

During his senior year (1960–61) at Michigan State, Sharer was unexpectedly nominated for a Woodrow Wilson graduate fellowship, that he was awarded. This required him to choose a graduate school and field of study. A serendipitous dinner meeting with the University of Pennsylvania anthropologist Loren Eiseley, who was invited to speak at Michigan State University



Robert J. Sharer looks at the Ante Cache jade figurine after it was excavated at Copan. The jade is currently on loan from Honduras and on view in the Penn Museum's "Maya 2012: Lords of Time" exhibition, which draws heavily on the new research and discoveries from the Copan excavations of 1988-2003.

Photo: Eleanor H. Coates.

The Sub-Jaguar Tomb (ca. 550 CE) was the first Copan royal burial found and excavated by Penn Museum archaeologists Loa Traxler and Robert J. Sharer (in middle), seen here with Honduran conservator Nando Guerra. Photo: Kenneth Garrett.



The Hunal Tomb, under Copan's royal Acropolis at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Copan, Honduras, was discovered and excavated by Penn Museum archaeologists, led by Dr. Robert J. Sharer. Sharer is seen here, with the male skeleton buried in the tomb. The skeleton was identified as the remains of the dynastic founder, K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo', who reigned ca. 426–437 CE. Photo: Kenneth Garrett.

by Sharer's father, the head of the Evening College there, persuaded Sharer to choose the University of Pennsylvania for graduate school, sight-unseen.

Sharer began his graduate career in anthropology at Penn in 1961, studying archaeology under Bernard Wailes. A summer excavation project in Cornwall with Wailes convinced Sharer that his interests were in archaeology. After two years of graduate work, Sharer took a two-year break to fulfill his military obligation, returning to graduate school at Penn in 1965.

Sharer's dedication to Maya studies can be traced to the influence of Ruben Reina. After taking a course in Maya ethnography, Sharer went to Guatemala for summer research in a highland Maya community, and found the people, their traditions, and the region fascinating.

With guidance from William Coe, Sharer's Ph.D. thesis research focused on collections from Coe's excavations at El Trapiche, an early precinct of the site of Chalchuapa in El Salvador. Sharer finished his graduate work in 1967 and was awarded his doctorate in 1968.

His first academic position was at Pitzer College (part of the Claremont Colleges) in California, where he taught from 1967 to 1972. While at Pitzer, Sharer was able to return to Chalchuapa for field research between 1968 and 1970. The project was partially funded by a large research grant for graduate student training, which Penn Museum Director Froelich Rainey had secured for Penn Museum projects, including Chalchuapa.

Upon Linton Satterthwaite's retirement in 1972, Sharer was appointed Assistant Professor in Penn's Department of Anthropology and Assistant Curator in the American Section at the Penn Museum.

Sharer was promoted to Associate Professor and Associate Curator in 1975; became Professor and Curator in 1984; was appointed

Curator-in-Charge of the American Section in 1987; and was made Shoemaker Professor in Anthropology in 1995.

Robert's research career focused on two major Penn Museum excavation projects at Maya sites – Quirigua in Guatemala (1974–79) and Copan in Honduras (1988–2003) – as well as a number of smaller projects in Guatemala and Honduras.

While Field Director of the Quirigua Project in 1975, Sharer was invited by Gordon Willey of Harvard University to help develop a master plan for future research at Copan.

Sharer's contribution to the master plan included a proposal to investigate the Acropolis area at Copan using a series of tunnel excavations, which could be dug horizontally into the Acropolis from the river-cut side.

At the time, Sharer had no idea that he would eventually be asked to undertake this work. Then in 1988, William Fash, now director of the Peabody Museum at Harvard

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On the Road to Xibalba: Robert J. Sharer (1940–2012)

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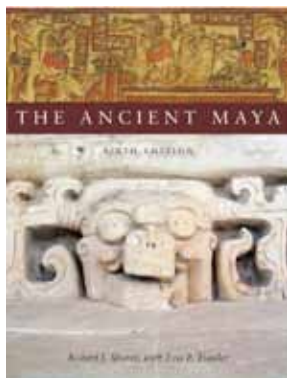
University, offered this option to Sharer, who realized that the tunneling strategy afforded a truly unique opportunity to explore the history of the Acropolis from its foundation to its last constructed buildings.

Sharer's expectations were more than fulfilled, as his team found what appears to be the tomb of Copan's dynastic founder, a discovery without equal at any Maya site, as well as revealing the entire sequence of building and rebuilding at the Acropolis by later rulers of Copan. Although directors of large complex archaeological projects usually spend their time in administration and logistics, Sharer found time to excavate the Margarita tomb and a large dedication cache at Copan.

After a long and successful career, Sharer retired in the summer of 2009. This, however, does not mean that he hung up his hat for good. Since 2004, he was hard at work with his wife and colleague, Loa Traxler, to ensure that all Copan databases, artifacts, records, photographs, maps, and so forth are completely analyzed, curated, and conserved for future generations. He also worked on several monographs on the Early Copan Acropolis Program, and used his "free time" after retirement to concentrate on that research.

The Ancient Maya

Perhaps his biggest accomplishment in making the Maya known to the public was his update of the famous Sylvanus Morley book, *The Ancient Maya*, first published in 1946, revised by George Brainerd in 1956. In 1983, the Fourth



The Ancient Maya, 6th Edition, by Robert J. Sharer and Loa P. Traxler, 2005, 984 pages, 26 tables, 112 figures, 238 illustrations (16 pages in color), 55 maps, 7" x 9.25". Cloth ISBN: 9780804748162 Paper ISBN: 9780804748179

Bob Sharer,
2009.
Photo by
Loa Traxler.

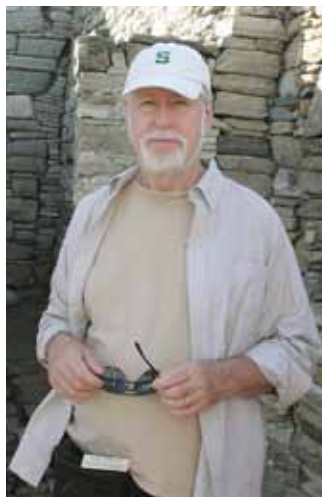
Edition was published preserving much of the Morley-Brainerd text while adding the considerable results of research and interpretation then available. By the Fifth Edition, published in 1994, Sharer had thoroughly rewritten and much expanded the book. Morley's name was dropped and Robert J. Sharer stood alone as the author of a book many consider essential in any Maya library.

Sharer wrote: "The rich findings of recent exploration and research are incorporated in this completely revised and greatly expanded edition of the standard work on the New World's most brilliant native civilization – that of the Maya people of northern Central America and southern Mexico."

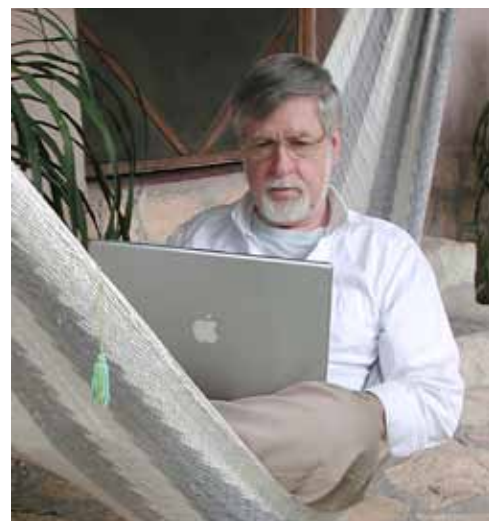
The Ancient Maya traces the evolution of Maya civilization through the Pre-Columbian era, a span of some 2,500 years from the origins of complex society within Mesoamerica to the end of the Pre-Columbian world with the Spanish Conquest in the 16th century. The result is the most thorough and incisive study of the origins and development of ancient Maya civilization ever published.

In Loving Honor

There will be a Memorial Service at the Penn Museum on Saturday, November 10 at 11:00 am. Bob's strong desire was to see all the archaeological research from his many projects through to publication. You can help support this noble effort. In lieu of any flowers or other similar expressions of condolence, gifts or donations should be directed to the Robert J. Sharer Maya Publications Fund. All contributions may be sent to Amanda Mitchell-Boyask, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19104



Robert J. Sharer, with a friend at the Macaw Mountain Bird Park in Copan, 2004. Photo by Loa Traxler.



Robert J. Sharer seen here working on his favorite hammock at the Copan camp house in 2009. Photo by Loa Traxler.

Kind Words of Remembrance

"I took a course at the NEH Institute about 30 years ago and Dr. Sharer was one of the contributors. He made it all look so easy and fun. He made us all wish we had gone into his field. He was very patient and took time to work with everyone. He was truly a great one".

– Rick McCallister

"Sorry to learn about Bob's passing. I spent time with him sometime ago at Copan. Obviously, his books/research were terrific and spurred me on to study and work on several archaeological projects as shovel-bum and staff member.

– Ted Prester

We are all saddened by the loss of a giant in Maya research, particularly at Copan. Robert Sharer was a pioneer who synthesized and categorized for thousands of Mayanists, the complex culture which we so admire. I used his books extensively in my research. I first met Robert and Loa at the III International Congress at Copan in 2007. Although I am an amateur, he readily gave me his ear and his time. Our sympathies go to Loa and his family.

– Janice Van Cleve

A Book Review by: Joaquin J. Rodriguez III, PE, SECB

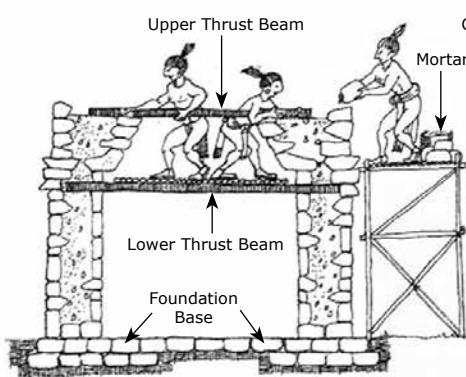
The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology

by James O'Kon, PE

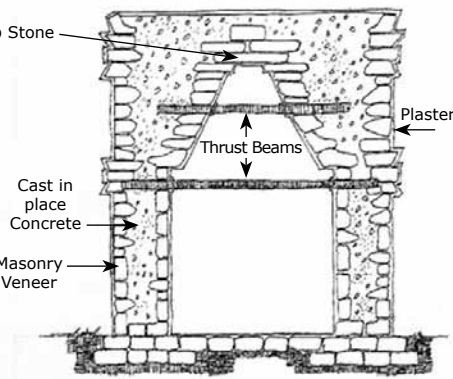
I must admit that when I was given for review James O'Kon's book, *The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology*, I was thrilled. As a structural engineer with other degrees in Chemistry and Physics, I was looking forward to a book written by a fellow engineer. I had read other articles by Mr. O'Kon, particularly his theory of the suspension bridge at Yaxchilan, and was looking forward to further data from him.

This is a thoroughly enjoyable book on a very important subject written by a highly qualified engineer with the right expertise to cover this matter. It is well researched and simply written. The excellent photography, helpful diagrams and graphic reconstructions add to the understanding of the subject. Although the core of the 390-page book is technology, "Lost Secrets" is anything but dry or complicated. The author takes the reader by the hand and guides him on a path of all things Maya to introduce him to the different technologies that made the Maya world the high civilization that it was.

From astronomy, through math, writing and calendrics to building materials, tools, agriculture, roads and navigation, the author covers most technological development of the Maya in detail.



Raising the walls, inserting thrust beams



Finishing the internal corbeled arch, structure completed

Construction of a Maya Arch Structure *Maya engineers developed a unique structural mechanism that enabled the construction of long-span interior spaces, multi-story structures and unique circular structural geometries. This structural mechanism is known as the Maya arch. This is the basic building module for all Maya structures. The structural geometry of this system utilizes a linear inverted "V" shape to develop clear span interior spaces. The combination of composite cast-in-place concrete and stone facing developed a very stable structural shape that has enabled the Maya arch to resist earthquakes, hurricanes and the ravages of the encroaching rainforest over a 1,500-year period.*

Absent, unfortunately, are the subjects of weaponry and textiles – both extremely important for human endeavor. Some of his conclusions may be debatable, such as the actual chemical behavior of Maya cements (particularly in view of the conclusions of the reports this author quotes).

Whether you agree one-hundred percent with his conclusions or not, *Lost Secrets of Maya Technology* is a must read for any serious student of the Maya civilization and a welcomed addition to the corpus of the literature on the subject.

Meet James O'Kon in person. He will speak at the IMS Explorer Session on November 14. See program announcement on page 8.

From *The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology* and James O'Kon's website at: www.theoldexplorer.com

In 1995, James O'Kon shocked the archaeological world with the discovery of a massive, lost landmark of Maya engineering, the long span suspension bridge at the ancient city of Yaxchilan in Mexico. Now considered to be the longest bridge of the ancient world, the structure was overlooked by scientists who had studied the site for more than a century.

His theory is based on computer reconstructions derived



The cables spanned between cast concrete and stone towers topped by Maya arches.

from an actual 12-foot high and 35-foot diameter rock formation in the Usamacinta River near the site of Yaxchilan, which flourished between 500 and 700 CE.

O'Kon, who is former chairman of the forensic council of the American Society of Civil Engineers, enlisted the services of his Atlanta engineering firm to create a reconstruction of the bridge. In his new book, O'Kon recounts the thrilling realization of his discovery and how he used modern methods to examine and prove the existence of the spectacular bridge.

He also explains how Maya engineers built multi-story buildings that were not exceeded in height until the first skyscraper erected in the U.S. in 1885, how they invented the blast furnace 2,000 years before it was patented in England, and developed the vulcanization of rubber more than 2,600 years before Goodyear.



Pub Date: April 22, 2012, Paperback, 6" X 9", 390 pages, published by Carrier Press Inc., Pompton Plains, NJ. ISBN: 978-1-60163-207-4 Available at: www.careerpress.com

Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!

November 14, 2012: IMS Explorer Session:

"The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology" with James O'Kon

The technological advances of Maya engineers have been investigated by Jim O'Kon for forty years. His research has included a wide variety of technical developments of the Maya. He will review the unique technological/engineering achievements of the Maya engineers. These technological achievements include the fabrication of tools that are harder than iron; the invention of high strength durable materials of construction including the fabrication of hydraulic cement for producing cast-in-place concrete; the development of the Maya arch as a structural mechanism to create multi-story and clear span structures, elevated concrete paved roads; long-span bridges, and advanced water management methodologies that permitted the Maya urban civilization to survive in a seasonal desert environment.



Suspected suspension bridge at Yaxchilan



Author, lecturer, award-winning structural engineer, and archaeo-engineer James O'Kon has explored and researched Maya technology for forty years. He has combined his talents as a forensic engineer with archaeological field survey evidence to uncover the veil over the lost technology of the Maya. Mr. O'Kon is an author with works published by scientific journals, textbooks by the American Society of Civil Engineers, and numerous international scientific institutes. His engineering breakthroughs and archaeo-engineering discoveries are the subject of a History channel production.

Visit O'Kon's website at: www.theoldexplorer.com • See Book Report and more from James O'Kon on page 6.

November 21: IMS Presentation:

"New Discoveries in Pre-Columbian Archaeology in 2012"

with Marta Barber



David Freidel of Washington University in St. Louis has announced the discovery of the tomb of Lady K'abel at El Perú-Waka'. She is portrayed on Stela 34, currently in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Though the most publicized event of 2012 is yet to happen, research and investigation in the Maya world and other Mesoamerican cultures didn't stop. As a matter of fact, it's been a busy year of extraordinary findings. Calendars and hieroglyphs; tombs and artifacts; food and colors all made headlines in 2012. We take a closer look at those findings that added to our knowledge of Pre-Columbian civilizations.



Detail from the stone block from Hieroglyphic Stairway 2 at La Corona (above) reveals the 4 Ajaw 3 K'ank'in "end date" for the current cycle turn-over of the Maya calendar (by David Stuart).



Bill Saturno of Boston University announced the discovery of early ninth-century murals at Xultun, Guatemala.

All meetings are 8 pm • Institute of Maya Studies • Miami Science Museum • Maya Hotline: 305-279-8110

Institute of Maya Studies

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The Institute of Maya Studies is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Membership dues and contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by the I.R.S.

Coming up next month:

2012: What will you be doing? Where are we headed?

IMS members distributed questionnaires to a handful of the Maya scholars attending the 6th Annual Maya at the Playa Conference. Mayanists Debra Walker, Mark Van Stone, Amanda Harvey, Bruce Love, Gerardo Aldana, Stanley Paul Guenter, and Marc Zender responded to some 2012-themed questions such as: "How aware do you think the ancient Maya were about the precession of the equinoxes?"; "What do you see as the future of Maya studies, now that the hoopla of 2012 will soon be behind us?" and "What will be your focus of attention in 2013? Excavation and field work? Research and writing projects?" Their answers may surprise you.

13.0.0.0: The End of an Era and the Dawn of Another

Archaeologists, academics and tourism authorities from Guatemala gathered at the headquarters of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, DC, to explain the meaning and interpretation of the thirteenth Bak'tun, which according to Maya tradition marks the end of 13 Bak'tuns and the beginning of the 14th Bak'tun. OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza noted that



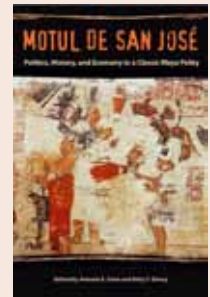
the process to decipher, understand and interpret the Maya culture accelerated in recent years due to the development of the region. "The peace agreements and democratic deepening in Mesoamerica gave us greater stability, which allowed a boom in the study of the Maya civilization."

A Book Review by Editor Jim Reed:

Motul de San José: Politics, History, and Economics in a Classic Maya Polity

Edited by Antonia E. Foias
and Kitty F. Emery

This volume addresses a major debate in Maya archaeology – the nature of political organization during the Classic period (250-950 CE). Numerous researchers present a coherent interdisciplinary body of archaeological and environmental data from the Motul de San Jose polity to delve deeper into the various models of the ancient Maya political and economic systems.



IMS Fellowship Membership Announcement

It is with great pleasure that we announce three (3) new "Fellows" to the organization: Patricia Manfredi, Ray Stewart and Dr. Anne Stewart. The award presentation will be held on November 21, 2012, at the Museum of Science, Miami, FL.

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

November 14, 8 pm: *IMS Explorer Session*
"The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology" – Based on over forty years of research by author, award-winning structural engineer, and archaeo-engineer **James O'Kon**.

November 21, 8 pm: *IMS Program*
"New Discoveries in Pre-Columbian Archaeology in 2012" – **Marta Barber** provides a recap of important discoveries in 2012 made by archaeologists working at sites in Mesoamerica.

December 12, 8 pm: *IMS Annual Affair*
"The IMS Annual Affair" – Come and join us for a short business meeting and a celebration to honor the start of our 42nd year together. Please bring books and other items for the sale.

January 16, 2013, 8 pm: *IMS Program*
"The Mirador Basin: The Cultural and Natural Legacy in the Cradle of Maya Civilization" – Social and political centralization in the Middle and Late Preclassic periods led to the first true state-level society in the Western Hemisphere, with director **Dr. Richard Hansen**, from Idaho State University,

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

December 9–15: *Conference*
"How We Know What We Think We Know About the Maya" – Theme of the 17th European Maya Conference, Helsinki, Finland. Get more online at: www.wayeb.org/conference/sevents/emc_newsymposium.php

Through December 16: *Exhibition*
"Luminescence: Silver of Peru" – A fascinating exhibit at the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology. The exhibit contains many Pre-Columbian artifacts and modern artwork as well. This piece is called "Madre Spondylus" which is a modern interpretation of Spondylus in silver and other materials. Get more info at: <http://moa.ubc.ca/exhibits/>



January 3–6: *Annual AIA Meeting*
"AIA Annual Meeting" – The 114th joint annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America and the American Philological Association will be held in Seattle, WA. The three-day annual event is the highlight of both organizations'

academic programming and is an important forum for scholars to present new ideas and current research. More info available at: <http://aia.archaeological.org/webinfo.php?page=10096>

Through January 5, 2013: *Exhibition*
"For I am the Black Jaguar: Shamanic Visionary Experience in Ancient American Art" – At the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University. More info at: <http://carlos.emory.edu/black-jaguar>

Feb. 22-24, 2013: *Tulane Symposium*
"KAANAL: The Snake Kingdom of the Classic Maya" – The Tenth Annual Tulane Maya Symposium and Workshops will explore one of the largest ancient Maya political entities – the kingdom of Dzibanche and Calakmul. The Hieroglyph Forum and the Workshops will focus on newly discovered texts from La Corona and elsewhere. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Peter Mathews of La Trobe University. Also featured will be M.A.R.I.'s new exhibit, "Faces of the Maya". See the speakers and program at: <http://mari.tulane.edu/TMS/program.html>

