



IMS EXPLORER

Institute of Maya Studies

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Maya enthusiasts providing public education for 42 years

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August 21, 2013 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.0.12.3 • 13 Ak'bal 1 Mol • G9



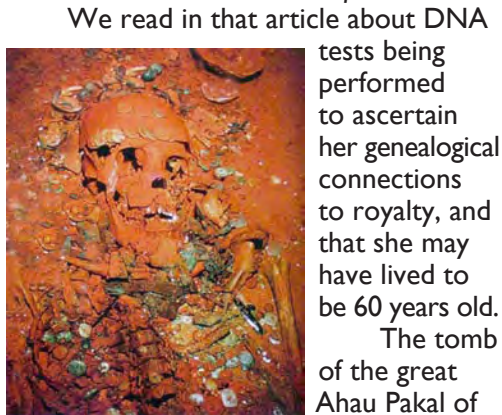
Toxic Metal Usage and Their Effects on Ancient Americans

by **Mark F. Cheney**

Cinnabar in original rock state (of volcanic origin).

The most curious of all metals, of course, is mercury. As a young chemistry student in high school, my class was warned by the instructor that mercury was toxic and not to touch it or, if heating it, never to inhale the vapors. This information has led me to think about related things that have been discovered in the world of the ancient Maya.

In recent articles in the *IMS Explorer*, there have been reports of the beautiful red cinnabar (mercury ore) powder spread on the bodies of deceased nobles, such as the “Red Queen” (photo below) of Palenque, Mexico who died between 600–700 CE, and was mentioned in the cover article of the March 2013 *Explorer*.



The Red Queen, Palenque, Mexico. Photo courtesy of Javier Hinojosa.

We read in that article about DNA tests being performed to ascertain her genealogical connections to royalty, and that she may have lived to be 60 years old.

The tomb of the great Ahau Pakal of



Maya slateware cup (front and back), ca. 900 CE, Chocóla, Campeche, Mexico. Clay with traces of cinnabar (11.5 x 13.5 cm). This beautifully carved ceramic vessel depicts an exquisite royal portrait, surrounded by glyphs that read: “This is the drinking cup of K’ahk’ Uht K’nich (fire-countenanced sun god), King of Akankeh (modern Acanceh, Yucatán) and ball player.” Courtesy of Infinity of Nations: Art and History in the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.

Palenque was also painted with cinnabar. A similar burial, quite famously known as “The Lady in Red” was found entombed in “Margarita,” of Copan, Honduras. She is thought by some to have been the wife of K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’ or Green Quetzal Macaw, who ruled from approximately 426 to 435 CE, centuries before the “Red Queen” of Palenque.

“The Lady in Red” was covered in both cinnabar and hematite powder. Hematite is an iron oxide that may be contaminated by lead. Among the more than 2,000 objects found buried with “The Lady in Red” were painted gourds filled with cinnabar and two small grinding stones. Archaeologist and criminologist Donna Yates, states

IMS Presentation:
August 21, 8 pm

“Between Sea and Sky: Trade, Movement, and Urbanism in Ancient Oaxaca, Mexico”
with **Sarah “Stacy” B. Barber**
Associate Professor, Anthropology, University of Central Florida

in her blog: “even though folks are going into the tomb to stabilize the murals, they will not be removing anything from the tomb. Why? you ask. Well, “early studies show a high concentration

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Jim Reed,
Editor

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Editor's note: Marta Barber will present a program at the IMS on August 14 entitled: "Maya Hieroglyphs: Gateway to History". It has inspired me to compile this article in honor of the folks who are out there now "doing the work." Since before the passing of epigrapher Linda Schele in 1998, her colleagues at UT-Austin have been carrying the banner. There is no better synopsis of all that has transpired than the mission statement and history pages of the MAM website. Check them out and help support their efforts at: <http://discovermam.org>

Teaching the Maya Hieroglyphic System to the Modern Maya

MAM = Grandmother/Grandfather; Ancestor

"May these pages find you and your loved ones well and strong in spirit, and may peace, health, and happiness be yours."

"Join us in this movement – part academic, part spiritual – as the indigenous Maya reunite with their own past, reading the ancient hieroglyphic books and monuments, communicating with their ancestors.

"MAM is the Maya word for ancestor and is our acronym in both English and Spanish: Mayas for Ancient Mayan, and Maya Antiguo para los Mayas."

MAM Mission Statement

"Mayas teaching Mayas the hieroglyphs and ancient calendar."

"All across the Maya world, in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize, we are finding Maya colleagues thirsting to learn the writing of their ancestors. We support them with workshops and teaching materials.



The 1st International Congress of Maya Epigraphers began with an inaugural ceremony asking the Creator and the spirit guardians to bless the proceedings.



In June 2013, MAM celebrated the one-year anniversary of the 1st International Congress of Maya Epigraphers that was sponsored by MAM and hosted by the Universidad del Oriente in Valladolid, Yucatán. Since then, one Maya participant was inspired to send director of MAM, Dr. Bruce Love, a personally signed letter of appreciation that included his original glyphs and artwork above. Just look at this design and the style of the glyphs by Walter Amilcar Paz Joj, Maya Kaqchikel from Panajachel.

By teaching contemporary Maya people how to read hieroglyphs, Linda Schele tried to "give back to them the tools they need to recover their past."

"A number of Maya scholars have already become advanced epigraphers in their own right and they are now teaching the glyphs and calendar to others. Our Maya colleagues have the training, the knowledge, the language and culture, and above all the desire to recover their own history. All they lack is financial resources. That is where MAM steps in: with grants to prepare and print teaching materials, with donations of digital projectors, and with help for transportation, meals, and lodging to attend workshops.

"Our Maya colleagues already know what to do and how to do it; MAM's mission is to support them."

MAM History: First Glyph Workshops for Mayas

"In June, 1987, a group of North American academic linguists were meeting in Antigua for their ninth annual workshop on Maya linguistics, organized and sponsored by the Proyecto

Lingüístico Francisco Marroquín.

The participants included a number of indigenous Maya linguists-in-training. Kathryn Josserand presented a paper titled "Tipos de material literario y modos de presentación" (Classes of Literary Material and Means of Presentation). The paper discussed various ways of presenting native texts, including the multi-line format preferred by linguists, poetic structuring, comic strips, live theater, and even



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hieroglyphic inscriptions.

"After her presentation, some Maya students approached her and commented that she had apparently been able to read the hieroglyphic inscriptions, and she told them "Yes," we could now read much of the texts. They responded that they

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The mission of the Institute of Maya Studies, Inc. (IMS) is to help spread knowledge on the pre-Columbian cultures of the Americas, with an emphasis on the study of the Maya. The IMS was founded in 1971 and is affiliated with the Miami Science Museum. Membership in the IMS includes free entrance to two lectures a month at the museum, a year's subscription to our monthly *IMS Explorer* newsletter, and access to all features in the members-only section of our website.

Explore Your Membership Benefits on the IMS Website at: www.instituteofmayastudies.org

Many IMS members are not aware of all of the available resources on our website that are set up for members only. Our webmaster, Keith Merwin, has endeavored to create a useful and informative site that is colorful and easy to navigate. By entering your user name and password into the login form on the home page, you can access many areas of the site that the general public does not get to see.

Most importantly are the IMS Image Library and video recordings of featured Maya scholars and their entire lectures.

Videos of IMS Programs:

These are a great resource for folks who don't live in the South Florida area and cannot attend our two monthly public programs. Some of the videos posted in the members-only area of our website are:

"Between Two Volcanic Eruptions: The Ancient Maya Village of Cerén, El Salvador" with Payson Sheets, Ph.D.

"Izapa: Stela 5 Stone of Creation" with V. Garth Norman

"The Last Days of a Maya Royal Court" with David F. Lee, Ph.D.

"Getting to Know: Maya Vaults" with Joaquín J. Rodríguez III, PE, SECB (IMS Director of Research)

"The Huastec Culture: History and Sculpture" with Marta Barber

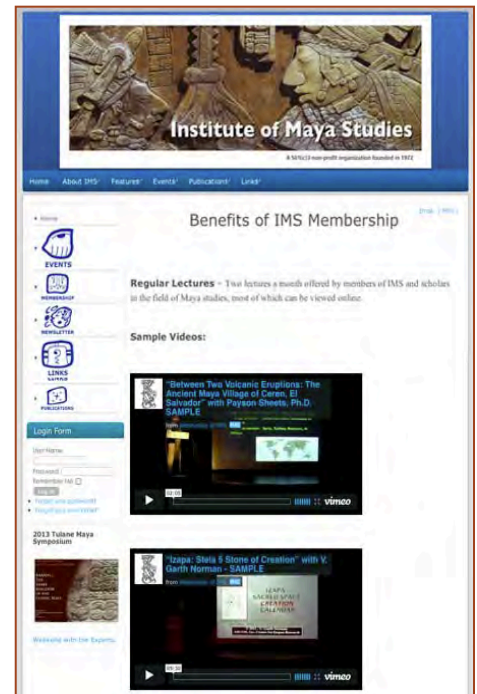
"Francisco de Orellana (1490-1546), Discoverer of the Amazon River." portrayed by Robert Dawson

"Maya Codices and the Books of Chilam Balam: Spanning the 'Conquest'" with Bruce Love, Ph.D.

"The Relationship Between Visionary Plants and Iconography in the Art of Tiwanaku, Bolivia, ca. 300-900 CE" with Constantino Manuel Torres, Ph.D.

"Cacao and Jade: The Diffusion of the Calendars Along Pre-Classic Maya Trade Routes" with *Explorer* Editor Jim Reed

Members also have access to past issues of the *IMS Explorer* (since 2008) by clicking on the index for any particular issue. Here is where you can also download the current issue.



Without a password, anyone accessing the IMS website can only see the "general public" home page that includes the two monthly program announcements, and links to pages titled: About IMS; Features; Events; Links; Membership; Newsletter; and Publications. There are a few book reviews and links to some articles previously published in the newsletter. There are also sample program videos on the "Benefits" page; featured now are IMS programs by Payson Sheets, V. Garth Norman and David F. Lee.

Dig into the IMS Image Library

The IMS has a large collection of images taken by members at sites throughout Mesoamerica over the past 30+ years. We are currently creating a gallery of many of these images.

Here are a few samples from our photo archives.



Pascual Ab'aj, Chichicastenango, Guatemala, 1964.



San Pedro volcano, Lake Atitlán, Guatemala, 1964.



View from the church bell tower of the market in Chichicastenango, 1964.



L) Parrot sculpture detail (before reconstruction of the ballcourt) 1976. R) Same Parrot detail placed in ballcourt Structure 10 (as viewed from the southwest) 2007.

Copan Comparison: One folder in the archives has many images that show some of the changes that have occurred over the years at Copan. In the samples at left, one photo was taken of the sculpture detail in 1976 and the other photo was taken at roughly the same angle, in 2007.

Have fun exploring all of the available resources.

Members:

Be sure to get your password by contacting our Webmaster at: keith@merwin.com



Toxic Metal Usage and Their Effects on Ancient Americans by Mark F. Cheney

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of mercuric sulfide or cinnabar.”
The artefacts (sic) are toxic!

In pre-Conquest Peru, “the toxic properties of mercury were well known. It was dangerous to those who mined and processed cinnabar, it caused shaking, loss of senses, and death ... data suggest that mercury was retorted from cinnabar and the workers were exposed to the toxic mercury fumes.”

So yes, ideas of preservation in situ are there, but really the tomb is covered in death powder.” (See www.anonymousswisscollector.com/2012_10_01_archive.html)

Another instance of a burial containing cinnabar dust was in Tak'alik Ab'aj, along with grave goods including a blue jade necklace and two ear spools coated in cinnabar (above center). The materials found in this burial site were dated to 100–200 CE. (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takalik_Abaj)

Liquid mercury has been found in five Maya locations, the reference found for all five was in the Wikipedia entry for Lamanai. (See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamanai>)

Those five places are Copan, Quirigua, Kaminaljuyu, Lake Amatitlán (not Atitlán) and Lamanai. Also in Lake Amatitlán “a cranium fragment of a young human female, stained with cinnabar, was found embedded in mud inside a round-sided ringstand base bowl” at Lavaderos. (See www.mpm.edu/research-collections/)



An offering in a tomb within Structure 6 at Tak'alik Ab'aj reveals rare blue jade and an abundance of cinnabar. Photo courtesy of Proyecto Tak'alik Ab'aj.

anthropology/online-collections-research/lake-amatitlán-guatemala-collection/0)

It appears that for hundreds of years the servants of the Maya elite have been crushing and handling both mercury and lead ores to be used among other things as a colored decoration for the dead. During those hundreds of years, were the people in the area inhaling, ingesting or absorbing toxic mercury or lead fumes or compounds?

This question needs to be asked because it may have contributed to the downfall of the large City-States, the cause of which is constantly being debated. Did they burn gourds that had contained the powdered metals inhaling toxic fumes? Did they prepare and eat foods using the same grinding instruments used on the ores, or bowls that had held these substances, thus ingesting them? As attributed in the treatise by William E. Brooks: *Industrial Use of Mercury Among Ancient Peoples*, “In South Central Mexico, cinnabar was used



The magnificent “Lady in Red”, Copan, Honduras. ©Kenneth Garrett, courtesy of National Geographic.

In Lake Amatitlán at Lavaderos (Site 1A), a brown-black ware face-neck jar with an image of Tlaloc contained liquid mercury, cinnabar, graphite and about 400 smashed pieces of jadeite. (Milwaukee Public Museum)



as a pigment by the Olmec to decorate figures during the Preclassic (1200 to 400 BCE),” (Martin del Campo, 2005) and “Cinnabar was one of several pigments used to decorate incense burners used for funeral rituals at Palenque,” (Vásquez and Velásquez, 1996). Further, “Lead released from ceramic glazes into acidic foods stored in pottery is still among the most frequently cited sources of episodic cases of classic lead toxicity that are attributable to food.” (per Mahaffey, 1978 and Ericson et al, 1990).

From a cursory look at the work that has been done on lead and mercury levels among ancient peoples, it appears that these levels can be determined by studying the

bone composition of the remains of the ancient Maya. (See Ericson, Smith and Flegal, 1991 at www.bi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/MC1568040/pdf/envhper00413-0204.pdf). Tissue samples as used in the above-cited DNA testing, may also be able to lend some valuable information. Hopefully, some interested forensic anthropologist or some such will choose to research this further. 🏠



L) Carved Mirror-Back with hieroglyphs, Guatemalan Lowlands, Early Classic Maya, 200–600 CE. Greenish slate with red cinnabar. Courtesy of Jay I. Kislak Collection, photo ©Justin Kerr, Kerr Associates. CL) Pectoral, ca. 200 CE, Spondylus shell, incised, with traces of cinnabar. Courtesy of www.princeton.edu. CR) Maya conch shell trumpet with incised portrait of ruler (with cinnabar). Published in *The Face of Ancient America*, p.124, K3481 ©Justin Kerr, See www.mayavase.com. R) Ceremonial Hacha representing a skeleton's skull, Maya, ca. 600–800 CE.



Grey-black diorite with significant traces of cinnabar. Courtesy of Gallery Mermoz.



Important Discoveries from Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH)

Archaeologists Uncover the Oldest Temple in Oaxaca Valley at El Palenque

A newly discovered temple complex in the Valley of Oaxaca, Mexico, reveals hints of a specialized hierarchy of priests – who may have committed human sacrifice.

The evidence of such sacrifice is far from conclusive, but researchers did uncover a human tooth and part of what may be a human limb bone from a temple room scattered with animal sacrifice remains and obsidian blades. The temple dates back to 300 BCE or so, when it was in use by the Zapotec civilization of what is now Oaxaca.

Archaeologists have been excavating a site in the valley called El Palenque for years. The site is the center of what was once an independent mini-state. Between 1997 and 2000, the researchers found and studied the remains of a 9,150-square-foot (850-square-meter) palace complex complete with a plaza on the north side of the site. Radiocarbon dating and copious ash reveal that the palace burned down sometime around 60 BCE.

Now, the archaeologists have unearthed an even larger complex of buildings on the east side of El Palenque. The walled-off area appears to be a temple complex, consisting of a main temple flanked by two smaller temple buildings. There are also at least two residences, probably for priests, as well as a number of firepits where offerings may have been made.

The main room of the main temple was scattered with artifacts, including shell, mica and alabaster ornaments, as researchers reported in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (April 22). The archaeologists also found ceramic vessels and whistles, as well as incense braziers. Obsidian blades and lances suggest that the priests



L) A view of Structure 20 temple, under excavation from its southeastern end. The hearths and burned floor are visible as is the rear staircase being exposed in the right foreground.



R) Structure 27, the supposed priestly residence, under excavation, facing northeast. The subfloor hearth (Feature 79) and cache (Feature 78) lie under the sheet of plastic.

Images courtesy of Charles Spencer and Elsa Redmond.

engaged in ritual bloodletting and animal sacrifice, as did the remains of turkeys, doves and other animals in the temple hearth.

The two buildings that appear to be priestly residences were earthen-floored and thick-walled, with firepits inside that are characteristic of El Palenque homes. The artifacts suggest that priests didn't cook their own food, but

were served meals in their quarters by temple servants. Like the palace, the temple complex has been burned and appears to have fallen out of use by the end of the first century BCE or the first century CE, making it the oldest temple discovered yet in the Valley of Oaxaca. 🏰

Source: From an article by Stephanie Pappas, released 4/22/13 at: www.livescience.com

INAH Specialists Excavate Possible Pre-Hispanic Dock in Veracruz

INAH archaeologists have found a containment wall, four rooms that might have been used for worship, a circular structure and stucco floors at the site of Tabuco, in the State of Veracruz.

The importance of the find resides in the possibility of it being an antecedent of the Tuxpan port. According to María Eugenia Maldonado Vite, who is responsible for the archaeological salvage, these vestiges correspond most likely to an ancient wharf or pier where merchandise and marine traffic were controlled. If this is confirmed, it would be the first of its kind along Mexico's Gulf Coast.

The exploration at the site is part of the Southern Archaeological Project of the Huastecan Veracruz, whose objective is to understand the organization of the political system in this frontier zone since the Tuxpan



In the northeastern section of the excavation area, workers found the remains of circular structures, stuccoed floors, and huge midden and the remains of more than 50 individuals. Photos: María Eugenia Maldonado/INAH.

River was considered as the ethnic divider between Huastecans and Totonacans.

During the process of excavaton, they also found 50 burials of men, women and children. 🏰

Source: From an article released at www.artdaily.com. Submitted by Katheryn Shurik via IMS facebook.

Teaching the Maya Hieroglyphic System to the Modern Maya

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wanted to learn to read the Maya hieroglyphic writing.

“An excursion to Copan was planned for that Sunday, but the next day, Saturday, was free, and Kathryn suggested that she and her husband, Nick Hopkins, could hold a one-day workshop for those interested. Having just done a workshop at the Casa de la Cultura in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, they had materials in Spanish at hand. Saturday, some 30 Mayas arrived, interested indeed, and received an introduction to the glyphs, including a detailed reading of the Palenque Temple of the Cross inscriptions that contained a historical panel that relates a series of births of rulers.

“When Kathryn (who together with Nick over the years have given various glyph workshops at the IMS) asked the students if they could see what was going on, one of them replied “Es un registro de nacimientos! Esta es nuestra historia!” (It is a record of births! This is our history!) Several then commented “We always knew we had a history, but it has been kept from us.” They fervently wanted more.

“Kathryn and Nick reminded the students they were all going to Copan the next day and the leading presenter of glyph workshops, Linda Schele, would be there and would give the group a guided tour of the site. They suggested the Mayas talk to Linda about future instruction.



On April 22 of this year a workshop was held for a group of candidates for Rixq'uun Ma 'Muun (Maya Poqomchi) Princess of Munchu), part of the celebration of the patron saint of Santa Cruz Verapaz, located in the department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. The workshop taught participants the basic elements of ancient Maya writing, which was practiced by using the syllabary to write vocabularies, place names, and the first and last names of each of the participants. Besides the MAM website, you can befriend MAM on facebook and get updates!

“Sunday, after the guided tour, Nick and Kathryn met with Linda at the Hotel Marina and introduced her to Martín Chacach and Narciso Cojti', then among the leaders of the Maya linguists. They asked her to come to Antigua and give them a glyph workshop. Linda replied that she was supposed to be in Copan, where she had a Fullbright scholarship to Honduras. They argued she had an obligation to the Maya nation, not to Honduras. She agreed only on the condition that Kathryn and Nick would leave their work in San Cristobal, Chiapas, to help her out, since her Spanish was limited. All agreed.

“Nora England, then a linguist at PLFM, translated a workbook supplied by Linda and organized an introductory glyph workshop to be held in one of the ruined churches in Antigua. Some weeks later (July 20-22, 1987) Kathryn Josseland, Nick Hopkins and Linda Schele held forth in front of more than two dozen indigenous Maya students! The students represented seven Mayan languages and five Guatemalan institutions (Kaqchikel, Q'eqchi', Mam, Tz'ulujil, Ixii, Popti' and Ch'orti'; PLFM, PRONEBI, IGED, CIRMA, and ILV).

“The success of this endeavor made Linda realize how much she enjoyed working with the Maya, and she returned periodically over the years, as did Kathryn, Nick, Nikolai Grube



and others, to teach workshops, often organized by Nora.

“To our knowledge, these were the first glyph workshops organized specifically for Maya attendees.”

Birth of MAM

“After 1987, Linda Schele, with Nikolai Grube, began to bring indigenous Maya students and scholars to her famous Maya Meetings in Texas. After Linda's passing in 1998, Nikolai continued the practice until he left Texas for his current position at Bonn University.

“In 2004, a group of Maya Meeting attendees, spearheaded by Sue Glenn and including a number of current MAM board members, organized to ensure that Mayas continued to be invited to Texas. In 2005, *Friends of the Maya* was formed for this purpose.

“In 2010, *Friends of the Maya* co-sponsored a workshop in Antigua at Proyecto Lingüístico Francisco Marroquín, attended by 70 Maya-speaking participants. It became clear that bringing workshops to the Mayas was much more effective than bringing Mayas to workshops.

“In 2012, *Friends of the Maya* reinvented itself with a new name MAM, a new logo, a new web page, a new executive committee, and a new mission “Mayas teaching Mayas the Glyphs and the Calendar,” providing cash grants and digital projectors for glyph workshops conducted by the Mayas themselves, and sponsoring international congresses for Maya epigraphers.” 🌳



After a tribute to Linda Schele, during the 1st International Congress of Maya Epigraphers, Dr. Bruce Love gave a program about Maya codices.

Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!

August 14, 2013: IMS Class

“Maya Hieroglyphs: Gateway to History”

with Marta Barber



Scribes could use a brush or a chisel. This typical hieroglyph, carved in stone, shows the artistic qualities of the Maya writing system.

With hieroglyphs being deciphered at warp speed, the history of the Classic Maya continues its course of understanding and knowledge.

Together with archaeologists in the field, epigraphers and linguists are making the story of kings and queens more lively than ever. It seems that, when the Maya scribes finally had a fully written language at their command, they left an imprint everywhere. On ceramics, stone, bones, paper, jade, caves and house walls, they wrote and wrote. But were the messages always the same? We examine the sources and their messages.



Thanks to epigraphers such as Linda Schele, Nikolai Grube and Bruce Love, Maya hieroglyphic writing is now part of the curriculum in Maya schools. Maya newspapers and publications spell headlines and titles in Maya hieroglyphs as well as Roman letters, and children have learned to write their names using the Maya writing system.

August 21: IMS Presentation:

“Between Sea and Sky: Trade, Movement, and Urbanism in Ancient Oaxaca, Mexico”

with Sarah “Stacy” B. Barber

Associate Professor, Anthropology, University of Central Florida



Depiction of warriors on canoes in the Codex Nuttall.

Straddling the narrow Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the Mexican state of Oaxaca lies at an ancient crossroads. It connected the great cities of highland Central Mexico with the tropical homeland of the Maya, as well as sitting atop the shortest route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in Mesoamerica. Oaxaca was thus a place on the move, with major trade routes passing through the region’s rugged mountains and high inland valleys, as well as along its 597 kilometers of Pacific coastline.



An interesting gold pectoral from Tomb 7 at Monte Albán. (INAH)

These trade routes were pivotal in the political and economic development of Oaxaca’s many Precolumbian urban areas, including the ancient mountain-top city of Monte Albán. Drawing on Oaxaca’s extensive archaeological and historic records, along with the new developments in geospatial modeling, **Dr. Barber** considers how ancient people navigated Oaxaca’s landscape and what role those movements played in the development of the region’s vibrant urban societies.

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

New Membership and Renewal Application

Name: _____

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The IMS has gone Green! Join today

You can also become a member by using PayPal and the on-line application form on our website at: <http://instituteofmayastudies.org>

Members: Be sure to get your password by contacting our Webmaster at: keith@merwin.com

Mail payment to: The Institute of Maya Studies, Inc. • Attn: Membership • 3280 South Miami Avenue • Miami, FL • 33129

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.

New Renewal

Benefactor: \$350

Patron: \$150

Century: \$100

Member: \$40



Membership in the IMS includes attending two lectures a month; a year’s subscription to our downloadable monthly **IMS Explorer** newsletter; and access to all features on our website: past newsletters, videos of IMS lectures, upcoming program announcements, IMS photo archives, and a lot more!

Institute of Maya Studies

The Institute of Maya Studies is totally member-supported! If you are not a member, please take a moment and join us. Membership brings benefits and helps the IMS offer educational programs to the public. If you are already a member, please encourage your friends to join. If you need any assistance, call our Maya Hotline at: 305-279-8110



INAH Mexico Unveils Stone-age Etchings

Archaeologists in Mexico have catalogued thousands of etchings carved into stones that they believe were made by hunter-gatherers 6,000 years ago.

The carvings (A), known as petroglyphs, mostly consist of wavy lines and concentric circles, with some images representing deer tracks.

Some 8,000 images were found at the site of Narigua in the state of Coahuila, Mexico. Experts say the etchings may be part of hunter-gatherer initiation rites, or representations of stars.

INAH archaeologist Gerardo Rivas said there was evidence of hunter-gatherer tribes having lived in the area.

He said many of their settlements were temporary, but evidence of cooking implements and stoves still remained.



Rivas reported that the petroglyphs may reveal clues as to the level of sophistication of the tribes, and the kinds of tools they were able to manufacture.

5,000 Cave Paintings Revealed in Mexico

INAH archaeologists have found 4,926 well-preserved cave paintings in the northeastern region of Burgos. The images (B) in red, yellow, black and white depict humans, animals and insects, as well as skylscapes and abstract scenes.


The paintings were found in 11 different sites, but the walls

of one cave were covered with 1,550 scenes.

The area in which they were found was previously thought not to have been inhabited by ancient cultures.

The paintings suggest that at least three groups of hunter-gatherers dwelled in the San Carlos mountain range.

Experts have not yet been able to date the paintings, but hope to chemically analyze their paint to find out their approximate age.

Sources: Compiled by the editor from two notices released at: www.bbc.co.uk
Submitted by Scott Allen. 

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

August 14 • 8 pm: *IMS Class*
“Maya Hieroglyphs: Gateway to History” – How breaking the Maya code has helped to reveal so much about the lives of the ancient Maya, with **Marta Barber**.

August 21 • 8 pm: *IMS Program*
“Between Sea and Sky: Trade, Movement, and Urbanism in Ancient Oaxaca, Mexico” – **Dr. Sarah “Stacy” B. Barber** considers how ancient people navigated Oaxaca’s landscape and what role those movements played in the development of the region’s vibrant urban societies.

September 11 • 8 pm: *IMS Class*
“Part II: Maya Hieroglyphs: Gateway to History” – The scribal saga continues, with **Lady Marta@B**.

September 18 • 8 pm: *IMS Program*
“Overview of the Uxul Project and Some Interesting Chenes Region Vessels” – with **Antonio Benavides C., Ph.D., INAH/Campeche**.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

September 7: *20th Annual Symposium*
“The World of the First Ahaws” – Theme of a one-day symposium at the Pre-Columbian Society of Washington, D.C. Research that has taken place during the last two decades at sites ranging from the Pacific coast of Guatemala to the Yucatán peninsula and Belize is forcing a new appreciation for the widespread and astonishing precocity of the Preclassic Maya.

Indeed, it can be argued that the Preclassic Period was the first florescence of the Maya, and that the Mirador Basin was home to the first true state-level political system of the New World. Addressing this topic will be David Anderson, Barbara Arroyo, Jaime Awe, Francisco Estrada-Belli, Stanley Guenter, and Richard Hansen (moderator).

For details and registration information (on-line registration is now possible), please go to the Pre-Columbian Society’s website at: www.pcswdc.org

September 20, 7:30 pm: *Lecture*
“The Artists of Xultun: Recent Discoveries of Maya Mural Paintings”



September 21, 9 am–12 pm: *Workshop*
“Maya Mural Painting: The Bonampak and San Bartolo Murals” – with artist Heather Hurst, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Skidmore College. This Maya Society of Minnesota Lecture and Workshop will take place at The Anderson Center, Hamline University, St. Paul, MN. More info at: <http://sites.hamline.edu/mayasociety>

September 26-29: *Conference*
“7th Annual Maya at the Playa” – Sponsored by American Foreign Academic Research, Davidson Day School, and the Archaeological Institute of America. Previous recipients George Stuart and Michael Coe present this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award to Barbara and Justin Kerr. Be sure to register now at: www.mayaattheplaya.com

IMS EXPLORER

Join in the **Explor-ation!** Scholar or not, we welcome submissions from IMS members. Share what interests you with others. All articles and news items for the **IMS Explorer** should be forwarded to the newsletter editor at: mayaman@bellsouth.net