



IMS EXPLORER

Institute of Maya Studies

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

An affiliate of the Miami Science Museum

Maya enthusiasts providing public education for 43 years



Volume 43
Issue 6
June 2014
ISSN: 1524-9387

Inside this issue:

Chili Pepper Residue Detected in Maya Preclassic Pots; Origins of Domesticated Chili Pepper Determined 2

Re-connecting the Pieces: A Journey Through the Life of Tatiana Proskouriakoff, cont. from pg. 1 3,6

Lost Maya City of Noh Kah Has Been Mapped 4

The Archaeology of Cihuatán, El Salvador; Fanning the Sacred Flame Mesoamerican Studies in Honor of H.B. Nicholson 5

June IMS Programs; Membership Application 7

Ancient Ballcourt Found Near Merida; Upcoming Events 8



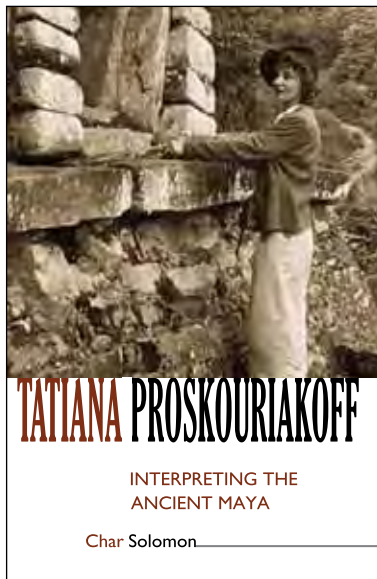
June 18, 2014 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.1.9.4 • 2 K'an 17 Sotz • G4

Re-connecting the Pieces: A Journey Through the Life of Tatiana Proskouriakoff by Char Solomon

As a teacher for more than twenty years and the mother of two young adults, I am aware that there is a great need today for strong role models, particularly of women who pursue careers with passion and integrity, contributing to our understanding of the world.

Tatiana Proskouriakoff, one of the leading interpreters of Maya art, architecture, and hieroglyphs, was such a woman. Dynamic and challenging, she sought new approaches to old questions about the ancient Maya. During a period when Mesoamerican archaeology was almost exclusively a profession for men of means, she dedicated herself to finding truth, even when what she found went against the beliefs of venerated authorities in the field.

I first met Tania in 1972, when I walked into Harvard's Peabody Museum hoping to find work. With a faint smile, a woman in the front office told me they were not hiring just then. However, she continued, there was someone looking



Tatiana Proskouriakoff: Interpreting the Ancient Maya, by Char Solomon. 2002. University of Oklahoma Press – Norman. 240 pgs. Published with the assistance of The Kerr Foundation, Inc. ISBN: 0-8061-3445-3. Cover photo: Proskouriakoff at El Tajin, Veracruz, Mexico. Courtesy of Mike Beetem.

for a volunteer for an ongoing project. She said it was Tania Proskouriakoff, whose catalogue of carved jades from the Sacred Cenote at Chichen Itza was demanding a great deal of her time. I was familiar with Tania's name from several college courses I had taken, and my breathing quickened when the woman said she could take me to meet her right away.

Leading me past displays of Native American artifacts, down a side stairwell, and through a dark labyrinth of cabinets, she finally opened the door to a brightly lit office. Introducing me, the woman quickly left us.

Tania, an older woman, dark-haired and petite, took off her large glasses, looked at me directly in the eyes and asked a few carefully



Tatiana, measuring Structure J-II at Piedras Negras, 1937.

IMS Presentation: June 18, 8 pm



Watercolor: Copan Ballcourt

One Woman's Voice: Tatiana Proskouriakoff's Impact on 20th Century Maya Archaeology with Char Solomon

worded questions about my background and intentions.

She listened intently to my responses and seemed

continued on page 3



Jim Reed, Editor

©2014 I.M.S. Inc. The *IMS Explorer* newsletter is published 12 times a year by The Institute of Maya Studies, Inc. The Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Membership and renewal application on page 7. As a member you receive the monthly newsletter and personal access to the Member's Only pages on our website. Access IMS program videos, photo archives, past issues and more. **Get your password by contacting our Webmaster at: keith@merwin.com**



In two unrelated news articles, Chili Peppers are hot topics this year!

Chili Pepper Residue Detected in Maya Preclassic Pots

Usually referred to as chili peppers, the flowering plants of the genus capsicum are well known today, but there are relatively few Precolumbian archaeological sites that actually contain any remains.

Although chili peppers are commonly used in Mexico today, we have a lack of knowledge regarding how Precolumbian cultures may have used them. However, in a new study, an archaeological team used chemical extractions to reveal the presence of chili residues in ceramic vessels from the site of Chiapa de Corzo in southern Mexico.

A range of vessels were tested that dated from the Middle to Late Preclassic periods (400 BCE to 300 CE) – and the types of ceramics that contained traces of the chili residue gave clues to its possible use.

The scientists found residues in various types of jars and vessels, which suggests that Mixe-Zoquean and Maya cultures may have been using chili peppers for many different culinary purposes. For instance, Capsicum was found in a vessel called a spouted jar, which is used for pouring liquids.

Each vessel that tested positive for capsicum appeared to have a culinary use, and so the possibility that chili residues from the Chiapa de Corzo pottery samples reflect either paste or beverage preparations for every day cooking becomes a real possibility – even if some of the occasions may have been ritual.

The significance of the study is that it is the first of its kind to detect ancient chili pepper residues from early Mixe-Zoquean pottery in Mexico and opens the door for further collaborative research into how the pepper may have been used either from a culinary, pharmaceutical, or ritual perspective.



Image of five vessels (of thirteen) that tested positive for capsicum from Chiapa de Corzo. Courtesy of

Roberto López and Emiliano Gallaga Murrieta.



Endless stacks and sacks of dried hot chili peppers at the Merced Market, Mexico City. These chili's are used to make Mexico's famous moles, chilaquiles, and chilates. Courtesy of Will Crowthers.

Origins of Domesticated Chili Pepper Determined

Central-east Mexico gave birth to the domesticated chili pepper – now the world's most widely grown spice crop – reports an international team of researchers, led by a plant scientist at the University of California, Davis.

Results from the four-pronged investigation – based on linguistic and ecological evidence as well as the more traditional archaeological and genetic data – suggest a regional, rather than a geographically specific, birthplace for the domesticated chili pepper. That region, extending from southern Puebla and northern Oaxaca to southeastern Veracruz, is further south than was previously thought. The region also is different from areas of origin that have been suggested for common bean and corn, which were presumably domesticated in Western Mexico.

The study findings were published online on 4/21/14 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, as part of a series of research papers on plant and animal domestication. For this chili pepper study, the researchers used these two traditional approaches but also considered historical languages, looking for the earliest linguistic evidence that a cultivated chili pepper existed.

They also developed a model for the distribution of related plant species, to predict the areas most environmentally suitable for the chili pepper and its wild ancestors.

The genetic evidence seemed to point more to northeastern Mexico as the chili pepper's area of domestication; however there was collectively more evidence from all four lines of study supporting the central-east region as the area of origin.

This may be the only crop-origins



2014
IMS Board
of Directors:

Rick Slazyk, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP

President/Membership/Website
arcwerks@bellsouth.net

Marta Barber

Executive Vice President/
Programming
imsmiami@yahoo.com

Joaquín J. Rodríguez III, P.E.

Administrative Vice President/
Director of Research
rod44@comcast.net
954-786-8084

Janet Miess, MLS

Secretary/Library Chair/Website
jmiess@gmail.com

Ray Stewart

Treasurer • rstu@bellsouth.net

Susan Bearse

Hospitality
bear6072@bellsouth.net

Patricia Manfredi

pmanfred2003@yahoo.com

Keith Merwin

Website Chair • keith@merwin.com

Alex Morán

kj4cgv@gmail.com

Dr. Anne Stewart

Education Chair

Beth Wein

Hospitality
bethwein@ymail.com

Beth Wiggert

Subscription List
beth2vic@earthlink.net

Gerald Wolfson

Public Relations
gerald.wolfson@att.net

Jim Reed

Newsletter Editor
mayaman@bellsouth.net

research to have ever predicted the probable first cultivators of one of the world's most important food crops. 🏠

Sources: Chili residue: PLoS ONE via Past Horizons, released 12/7/13 at: www.pasthorizonspr.com. Chili domestication: Edited from a University of California press release posted 4/21/14 at: <http://popular-archaeology.com>. Both submitted by Scott Allen.

Re-connecting the Pieces: A Journey Through the Life of Tatiana Proskouriakoff

by Char Solomon

continued from page 1

pleased with what she heard. Although I had no direct experience with the precise measurements and descriptions that were part of the job, she told me she would teach me what I needed to know. Could I possibly start right away? I began the next day.

Over the next several months, sitting across from me at her desk, Tania gradually shared stories of her early childhood in Czarist Russia. She told me about her family's dramatic attempt during World War I to leave Russia on a ship, only to be refused passage when the captain learned that Tania and her sister had scarlet fever. She described soldiers bundling the two girls in blankets and carrying them back across the ice with their mother, while their father, with his orders from the Czar to go to the United States and oversee the production of munitions, proceeded alone to America.

Tania also shared many stories about her later adventures at archaeological sites in the rain forests of Central America. In 1939, for example, she said she crossed mountains in Honduras in a car driven by a "madman" who sped along the treacherous roads at breakneck speed, blind curves,



Tania, undated. Courtesy of Mike Beetem. This book includes previously unpublished photographs from private family collections, as well as archived photographs of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

Tania, age 63, working on jades recovered from the Sacred Cenote at Chichen Itza, in her office at the Peabody Museum, 1974, during the time when Solomon worked for her as a volunteer assistant. Courtesy of President & Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum, Harvard University (N 31681).



hairpin turns, and all. She completed her journey on a mule led by a young boy, who brought her finally to the Carnegie Institution of Washington headquarters in the village of Copan.

Among the archaeologists already partaking of the evening refreshments was the gregarious Gustav Stromsvik, the Norwegian sailor-turned-archaeologist who directed the CIW project. Tania's stories were particularly animated when relating tales of this man who became a lifelong friend, and she often ended by saying quietly, "Ay, Gustavo."

These stories fueled in me an already strong desire to experience the Maya region, which I was able to do during four field seasons as a volunteer assistant on Ian Graham's Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions project. Although in 1976, my life took an entirely different direction, Tania's stories remained with me vividly.

Twenty years later, in North Carolina, where I have lived ever since, raising a family, writing, and teaching music, I began preparing for my first return trip to Yucatan. Along with my family, I planned to take several students to visit nature reserves and archaeological sites, before (as my conservationist friend, Joann Andrews, warned) the area had changed beyond my recognition.

In going through books on the Maya, I frequently came across Tania's name, and so I began to look for more information about her. Little was published, but I soon learned that she had passed away eleven years earlier. This fact, in combination with what we had seen on our recent trip and gentle urging from my husband, fostered the idea of writing about Tania's extraordinary life.

Finding that Harvard University had archived Tania's personal diaries and that permission to read them

had to be obtained from her legal executor, Ian Graham, I realized it was time to reconnect with people from an earlier time in my life. When I reached Ian by phone at his Peabody office, the intervening years seemed only days. He encouraged me to come to Cambridge and gave his consent for me to read through the diaries. Another old friend, Clemency Coggins, one of the people closest to Tania in her later years, also urged me to attempt a biography.

Later that year, I sat down at the table reserved for me at Harvard's Pusey Library and picked up the first of more than seventeen handwritten diaries. These books spanned nearly fifty years of Tania's life. Nervous and excited, I read her first entry. Dated February 13, 1939, it described her feelings as she departed alone from her beloved Philadelphia on a United Fruit Company boat, bound for the coast of Central America. Although she had been to the region on two earlier expeditions, this was the first time she ventured alone. It was the first of many such trips she would eventually take, and as I read through this first diary, I sensed I was in for an amazing adventure. I was right.

Tania's diaries provide an intimate view of a complex mind. In them, she vents her frustrations, voices her fears, and explores her ideas about philosophy, politics, religion, love, and war. She also writes about the colorful personalities of her friends and colleagues over the years. Many, such as Sylvanus Morley

continued on page 6





Lost Maya City of Noh Kah Has Been Mapped

Archaeologists from Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) have confirmed the existence of an ancient Maya urban center covering more than 34 hectares, containing at least six architectural groups, that was previously hidden in the forests of southern Quintana Roo, near the border of northern Belize.

A city eaten by the jungle

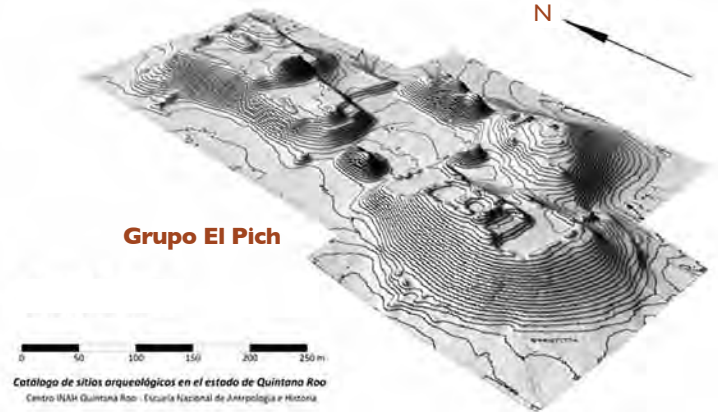
For people who lived in the area, El Paredón, a wall covered with creepers and roots, was clear evidence of an ancient city that had been "eaten" by the jungle.

The researchers could give the site no other name than what the locals called the area; Noh Kah, "Big City". For two years, specialists from the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH) along with archaeologists from the INAH carried out detailed field collection of ceramic material and the topographic survey of the ancient metropolis.

Although it was the Paredón site that alerted INAH to the importance of the site, archaeologist Javier López Camacho, who heads this survey work, explained that this was only a small part of what he described as a "construction boom in the city that took place more than 1,500 years ago, in the Early Classic



A researcher investigates one of the many looter's trenches revealed at Noh Kah. Courtesy of Edgardo Rodríguez/SIPSE.



3D map of "El Pich" group. Courtesy of Proyecto Noh Kah, INAH.

period, between 250 and 600 CE"

"Noh Kah belongs to a very important area that is along the banks of the Hondo River, adjacent to Belize, where monumental sites were unknown, and this will throw new light on what is now known about the 'Dzibanché sites'", noted López Camacho.

Using aerial photography, the team of archaeologists along with a group of students, scoured the jungle for signs of archaeological features, but in the end it was necessary to follow up all the possible sites on the ground to locate and map them using a total station to create topographic plans of each architectural group.

Dynastic powerbase

Noh Kah will provide a great deal of new information about the influence of the Kaan dynasty in what is now southern Quintana Roo, which was first recognized at this site by the presence of the glyph "Snake Head". Hieroglyphic texts suggest this was the location of the Kaan ruler's government during the 5th century CE, before moving to Calakmul in the 6th century.

The form and structure of the mounds and exposed masonry reveal two cultural stages in Noh Kah. The first dated to the Early Classic, is connected to the expansion of government institutions and material culture from Central Petén, in northern Guatemala today.

After the defeat of Tikal by the Calakmul state in 562 CE, the settlement had another period of development; "during the Late Classic, between about 600 and 800 CE, influenced by the province of Río Bec on the Yucatan Peninsula," said the archaeologist.

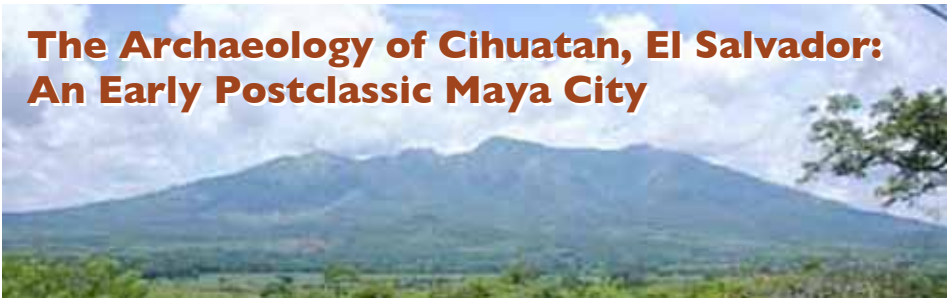


Principal architectural groups mapped at Noh Kah. Courtesy of Proyecto Noh Kah, INAH.

It still remains to define the full extent of Noh Kah. Its distribution pattern matches the pattern of settlement of other sites in southern Quintana Roo; characterized by the separation of the central area of the city into dispersed sub-cities or architectural groups, with pyramids, platforms, ceremonial areas and houses for the elite in order to exercise greater control over the population.

The architectural groups of the ancient city that have been named, El Corozal, El Pich, El Paredón, El Pocito, Hop Na and El Viente, are separated by distances ranging from 0.5 to 3 kilometers. Given the ruggedness of the terrain, the builders had to construct hillside terraces, making them difficult to detect from the air, which is why they remained hidden for centuries. 🏛️

Sources: Original notice with images released 5/12/14 by INAH at www.inah.gob.mx. Condensed and translated version reproduced here released 5/17/14 at www.pasthorizonspr.com. Submitted by Mike Ruggeri and Scott Allen.



The Archaeology of Cihuatán, El Salvador: An Early Postclassic Maya City

Guazapa Volcano as seen from the main pyramid at Cihuatán. A local oral tradition describes how the rough peaks of Guazapa Volcano resemble the silhouette of a sleeping woman. The place name “Cihuatán” is from the Na’huatl language (also spelled “Ciwátan”, with penultimate accent) which was spoken in this area at the time of the Spanish conquest. It may be roughly translated as “Place Next to the Woman”.



ISBN-10: 3659267635

This is a major study of the discovery, history, investigations of, and current situation of a major Maya site in southeastern Mesoamerica, with the first study since 1960 of Early Postclassic ceramics in this important Maya area. It also discusses in illustrated detail the place of Cihuatán in Salvadoran prehistory with a review of contemporary sites of the same cultural tradition.

Cihuatán has long been considered the largest archaeological site in El Salvador, covering about 3 square kilometers

The first major monograph on a Salvadoran site in 40 years has been recently published by Karen Olsen Bruhns and Paul Amaroli B. This is a major study of the discovery, history, investigations of, and current situation of a major Maya site in southeastern

Mesoamerica, with the first study since 1960 of Early Postclassic ceramics in this important Maya area. It also discusses in illustrated detail the place of Cihuatán in Salvadoran prehistory with a review of contemporary sites of the same cultural tradition.

(approximately 1.2 square miles). The city is strategically located on a broad, low hill which dominates the ample valley formed by the Acelhuate and Lempa rivers. The horizon east of Cihuatán is punctuated by the rugged peaks of Guazapa Volcano.

Cihuatán is a large urban site dating to the earliest Postclassic period (ca. 950-1050/1100 CE). Investigations at the site since 1929 have revealed a walled ritual center with a main pyramid and two ballcourts, while investigations in the 1970s and then in the 21st century, directed by the authors, have begun to reveal the Acropolis with its palaces,



Map showing the route of the archaeological trail in the Western Ceremonial Center. Note the two large ballcourts.



Researchers investigate a temazcal (sweat bath), located by the North Ballcourt, that was originally excavated by Antonio Sol in 1929.

temples and associated structures. This recently published book is also available in Spanish and German. 🏰

Source: From articles on the Cihuatán Archaeological Park page on the FUNDAR website at: www.fundar.org. Submitted by Scott Allen.

Fanning the Sacred Flame: Mesoamerican Studies in Honor of H.B. Nicholson

Mesoamerican Worlds: From the Olmec to the Danzantes

This new book contains twenty-two original papers in tribute to H.B. “Nick” Nicholson, a pioneer of Mesoamerican research. His intellectual legacy is recognized by Mesoamerican archaeologists, art historians, ethnohistorians, and ethnographers – students, colleagues, and friends who derived inspiration and encouragement from him throughout their own careers. Each chapter, which presents original



research inspired by Nicholson, pays tribute to the teacher, writer, lecturer, friend, and mentor who became a legend within his own lifetime. Covering all of Mesoamerica across all time periods, contributors include Patricia Anawalt, Anthony Aveni, Richard Hansen, James E. Brady, Ruth Gubler, and more. David Carrasco and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma provided the Foreword and Reminiscence. Eloise Quiñones Keber provides a thorough biographical sketch, detailing Nicholson’s academic and professional journey. The volume is edited by Matthew A. Boxt and Brian Dervin Dillon.

University Press of Colorado; Hardback; 557 pgs. Also available in electronic form. ISBN 1607321602



Fanning the Sacred Flame. Montezuma [sic] offering incense to Quetzalcoatl in his guise as Black Ehecatl (by Keith Henderson, from The Conquest of Mexico by W.H. Prescott). This was one of the illustrations that sparked H.B. Nicholson’s imagination at a young age. Courtesy of the Royal Watercolour Society, London. 🏰

Editor's Corner:

What has the Kerr Maya Vase Database meant to you?

A Shoutout to Maya Enthusiasts Everywhere

Mayanists and anyone into Maya studies were saddened by the news of the passing of Barbara Kerr on April 28, 2014. For over fifty years, Justin and Barbara Kerr have been on a mission to steadfastly document and photograph Precolumbian objects and then make their images freely available on the Internet for scholarly and educational purposes. Their contribution to Maya studies is profound and undeniable. I'm sure, somewhere along the way, you too have been touched by their steadfast generosity, down home wholesomeness, and downright enthusiasm to further all facets of Maya studies and research. All they do and have done is and has been for you. Let's plan a future IMS Explorer as a homage to Justin and Barbara. Let your voice be heard.

Share your fond memories... admiration... words of consolation. Go to [facebook](#), search "Kerr Maya Vase Database," post your comments, then [like](#) the page.



Barbara and Justin Kerr in the living room of their New York loft, December 2013. Photo by Kristine Larsen / Art + Auction.

Re-connecting the Pieces: A Journey Through the Life of Tatiana Proskouriakoff by Char Solomon

continued from page 3

and J. Eric Thompson, are familiar to Maya scholars and amateur enthusiasts alike. Others, such as Anna Shepard, Harry Pollock, and Ledyard Smith, may be less well known outside of Mayanist circles, but they were equally vibrant and important in Tania's life.

I was also able to interview some of Tania's contemporaries, including Gordon Willey and

Tania at age twenty-six with friends at the family's camp at Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire.
Courtesy of Char Solomon.



Ed Shook, who have now passed away. Through them, I experienced firsthand the extraordinary humor, intellect, and integrity that marked so many people close to Tania.

I have communicated with students she influenced in her later years, many now with distinguished careers in Maya studies. They shared stories of meeting with Tania in her Cambridge apartment, in her office, or in the "Smoking Room" in the basement of the Peabody. They related that she was demanding, challenging, and generous with her time, yet could be aloof and even cold, as she was in her relationship with a young woman, whose style and approach to Maya studies were radically different from her own.

Though few in number, Tania's relatives, too, have been a great source of information, graciously providing me with documents, correspondence, and photographs, some dating from nineteenth-century Russia. Their stories helped fill gaps in Tania's earlier life, before she began keeping her diaries.

I feel I have been given a gift in writing this biography. So many of the people I came into contact with have shown a generosity of spirit, sincere warmth and good humor. Through their eyes, and through careful study of Tania's diaries, correspondence, books, and articles, I have come to understand the

remarkable life she led.

In 1972, I was aware that Tatiana Proskouriakoff was one of the first women involved in Mesoamerican archaeology, and though she never suggested to me that this hindered her career, it left me in awe. Over these past years of research, I discovered that, like many women, she frequently wrestled with self-doubt and at times depression, but overcame the debilitating effects of these conditions by finding mentors who challenged her to use her keen mind and to rely on thorough scholarship and investigation.

It was not a direct or easy road, but she found a focus: the search for truth about the ancient Maya. It was the complexity of her journey and her quest for truth – instead of a complacent acceptance of established views – that I found so compelling. 🌟

Char Solomon, a freelance writer, researcher and music teacher, will present at the IMS on June 18; see her program announcement on page 7. This article was originally published in the University of Oklahoma Press Fall 2002 Academic Catalog. Check out Char's website at: www.charsolomon.com



Piedras Negras, 1958. Tania was an architect by trade, but faced with a scarce job market during the Great Depression, took work drawing reconstructions of the structures at Piedras Negras. Later, while examining photographs of the Piedras Negras stelae, she noticed patterns in their dedication dates. The Maya would set up a series of stelae in front of a single temple, one every five years. The first stela in each series always showed a seated figure. Thompson had thought these were gods, but Tania convincingly proved that they were kings and that the different glyphs on the stelae depicted their lives from birth until death.

Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!

June 11, 2014: Ancient Maya Cities Series Presentation:

Uxmal: Jewel of the Puuc

with IMS President **Rick Slazyk**, AIA NCARB, and IMS Director of Research **Joaquín J. Rodríguez III**, PE SECB



Postcard from the "Century of Progress" Chicago World's Fair, 1933/34, entitled "The Nunnery at Uxmal Ruins in Yucatan." The structure was reconstructed in full size by Tulane University for the event.

Puuc means "hilly country," and is the name given to the hills nearby and the predominant style of architecture found here. Puuc decoration, which abounds at Uxmal, is characterized by elaborate horizontal stonework on upper levels.

In this presentation, two of our beloved IMS board members will explore the various architectural styles evident in this magnificent city, as well as the layout of its structures, and the building construction technologies incorporated by the ancient Maya.



A beautiful jaguar posed atop the "Double-Headed Jaguar Throne"; in front of the "Governor's Palace" at Uxmal. A still from a Cirque du Soleil video set to the music "Alegría".

June 18: IMS Presentation:

One Woman's Voice: Tatiana Proskouriakoff's Impact on 20th Century Maya Archaeology

with **Char Solomon** Author/Researcher/Music Teacher

My research as Proskouriakoff's biographer gave me an intimate understanding of the challenges she faced as a woman entering the field of Maya archaeology in 1936. Overcoming periods of self-doubt, she pursued truth and in the course of her 50-year career rose to the pinnacle of her profession.



Reconstruction drawing of Copan by Tatiana (Tania) Proskouriakoff.

In this presentation, I will explore what it was in Proskouriakoff's background that made it possible for her to question leading authorities of her time, eventually changing the direction of Maya research.



Char Solomon, happy at a book signing.

Editor's note: In a review of Solomon's biography of Tania (in *Archaeology*, Jan-Feb 2003), Traci Ardren notes: "A new biography of this amazing scholar is sure to fascinate readers... [it] wins over the reader with a compelling portrait of one of archaeology's most important early personalities."

All meetings are 8 pm • Institute of Maya Studies • Miami Science Museum

New Membership and Renewal Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

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>

- New Renewal
- Benefactor: \$350
- Patron: \$150
- Century: \$100
- Member: \$50



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 more!

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.

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 has found a Maya ballcourt dated to 250-600 CE, 65 miles from Merida. The stones are in the Puuc style. The two walls to the side of the court are oriented north-south. There is a cave nearby which is spiritually significant. The ballcourt may have been created for agricultural ceremonies. Ceramics dating back to 700 BCE have been found there as well.

Ancient Maya Ballcourt Found Near Merida

Over the years, in the state of Yucatan, including the city of Merida, archaeologists have discovered 26 Precolumbian ballcourts, but there has never been a discovery of one made during the construction of a modern school's basketball court. This unusual circumstance occurred at West Technological University (UTP), in the municipality of Maxcanu.

UTP spokesperson Rossana Alpizar Rodríguez, noted that in



Interesting that workers erected a cross during the restoration of the ballcourt. (INAH)

2012, when they first started to clear land for the basketball court, they chose an area covered in grass, at the foot of a *puuc* ("hill" in Maya).

"When we introduced digging machinery, it crashed into a hard stone which was impossible to move. It was a pink stone that seemed ancient, so we immediately called INAH so they would check it out."

Alpizar Rodríguez continued, "The INAH archaeologists who came to the university in order to investigate told us: 'The Maya are way ahead of you, you can't build



The finished and preserved ballcourt. (INAH)

your court because an ancient one already exists here: it's a Maya ballgame court"

INAH archaeologist Eunice Uc added that "the original ballcourt was constructed at the foot of a mountain, semi-buried in an expanse of red earth called *kankab*, near a cave used for ceremonies. Evidence suggests the whole complex was a powerful ritual center." 🏰

Source: Condensed from an article translated from Spanish and released on <http://artdaily.com>. Original report issued by INAH on 3/10/2014 at www.inah.gob.mx. Submitted by Mike Ruggeri.

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

June 11 • 8 pm: *Ancient Maya Cities Series: Uxmal: Jewel of the Puuc* –

A discussion of architectural style and building techniques, with IMS President **Rick Slazyk**, AIA NCARB, and IMS Director of Research **Joaquín Rodríguez III**, PE SECB.

June 18 • 8 pm: *IMS Presentation: One Woman's Voice: Tatiana Proskouriakoff's Impact on 20th Century Maya Archaeology* –

Get to know the woman who changed the direction of Maya research, with her official biographer, **Char Solomon**.

July 9 • 8 pm: *Ancient Maya Cities Series: Ancient Maya Cities with Mural Paintings* –

Beyond the well-known murals of Bonampak and San Bartolo, **Dr. Anne Stewart** reports on many other murals at lesser-known sites.

July 16 • 8 pm: *National Geographic Film: Dawn of the Maya* – This beautiful film explores how the Preclassic Maya lived and ruled before 200 CE.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

June 13-15: *Maya Convention Collapse of the Mundo Maya* –

Theme of the VII World Convention of Maya Archaeology to be held in La Antigua, Guatemala. Presenters include Mary Lou Ridinger, Mark Van Stone, Richard Hansen, Stanley Guenter, Tomás Barrientos, Arthur Demarest, Marcello Canuto, Francisco Estrada-Belli, Christa Schrieber de Lavarreda, and Miguel Orrego Corzo. Get additional info at: info@eventosantiguaguatemala.com

October 24-26: *Meso Conference 5th Annual South-Central Conference on Mesoamerica* –

Sponsored by The Middle American Research Institute, hosted by Tulane University, organized by Dr. Marcello Canuto, Dr. Marc Zender, and Dr. Tatsuya Murakami. Dr. John Watanabe, an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Dartmouth, will be the keynote speaker. Free and open to the public. More info at: www.southcentralmeso.org

Through December 7: *Museum Exhibit*

The Painted City: Art from Teotihuacan – at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. This small exhibition, drawn from the museum's extensive collection of the Art of the Ancient Americas, features painted ceramics that come from the ancient city of Teotihuacan. More info at: www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/

January 13-17, 2015: *UT Maya Meetings Body and Sacrifice: New Interpretations of Ancient Maya Art, Ritual and Performance* – Theme of the 2015 Maya Meetings at The University of Texas at Austin. More details will be available soon on the UT Mesoamerica Center <www.utmesoamerica.org/maya> webpage.

Editor's Tip: *Online all the time Visit the IMS facebook page under the group Institute of Maya Studies* – Join in the fun!



IMS EXPLORER

Join in the **Explorer-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