



IMS EXPLORER

Institute of Maya Studies

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August 20, 2014 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.1.12.7 • 13 Manik' 0 Mol • G4

This digging season, Dr. Kirk D. French and his team from Penn State University, have been excavating an ancient Maya pool located in the Picota Group of Palenque. This project is funded by the National Geographic/Waitt Foundation Grant Program. Kirk started announcing their efforts that include the help of many Maya workers via social media in late May. He welcomes all to follow along at: <http://palenquepoolproject.blogspot.com>

Palenque Pool Project: We Can't Do It Without Them

Posted by Kirk French, 5.31.2014

Much of our effort over the last week was put toward removing the large stones from inside the pool. Most of the stones are from the collapsed terraces that surround the pool on its south, west, and north sides. Many of these stones are manageable in size, ranging from 25–120 lbs.

Then there are the stones that would make most people (i.e. tenderfoot academics) either 1) build a road through the jungle in order to drive in an industrial hydraulic crane, or 2) just give up all together. But seriously, these



Jesus getting loaded up with a large cut stone from the pool's floor.

stones have to be removed if proper consolidation of the feature is to take place. This requires lifting these monoliths up about 4 meters from underwater and then placing them safely on the plaza floor... a total distance of about 10 m.



Carrying stone overview: From left to right: Jesús, Nicolas, Andreas and Eduardo moving stones from the pool's interior.

So who ya' gonna call? The Tzeltal Maya from Naranjo of course!

Hey, if you are in the mood for a dose of emasculation just spend a few hours watching these guys work. It's the complete opposite of, let's say, a trip to Walmart, which tends to provide a little self-image boost. After about 15 minutes you walk out of there thinking, "Hell, I'm not doing so bad after all." This is not how you feel after watching the Maya move mountains for a day. You walk back to your field truck mumbling, "Am I a man, am I a boy, am I even human?"

Some of the workmen only weigh about 140 lbs., but can easily carry a 200 lb. stone on their back while walking out of the water and up a broken staircase in rubber boots that are filled with water!

A few of the stones in the pool were upwards of 500 pounds. They asked for a pulley, some rope, and two more

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IMS Presentation: August 20, 8 pm



Centipedes in the Art and Iconography of the Ancient Maya with Jim Reed

workers (four in all). It took all of us, the four workers and us four gringos (which by the way is the equivalent of five Maya workers), but we did it, see our photo on page 3!

continued on page 3



**Jim Reed,
Editor**

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Mark of the Jaguar: An Adventure in the Land of the Maya

by Mark F. Cheney

The story of how Mark Cheney came to write his historical novel, *Mark of the Jaguar: A Book of Mormon Adventure in the Land of the Maya*, is a convoluted one. After almost twenty years studying the Maya and visits to the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico and Central America, he has written many non-fiction articles for the Institute of Maya Studies' *IMS Explorer*.

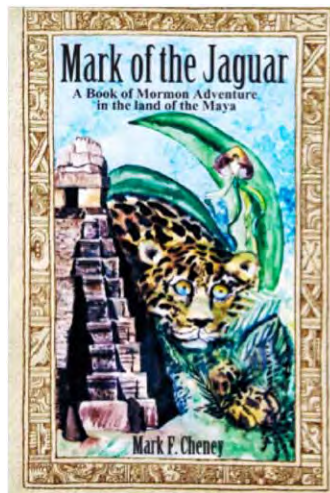
His own interest in possible connections between Mesoamerican studies and *The Book of Mormon*, a book about an ancient people in the Americas that was visited by the resurrected Jesus Christ, who Cheney believes was likely the white and bearded god, Kukulcan, revered by the Maya and other peoples, instilled in him a desire to write the book. The author's daughter, Anika Ferguson, provided some of the more interesting artwork, including the cover art.

The following is a summary of the book:

About 665 CE, the young boy, Yax Kan, miraculously survives an attack by a black jaguar. He later loses his family and is the adopted grandson of his village's shaman. Before the shaman, old Naz-Hani, dies he challenges Yax, then about twenty, to begin a quest to find lost truths about the white and bearded God, Kukulcan, of the Maya (later known to the Aztecs as Quetzacoatl).

Traveling far north to the ancient City of the Gods, Teotihuacan, he thinks he will find the answers he seeks, but meets dangers along the way, and more within this mysterious city. He also meets a girl like no other and a shy romance blooms.

After being threatened with death, he escapes into the southern Mexico area that is now known as Chiapas, and is captured by the *ahau* of Palenque, Kan Balam (ca. 685 CE), who puts Yax's talents as a scribe, shaman and stone carver to the king's own use. Moving



Cover of book, watercolor by Anika Ferguson. ISBN-10: 1496908082

from a slave to a position of respect in the king's court, he completes an imposing task and is given a great gift, a jaguar kitten, and an even greater gift, his freedom!

He continues throughout the Yucatan to the Caribbean coast, where his mission bears fruit with a spiritual experience that will change his life. He goes on to help others with his fully grown jaguar companion at his side. He rejoins the young woman he had met in Teo at Lamanai. Then the mythical crystal skull in Lubaantun is exploited by evil men, and Yax must do what is needed to help those under its spell.

Mark of the Jaguar is a story reminding us that God is mindful of those who earnestly seek Him, in whatever place, or whatever time they may be. It is a tale that reflects the personal beliefs of the author that Jesus Christ appeared on the American continent after his resurrection and ascension in the Old World, as described in the Book of Mormon. 🏰

You can order the book at amazon.com or contact the author at: CheneyM@gmail.com



Drawing by Anika Ferguson of Kan Balam, aka Chan Balam, successor to Pakal of Palenque.



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IMS Explorer photo of the month:

Stanley Paul Guenter on the road again

Stanley has traveled everywhere from the VII Maya Archaeology Symposium in Guatemala City on June 13-15, to Belize, then Tikal; all on his way to work in El Mirador. On June 26, he posted this pic to his facebook page and noted "We had a fun excursion yesterday afternoon to the iguana farm here in San Ignacio, Belize." 🏰





L) All eight (or five) of us pulling a 350-pound stone from the pool using a rope and pulley. C) Kirk Straight, project ceramicist, drawing the staircase. R) Kirk French, attempting to get a better view into the depths of the pool. Follow the action at: <http://palenquepoolproject.blogspot.com>

Palenque Pool Project:

continued from page 1

Now I know for some readers, this is nothing new. You may have spent time in another country and witnessed something similar. I too have seen this before. But I'll tell you what, it will never cease to blow my mind.

Archaeologists throughout much of the world could not carry out their research without the brawn and ingenuity of local workers. The Tzeltal Maya that live in the Palenque area have been the backbone (literally) of every archaeological project that has taken place here since Patrick Walker and John Herbert Caddy arrived in late January of 1840.

We owe them so much more than the meager wages our projects provide. I raise a glass of *pox* (or whatever the local drink is) to the workers around the globe



Stela in the Picota Group, just beyond the pool. All photos courtesy of Kirk French.

Kirk French investigating one of the aqueducts.

who make archaeology happen. We couldn't do it without you.

Water, water, everywhere

Posted by Reed Goodman, 5.27.2014

A first principle of archaeology is that research designs can and will change. Despite preparations for a dry excavation, including the use of a gas powered water pump, we've found ourselves waist deep in Palenqueña water. Our Project Leader, Kirk French, quickly realized that the ancient pool was built into bedrock, its limestone basin dipping beneath the water table. When the pool's depth leveled off soon into draining, the team was quickly disabused of illusions for neatly defined strata, and was encouraged to look for creative solutions.

We decided that the best possible approach involved the feature's division into neatly defined sections, with wet screening of removed sediment for artifact recovery. This required that we shift gears from more traditional dry-land archaeology, to a type of underwater work (well half underwater, anyway). And this was most welcomed: shaded by dense jungle and cooled with spring water, the change in methods has offered a welcome respite from unrelenting humidity in the tropical environment.

Between donning bathing suits and transporting frogs from one water source to another, the excavation has proved to be unique in every way, with each moment presenting



a new learning experience. To begin with, we knew from earlier studies that the ancient Maya of Palenque were ingenious hydrological engineers. Since the beginnings of habitation, water was an abundant resource, even in excess at certain times of the year.

This ecological fact surely played into the site's ancient name, *Lakamhá*, or "Big Water." And as a result, the Palenqueños had to devise a means to control runoff during the rainy season, diverting streams into underground aqueducts that ran beneath plaza floors, thereby practicing flood control and, significantly, expanding inhabitable space (on what was then, and remains today, a relatively restricted escarpment).

The exact timing and degree of Palenque's waterworks, however, remain poorly understood, though our work is already shedding light in this important area of research. 🏹

Kirk D. French wants to let everyone know that the Palenque Pool Project is underway. For more information visit:

<http://palenquepoolproject.blogspot.com>,

<https://www.facebook.com/palenquepoolproject?fref=nf>,

<https://twitter.com/PalenquePool>, and

<http://instagram.com/palenquepool>



Centipedes in the Art and Iconography of the Ancient Maya by Jim Reed

In 2008, I led a group of Maya enthusiasts on an adventure to Tikal by way of Belize. At Cahal Pech, I observed many red and black centipedes crawling around the open excavation pits that were left by Mat Saunder's high school group from the American Foreign Academic Research program. I wondered if centipedes were important to the ancient Maya. That was my first inspiration, and I'll designate here as "Clue 1".

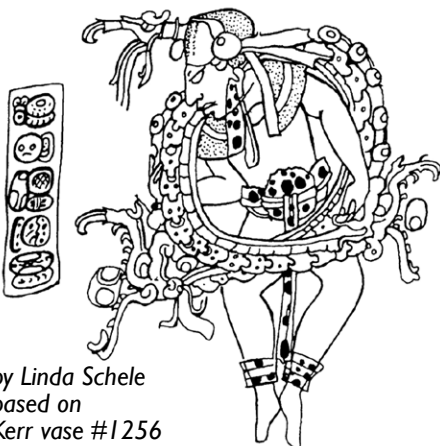
I intensified my research over the past 2-1/2 years and came across many interesting clues along the way,

Centipedes are members of the *Chilopoda* family, arthropods with bodies made up of a chain of flattened segments, modified to form legs. Some 2,500 species exist. The giant centipede can grow to twelve inches and may live as long as ten years. Although no giant centipedes have been observed and then documented in the Maya area for a few decades, they definitely were alive and well during ancient times.



Clues along my path:

The second clue came when I realized the Maya word for centipede was *chapat*. I did a Google search and came across a very interesting photo of some people posing in front of the entrance to a cave that looked like a cave I visited in the Maya Mountains



by Linda Schele
based on
Kerr vase #1256

Clue 20: Nikolai Grube describes this scene as a human dancing with the sak bak nah *chapat* "white bone house centipede".



Clue 1: Red and black; the type of centipede I encountered in the excavations at Cahal Pech.

of Belize back in the 70s. It was Clue 3, because, as the Maya gods would have it, the name of the cave is Actun Chapat!

I then researched what Maya scholars have published about centipedes and came up with clues 4 through 51.

Representations of centipedes have appeared on ceramics and carved in stone all over Mesoamerica since the Early Preclassic period and in the hieroglyphic inscriptions since the Preclassic. Deities wear centipede headdresses on some of the most important vases depicting Maya gods in the Kerr Maya Vase Database.

I am amazed by how important centipedes were to the ancient Maya.



Clue 2: In Yucatek and Chorti Maya, the word for centipede is *chapat*.

CHAPAT (*chapat*) (Tnn) > n.
"centipede"

<> (JM) Represents the head of a monstrous centipede.

(CH) > CHAPAT (*chapa[h]t*)
chapaht ~ n. "centipede"

<> Represents the skeletal head of a supernatural centipede.

Source: From the archives of the works of John Montgomery at <http://research.famsi.org/montgomery/dictionary>



Clue 3: Folks hanging out in front of the way-out-of-the-way Actun Chapat cave.

Look for clue 52 in my program announcement on page 7.

A CELEBRATION
OF GEORGE

GEORGE STUART
1935 - 2014

Please join us on Saturday, August 16, 2014, at 4 pm
for an afternoon celebrating George,
with good food, great music and fond memories.
Boundary End Farm, One Walker Creek Road
Barnardville, North Carolina
Kindly RSVP after August 1, to: kawil@mac.com



The ancient site of Xno'ha may provide another window on the structure of Maya society. Researchers are now uncovering evidence that will shed light on the lifeways of Maya elites, the class of people who lived within that rung of society between the kings and royal households and the commoners of ancient Maya civilization.

Archaeological Team Uncovers Elite Residential Complex

For four weeks in July, 2013, a team of archaeologists, students and volunteers under the auspices of the Maya Research Program, based at the University of Texas in Tyler, excavated the remains of what is considered to be an elite residential complex or compound at the site of Xno'ha in northwestern Belize. In addition to architectural features, they discovered, a cache of purposefully positioned Late Preclassic (400 BCE–200 CE) ceramic vessels, and an Early Classic (200–600 CE) tomb.

Under the direction of site supervisor Alexander Parmington, excavators focused on a set of structures designated “Patio Group 78”. Xno'ha Group 78 is described as a series of range structures, which are large, vaulted and multi-roomed. Patio groups are usually associated with individuals and families with elite status.

“The approach undertaken was to first locate the patio surface and baseline of two structures before

broader stripping of the associated architecture,” said Parmington. “Not only did the excavations reveal the final phases of the patio’s architecture, a large cache of nine Sierra Red vessels dating typologically to the Late Preclassic period (300 BCE–250 CE) were recovered below the Patio’s exterior floor. Four of the vessels were stacked in a lip-to-lip configuration with one vessel positioned immediately north and one south of the stack. Phytolith analysis of the sediments contained within the vessels determined the presence of sponge spicules – indicating the vessel contained marine sponges.”

In addition to the cache, an Early Classic tomb was recovered, containing two marine shells and

Overhead view of portion of excavated elite residential area at Xno'ha. Courtesy Maya Research Program.



The cache restored to its appearance as originally configured in a lip-to-lip configuration. Courtesy Maya Research Program.

a tubular jade bead. Xno'ha was first identified in 1990 and then surveyed, mapped, and partially excavated between 2002 and 2004 before the current excavation series were initiated. Excavation results suggest that the site was occupied from the Late Preclassic to the Terminal Classic period (300 BCE–925 CE). Researchers hope future excavation and research will shed light on any relationships with nearby La Milpa. 🏛️

More information about the programs of the Maya Research Program (MRP) can be found at www.mayaresearchprogram.org/.



New App: “Tulum: Be Your Own Guide”

If you could have the single most complete source of information about the ancient Maya city of Tulum for just 99 cents, would you get it? If you answered yes, then you should download this app for iPhone and iPad.

This app includes descriptions, photos, and drawings for each and every building at Tulum, including many that are found in no other published source of information. The site’s overall chronology and

history of archaeological investigation are also included. The information is available in text or audio file formats, narrated by the app’s creator, Dr. Ed Barnhart.

If you choose to visit the site of Tulum with this app, it becomes a gps enabled, self-guiding tour tool. The feature “What is That?” allows you to point your mobile device at any building to learn more about it. The feature “Take Me There” allows you to choose any building at the site from a list and be guided there. And because the app’s map is geo-coded it doesn’t use a cent in data charges.

“Tulum: Be Your Own Guide” is available through the iTunes Appstore. Either go directly through your own iTunes account, or follow this link: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tulum-be-your-own-guide/id731412870?mt=8> 🏛️

Barnhart Comments on the Palenque Pool Project:

On June 1, 2014, Ed Barnhart @mayaexploration.org wrote:

“Way to go Dr. French and company! We’ve been dreaming of excavating that pool since we found it back in 1999 during the Palenque Mapping Project. I couldn’t be more proud of my once student turned professor! I’ll bet you a bottle of posh that in the construction fill you’re going to find ceramics from the earliest times of Palenque’s dynasty. But I’m guessing you wouldn’t take that bet, would you? Good luck out there amigos!”

Regards, Ed 🏛️

Dr. Edwin Barnhart
Director,
Maya Exploration Center

Construction at Lubaantun

By Joaquín J. Rodríguez III, PE, SECB

Deep in Southern Belize lies the site of Lubaantun (Maya for “place of the fallen stones”). The city was at its peak during the Maya Classic era, from about 730 to 890 CE. After this period, the city seems to have been deserted.

The architecture of the site differs from most typical Maya classical lowland sites of this period. Its construction is rare in that the relatively small stones used for construction are laid “dry”. Each stone was measured and cut to precisely fit next to the opposing stone and is not held in place by any type of mortar. As time has passed, and the ground has shifted, the stones have shifted and fallen.

In the April 2014 *IMS Explorer*, we reported on “Construction at Lamanai”, where small, modern brick-sized stones well laid in mortar had been very successfully used in very stable construction.

The stones at Lubaantun are a little larger, about the size of a modern concrete block, but used with no binder between them. Dry masonry is usually megalithic, that is, of very large stones. Support depends on the large weight of the blocks to keep them in place. Most



Mortarless construction (detail).

early construction is of this type.

The use of mortar binding in most civilizations is an innovation that allows the use of smaller stones that speed up construction. To find small stones used without mortar is rare indeed. This explains the bad condition that most buildings at this site are in. In fact some stone steps are so unstable that it is dangerous to walk on them.

Some blocks were cut slightly wedge-shaped; they hoped the shape would help with stability, but this was a minor assistance. The name Lubaantun is modern but very apt: “place of the fallen stones” indeed.

From an engineering point of view, Lubaantun must be regarded as an experiment that failed.

The TMBA Animation Studio website notes that Lubaantun is unique from other archaeological sites of this period based on a number of factors. The most significant factor is the number of small ceramic artifacts that have been found at the site. These detailed objects are believed to have been charmstones or sacred ritualistic relics.

Based on the volume of whistle figurines and



Lubaantun is 26 miles northwest from Punta Gorda, in the Belize District of Toledo, and is 2 miles from the village of San Pedro, District of Columbia. The city sits 200 feet above sea level, on a ridge, overlooking the Columbia River Valley. The city was comprised of five large plazas, eleven large towers and three ballcourts. 3-D reconstruction of Lubaantun courtesy of TMBA Inc.



The structures of the city are built from stone blocks that were not set with mortar. The blocks were primarily black slate that was common to the area, instead of limestone. Several of the constructions have what is called “in and out” masonry, in which every second descending level protrudes slightly from the one beneath it. The corners of the pyramids were all rounded and did not have stone structures at the top. It is assumed that at the top of each pyramid were constructions that were made from perishable materials, like reeds and wood.

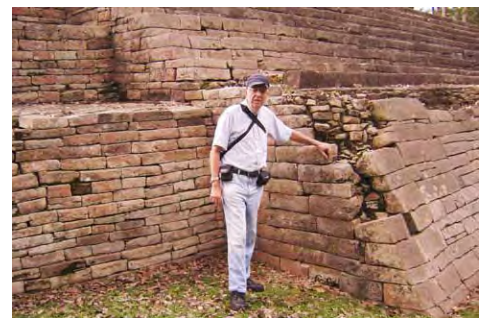
3-D reconstruction of Lubaantun courtesy of TMBA Inc.



Raymond E. Merwin at Rio Grande Ruins, now called Lubaantun. At the start of the 20th century, inhabitants of various Kekchi and Mopan Maya villages in the area mentioned the large ruins to inhabitants of Punta Gorda. Dr. Thomas Gann came to investigate the site in 1903, and published two reports about the site in 1905. The next expedition was led by Raymond E. Merwin (REM) of Harvard University's Peabody Museum in 1915. He cleared the site of vegetation, made a more detailed map, took measurements and photographs, and made minor excavations. Of note, Merwin discovered one of the site's three ballcourts, one that had stone markers with hieroglyphic texts and depictions of the ballgame.

Peabody Museum, No. 2004-24-10000; submitted

by our webmaster Keith Merwin (REM's nephew).



IMS Director of Research Joaquín J. Rodríguez assists a single mortarless stone from falling.

several burial tombs that were discovered at the site it is believed that Lubaantun was an administrative, religious, political, and commercial center. The site was used primarily for occasional festivals, religious ceremonies and ballgames.

Sources: Combined from original texts and images by Joaquín Rodríguez and texts and 3-D reconstruction images by TMBA Inc. See videos of their 3D artistry at: www.tmba.tv/3d-animation/city-lubaantun/

Institute of Maya Studies Line-up of Presentations!

August 13, 2014: Ancient Maya Cities Series Presentation:



El Rey (The King). This Maya site in Cancun was named after a stone sculpture that was discovered in the site that depicts a head with a crown. It features a series of religious temples, columns and platforms of the Postclassic era.

Tulum and Coastal Cities with Ray Stewart

The coast of the Yucatan peninsula played an important economic, political and communication role in ancient Maya history, especially in the Postclassic period. Evidence of this importance are the numerous Maya ruins that dot the famous Maya Riviera Coast of the Mexican state of Quintana Roo, facing the Caribbean Sea.



Another important Maya site, El Meco, is also near Cancun. It has one of the tallest pyramids (13 meters high) in the Cancun area called The Castle, which is believed to have been a symbol of commerce between the mainland and Isla Mujeres. El Meco features 14 structures that date back to 300–600 CE.

August 20 • 8 pm
IMS Presentation:

with IMS Explorer newsletter editor
Jim Reed

Centipedes in the Art and Iconography of the Ancient Maya

Perhaps the most important clue:

Clue 52:

Research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (9.30.13) reports that a peptide found in centipede venom could prove more powerful than morphine in treating all types of pain, including pain caused by nerve damage, cancer and surgery.

Over the past decade, Maya scholars have begun to agree that a lot of the imagery on Maya ceramics and stone sculpture that was originally thought to be snake imagery is actually centipede imagery. Mayanists Nikolai Grube, Karl Taube, Erik Boot, Michael Grofe and Nicholas Hellmuth have led the way in scholarly research and their insights have helped to put centipedes in their proper light.

As it turns out, centipedes are connected to the Sun, and assist the Sun as it enters and exits caves on its nocturnal journeys through the Underworld.

On Kerr vase #5420, the creature tied with a snake is a version of the centipede *chapat*, here in skeletal form.



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

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The Ancient Maya and Virtual Worlds: Different Perspectives on Material Meanings

We take it for granted that our lives, and our beliefs, are intrinsically different from cultures of the past. They built pyramids and temples, we play on Facebook and build virtual lives.

A new study from the University of Cincinnati, however, shows that the ancient Maya might just have been big fans of Facebook. They believed that material objects, like a courtier's mirror or a sculptor's carving tool, could be imbued with part of the owner's identity.

They considered such objects to be alive, naming them, talking to them, and taking them to special events.

UC's assistant professor Sarah Jackson claims that such behavior isn't much different than today's selfie-snapping culture where a Facebook profile

can become as important to a person's identity as his or her real-world interactions.

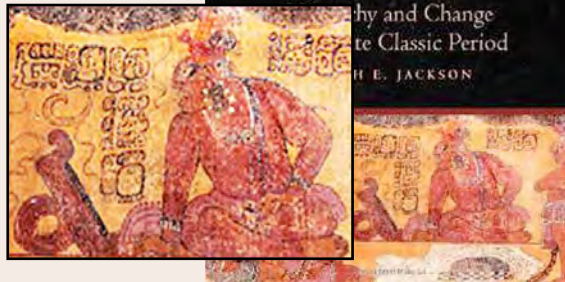
"This relates to a lot of things that people are feeling out right now about virtual realities and dealing with computers and social lives online," said Jackson, an anthropological archaeologist.

"These things start to occupy this uncomfortable space where we question, 'Is it real, or is it not real?' I look at the Maya context and consider, 'How different is that from some of the concerns we have now?' There are some parallels in terms of preoccupation with roles that objects play and how attached we are to things."

Authored by anthropologist

The cover of Sarah Jackson's book includes an image of what appears to be a Maya ruler talking with a mirror.

Credit: Justin Kerr.



Sarah E. Jackson and richly illustrated with drawings, photographs and maps, *Politics of the Maya Court* uses hieroglyphic and iconographic evidence to explore the composition and social significance of royal courts in the Late Classic period (600–900 CE), with a special emphasis on the role of courtly elites.

Source: The University of Cincinnati. Posted at: <http://phys.org> and at: www.redorbit.com.

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

August 13 • 8 pm: *Ancient Maya Cities Series: Tulum and Coastal Cities* – A look at mostly Postclassic Coastal Maya cities reveals much more than expected, with IMS' own **Ray Stewart**.

August 20 • 8 pm: *IMS Presentation: Centipedes in the Art and Iconography of the Ancient Maya* – A personal account of 2-1/2 years of research into why centipedes were so important to the ancient Maya, with *IMS Explorer* editor **Jim Reed**.

Sept. 10 • 8 pm: *IMS Explorer Session: San Miguelito and Its New Museum in Cancun* – **Ray Stewart** explores the newly opened site of San Miguelito that sits next to Mexico's new \$15M Museo Maya de Cancun.

Sept. 17 • 8 pm: *IMS Presentation: Early E-Groups and the Development of the Maya Calendar* – Solar observations were the key, with **Dr. Susan Milbrath** of the University of Florida.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

September 20: *PCSWDC Symposium Land Without Borders: Cultural Interaction Between the Pre-Hispanic Southwest and Mesoamerica* – Theme of the Symposium of The Pre-Columbian Society of Washington, D.C. This symposium will re-examine the relationship between the culture areas of the Southwest and Mesoamerica, with their acknowledged differences and many important similarities. For details and registration information, see the Pre-Columbian Society website at www.pcswdc.org

September 25–28: *M@TP Conference 8th Annual Maya at the Playa Conference* – For eight years, it has been our honor and privilege to host some of the world's leading minds in the field of Maya studies as well as some of the greatest students, enthusiasts, and supporters of the science. Dr. Peter Mathews will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Presenters include Elaine Schele, David Schele, Francisco Estrada-Belli, Marc Zender, Marcello Canuto and IMS's own Keith Merwin and artist Steve Radzi. To be held in Flagler Beach, FL. Get more info at: www.mayaatthep Playa.com

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 Mesoamerica and Ancient America Lectures, Conferences and Exhibits* – Check out Mike Ruggeri's comprehensive list of upcoming events. Be sure to bookmark his site at this tiny URL: <http://bit.ly/11aKJzE>



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