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December 10, 2014 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.1.17.19 • 8 Kawak 12 Mak • G8

This new study of gestational imagery on ancient Olmec monuments and objects brings to light Mesoamerica's earliest creation narrative and traces its evolution into one of the enduring themes of Mesoamerican ritual life and art.

Pre-Columbian Studies suggested reading



Reconsidering Olmec Visual Culture: The Unborn, Women, and Creation by Carolyn E. Tate

From University of Texas Press Release:

Recently, scholars of Olmec visual culture have identified symbols for umbilical cords, bundles, and cave-wombs, as well as a significant number of women portrayed on monuments and as figurines. In this groundbreaking study, Carolyn Tate demonstrates that these subjects were part of a major emphasis on gestational imagery in Formative Period Mesoamerica.

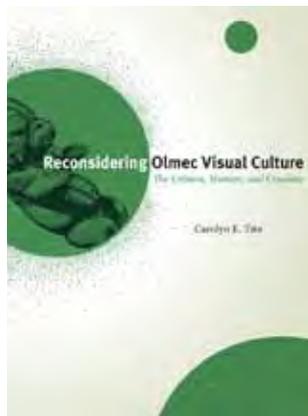
In *Reconsidering Olmec Visual Culture*, Tate identifies the presence of women, human embryos, and fetuses in monuments and portable objects dating from

1400 to 400 BCE and originating throughout much of Mesoamerica. This highly original study sheds new light on the prominent roles that women and gestational beings played in Early Formative societies, revealing female shamanic practices,

the generative concepts that motivated caching and bundling, and the expression of feminine knowledge in the 260-day cycle and related divinatory and ritual activities.

The book is the result of the first study that situates the unique hollow babies of Formative Mesoamerica within the context of prominent females and the prevalent imagery of gestation and birth. It is also the first major art historical study of La Venta and the first to identify Mesoamerica's earliest creation narrative. It provides a more nuanced understanding of how later societies, including Teotihuacan and West Mexico, as well as the Maya, either rejected certain Formative Period visual forms, rituals, social roles, and concepts or adopted and transformed them into the enduring themes of Mesoamerican symbol systems.

"In the Hill of the Woman (to'oxykyopk) there was a cave where the people used to put their ear of maize.



University of Texas Press – Austin, 2012, 359 pages. ISBN: 978-0-292-72852-3. Also available as an e-book.



Olmec fetus sculpture with hands grasping a helmeted head, like the colossal heads of La Venta.

Metropolitan Museum of Art. Drawing by Carolyn Tate.

IMS Presentation: December 10, 8 pm



IMS Annual Business Meeting and December Birthday Party

In that place is where they found two little white eggs and carried them to the house." These sentences from Walter Miller's book *Cuentos Mixes* begin the story of Kondoy, the Mixe leader who was born from an egg.

continued on page 3



Jim Reed,
Editor

The research of multiple Maya Exploration Center (MEC) scholars is featured in a brand new edited volume about Maya archaeoastronomy. *Archaeoastronomy and the Maya* was published by Oxbow Books and is edited by Gerardo Aldana y Villalobos and Dr. Edwin L. Barnhart.

Archaeoastronomy and the Maya

Archaeoastronomy and the Maya illustrates archaeoastronomical approaches to ancient Maya cultural production. The book is contextualized through a history of archaeoastronomical investigations into Maya sites, originating in the 19th century discovery of astronomical tables within hieroglyphic books.

Early 20th century archaeological excavations revealed inscriptions carved into stone that also preserved astronomical records, along with architecture that was built to reflect astronomical orientations. These materials provided the basis of a growing professionalized archaeoastronomy, blossoming in the 1970s and expanding into recent years.

The chapters in the book exemplify the advances made in the field during the early 21st century as well as the on-going diversity of approaches, presenting new perspectives and discoveries in ancient Maya astronomy that result from recent studies of architectural alignments, codices, epigraphy, iconography, ethnography, and calendrics.

More than just investigations of esoteric ancient sciences, studies

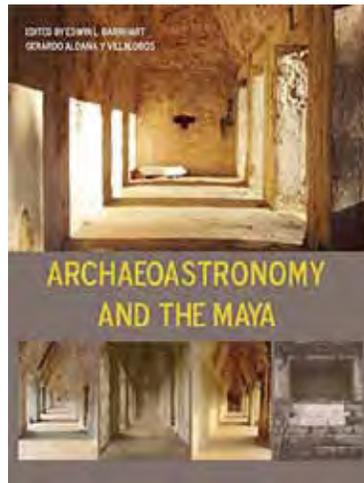
Paperback: 176 pages
 Publisher: Oxbow Books
 (July 31, 2014)
 ISBN-10: 1782976434
 ISBN-13: 978-1782976431
 Dimensions:
 10.7 x 8.4 x 0.4 inches

of ancient Maya astronomy have profoundly aided our understanding of Maya worldviews. Concepts of time and space, meanings encoded in religious art, intentions underlying architectural alignments, and even methods of political legitimization are all illuminated through the study of Maya astronomy.

Chapter 1 of the volume was authored by former MEC Board Member Harold Green and explains his ground-breaking field work on solar movements as observed along the eastern horizon from Chocoma in the Guatemalan highlands. Chapter 3 updates the MEC team's research on how Palenque's Temple of the Sun is indeed a Sun temple, functioning as an annual solar clock. In Chapter 5, Alonso Mendez and Carol Karasik explain their still on-going studies of the importance of zenith and nadir passages at Palenque. The book's final chapter was authored by MEC's Michael Grofe and tackles some outstanding issues in the still enigmatic Maya lunar series.

In addition to MEC scholars, some other big names in Maya archaeoastronomy made contributions. Above and beyond being co-editor of the volume, Gerardo Aldana y Villalobos penned the introduction, the epilogue, and Chapter 4 on the oracular nature of the Dresden Codex Venus Pages. Susan Milbrath, author of the celebrated book *Star Gods of the Maya*, contributed a discussion of Venus and its importance in the wider context of Mesoamerica. Ivan Šprajc – recently famous in the international press for his discovery of unknown Maya cities in Campeche – wrote Chapter 2. In that chapter, he discusses some of the other Maya cities he's found in the jungles of Campeche and the repeated patterns of what he terms "Teotihuacan architectural alignments" he documented within them.

Overall, the volume is a dynamic set of studies that highlight some of the best recent



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advances in Maya archaeoastronomy.

Source: Article originally published in *ArchaeoMaya*, the Fall 2014 newsletter of the Maya Exploration Center, available at: http://mayaexploration.org/pdf/mec_newsletter_fall2014.pdf. Go there and click on the "Amazon Affiliates" portal link on the first page to order the book. Submitted by Dr. Edwin Barnhart. 🏠



Maya Exploration Center also has the 2015 edition of their *Maya Calendar* available. It includes the symbols representing the day name in the Maya Sacred and Solar calendars for every day of the year; the Long Count for the first day of every month; and factoids about important dates in Maya history. Proceeds support Maya Exploration Center, a non-profit research and education center. Order the 2015 *Maya calendar*

at: www.mayan-calendar.com

Reconsidering Olmec Visual Culture: The Unborn, Women, and Creation by Carolyn E. Tate

continued from page 1

These themes – caves, women, transformation, and the co-identity of maize and humans – pervade this book on the visual culture of Formative period Mesoamerica.

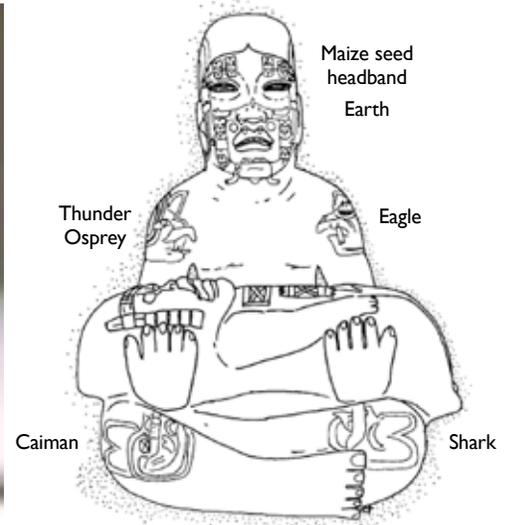
At the heart of the book is an investigation into the stories that early Mesoamerican peoples told to explain their lives and world. Stories can bundle together many elements of knowledge. A narrative might contain lessons based on generations of experience confronting a problem, and information about places, resources, processes, and social inequalities. Stories also describe the characters' emotional responses to events and situations – and information, emotions, and experience are constituents of knowledge.

But the stories this book explores are especially hard to hear because they were not recorded in words, but in three-dimensional shapes enhanced with two-dimensional symbols. To grasp them we must

acknowledge that humans “think with things”.

This is an interpretive, humanistic inquiry rather than a historical or scientific one. Tate's interest has been in how Formative period symbols and shapes communicated – and contributed to the formulation of – Mesoamerican ways of knowing.

She writes: “As ethnographers Martin Prechtel and Robert Carlsen (1988:123) have written about the Maya of Santiago Atitlan, ‘To know something is not to be aware of the minute details of that thing but instead is to understand how that thing fits into an ever-expanding system... whose primary function is the regeneration and continuation of time and of the world.’ I think



Left: Olmec jadeite. Standing figure holding supernatural effigy. Height: 21.9 cm. Published in *The Olmec World, Ritual and Rulership*, pg. 160, The Brooklyn Museum. Right: The Las Limas figure, found in 1965. Height: 55 cm. Museo de Arqueología, Jalapa, Mexico. Drawing by Carolyn Tate.

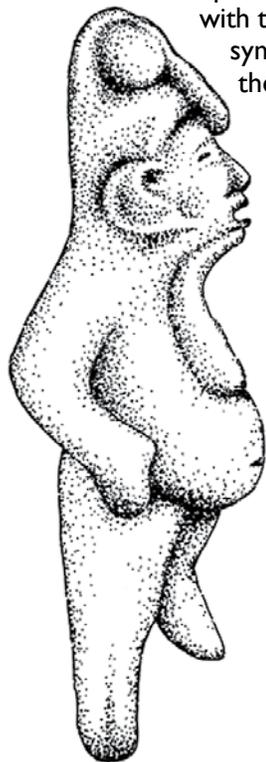


Detail from the Codex Borbonicus of the creator gods. Drawing by Carolyn Tate.

it is our task as scholars of the humanities to pay attention to the communicative efforts of past civilizations, to their myths and narratives, so that we can better scrutinize our stories about ourselves.”

See more at: <http://utpress.utexas.edu/index.php/books/tatrec>

Carolyn E. Tate is Professor of Art History at Texas Tech University and former Associate Curator of Pre-Columbian Art at the Dallas Museum of Art. She co-curated the exhibitions *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership* at the Art Museum, Princeton University, and *Olmec Art of Ancient Mexico* at the National Gallery of Art.



L) La Venta figurine of pregnant woman. Museo del Sitio, La Venta. Drawing by Paula Yeager.
 C) Embryo riding a jaguar. Height: 8.9 cm. Private collection. Drawing by Corey Escoto.
 R) The fetus sculpture reassembled by Covarrubias and Rivera between 1936 and 1944. Collection of the Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico. Drawing by Carolyn Tate.



IMS Program and Speaker Recap for 2014



**Offering educative public programs
on Mesoamerican studies
with a focus on the Maya.**



Francisco Estrada-Belli



Erin L. Sears



George Fery



Char Soloman



Keith Merwin



Stanley Paul Guenter

January 8:

Behind the Scenes at Chichen Itza
with Ray Stewart

January 15:

**Youths and Ancients: Pre-collegiate
Research in the Maya World**
with C. Mathew Saunders

February 12:

Palenque and Its Tombs with George Fery

February 19:

Taíno and Maya: Parallel Cultures
with Peter Barratt

March 12:

**Copan and Its Recorded History:
What Do the Hieroglyphs Reveal?**
with Marta Barber

March 19:

**In Gar We Trust: Fish Imagery in
Ancient Maya Kingship and Cosmology**
with Dr. Kevin J. Johnston

April 9:

Tikal: A Style All Its Own
with IMS President Rick Slazyk

April 16:

**On the Trail of the Snake Kings:
Archaeology and Epigraphy in the
Mirador Basin** with Dr. Stanley Guenter

May 11:

Calakmul: A Walking Tour
with Janet Miess, MLS

May 21:

**Fifty Shades of Grey
and Orange: Late Classic
Maya Ceramics Figurines** with Erin L. Sears

June 11:

Uxmal: Jewel of the Puuc
with IMS President Rick Slazyk and IMS
Director of Research Joaquín J. Rodríguez III

June 18:

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

July 9:

Ancient Maya Cities with Mural Paintings
with Dr. Anne Stewart

July 16:

Dawn of the Maya A National Geographic Film

August 13:

Tulum and Coastal Cities with Ray Stewart

August 20:

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

September 10:

**San Miguelito and Its New Museum
in Cancun** with Ray Stewart

September 17:

**Early E-Groups and the Development
of the Maya Calendar** with Dr. Susan Milbrath

October 8:

On the Road with IMS Members
with Marta Barber

October 15:

**The Holmul Kingdom and the Rise of
a Maya Empire** with Dr. Francisco Estrada-Belli

November 12:

**Costa Rica and Its Connections
to Mesoamerican Archaeology**
with Dr. Anne Stewart

November 19:

The IMS Stelae
with Keith Merwin, IMS Webmaster

December 10:

**IMS Annual Business Meeting
and December Birthday Party**



Part II: Recounting the Story of the IMS Stelae

by **Keith Merwin**, IMS Webmaster

continued from page 3 of the November 2014 IMS Explorer

At the request of the Museum, the IMS formed a committee to develop a design for the exhibit, the Maya Plaza. This committee was headed by Elayne Kaplan and included Members of the IMS Board, Museum officials and the Consul General of Guatemala.

The Exhibit Committee decided on a subscription series of three lectures to raise funds for the Maya Plaza. All three lectures were held at the First Presbyterian Church of Miami. The first was on November 10, 1972, and featured Michael Coe speaking on the Maya Underworld.

The second lecture was held on December 15 and had Frederick Dockstader, Director of the American Indian Museum, speaking on polychrome pottery from Copan. The third lecture took place on January 17, 1973 and featured Gordon Ekholm, Curator at American Museum of Natural History, speaking on Maya Civilization in World Perspectives.

The last stela, Stela 24 from Naranjo, finally arrived on June 14, 1973. It would take a team of people from the museum and IMS supervised by representatives of the Guatemalan government six months to reassemble the eight pieces of stone totaling four tons into a displayable item.

The dedication of Stela 24 was held on January 30, 1974 with



Close up of the fragments of Piedras Negras Stela 3. From a slide by Hal Ball.

a formal dinner. The *Miami Herald* covered the event through Grace Wing Bohne's society column. She opened with "At first glance, Stela 24 looks like a hunk of weathered rock, six feet high and three feet wide, but the Museum of Science made it a bridge between the Americas at their first on-location seated dinner."

After telling us that 165 evening-garbed guests were present, we learned that "But the No. 1 triumph was the dinner setting. The everyday denizens of Gallery A were whisked behind the scenes (the huge grizzly b'ar ended up in the kitchen amid the caterer's staff)." And that "The stela somehow seemed alive in its flood-lighted corner filled with live jungle greenery. A long-tailed, dark green quetzal, the shy bird and national emblem of Guatemala, perches on one corner of the stone. Visitors will continue to find Stela 24, on loan from the Guatemalan government, in Gallery A until the Museum's Maya Plaza is completed."

The dedication was only the first part of this event. The following day, the IMS and the Museum of Science hosted a two-day symposium



Dedication Ceremony for Naranjo Stela 24. Held in Gallery A on January 30, 1974. Image from Museum of Science Annual Report 1973-1974.



L) Photograph of Naranjo Stela 24 by Teobert Maler from 1905, ©President and Fellows of Harvard College. R) Naranjo Stela 24 on display in National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Guatemala City. Photo by Rick Slazyk.



held in the auditorium of the Museum. The title of the symposium was "The Rise and Fall of the Maya Culture and Its Present Day Parallels" and was moderated by Dr. Michael Coe. He was joined by Dr. Munro S. Edmonson, Professor of Anthropology, Tulane University; Dr. Hugh Popenoe, Director, Center for Tropical Agriculture, University of Florida; and Edwin M. Shook, Archaeologist, Mayanist.

The actual dedication and opening of the Maya Plaza exhibit wouldn't occur until October 15, 1975. Not all three stelae were present. But, that is a story for another time.

Look for this article and its accompanying historic IMS photos on the IMS website.

Dedicated to our cherished Mayanists who have entered on the road to Xibalba this year. . .



Barbara Kerr
(April)



Dr. Brian M. Stross
(April)



George E. Stuart
(June)



Edward B. Kurjack
(August)

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L) Fig. 1: Top mask of four-mask stack over center doorway of north building of the Nunnery, Uxmal. Note flowered headband unique in Nunnery quadrangle masks. C) Fig. 2: Temple atop Great Pyramid in Uxmal. Note cigar-like shaft between eye and snout, and the face emerging from triangular mouth. Atypical mask tops a three-mask stack. R) Fig. 3: Unusual mask on upper façade over doorway on building in Xkichmook, Yucatan. Note apparent bee hive iconography below each ear block. All photos by John Spoolman.

Stone Masks of the Maya by John Spoolman

The timeless stares of mysterious stone masks gaze down upon visitors to ancient Maya ruins all over Mexico's northern Yucatan. Popularly known as the Maya rain god Chac (or Chaac or Chahk), they are especially prolific in Uxmal, Kabah and Chichen Itza. The stylized masks are commonly mounted on a building's upper façade or corners or both.

The basic components of a typical mask are: a headband, an ornament just above the nose, a long curled nose or snout (or long upper lip according to some scholars), two eyes with panels above and below each, a mouth with curved teeth, a small horizontal "fang" at each mouth corner and two ear spools or sockets.¹ The masks or mask panels are often framed on each side by columns of swirls or other elaborate designs (Fig. 1).

The mask tradition spans Maya history, but the rectilinear "mask panel" came into use around 600 CE.² It has proven "remarkably resistant to interpretation"³ and is "the most misunderstood and understudied problem" in the Late and Terminal Classic.⁴ The "new and imaginative ways"⁵ the masks

were used by the builders adds complexity to the challenge of proper interpretation.

From personal observations, several examples of this creative expression come to mind (Figs. 2-5). With the many variations, not to mention all the different shaped nose snouts and other differences in the detail of numerous masks, it is no wonder an all-inclusive identification has been elusive.

Since the early days of Maya exploration scholars have puzzled over the meaning and identity of the mysterious masks. The popular Chac identification, attributed to Eduard Seler in 1917, was challenged in 1988 when Linda Schele noted there was little iconographic evidence for the masks as Chac. According to Schele "the diagnostic shell ear flares or shell diadems" were missing from nearly all the stone masks she examined, and without them the masks could not be Chac. She believed the most critical clue to identification was the mask's headband or headdress⁶ (Fig. 1).

Schele doubted David Stuart's 1987 witz decipherment of a glyph on a mask in Copan, believing instead it was an *itz* glyph, and that the masks most often (but not always) depicted "the old god Itzamna and his avatar, the great supernatural bird..."⁷ Schele, with Peter Mathews, thus concluded that buildings with these



Fig. 4: West façade of Codz Po'op, Kabah. Masks have shared ear sockets. Half masks with nose snouts are on either side of doorway. Note mask step inside room.

masks were magical places or conjuring houses.

In 2004, Karl Taube published *Flower Mountain*, an intriguing study emphasizing a Maya "celestial paradise". It described a refreshing counter balance to the "dark and threatening underworld" of Xibalba, the most common depiction of Maya afterlife. Flower World, a floral mountain, is a paradise, a place of resurrection and ascent out of the underworld where the souls of the gods and ancestors live after death on their journey to the sun.⁸ It is a beautiful, peaceful place of flowers, jewels, fruit trees and music albeit "probably limited to... nobility... and valiant warriors". Even today, the floral, solar paradise concept "is well documented among the contemporary Tzotzil of highland Chiapas."⁹

Taube identifies the curled patterns often found near the mask ear spools as breath or wind,

continued on page 8

¹ Rosemary Sharp, 1981, pg. 12.

² Jeff Karl Kowalski, 1987, pg. 185-7. Kowalski's book *The House of the Governor*, Chapter II, provides a thorough, comprehensive history of mask identifications up to 1987.

³ William Ringle, 2012, pg. 205.

⁴ Linda Schele, 1988, pgs. 482-3.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Linda Schele and Peter Mathews, 1989, pg. 46.

⁸ Karl Taube, 2004, pgs 69-70.

⁹ *Ibid.*



Stone Masks of the Maya

by John Spoolman

continued from page 7

noting that the “breath soul” and wind god are often associated with the solar paradise. The small, horizontal and sometimes curved “fang” at the corners of the mouths is identified as wind or breath. Most of the masks at Uxmal and Chichen Itza have ample “breath-soul” indications, which have “profound meaning, as they denote such temples as places infused with spiritual power and life.”¹⁰

Significantly, most also have floral headbands and sometimes a central floral decoration.¹¹ Taube declares Stuart’s 1987 finding at Copan as a *witz* or living mountain a “brilliant epigraphic decipherment” which supports his theory. The masks, he concludes, “have snouts with up-curving tips, a trait of the zoomorphic *witz*. Rather than portraying rain gods or mythic birds, the Uxmal and Chichen Itza façades are depictions of Flower Mountain.”¹²

Solid endorsements of the Flower Mountain concept followed. Erik Boot’s study of ceramics is persuasive in support of the Flower Mountain identity, which he believes should apply to all “long-lipped masks with flower headbands”.¹³ In the 7th edition of Michael Coe’s *The Maya*, mask panels on northern Yucatan buildings are now referred to as Flower Mountain masks, not “Chahk” masks, and they in turn “transform each Puuk and Chichen Itza building where they are found into the ‘Flower Mountain’; the celestial paradise.”¹⁴

In 2012, William Ringle introduced a fascinating new look at the Nunnery and its many masks in *The Nunnery Quadrangle of Uxmal*. He observes that “in most cases, emphasis has been on the cosmological, religious or mythic underpinnings of architecture and the site plans, but alternatively the sociopolitical

Fig. 5: Abbreviated mask above hut has only mouth, eyes combined with lower plate and curved upper eye plates, south building of Nunnery, Uxmal.



relationships encoded in the built environment might be pursued.”¹⁵

The study posits that the Nunnery was “the meeting place of the court of Uxmal” and each wing was “dedicated to one of the four “estates” directing its governance. Those estates were the Military in the east wing, the Nobility or Priesthood in the west building, the “secondary clients” (subjects or allies of Uxmal) to the south and the King and his high council in the north building. Using this functional approach, the various masks and mask arrangements were examined for what they indicate about their respective buildings, not for themselves. Following are two of numerous examples.

First, Ringle notes that the top mask of each corner mask stack of the east building has the T510f star/Venus glyph in its lower eye panel and crossed bones in its upper eye panels (Fig. 6). Both are consistent with a military interpretation.¹⁶ Venus glyphs are also present in all of the masks of the stack over the central doorway. Along with other iconographic clues, Ringle concludes this building was military headquarters.

Second, the north building alone has four masks per stack and a Toltec topping on several stacks. This, along with it being the highest building, emphasizes its predominance over the other three wings. The top mask above the center doorway has “a band of feathers with rosettes placed at intervals, a headband not repeated elsewhere” and appears to be the “headband of highest rank”¹⁷ (Fig. 1). From this and other details Ringle identifies the north building as the domain of the King and his council.

The study concludes that masks and mask stacks are associated in some way with the rooms (or

Fig. 6: Corner masks on the east building of the Nunnery, Uxmal. Note differences between top mask and two lower companion masks.



offices) they are closest to, and variants of the flowered headband may refer

to different ranks of the officials using those offices.¹⁸ Each building’s iconography, room features and mask arrangements were analyzed, providing compelling evidence for the paper’s contentions.

Conclusion

What was the intent of the Maya masks? Many scholars, the popular literature and guide books still see them as Chac, the rain god. Other gods such as Cauac and Itzamna have also been identified. Most recently Karl Taube’s work provides a persuasive case that the masks, especially those with floral features, are the personification of the Maya solar paradise, Flower Mountain.

Yet it seems that all the detailed and creative differences in the many masks and mask arrangements must have meant something to the builders.

William Ringle observes that past studies have always attempted

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¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 85.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Erik Boot, ~2005, pg. 4.

¹⁴ Michael Coe, 2011, pgs. 174-5.

¹⁵ William Ringle, 2012, pg. 191.

¹⁶ Ibid, pg. 208.

¹⁷ Ibid, pg. 219.

¹⁸ Ibid, pg 213.

Total Renovation of Harvard's Tozzer Library Completed

After 18 months of construction originally projected to cost \$12 million, the Tozzer Library, the country's oldest anthropology collection, reopened in mid-June. The project renovated the nearly 40-year-old library and centralized the offices of the faculty of the anthropology department, who were previously spread across campus. Tozzer was originally founded in 1866 as the Peabody Museum Library.

As you can see in the photos, part of the renovation included the



L & C) Back in April 2014, Sr. Capital Project Manager John Hollister offered a sneak peak inside the library on the library's Facebook page. He posted these two photos of a cast of Stela D



from the ancient Maya city of Copan during its installation by the main entrance. R) Another cast of Stela D stands in its former position in front of Temple 2 in the Great Plaza at Copan. The original is housed in the Sculpture Museum of Copan. Photo courtesy of Iolanda Andrade.



installation of a cast of Stela D. It features Copan's 13th dynastic ruler Uaxaclajuun Ub'aah Kawiil (18 Rabbit).

The king peers through a mask he is wearing that researchers believe is the image of the Old Sun God. 🏹

Institute of Maya Studies' Anniversary Affair!

IMS Annual Business Meeting and December Birthday Party – December 10



Jaina figurine.

Officially dubbed the Annual Members Meeting, members seldom think of it as that. Think fellowship, food and fun! Think bargain books and other desirable items. Think "Happy Birthday" to the IMS.

The IMS has now been together for 44 years!

As established in the bylaws, the event takes place on the second Wednesday of December, in this case December 10. We combine our anniversary party with a short business meeting, a few short committee reports and the announcement of the new board members elected that evening to the 2015 Board of Directors. If you haven't e-mailed or snail-mailed your ballot in yet, you can even hand-deliver it at the event.

Also, there's our Book Sale – donate some, buy some!

The IMS Annual Affair • 8 pm, Wednesday, December 10

Feel free to wear your favorite get-up ... it's a chance to wear your huipil and jadeite!

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



Jaina figurine.

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Stone Masks of the Maya by John Spoolman

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to relate the masks to one or more known deities, “but such blanket identifications founder when the true variety of the masks is confronted. Although masks probably do signal dynastic spirit generally, attention to the often minute differences between them provides a more satisfactory picture of their function.”¹⁹

Was the iconic mask meant to depict one or more gods or god-related concepts, as Taube and many others have asserted? Or could the mask panel have been a creative, perhaps sacred format or template within which building designers embedded religious, political or dynastic

¹⁹ Ibid, pg 223.

information, as Ringle’s Nunnery study implies? The question remains, could the mask in some manner have served both functions?

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Upcoming Events at the IMS:

December 10, 8 pm: *IMS Annual Affair IMS Annual Business Meeting and Anniversary Get-Together* – Join with us as we celebrate 44 years together! We’re planning food, fun and fellowship. We mix a short business meeting with a few annual committee reports and add in a bunch of celebrating. Bring a book, buy a book. It’s free for all members, please attend!

January 21 • 8 pm: *IMS Presentation: Origins of Maya Civilization Viewed from Ceibal, Guatemala* – with **Takeshi Inomata** of the University of Arizona. Our recent investigations at Ceibal, Guatemala, documented the earliest ceremonial complex in the Maya lowlands, dating to the Middle Preclassic period.

February 18 • 8 pm: *IMS Presentation: She Gives Birth: Reproductive Strategizing in Precolumbian Maya Culture* – with **Pamela Geller** of the University of Miami.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

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 features painted ceramics from 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. Registration is now open, go to: www.utmesoamerica.org/maya/registration

Through February 2015: *Museum Exhibit The Aztecs* – Experience the power, the glory and the guts of the Aztec empire in this major exhibition of artifacts from ancient Mexico, at the Australian Museum, Sydney, Australia. Exhibit and nighttime talks schedule at: <http://australianmuseum.net.au/landing/aztecs/>

March 19–22, 2015:

Tulane Symposium Royal Chambers Unsealed: Tombs of the Classic Maya –

Theme of the 12th Annual Tulane Maya Symposium in New Orleans, LA. The keynote speaker will be William A. Fash. Presenters include Ricardo Agurcia F., Jaime Awe, David Freidel and Marc Zender. Info at: <http://mari.tulane.edu/TMS/>

Through May 3, 2015: *Museum Exhibit Mochica Kings: Divinity and Power in Ancient Peru* – Peru has lent a treasure trove of Moche artifacts for this exhibit at the Ethnography Museum of Geneva, Switzerland. Get more info at: www.ville-ge.ch/meg/exposition.php

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 at: <http://bit.ly/1aKJzE>



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