



IMS EXPLORER

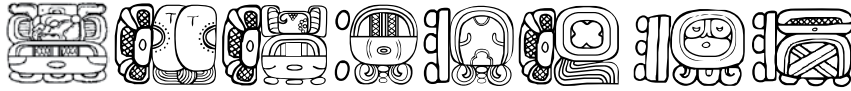
Institute of Maya Studies

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

An affiliate of The Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science, Miami, FL

Maya enthusiasts providing public education for 44 years

Volume 44
Issue 5
May 2015
ISSN: 1524-9387



May 20, 2015 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.2.8.0 • 13 'Ahau 8 Sip • G7

Tikal's "Ballcourt Marker"

by Janice Van Cleve

Discovery

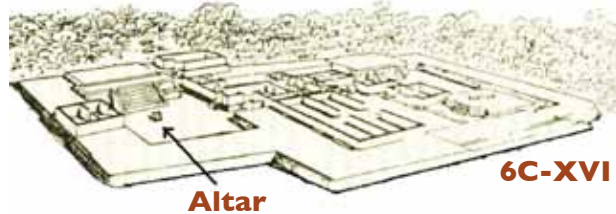
The so-called Tikal Ballcourt Marker was discovered by Juan Pedro LaPorte in 1987-1988 in a compound dubbed 6C-XVI by archaeologists. This compound is located less than a kilometer south of the Mundo Perdido complex at Tikal. Founded about 250 CE by a clan chief – at the same time as one of Tikal's early kings was refurbishing the Mundo Perdido complex in Teotihuacano style – 6C-XVI went through many stages of rebuilding.

In the first stage, a small shrine in the shape of an open sided stone box was set up in the middle of the north patio. It was remodeled later into a *talud-tablero* altar atop which the ballcourt marker was installed in 414 CE. During the twelfth reconstruction stage, this altar was decommissioned around 450-460 CE. Before covering the altar and the whole patio with a new floor, the clan chief of 6C-XVI took down the ballcourt marker and buried it inside the altar with some other offerings. By the time Tikal was abandoned, 6C-XVI supported only a few late architectural features.

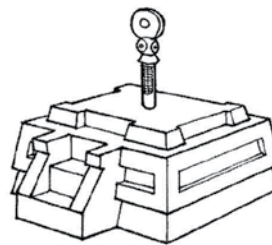
LaPorte excavated three miles of tunnels underneath the patios in the course of which he discovered the altar and its offerings.



L) Tikal Ballcourt Marker, by Kenneth Garrett (used with permission of the Ministry of Culture and Sport, Guatemala). R) Tikal site map showing location of Compound 6C-XVI in relation to the Mundo Perdido Group.



Above) Artistic rendering showing the location of the Altar within Compound 6C-XVI. Right) Drawing by Linda Schele depicting the Tikal Ballcourt Marker atop the Altar (LACMA SD-2057).



Description

The ballcourt marker stands about three feet tall and is now housed in the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Guatemala City. It is a thick limestone cylinder topped by an oval which is carved on both sides in a ring of feathers. In the center of the feathers on the front

Inside this issue:

Royal Chambers Unsealed: 2
Tombs of the Ancient Maya,
Tulane Maya Symposium
Review by Marta Barber

Interesting and Unusual 3,6
Ancient Artifacts: The
Rogan Plates – Maya Art in
Georgia? by Mark F. Cheney

The Tikal "Ballcourt 4,6
Marker", by Janice Van Cleve,
cont. from pg. 1

Adventure Travelogue 5
with the IMS!: Tenam Puente,
by Marta Barber

May IMS Programs; 7
Membership Application

Guatemalan Rappers 8
Promote Mayan Language;
Upcoming Events

IMS Presentation: May 20, 8 pm



**The Mesoamerican
Ballgame and
Its Architectural
Settings: A Three
Millennia Tradition**
with
Dr. Éric Taladoire

is representation of Tlaloc, the rain/lightning god who also symbolized the Teotihuacano style and iconology of war. In the

continued on page 4



**Jim Reed,
Editor**

©2015 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 to IMS program videos, photo archives, past issues and more. **Get your password by contacting our Webmaster at: keith@merwin.com**

Royal Chambers Unsealed: Tombs of the Classic Maya

Review of the **12th Annual Tulane Maya Symposium & Workshop**
(March 19-22, 2015) by **Marta Barber**

A small group of members of the Institute of Maya Studies attended this symposium, which, as in years past, presented an excellent array of papers. Tulane's yearly gathering continues to be a magnet of scholars who, as in the case of Ricardo Agurcia, return to their Alma Mater or work in the field with present-day Tulane staffers.

It is also a time to chit-chat with friends, some of whom come to IMS to present lectures to our group. Victoria Bricker and Harvey Bricker were there, and it was a great relief to see them in good shape, knowing that they had a rough 2014 insofar as health, and ready to present to the IMS in July. Also present was Francisco Estrada-Belli, whose discoveries in Holmul and Cival have been a source of international news in the field of archaeology.

The conference opened Friday evening with the keynote presentation by William Fash, who focused on the several royal tombs found in the Acropolis in Copan. I had the opportunity to ask Agurcia, of the Copan Project, about a tomb I had visited years ago with Seiichi Nakamura. (The report on this find can be found at www.mesoweb.com.) The tomb is about a kilometer away from the main site, and Agurcia tells me that it is expected to also be royal, but a final publication with evaluation and analysis of its contents is pending.

Erik Velásquez, Marcello Canuto

Harvey Bricker,
Professor Emeritus of
Anthropology at Tulane, was
in a festive mood!
All photos by Marta Barber.

(symposium organizer), David Friedel and Hector Escobedo filled Saturday morning slots on their corresponding sites: Dzibanche, La Corona, El Peru-Waka and Piedras Negras.

Piedras Negras is a site that is barely excavated and difficult to visit. I later asked Stephen Houston (who worked in Piedras Negras) and Escobedo about the location of the tomb compared to the spot (which a group of IMS members had visited a few years ago) containing the ashes of Tatiana Proskouriakoff. Both men were instrumental in bringing the ashes from Ian Graham's office at Harvard and burying them in one of the highest spots in Piedras Negras, an action that involved the United States, Mexico (where the plaque was made) and Guatemala, the location of Piedras Negras. The Guatemala government was (is?) not happy about placing the plaque of an American archaeologist at an ancient Maya site. For now, the plaque is still there.

Saturday afternoon was occupied by Jaime Awe, now linked to Northern Arizona University, Agurcia, Alfonso Lacadena and Houston. Awe spoke on Cahal Pech, Agurcia covered the magnificent tomb in the Oropendola building in the Copan Acropolis, and Houston covered a tomb at El Zotz. I was delighted to meet Lacadena, a jovial Spaniard of whom I've heard a lot about from other archaeologists. He delighted us with his presentation on Ek' Balam. On Sunday, Lacadena also conducted a workshop



Mark Zender works on text from Piedras Negras Stela 8.



L) A sculpture with apron in Marcello Canuto's office. R) Seiichi Nakamura above the royal tomb he discovered near the Copan Acropolis.



**2015
IMS Board
of Directors:**

Rick Slazyk, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP
President/Membership/Website
arcwerks@bellsouth.net

Marta Barber
Executive Vice President/
Programming
info@instituteofmayastudies.org

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/Subscription List
rstu@bellsouth.net

Patricia Manfredi
pmanfred2003@yahoo.com

Keith Merwin
Website Chair • webmaster@
instituteofmayastudies.org

Dr. Anne Stewart
Education Chair

Beth Wein
Hospitality • bethwein@ymail.com

Gerald Wolfson
Public Relations
gerald.wolfson@att.net

Jim Reed
Newsletter Editor
mayaman@bellsouth.net

on the Writing and Language at Ek' Balam, an intriguing subject.

The Sunday morning tradition of a Hieroglyphic Forum continues, this year led by Marc Zender, with James Fitzsimmons, Houston, Lacadena and Velásquez helping in the decipherment of Stela 8 of Piedras Negras, a historical document amply covering Ruler 2 of the site as told by Ruler 3.

Though I found some of the subjects to be repetitious, it was a first-rate symposium led by scholars of the highest caliber. 🏛️

The Rogan Plates – Maya Art in Georgia?

by Mark F. Cheney

The fact of cultural interchange in the Americas is well known and accepted, but not always the possibility of how widespread it may have been. We pretty much agree that the Maya, Nahua, Zoque and other groups were affected by the older Olmec culture, but we don't nearly as often agree about what contacts the peoples in Mesoamerica had with those in South America, or even in North America. Perhaps we will never agree or have proof, but there are still some interesting comparisons to be made.

The Rogan Plates, for instance, that are a collection of Mississippian copper plates found in Mound C of the Etowah Indian Mounds near Cartersville, GA, by John P. Rogan, working under Cyrus Thomas of the Smithsonian Institution in the early 1880s, bear some remarkable



Fig. 3: "Winged Warrior", Chichen Itza.



Fig. 4: Feathered Serpent Warrior, Chichen Itza.

Fig. 1: Repousséd Etowah copper plates 1, 2 and 3 found in Mound C near Cartersville, Georgia (Rogan Plate 1 on left and Moorehead Plate 1 on right).



similarities to Maya sculpture found in the Yucatan Peninsula. Another group of copper plates was found by Warren K. Moorehead in Mound C in 1925, and one very similar to the Rogan Plates was named Moorehead Plate I (**Fig. 1**).

All three of these plates depict what has been called the "Falcon Dancer" or "Birdman"; and they may have been made at another location, e.g. Cahokia near modern St. Louis, before being transported southeast through trade or war booty.

Looking at Rogan Plate I, we see a number of interesting motifs similar to those found in Mesoamerican and Aztec art. First, the falcon or eagle image is common – not too surprising or very significant in and of itself, but then there is the head of a supposed enemy in the left hand, and the interesting downward pointed satchel or apron in the center of the plate.

Another plate with both some definite connections to the Rogan Plates and also to the Maya, is the Copper Solar Ogee Deity plate found at Lake Jackson Mound Site, Florida (**Fig. 2**). This plate has the a similar weapon raised in one hand

and the severed head in the other, and further, it has a long-nosed figure that, if found in a Maya site,



Fig. 5: Gold repousséd plate found in cenote at Chichen Itza.

would no doubt be designated as Chaak, the Maya rain god.

Looking next at two wall carvings from Chichen Itza, let's examine some of the similarities between them and the Rogan Plate. The so-called "Winged Warrior" wall carving in Chichen Itza

has a number of comparables: first, the name itself indicates a bird motif similar to the "Dancing Falcon"; second, the warrior holds a weapon in his right hand and a severed head in his left (**Fig. 3**). Flying serpents are also part of the decoration.

To continue the comparisons with wall carvings in Chichen Itza, we can look at the Quetzalcoatl or Feathered Serpent Warrior (**Fig. 4**). Here the warrior again carries a weapon in his right hand that appears to be a serpent-shaped club or *macana*, and the now-familiar severed head, with gushing blood, in his left hand. Some interesting similarities, to be sure.

Another connection to Chichen Itza would be the gold repousséd plates found in the sacred cenote, where offerings to the gods, including human sacrifices, were discovered (**Fig. 5**). As much as anything this style of metal work may link to the Rogan Plates.

continued on page 6



Fig. 2: Solar Ogee Deity plate – Lake Jackson Mound, FL.

Tikal's "Ballcourt Marker"

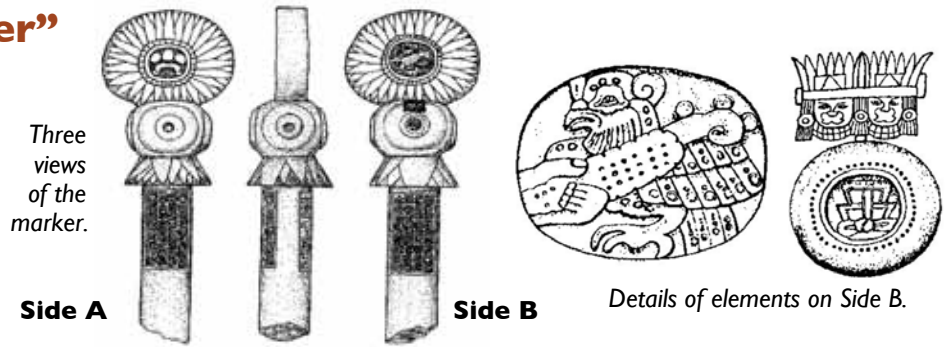
by Janice Van Cleve

continued from page 1

center of the feathers on the back of the oval is an owl and a spearthrower. Below the owl are two heads with non-Maya headdresses and butterfly nose ornaments, typical of Teotihuacan. Below them is a double trapezoid sign wrapped in a cloth. LaPorte suggests the latter may be a Mexican year sign. However, it could represent a pyramid temple wrapped in the headband of kingship. If subsequent to the Entrada of 378 CE, the ultimate source of royal authority to many Maya royals was Teotihuacan, then it would not be much of a stretch to suggest that this wrapped symbol is in fact the *wi-ti-na* (royal "house" pyramid), the dedication of which is mentioned on Tikal Stela 31.

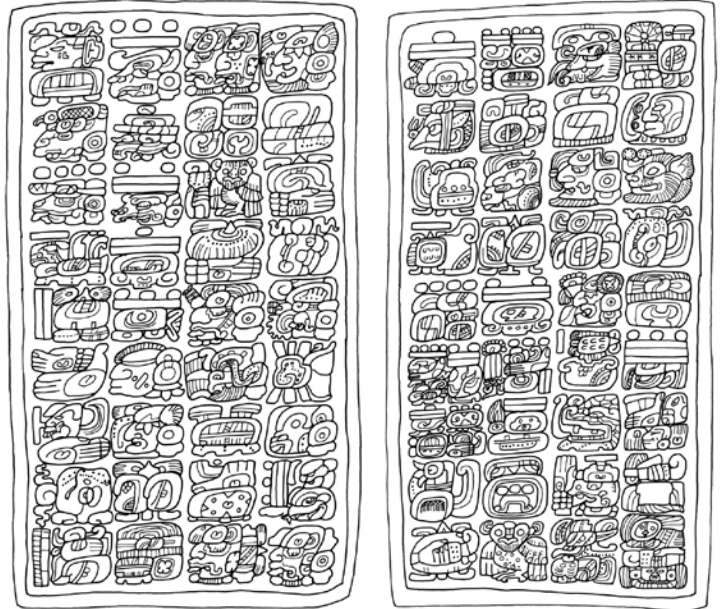
The Tikal Marker Texts

The inscription on the Tikal marker is Early Classic which retains more logograms in its text than was the case in Middle Classic writing and it still has usages that had fallen away by the height of the Middle Classic. Therefore the glyphs present more challenges than usual. I created a rough translation of the texts that is included in my full report available on the IMS website. I am indebted to John Montgomery's *Dictionary of Maya Hieroglyphs* for most of it. Special thanks also to Mark Van Stone, co-author with Michael Coe



The Tikal Marker, recovered from Group 6C-XVI: Illustrations from Geoffrey Braswell (editor), p. 213, *The Maya and Teotihuacan*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 2003.

of *Reading the Maya Glyphs*, for his notes from David Stuart's 2013 workshop in Antigua, Guatemala. These notes were of great help, as much to unravel some of the glyphs to highlight the difficulty of others. Finally, there were the interpretations by David Freidel in *Maya Cosmos* and Linda Schele in *Forest of Kings* which cast their own instructive light.



L) Text on Side A of the Tikal ballcourt marker (SD-2058). R) Text on Side B of the Tikal ballcourt marker (SD-2059). Both illustrations in the Linda Schele Drawing Collection, at: www.ancientamericas.org.

Ballcourt Marker or War Banner?

LaPorte makes a case that this Tikal artifact is a ballcourt marker and this attribution has remained in the literature since his report. He bases his case on the fact that he found no elements of residence, kinship, or production at 6C-XVI (LaPorte in Braswell, p.210). He found no evidence of densely populated apartments, nor many hearths or middens, and only a few burials.

Although there are no ballcourts in 6C-XVI, LaPorte notes that two murals depict ball players. LaPorte suggested that 6C-XVI may have been a kind of Spartan academy for ballplayers.

Schele expanded on LaPorte's thesis (Schele, pp. 158 and 451). She noted that a very similar artifact was found at La Ventilla complex at Teotihuacan. Note in the image at far left, that it has the same Tlaloc image in the center of a feathered disk as the Tikal marker.

Another artifact from Kaminaljuyu which is often cited as a ballcourt marker similar to the Teotihuacan and Tikal examples bears no resemblance to either (see image at left).

While Maya ballcourt markers typically were round disks planted



L) Comparable artifact found in the La Ventilla complex at Teotihuacan. R) Similar artifact from Kaminaljuyu.

Tenam Puente by Marta Barber

I had never heard of Tenam Puente. My purpose to travel south of San Cristobal de las Casas – the beautiful, lively and somewhat notorious Colonial city nestled in the highlands of Chiapas – was to visit Chinkultic. Chinkultic is well known. Not for its archaeology, but for a circular stone marker found almost intact and chiseled with the figure of a ball player with a knee bent and Maya hieroglyphs surrounding it. (See *Éric Taladoire’s program announcement at bottom right, page 1.*) I have since learned the piece is not from Chinkultic, but from the nearby site of La Esperanza. Regardless, it is still known as the “Chinkultic Ballcourt Marker”.

At the beginning of February, our group of loyal IMS members, together with a few additions, started our second decade of travel in Villahermosa, with an itinerary we called “The Olmec and the Zoque: Two civilizations with ties to the Maya”. It included Chinkultic. From web photographs, the place looked like a Maya Shangri-La: a distant image of a white structure surrounded by lush forest glistening under the tropical sun. This was a must.

Our trusted driver, Jose Andres Loeza, suggested we stop first at Tenam, a short 1-1/2 hour drive south of San Cristobal, and then move on to Chinkultic and then Montebello Park. Tenam Puente ended up being one of those sites you don’t imagine and then it surprises you by its physical beauty and its archaeological vestiges.

As climbs go, the walk up to the site is not difficult. The climb up the first set of steps is another matter. We all know them: too narrow for a foot to face forward; too steep for this 5-footer to move up without grunting. I looked up and saw at least three more levels yet to climb. Then I saw Janet Miess, IMS’ secretary and in-house archaeologist, walking smoothly by my side while I was



Fig 1: One first encounters a nice-sized ballcourt on the first level of Tenam Puente (east-west axis).

trying to catch my breath. “There’s a path there”, she said pointing to the right. Marked by a sign with two yellow feet, I learned not to miss those for the rest of our visit.

The first thing you see once you are inside the site is a ballcourt. Sunken and “I-shaped”, it was a sight to behold (**Fig. 1**) About the length of Copan’s, but with a wider field, it is perfectly defined on all corners of the “I”, and with a nice view of the forested landscape.

The second tier of stairs led to a second ballcourt. Again, an I-shaped, beautifully-kept ballcourt overlooking (if it were not for the trees), that first ballcourt on the lower level (**Fig. 2**). The lower ballcourt had an east-west axis; this one on the second level had a north-south.

I followed Janet’s path up to the third level, where another ballcourt greeted us (**Fig. 3**). This one seemed perfectly parallel to the one on the second tier. I’ve been to Cantona, the site with the most ballcourts recorded, and to El Tajin, with its fair share of playing fields.

This was different. This site is indisputably Maya in appearance. If its name, Tenam, which means “fort” in Nahuatl, has a similar name in its Mayan language, was this a place of protection of surrounding areas? Apparently, Tenam was a post for trade between the Gulf of Mexico and the Highlands of Guatemala.

Past the third ballcourt stands the Acropolis, a well-built set of structures with extended views of the landscape surrounding it. Going down on the opposite side from where I had climbed, you end the walk in a small court; behind it, an imposing large pyramid: Structure 42. It is always an interesting realization



Fig 2: The ballcourt on the second level is shaded by many trees (north-south axis).



Fig 3: The ballcourt on the third level, before approaching the Acropolis, also runs north-south.



Fig 4: Talud-tablero architectural details are evident on a structure within the Acropolis.

that the population seemingly had no access to the large tall pyramid, only an intimate group did. Throughout the Maya world, small courts with limited access indicate that rituals or performances held there were not to be viewed by everyone.

The site has good signage: including the description of spots where architecture in the talud-tablero style of Central Mexico is evident. This talud-tablero style can be seen on an opening within a more recent building (**Fig. 4**). The restorers of this site have done a wonderful job of exposing this important element.

What INAH says

Tenam Puente was occupied from 300 to 1200 CE. Peak occupation: 600-900 in the Classic Period, and up to 1200 CE, or Early Postclassic. 🏛️

Marta Barber organizes trips for members of the Institute of Maya Studies. All photos by Rick Slazyk.

Tikal's "Ballcourt Marker"

by Janice Van Cleve

continued from page 1

in the floor of the ballcourt, Schele pointed to a different kind of game played with sticks which did appear to include upright markers. The Mural of Tepantitla is one example (see below). Another, identified by Koontz shows a similar marker and a scattering of players with sticks and balls.

Freidel noted, however, that these "ballcourt markers" were actually stone representations of battle standards which may on occasion have been placed at some ballcourts as trophies, not of game victories, but of war victories (Freidel in *Maya Cosmos*).



One of the murals of Tepantitla shows players with sticks (A) and an overturned marker (B).

Late Classic Bonampak mural:

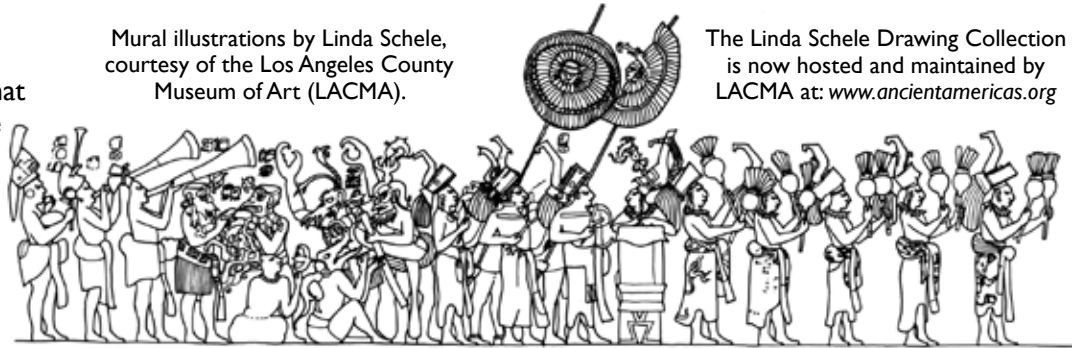
Reproduced together, both drawings are LACMA number SD-6005.



Lower register, west side, room 1, temple 1, showing a dance procession carrying large feather banners,

Mural illustrations by Linda Schele, courtesy of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

The Linda Schele Drawing Collection is now hosted and maintained by LACMA at: www.ancientamericas.org



Lower register, east side, room 1, temple 1, showing musicians (including trumpeters, drummers, rattle players, and masked dancers). Others carry large feathered banners.

The text itself names the Tikal marker as the Tlaloc war banner of Spearthrower Owl. Examples of just such war banners are vividly displayed in the famous murals of Bonampak (above). Therefore it would be more correct to refer to this artifact at Tikal as the "Tikal War Banner effigy."

Be sure to see Van Cleve's full report with complete Bibliography on the IMS website at: www.instituteofmayastudies.org



Janice Van Cleve with the Tikal War Banner in the National Museum in Guatemala City.

The Rogan Plates – Maya Art in Georgia?

by Mark F. Cheney

continued from page 3

In both nearby Coba and Tulum there are carvings of a so-called "Dios Descendiente" or "Descending God" which is depicted upside-down to portray flying down or descending (Fig. 6). The interesting part of this stucco carving is the apron on the figure, sometimes reminding interpreters of a bee's abdomen. This feature actually is very similar to the apron or satchel on the "Falcon Dancer" plates.

And for my last comparable, we will look at Stela 21 from Izapa, Mexico (located just north of the Guatemala border in Mexico) (Fig. 7, A and B). This



Fig. 6: "Descending God" – Tulum, Quintana Roo, Mexico



Fig. 7: A: Drawing of Stela 21, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico. B: Stela 21 in Mexico's National Museum of Anthropology.



ancient site has many very interesting stelae, but on this particular one, a man/warrior is shown with weapon raised in his left hand, and the head of his victim, whose body is partly raised in his death thralls below him, held up in his right hand. Although the hands are different (this guy was probably left-handed!) the two hands

and the "wing" behind his back are possible similarities to the "Falcon Dancer" of Georgia.

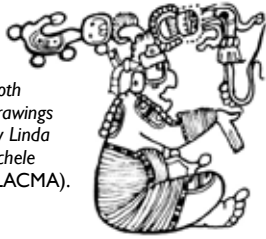
Conclusion: Do these seeming coincidences in artistic representations mean there was a Mississippian-Maya connection? Only time and further study will tell, pero es muy interesante, no? 🏠

May 13, 2015 • IMS Explorer Session • Gods, Legends and Rituals Series

Gods of the Maya

with **Janet Meiss**, IMS Secretary and Library Chair

Both drawings by Linda Schele (LACMA).



“According to ethnohistorical sources, Itzamna was the inventor of writing as well as the patron of the priesthood; he was in fact, considered as the ‘first priest’ by the Yucatec Maya, which would have made him ‘first scribe’ among the Classic Maya.” (Michael D. Coe, *The Art of the Maya Scribe*, p. 102).



“It is believed that many depictions of a young lady represent the young Moon Goddess, a youthful variant of Ix Chel known as Ix Ch’up (‘The Woman’), who has romantic alliances with various gods.” (Michael D. Coe, *The Maya*, 9th ed., p. 205).

May 20: IMS Feature Presentation

The Mesoamerican Ballgame and Its Architectural Settings: A Three Millennia Tradition

with **Dr. Éric Taladoire**, Prof. of Precolumbian Archaeology at the University of Paris I



The North Ballcourt at Cihuatán, El Salvador (an Early Postclassic urban Mesoamerican site) has a sweat bath as an integral part of the ballcourt architecture. Submitted by Karen Olsen Bruhns.

The ballgame is one of the oldest traditions of Mesoamerica: the first known ballcourt dates 1200 BCE, and the game is still alive in several regions of western Mexico. Far from its sportive aspect, the game is deeply rooted in Mesoamerican thought and cosmology. Up to now, more than 2000 ballcourts have been registered all over the cultural area, while representations of ballcourts can be found in pictographic manuscripts, in rock art, and in offerings. In the Maya area, playing was one of the king’s responsibilities, while, in the Mexica Empire, the game was a substitute for war. The ballgame obviously underwent many changes and meanings according to the different civilizations that practiced it over time, but the available data allow asserting that it maintained, throughout its long-lasting existence, the same basic symbolism.

The Institute of Maya Studies thanks the following sponsors for their contribution to this event:



All meetings begin at 8 pm • Institute of Maya Studies • The Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science

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>

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

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

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

New Renewal

Benefactor: \$350

Patron: \$150

Century: \$100

Member: \$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!

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



Guatemalan Rappers Promote Mayan Language, Stories to Youth

A group of Guatemalan musicians is on a mission to breathe life into a Precolumbian language and heritage through a thoroughly modern genre: hip-hop.

Calling themselves *Balam Ajpu*, which means Jaguar Warrior or Warrior of Light, they rap in the ancient Tz'utujil Mayan language with the goal of making it cool for kids and teaching them their ancestors' stories and ways. Their debut album, "*Tribute to the 20 Naguales*," or spirits, was released to coincide with the March 20, 2015, spring equinox.

The musicians rap in both Tz'utujil and Spanish, blending a hip-hop beat with marimba and natural sounds like bird songs and running water.

"Since the time of the (Spanish) invasion, the Maya

Musician
Rene Dionisio
a.k.a. Tz'utu
Baktun Kan,
from the band
Balam Ajpu,
records a song
in Guatemala
City. AP photos
by Moises
Castillo.



Members of the band Balam Ajpu perform a song after their Maya ritual at the base of the San Pedro Volcano in San Pedro Atitlan, Guatemala.

worldview was persecuted, even almost snuffed out, but now it's returning to life, relying on music and sustaining itself in art," said group member Rene Dionisio, who uses the stage name Tz'utu Baktun Kan. "Our commitment as artists is to rescue the ancient art."

The lyrics came from a young Maya priest named Venancio Morales, who serves as the group's spiritual guide. Starting with the project's

genesis, he performed prayer ceremonies where he entered into a trance and dictated in Tz'utujil what the songs should say.

Much of the album explores the concept of spirits represented by animal glyphs in the Maya mythology. The record also provides a handy guide for listeners to find their own "nagual" based on birthdate. ▲

Submitted by Janet Miess via IMS Facebook.

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

May 13 • 8 pm: *IMS Explorer Session Gods, Legends and Ritual Series: Gods of the Maya* – IMS Secretary and Library Chair **Janet Miess** discusses the pantheon of Maya deities.

May 20 • 8 pm: *IMS Presentation The Mesoamerican Ballgame and Its Architectural Settings: A Three Millennia Tradition* – with Professor **Éric Taladoire**.

June 10 • 8 pm: *IMS Explorer Session Gods, Legends and Ritual Series: Coba: Maya City of Extremes* – The estimated 6500 structures at Coba are located in 20 different groups. Nestled among 5 lakes, it is indeed an amazing site, with IMS Education Chair **Dr. Anne Stewart**.

June 17 • 8 pm: *IMS Presentation Kennewick Man: The Debate Over the Oldest Human Remains Found in the Americas* – New insights are intriguing, with IMS Secretary and Library Chair **Janet Miess**.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

May 1–3, 2015: *ASNM Annual Meeting Archaeology in the Rio Grande: A Collaboration* – Theme of the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico, at the Sagebrush Inn, Taos, NM. Details at: www.TaosArch.org

May 8–9: *Nahuatl Studies Conference 2015 Northeastern Group of Nahuatl Studies Conference* – at Yale University, New Haven, CT. There's no URL yet, but you can get more info by contacting John F. Schwaller at: jfswaller@gmail.com

May 16: *One-day Seminar South American Archaeology Seminar* – at The Institute of Archaeology, UCL, London, England. Email Manuel Arroyo-Kalin for more information, at: ucl.saas@gmail.com

May 22–25: *Rock Art Conference 42nd Annual American Rock Art Research Association*

Conference – at the Colorado Belle Resort and Casino, Laughlin, NV. For conference registration, contact Donna Yoder at: donnayoder@cox.net. General info at: www.arara.org/2015_conference_announcement.html

Through July, 2015: *Museum Exhibit San Diego Museum of Man Exhibit Maya: Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth* – at the San Diego Museum of Man, San Diego, CA. Get more info at: www.museumofman.org/html/exhibitions.html

Editor's Tip: *Online all the time Visit the IMS Facebook page under the group Institute of Maya Studies* – Get in on all the action! IMS members post interesting links, as well as photos from their recent adventures. Plus, Marta Barber seems to always be there to help out if you have questions or comments. Join the **Explorer-ation!**



IMS EXPLORER

Join 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