

March 16, 2016 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.3.5.1 • 2 'Imix 9 Kumk'u • G2

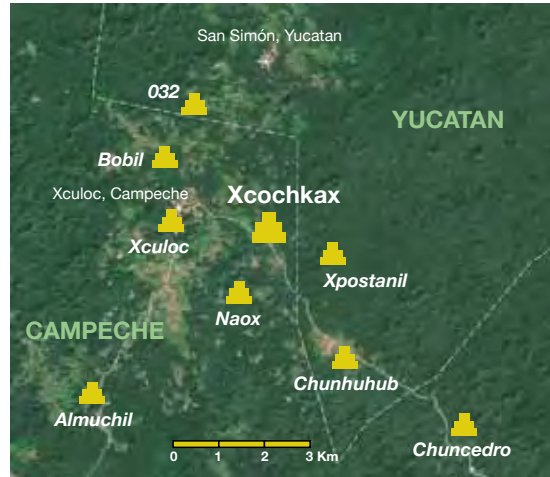


Fig. 1: Xcochkax straddles the border between northern Campeche and southern Yucatan, and is located about 22 km south of Uxmal and 20 km west of Sayil. Several archaeological sites surround Xcochkax.

Xcochkax, Campeche: Rescue of Sculptures and Reliefs

by **Antonio Benavides C.**
INAH Campeche

The northern Campeche area was home to many Puuc settlements during the Late and Terminal Classic periods (700-1000 CE). Some examples include Almuchil, Chunhuhub, Xculoc and Xpostanil. Xcochkax, two km east from the modern community of Xculoc, is one of those sites where vestiges of masonry buildings are still preserved. Very interesting sculptures and blocks with reliefs that formed part of inscriptions and scenes are also present. (**Fig. 1**)

The site's toponymy refers to a place (*kax* = jungle) with many *xk'ooch* (*Ricinus communis* L.) bushes. The plant has many medical uses today (for example, to heal injuries) in several Mexican regions, especially in the Yucatan península.



Fig. 2: Structure C4-7 of Xcochkax, seen from the south, at the beginning of the field season.

The site was first reported by Harry Pollock (1980: 386-397) for the Carnegie Institution of Washington; partially registered by UNAM's Paul Gendrop (1983) and also by George Andrews (1995) of the University of Oregon. Xcochkax was later studied as part of a regional project by French archaeologists headed by Dominique Michelet (2000).

The settlement is distributed on several levels of a hilly landscape and the only water supply was underground cisterns or *chultuns*. Unfortunately,

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March 16, 8 pm

IMS Presentation:



Visionary Plants and Iconography of Prehistoric South America with

C. Manuel Torres,
Professor Emeritus of Florida International University

Xcochkax was heavily looted during the XXth century and we are now trying to register and protect as much as possible of that rich Maya heritage.

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Jim Reed,
Editor

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Comments on the Relationship Between Snuffing Paraphernalia and Tiwanaku Monumental Sculpture

by **Constantino Manuel Torres**, Professor Emeritus, Florida International University

A representative snuffing kit consists of a rectangular tray, a tube, a small spoon, and a leather pouch containing snuff powder (**Fig. 1**). This basic set of instruments is widespread throughout the Andes, and predates the rise of Tiwanaku. Eighty-three snuff trays are carved with Tiwanaku imagery and make up approximately 8 to 10% of the larger snuff tray sample.

The highest concentration of archaeological evidence for the use of psychoactive plants, as well as the most ancient, is in the South Central Andes. This area includes Tiwanaku (ca. 300-900 CE) in the southern Lake Basin, Bolivia, and San Pedro de Atacama in northern Chile (**Fig. 2**).

The earliest evidence for snuffing is provided by the Peruvian coastal site of Huaca Prieta dated to ca. 1200 BCE. The plant source of the snuff used in this South Central Andean area is *Anadenanthera colubrina* var. *Cebil*, as demonstrated by chemical and botanical analysis of snuff samples. A comparative analysis of the iconography represented in snuffing paraphernalia and in monumental stone sculpture at Tiwanaku reveals four layers of meaningful activity (**Fig. 3**, page 4):

- 1) Individual primary signs. For the purpose of this work, the term sign is used in its most basic sense: something that represents or substitutes for an object or concept and activates an interpreter. These basic components of the iconographic series do not seem to be hierarchical in nature.
- 2) Clusters of signs: e.g. stepped platforms with lateral projections, headdresses, staffs, etc. These clusters in turn construct the basic thematic units, allowing the creation of numerous structural variations.
- 3) Thematic units: e.g. staff bearing frontal figures, disembodied ray heads, profile genuflecting



Fig. 1: - Left: Snuff tray and tube, Solcor 3, Tomb 99, San Pedro de Atacama, Chile: snuff tray, wood, 15.6 x 6.3 cm, snuffing tube, wood, 16.6 cm, ca. 700 CE. Instituto de Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Museo R. P. Le Paige, Universidad Católica del Norte, San Pedro de Atacama, Chile. Right: Snuff tray and tube, tomb 107, Solcor 3, San Pedro de Atacama Chile: snuff tray with stone inlays, wood, 16.1 x 7.3 cm, collection #8432; snuffing tube, wood with gold and copper alloy wrapping, 21.5 cm., ca. 570 CE. Instituto de Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Museo R. P. Le Paige, Universidad Católica del Norte, San Pedro de Atacama, Chile.



Fig. 2: Map of lower South America featuring the Tiwanaku Sphere of influence between the site of Tiwanaku in Bolivia to San Pedro de Atacama in northern Chile. Original map by Jim Reed, with actual Google-Map base imagery (public domain).

- 4) Thematic configurations are defined by compositions that combine different thematic units and comprise the most complex expression of the iconography. Thematic configurations are mostly restricted to individuals, anthropomorphized packed camelids.



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monumental stone sculpture and architectural decoration. In most cases, snuff trays and tubes represent individual themes. The arrangement of these configurations within the bodies represented on stone sculpture suggests a hierarchical structure.

The body provides the basic framework for the iconographic elements. Composition, sign associations, and position within the body determine functions of the primary signs. If the various formulations of a

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Xcochkax, Campeche: Rescue of Sculptures and Reliefs

by Antonio Benavides C.

INAH Campeche, *continued from page 1*

The first operations to prevent collapse of the buildings took place in November and December 2015 clearing the forest and shoring up several sections of structure C4-7 (Figs. 2 & 3). This building has seven rooms arranged in the shape of an “L”, with 5 rooms on the eastern side and two rooms along the southern axis (Figs. 4 & 5).

Since the time of Pollock, Room 5 was reported to have hieroglyphs around the entrance doorway. Notes show Room 7 had a lintel with glyphs. The 2015 explorations revealed three additional glyphic blocks for Room 5 and also two glyphic blocks for Room 6 (Fig. 6).

Pollock also reported that the central capstone of Room 7 had a mat or Pop design. And we found that Room 6 has the same motif, just simpler. That sign was used by the ancient Maya for the first month and was frequently represented as a symbol for political authority. There are many examples of Pop representations in sculptures, ceramic vessels and other objects (Figs. 7, 8, 9, 10).

Both axes of C4-7 were restored, reinstalling two fallen lintels and replacing the sections originally carved with hieroglyphic blocks. Activities took place outside, and also inside each room. That labor was achieved with specialized masons from Cumpich and workers from Xculoc. First, they reinstalled the fallen glyphic blocks in the door jambs, then they began the consolidation of each wall. The heavy medial molding stones were also restored and finally, they could begin restoration of the frieze.

On the upper level of Structure C4-7, there is Structure C4-6. It has practically the same distribution of two axes forming an “L”, but is not as large as the former and has fewer rooms. Looting activities included relief sawing which



Fig. 3: The cleaning of vegetation and trees on C4-7’s east wing was one of the first activities.



Fig. 4: Structure C4-7 after restoration as seen from the east. **Fig. 5:** The east wing of the structure has five rooms, four of them still preserve the original vaults over their doorways.



Fig. 6: The hieroglyphic entrance to Room 5 is now restored.

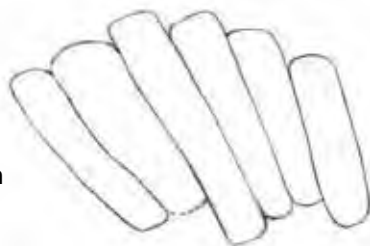


Fig. 9: The central capstone of room 6 has a simpler Pop motif.



Fig. 7: The central capstone of Room 7 had fallen down and was encountered in pieces.



Fig. 8: Pop sign drawing of the central capstone of Room 7.



Fig. 10: Some examples of the Pop sign taken from hieroglyphic inscriptions.

caused a lot of damage.

During the 1990s, Michelet’s team helped to bring some order to the scattered sculpted stones. They placed relief motives upside down to protect them. Recent curious visitors have moved many stones unaware of the necessity to preserve them for their relevance in understanding some aspects of the ancient Maya society.

We photographed and measured all of the sculptures and relief blocks that we encountered in order to

have a more complete database. We hope to use the database to possibly reassemble scenes and texts and eventually register them.

The initial results of this task indicate that several walls of C4-6 were covered with designs including richly dressed people, symbols and gods. There is also evidence of at least one other hieroglyphic entrance doorway and that several medial moldings were carved with human faces and aquatic motifs.

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Comments on the Relationship Between Snuffing Paraphernalia and Tiwanaku Monumental Sculpture, by Constantino Manuel Torres

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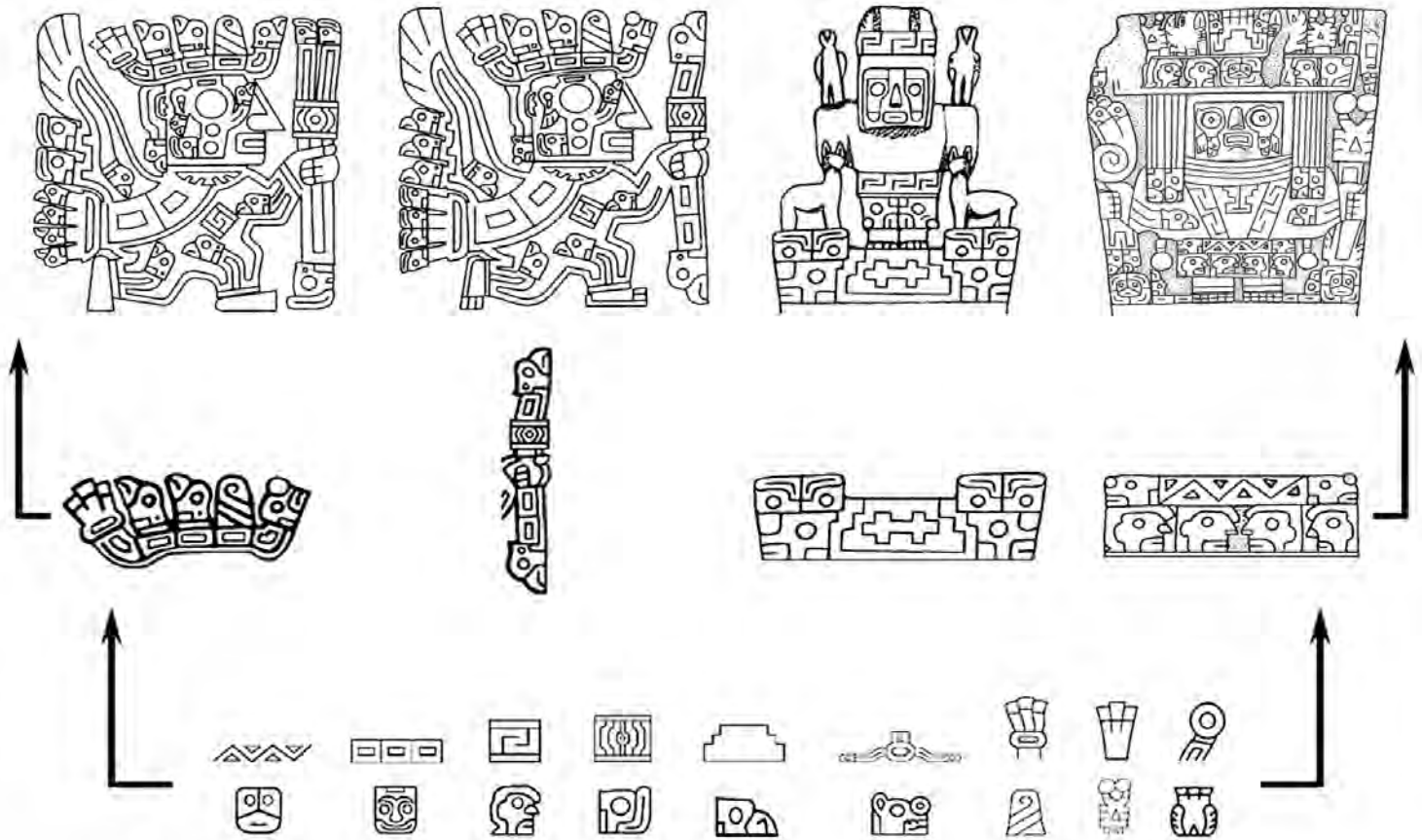


Fig. 3: Basic framework of the Tiwanaku iconographic configuration.

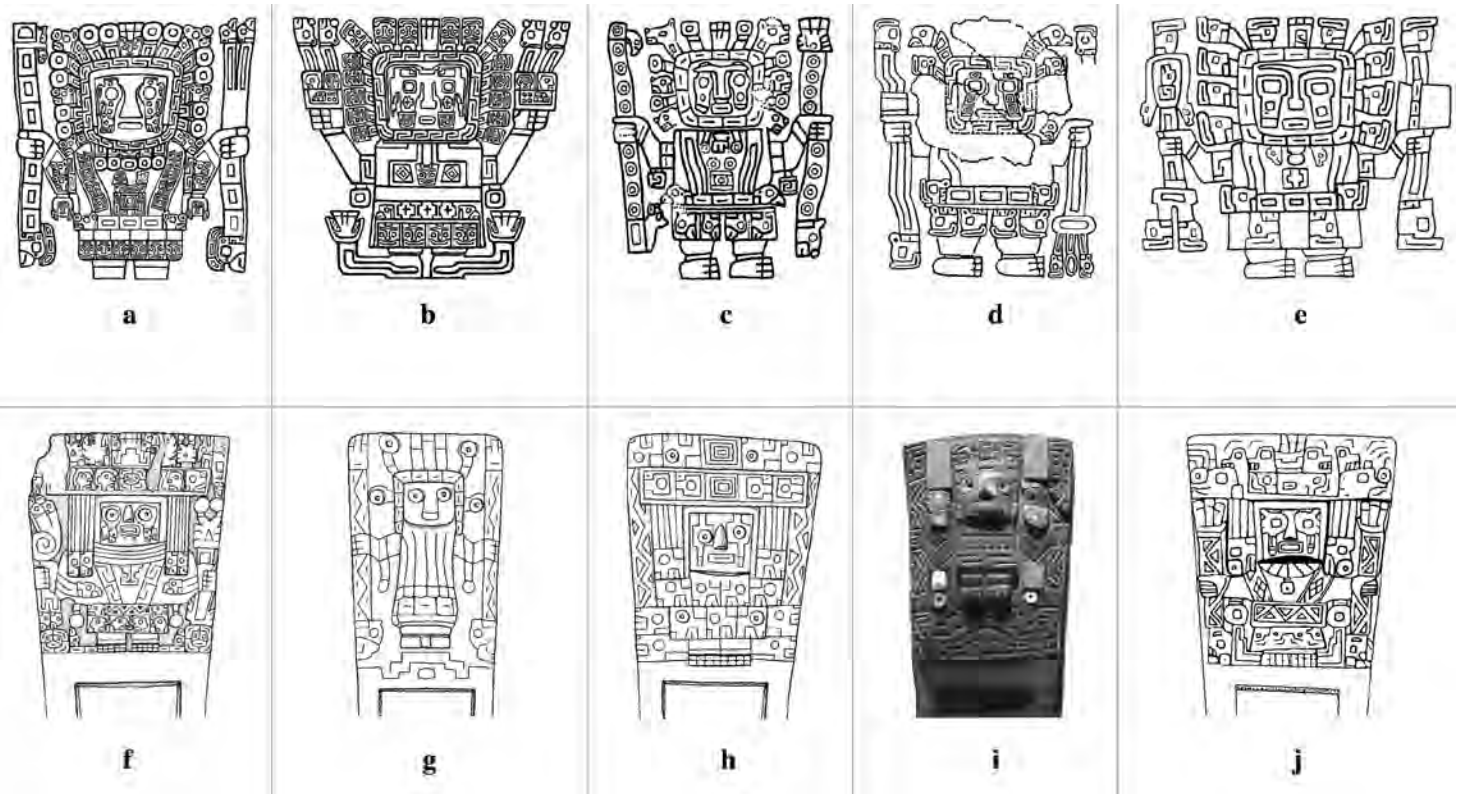


Fig. 4: Frontal personage holding staffs from stone sculpture and snuff trays.

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Xcochkax, Campeche: Rescue of Sculptures and Reliefs

by Antonio Benavides C.

INAH Campeche, *continued from page 3*

The sculptures reported by Gendrop were still there but heavily exposed to rain, solar rays, heavy branches falling and vandalism.

(Fig. 11)

The larger sculptures include a strange dancer with what seems a square head (Fig. 12); jambs with high-level individuals wearing wide feather headdresses; and lintels whose carvings depict rows of triangles, squares and marine shells (probably *Oliva sp.*). Some sculptures, jambs and veneer stones with glyphs were removed to an onsite museum at Chunhuhub, where they have better protection and are now exhibited (Figs. 13 & 14).

The high investment in carved scenes, hieroglyphic inscriptions and sculpted jambs, lintels and medial mouldings speak of a powerful elite, one able to command such activities that are above and beyond the usual masonry buildings and terra-forming (hill-leveling) constructions evident at smaller sites in the region.

The presence of a strong society is evident, but by extension, it seems a reduced one, unless we are dealing with the nucleus of a somewhat larger regional settlement pattern that includes the localities that are known today as Bobil, Xculoc, Xpostanil, Naox and Chunhuhub.

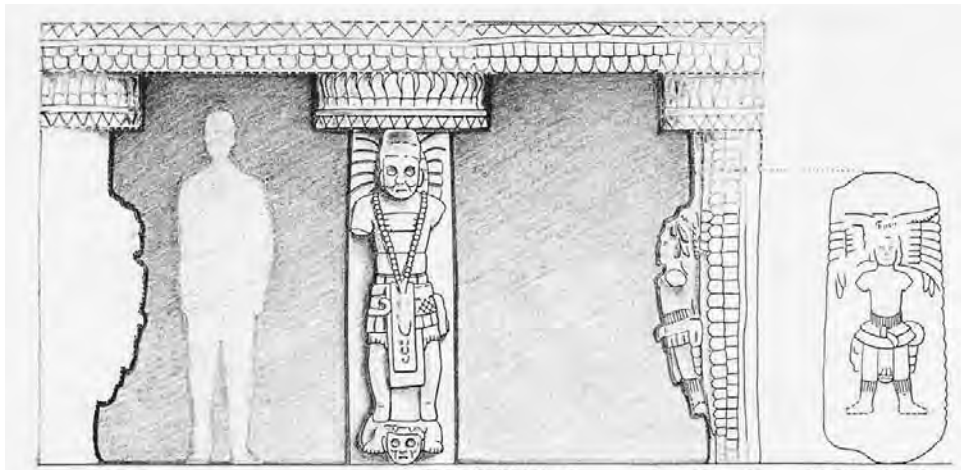


Fig. 11: Structure C4-6 façade as restored by Paul Gendrop (1983).



Fig. 12: Monolith depicting a dancer. The sculpture is now exhibited in a museum in Chunhuhub.



Fig. 13: A human profile from the many blocks surrounding Structure C4-6.



Fig. 14: Sculptured jamb recovered from C4-6 and now also in Chunhuhub.

That theoretical political entity could have covered 40 km², taking advantage of the valuable resources in both the hills and the agricultural valleys in the region.

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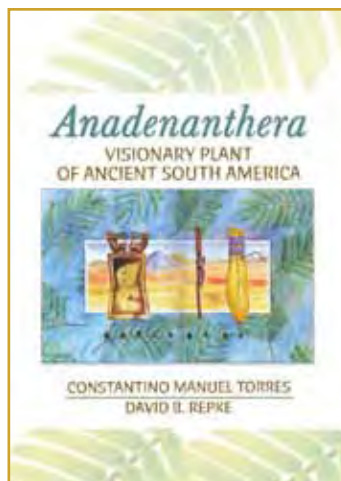
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Our Main Speaker This Month Has a Book Available

Anadenanthera: Visionary Plant of Ancient South America,

by Constantino Manuel Torres and David B. Repke

A multidisciplinary study of Precolumbian South America – centering on the psychoactive plant genus *Anadenanthera*. Cover watercolor by Donna Torres. Includes extensive bibliographical references and index. First published in 2006 by Haworth Herbal Press, Binghamton, NY. 2012 edition published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York, NY. Available on Amazon.com



Comments on the Relationship Between Snuffing Paraphernalia and Tiwanaku Monumental Sculpture, by Constantino Manuel Torres

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specific theme are compared, it is seen that the depicted personages differ greatly. The basic thematic pose is shared, but most other components, such as held objects and headdresses, are not. These changes become evident when variations of the same theme are compared, such as the frontal figure holding staffs (Fig. 4) engraved on five wooden snuff trays and the central personage carved in low-relief on the Gate of the Sun, the figure incised on the back of the Bennett and Ponce stelae, and other stone sculptures from the site of Tiwanaku (Figs. 5-7).

These representations all share the frontal pose with outstretched arms carrying scepters, but the component elements vary greatly. These variations suggest that primary signs derive meaning from affiliation with other signs, from their position within the body, and the theme being expressed.

In conclusion, I propose that Tiwanaku iconography was not the reflection of a stable set of rules and meanings. The evidence suggests a conceptual



▲ Fig. 5: Gate of the Sun, approximately 4 meters wide. Kalasasaya complex, Tiwanaku, Bolivia.



▲ Fig. 6: Bennett stela, 5.50 m, Semi-subterranean Temple, Tiwanaku, Bolivia.

◀ Fig. 7: Ponce stela, 3.05 m; Found in central courtyard of the Kalasasaya, Tiwanaku, Bolivia. All images submitted by C. Manuel Torres.

notation system, an attempt to codify, rather than the expression of a constant ideology. This notation system produced a repertoire of signs and themes that included traits with a wide temporal and geographical distribution, as well as others that were specific to a

time and a place. The iconographic system can, therefore, be seen as having varying degrees of autonomy from exclusive political entities, and moreover, was not the carrier of a specific and constant ideology. Rather, it adapted to local conditions and its meaning was variable. ▲

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March 9, 2016 • IMS Explorer Session: An Intro to the Maya Three Cs and One F: Food Staples of the Ancient Maya



Cacao pods hanging on a tree.
Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth/FLAAR.

with IMS Treasurer Ray Stewart

Since agriculture was discovered by the hunter-gatherers of Mesoamerica, there have been three food products farmed by the Maya to feed the people, and one farmed for the pleasure of the royalty. **C**orn and “**C**alabaza” were, and still are, dominant crops in cultivated farmland across Mesoamerica. Added to these two, “**F**rijoles” were grown alongside corn and squash, as the nutrients of each interact allowing all three to occupy the same “milpas,” or fields. The third C is **C**acao, the bean that when converted into a drink mixed with chile and honey, was dubbed “food of the gods.”

As cities grew and farmers were being used to build increasingly larger cities, irrigation, transportation and distribution of the crops had to be developed for survival.



Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth poses with his Maya research team and many varieties and colors of corn (maize) from Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.
Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth/FLAAR.

March 16: IMS Feature Presentation

The Lives of Three Ancient Shamans: Art and Visionary Plants in the Andes 1500-2000 Years Ago

with **Constantino Manuel Torres,**



▲ Two views of polychrome basket, T112, ca. 775 CE, Solcor 3.*



Professor Emeritus, Florida International University

Rather than concentrating on one particular culture, this presentation will focus on three individuals (1 female, 2 males), from San Pedro de Atacama, Chile, ca. 500-700 CE. These three well-preserved burials provide us with a glimpse into the lives of individuals interred with certain artifacts that link them to shamanic practices. Two of them were buried with Tiwanaku artifacts, and two carried complex snuffing kits. However, they are connected by a distinctive set of baskets and clothing.

◀ Engraved camelid bone, T113, Solcor 3, Tiwanaku style.*

*All images submitted by C. Manuel Torres are from the Instituto de Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Museo R.P. Le Paige, Universidad Católica del Norte, San Pedro de Atacama, Chile.



▲ Snuffing kit, ca. 775 CE, T112, Solcor 3, San Pedro de Atacama, Chile.*

All meetings begin at 8 pm • Institute of Maya Studies • www.instituteofmayastudies.org
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Both programs will take place in K-413 (in Building K-4, Room 13)

Check out their website at: www.mdc.edu for directions and campus map.

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Scientists to Drill Into Chicxulub Crater

About 30 scientists from around the world – representing Mexico, England, Spain, Germany, the United States, Holland and Japan – will gather here in Progreso, Yucatan, for a new study of the so-called Chicxulub Crater in the Gulf of Mexico.

The catastrophic asteroid crash, blamed for the demise of the dinosaurs, left a sprawling crater approximately 65.5 million years ago. Discovered by Pemex geologists in 1978, the crater may hold the answers to many mysteries about pre-historic times.

The crash released as much energy as 100 trillion tons of TNT, and more scientists have come to agree on the theory linking the incident with the eventual end of the dinosaurs' reign.

Now, scientists plan to drill 5,000 feet (1,500 meters) below

Editor's note: This is a beautiful and informational graphic of the area of the northern Yucatan Peninsula in question.
Courtesy of Expedition 364.

the surface of the crater to bring up a giant core – and delve 10 million to 15 million years into the past. The endeavor would result in the first offshore core taken from near the center of the crater.

Studies will be conducted on board a vessel similar to an oil rig, which will drill a well 1.5 kilometers into the ocean floor, about 30 kilometers off the coast of Sisal.

The study, called the Expedition 364 Chicxulub Impact Crater, will not require the use of explosives or towing equipment which in the past had impacted fisheries operating in the area.

The investigation should be completed within 60 days,



and cost 20 million pesos, funded by a consortium of scientific agencies. Scientists hope to learn more about the structure of the crater, and what it consists of; how long it took life to recover after impact; and learn the planet's temperature after the asteroid crashed into the Gulf of Mexico.

Submitted by Marcia Kirby to the editor's Facebook timeline. Source: From our friends at *Yucatán Expat Life*, Progreso, Yucatán. Posted 01.30.2016 at: <http://yucatanexpatlife.com/scientists-to-drill-into-chicxulub-crater/>. Gracias, Marcia! 🇲🇽

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

All IMS events for March and April will take place in Room K-413 at Miami Dade College – Kendall Campus. That's Building K-4, Room 13. See www.mdc.edu

March 9 • 8 pm: *An Intro to the Maya Three Cs and One F: Food Staples of the Ancient Maya* – with IMS Treasurer **Ray Stewart**.

March 16 • 8 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation The Lives of Three Ancient Shamans: Art and Visionary Plants in the Andes 1500-2000 Years Ago* – with **Constantino Manuel Torres**, Professor Emeritus of Florida International University.

April 13 • 8 pm: *An Intro to the Maya Can You Dig It?: The Tools of an Archaeologist*, with IMS Secretary and Library Chair **Janet Miess**.

April 20 • 8 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation Maya Textiles as Cultural Texts Through Time* – with **Dr. Gabrielle Vail**, of the Florida Institute of Hieroglyphic Research.

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

March 3-6, 2016: *Tulane Maya Symposium Ixiktaak: Ancient Maya Women* – The invited scholars will focus on the significance of women in ancient Maya society. This year's Keynote, hosted at the New Orleans Museum of Art, will be given by Dr. Mary Ellen Miller of Yale University. The symposium will take place at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. Get more at: <http://mari.tulane.edu/TMS/index.html>

March 11-12: *2016 Conference Midwest Conference on Mesoamerican Archaeology and Ethnohistory* – Dr. Elizabeth Pope of the Art Institute of Chicago will be the keynote speaker. Dr. Pope will speak on Friday, March 11. The symposium will follow on Saturday, March 12. At the College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL. (Sorry, no URL listed as of presstime)

March 20: *Alianza de las Artes Lecture Continuity and Creativity: Andean Tapestries in the*

Catholic Church – In sixteenth and seventeenth century Peru, Andean weavers created tapestries to adorn newly-built Christian churches. With Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Florida. At the Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO. Info at: <http://denverartmuseum.org/calendar/continuity-and-creativity-andean-tapestries-catholic-church>

April 28–May 1: *M@L Conference Maya at the Lago* – The Maya at the Lago Conference (M@L) is a four-day “Everything Maya” event that's comprised of lectures, workshops, and exciting social activities. M@L brings some of the world's top Mesoamerican archaeologists together to share their experiences and current research with colleagues, students, and the general public. At Davidson Day School in Davidson, NC. Get additional info at: <http://www.mayaatthelago.com/program>



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