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May 18, 2016 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.3.8.4 • 13 K'an 7 Sip • G2

**On May 11, as part of our Intro to the Maya series of Explorer Sessions, IMS Executive Vice President Marta Barber will separate fact from fiction when it comes to the question of:**

## How Bloody Were the Ancient Maya?

**A recent study, published in the Journal of Archaeological Science, may offer a little fuel to the fire:**

During October of 2015, a team of researchers from Southern Illinois University led by Professor Prudence Rice conducted a study of 108 Maya projectile points from excavations of a burial at the site of Zacpeten, Guatemala. Their research confirmed that the people of the Maya civilization had employed obsidian points in their religious rituals.

Traces of blood discovered on projectile points in Guatemala suggest the Maya took part in bloody ceremonies to communicate with their gods.

Bloodletting ceremonies involved piercing the earlobes, tongues and even genitals of willing participants and using



Three obsidian projectile points from the Peten lakes region of Guatemala look similar to the two points that tested positive for human blood.

Photo by Nathan Meissner.



Detail of Lintel 24.

One of the best-known lintels from Mesoamerica, Yaxchilan Lintel 24, shows Lady K'abal Xook drawing a barbed rope through her tongue. In front of her, Itzamnaaj B'alam II, her husband and ruler, is depicted holding a torch. Images courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum (where the artifact is housed).



the spilled blood to “feed” their deities. The projectile points were collected from five sites in Guatemala, including a temple at Zacpeten where it’s thought bloodletting ceremonies took place more than 500 years ago.

Stone reliefs created at the time have shown these ceremonies taking place, and rituals were carried out using carved bones, stingray spines or thorny ropes, as well as projectile points.

The points found by researchers are made from a volcanic glass called obsidian. They came from an elite ceremonial group, suggesting important members of society took part in the

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**May 18, 8 pm**

### IMS Presentation:



**The Crown Was Held Above Him:**  
**Revisiting a Classic Maya Coronation Ceremony**

with **Marc Zender**,  
Tulane University

ceremonies, but there is a chance whole communities were involved. Professor Rice noted that the Maya believe each person has a “life force” and ancient people thought

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**Jim Reed,**  
Editor

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# Inspiring Achievements of Visual Communicators



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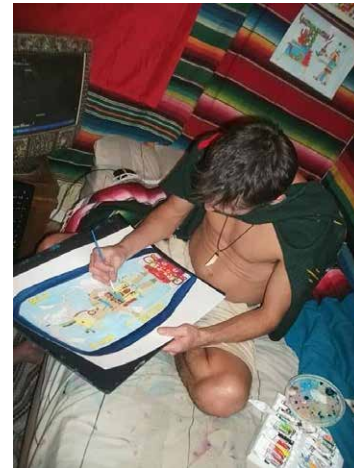
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Working with watercolors or colored markers, Rory is known for his use of vibrant colors. L) Izapa Stela 4 depicts a bird dance, which has a king or shaman-ruler being transformed into a bird. The scene is most likely connected with the Principal Bird Deity. This transformation could symbolize shamanism and ecstasy. C) Izapa Stela 2 has been linked to the battle of the Maya Hero Twins against Vucub Caquix, a powerful ruling bird-demon of the Maya underworld, also known as Seven Macaw. R) Rory, in bed, engulfed in his work.

## Rory Eade Arte: The Life and Times of a Visionary by Jim Reed

I respect people with a passion for the Maya and there are few who can combine that passion with impressive artistic talents like Rory Eade. He lives a simple life, but life hasn't been very kind to him. Overcoming times of injury and hardship, he has learned to endure and live strong. And via social media, he endeavors to share his vision with the world.



A tribute to the Temple of the Jaguar murals at Chichen Itza.



A colorful Xultun Stela 10.



## Arte MAYA en el Mundo

La Cultura Maya trasciende alrededor del planeta a través de quienes admiran los diferentes maticos de esta milenaria civilización, como es el caso del autor de la pintura del árbol de la vida, un canadiense de nombre Rory Eade, quien trabaja en una estación de gasolina en Ontario y su gusto por dibujar arte Maya y lo ha llevado a ganar la admiración de quienes están cerca de él, pues su jefe le permite dibujar y plasmar con pintura de agua estas imágenes, que forman parte de una colección con la cual asegura quiere mostrar desde ese país, lo maravillosa y fascinante que resulta la Cultura Maya.



Proyecto  
**BAKTEIN**

**YUCATAN INFORMATIVO.COM**  
Director: Victor Sandoval

Rory's artistic endeavors began during one of his first adventures through Mexico. He created designs and ads for tour agencies as well as illustrations for children's books. In Rory's own words... "I originally started doing paintings for kid's books long before I started doing the stelae, etc. Back in 2008, I had a serious nailgun accident and got shot in my left eye. Around 2011, I started to paint in bed every night because I couldn't sleep. PTS they call it. In this state of mind, I figure this must be a dream, so I dream to be a Maya artist. Here is a link to those paintings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJgl9bfjxwg>" continued on page 4



**Mochica Chasqui Pallares: Exploring the Bean Code**  
by Mark F. Cheney

Little did I imagine that my two loves – of both beans and epigraphy – could somehow be connected. Recently, I was researching something about Inkan *quipus* or “talking knots” in Google images, when I came across a photo of Lima beans (*Phaseolus lunatus*) with dark markings on them (Figs. 1–2). I followed up by exploring other available articles and discovered a PDF essay by Tomi S. Melka that went into great detail (48 pages) concerning what has been described to date about these specific Lima beans (or *pallares* in Spanish). I noticed the writer was being careful to never come to a definite hypothesis of his own, or even to cite any of the existing theories about the beans, as being definitive.

Melka cites Rafael Larco Hoyle, an early writer on the matter, as quoting José de Acosta, a Spanish Jesuit missionary (1590), and many other investigators that theorize about the use of the beans with “patterned drawings or incisions” among the Moche (Mochica) people over a period of time between ca. 100 BCE – ca. 850 CE, combining the various references, being 600- to 800-year periods here and there (Figs. 4, 5).

As for the purpose of the *pallares*, they were carried by *chasquis* (a Quechua word meaning “exchange” or “give and take”), or couriers



Fig. 1: Photo of *Pallares blanquinegras* (1).



Fig. 2: *Pallares* in an opened *spondylus* shell (3).

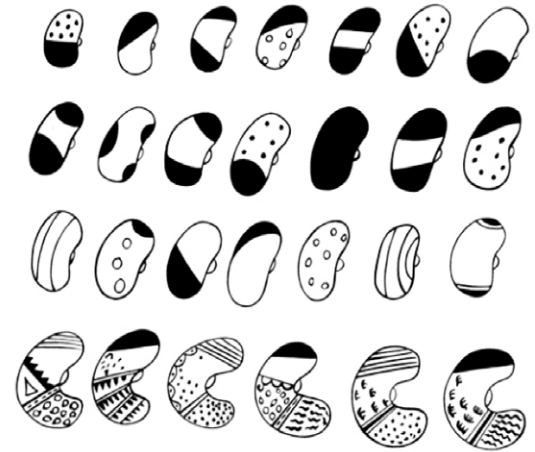


Fig. 3: Example of decorated *pallares* (2,4).

who carried groups of these painted and/or “incised” beans in “pouches apparently made from the tanned hide of llamas”, from one place to another. Of interest to me was where Melka stated, “...messages were dispatched by using mounted and/or walking or running messengers...” I wonder what sort of beast they might have “mounted”. I can only guess it would have been a camelid, such as a llama, ridden like a horse.

Melka surmised that there

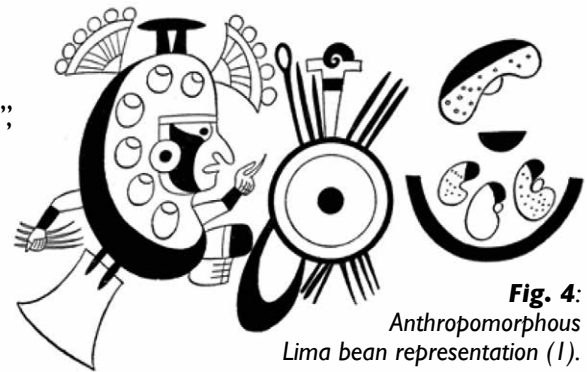


Fig. 4: Anthropomorphic Lima bean representation (1).

would have been three functions involved: first, an encoder to mark the beans with some kind of information, then a courier, and finally a decoder to interpret the message, whatever it might be. Melka was careful not to agree with Hoyle that it was an “ideographic” system of writing, but uses drawings of the beans lined up in rows, as though making some sort of sentences (Fig. 3).

I found that puzzling, as I don’t see how they could easily be put into meaningful order after being thrown together into a pouch. It seems more likely that they would be useful by being interpreted



Fig. 5: A confrontation of “bean” and “deer” warriors (2). Drawing by Donna McClelland.





# Inspiring Achievements of Visual Communicators

## Rory Eade Arte: The Life and Times of a Visionary

continued from page 2

In Rory's own words, we get a glimpse into his world...

"Here is a simple version of my life. I was born 38 years ago in Ontario Canada, where my father, who was an artist also, raised me with much love and respect for the Maya culture, and told me of places like Akumal and Tulum.

"He passed in 2007 and the following year was when I was injured at work in the nailgun incident. I started drawing every night. I paint with one eye, the other one has a plastic lens and I see far away with that one, but not up close up. Later, I got some money and went to Akumal in 2011 and 2012. I fell in love with Mexico, and the Maya.

"Four years ago, I moved from Ontario to British Columbia, Canada, to a small island named Salt Spring Island, after visiting Mexico a few times. In August 2013, I began painting the Maya stelae and lintels, in hopes to help make a difference in the world through my art, and maybe see Akumal again one day.



Rory is an active contributor to our IMS Facebook page. L) Here he depicts a palace scene from one of the most famous Maya polychrome vases, R) Number K511 in the Kerr Maya Vase Database, otherwise known as the Princeton Vase. We get a view into the supernatural court of the aged God L as he ties a jade bracelet onto the arm of a young woman, possibly the Moon Goddess. Note the standing woman pouring what is believed to be frothy cacao from one vessel to another, while the Rabbit Scribe records the event. Interestingly, when this vase was first published, the images were the first time that Justin Kerr used his roll-out photography technique, also it has been suggested that God L is the underworld counterpart of Itzamna, the supreme Maya deity and IMS mascot. Check out Kerr's body of work at: <http://research.mayavase.com/>



Last year, Rory posted this on Facebook: "Jim Reed surprised me by publishing my tribute to El Ceibal Stela 18 in the June IMS Explorer newsletter for the memoriam of IMS member Susan Hangege."



Yaxchilan Lintel 25 was originally set above the central doorway of Structure 23. It was carved from limestone during the reign of king Itzamnaaj B'alam II and shows Lady K'abal Xook invoking the Vision Serpent to commemorate the accession of her husband to the throne. The hieroglyphic inscription on the lintel is unusual, being reversed, as if it were meant to be read in a mirror, although the significance of this is unknown. (If the idea intrigues you, e-mail me for my thoughts on the matter! JR)



Rory's tribute to Mural I at the seaside site of Tulum.

"Hope you have a great day, did I ever tell you that maybe some day I'd like to get citizenship and open a studio down in Mexico, then get well known for my work!"

Let's help Rory with his dream! Contact me and make a \$\$ donation to assist him. I'll mail you one of three original paintings that Rory forwarded to me ([mayaman@bellsouth.net](mailto:mayaman@bellsouth.net)).

Rory has fifteen hundred Facebook fans and followers that include many notable Mayanists, such as David and Elaine Schele, Katherine Shurik, Sofia Paredes Maury, Eduardo González Arce, Steve Radzi, Erik Christiansen, Stanley Paul Guenter, Guido Krepel, Marta Barber, Santiago Billy, Jim Okon, Francisco Estrada-Belli, Michael Ruggeri, Mark Van Stone, Marc Zender, David Freidel, David W. Sedat, Alfonso Escobedo, Alfonso Morales, Karl Taube, Bryan Just, Barb MacLeod, Marcello A. Canuto, Susan Milbrath, Markus Eberl, Richard D. Hansen, and Arthur Demarest.

Befriend him and enjoy his almost daily posts on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/yum.kaax.7?fref=hovercard>





**Mochica Chasqui  
Pallares: Exploring  
the Bean Code**  
by Mark F. Cheney

*continued from page 3*

individually, perhaps like tarot cards, and then some meaning applied to all of the interpretations put together by the “decoder”, such as “auguries”.

Melka quotes Rafael Larco Hoyle in noting that “The extant corpora of the marked and/or incised beans appear mainly on earthenware or baked clay containers intended for storage, serving, or funerary offerings (**Fig. 6**), and in a similar manner in textiles, in which Moche artists had reached mastery” (2).

Different theories listed in Melka’s article include various kinds of inventories, e.g. food rations or manufactured goods, and messages about “military convocations or religious celebrations”, but more often numeric meanings are given than linguistic interpretations, or even “astronomical, astrological or meteorological sign systems.”

Melka explained that this form of communication was “to serve in particular the interests of the ruling class.” His most instructive statement in my mind, however, was “For the time being, the careful acquisition and exposition of the data seem a better option than ‘reading’, or ‘interpreting’ them.”

Many pieces of pottery have drawings showing hunting scenes with bean-shaped soldiers and other anthropomorphic illustrations using the reniform or kidney-like shape of Lima beans, and especially with ornithomorphous or particularly bird-like figures (**Fig. 7**), and what are called zoomorphic (in this case fox-like) depictions (**Figs. 6L, 8R**).

Another investigator of the *pallares* even compared them in some detail with Maya glyphs, and indicated that the cartouche shape of the beans was similar to many Maya examples (**Figs. 8, 9**).



**Fig. 6:** Examples of Moche stirrup spout pottery, all with Lima bean motifs (2,6). Museo Larco, Lima.



**Fig. 7:** Ornithomorphous Moche couriers – their headdresses may indicate individual names or possibly their rulers (2).



**Fig. 8:** Maya images with glyphs (from the Dresden Codex) compared to images on Moche pottery. L) Illustrations associated with divinities, R) Possible fox-like creatures (5).



**Fig. 9:** Maya images with glyphs (from the Maya codices) compared to images on Moche pottery. L) Illustrations associated with felines, R) Participants in rituals or possible scribes (5).

Researching further, I found that some modern Peruvians, such as investigator and author Maritza Villavicencio Fernández, are today using such beans, now grown with their own black markings made by nature, for soothsaying as an oracle or shamanic tool. Villavicencio warns,

“The magic *pallar* variant is *blanquinegra* and it is not advisable to eat them, because the black colored portion contains a high concentration of toxic hydrocyanic acid,” (**Fig. 1**).

As a final note, in the art of Ellen Izcue, I found a detail that may

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## How Bloody Were the Ancient Maya?

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they could “feed” the gods by sharing it in the form of blood.

Nathan Meissner, a researcher at the Center for Archaeological Investigations at Southern Illinois University, added: “We know Mayas participated in bloodletting as a part of birth or coming-of-age ceremonies. This practice served to ensoul future generations and connect their life force to those of past ancestors.”

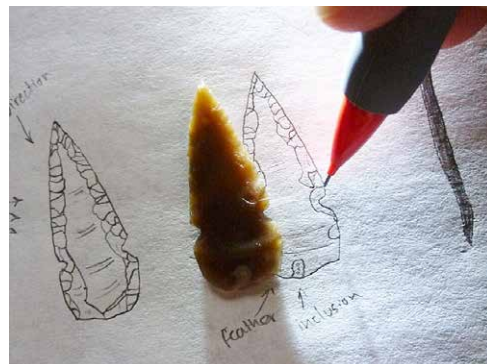
It is thought that people, including rulers, gave their blood voluntarily. The majority of these volunteers survived the gruesome ceremony, which sometimes involved ropes studded with thorns being drawn through the tongue, as depicted on Lintel 24 for example.

Drs. Rice and Meissner examined 108 projectile points collected at five sites in the central Petén region of Guatemala. All the points were dated 1,400 and 1,700 CE.

By using a technique called counter-immunoelectrophoresis, they were able to detect traces of blood on 25 of the artifacts.

In particular, they found two of the projectile points bore traces of human blood, while others had traces of animal blood, including that of large felines, rabbits, rodents and birds.

In the lab, the scientists removed proteins from the projectile points and then tested them to see how they reacted to serums containing the antibodies



L) The projectile points were collected from five sites in Guatemala, including this temple at Zacpeten where it's thought bloodletting ceremonies took place. R) This image shows a researcher documenting small points from the Peten lakes region. Images by Nathan Meissner.

of different animals. If a reaction occurred, they linked the point with being used on that animal.

However, Dr. Meissner cautioned that because of the process used, experts can never be certain that one particular point tip was used for bloodletting or if it was contaminated by chance or during hunting.

One of the projectile points with traces of human blood on it was found inside the ruins of a house near Zacpeten. Impact damage suggests it hit a person, rather than being used gently in a bloodletting ceremony.

The researchers believe a wounded person may have been carried to the house where the point was removed, or the point tip was recycled having been used in a skirmish. In fact, the study reveals the many uses for points.

Dr. Meissner explained, “Most were subsistence animals that would have been procured from hunting. This includes deer, rabbit, peccary, turkey, and paca. A couple of the

animals such as large cats (jaguar, jaguarundi, ocelot) certainly had ritual significance, but we can't say for sure if they were sacrificed in this particular context.”

Because of sacrifices, the Maya have a bloodthirsty reputation, but experts argue it's unfounded.

Dr. Meissner said: “Some of the characterizations of the Maya as bloodthirsty are indeed outdated, and have been used in many ways to justify stereotypes and often racist anti-indigenous narratives of the Conquest.

“It is important to approach Maya ritual behavior through the lens of their worldview that included complex cycles of renewal and time. Bloodletting was likely only one facet of much more elaborate ritual activity.”

Source: Condensed from an article released 10/21/2015 by Sarah Griffiths at: [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk).

**How Bloody Were the Maya?**  
Marta Barber separates fact from fiction on May 11 at 8 pm.

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**May 11, 2016 • IMS Explorer Session:  
An Intro to the Maya**

## **How Bloody Were the Maya? Separating Fact from Fiction**

**with IMS Executive Vice President Marta Barber**

Religious rituals among the Maya covered many different themes. War, the right to be king, and blessings from the gods for abundant harvests, were among those activities probably practiced on a daily basis. Ancient monuments, such as stelae and stone panels, tell us of specific rituals practiced by the elite in their pursuit of power. Many of these ceremonies involved the perforation of the body to extract blood. At the time of the Conquest, some of these ancient customs were still being practiced, the Maya gods were constantly petitioned, and tales of human sacrifice surfaced.



Illustration of Yaxchilan Lintel 24  
by Linda Schele (FAMSI/LACMA).

**May 18: IMS Feature Presentation**



Marc, deep inside the tunnels of the Acropolis at Copan, standing in front of the original Margarita panel... its only 1,500 years old!

## **The Crown Was Held Above Him: Revisiting a Classic Maya Coronation Ceremony with Marc Zender of Tulane University**

Ever since David Stuart's decipherment of the hand-holding-celt sign as K'AL in the 1990s, epigraphers have grappled with the sign's meaning. Coupled with Stuart and Houston's demonstrations that the BAAH "gopher" sign often functioned as a rebus for "head" or even "self", many epigraphers have come to translate a common Classic Mayan coronation phrase as *k'ahlaj sakhuun tubaah*, literally "the white headband is tied on his head". This paper reconsiders this phrase in the light of new evidence drawn from epigraphic, linguistic, iconographic, and ethnohistoric sources. First, a widespread sense of "hold" is also attested in the Ch'olan languages for *k'al*, and perhaps better fits the iconic origins of the hand-holding-celt sign. Second, Mayan languages commonly derive locatives from body parts,



strongly suggesting that a form like *t-u-baah*, although literally meaning "at/on his head" actually came to signify "above him". Third, occasional depictions of coronation scenes appear to show a priestly attendant literally "holding" a royal crown above the head of the acceding king, rather than tying or placing it on his head. Taken together, the evidence suggests that this phrase may have codified a key moment in the coronation ceremony where a priestly attendant held the crown aloft, perhaps for an adoring public to observe from a distance. As will be seen, intriguing comparisons can be drawn with coronation ceremonies from other cultures, particularly those of the Late Postclassic Aztec.

Marc Zender received his B.A. in anthropology from the University of British Columbia (1997), and his M.A. (1999) and Ph.D. (2004) in archaeology from the University of Calgary. He is now assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at Tulane University. Professor Zender teaches courses in historical linguistics, Maya hieroglyphic writing, and several Mesoamerican Indigenous languages (Ch'orti' Maya, Yucatec Maya, and Nahuatl).

**All meetings begin at 8 pm • Institute of Maya Studies • [www.instituteofmayastudies.org](http://www.instituteofmayastudies.org)**

**The IMS is a Community Partner with Miami Dade College – Kendall Campus, Miami, FL**

**Both programs will take place in K-413 (in Building K-4, Room 13)**

**Check out their website at: [www.mdc.edu](http://www.mdc.edu) for directions and campus map.**

**IMS Hotline: 305-279-8110**





**Fig. 10:** Detail from a painting by Ellen Izcue, a famous Peruvian painter who lived during the first half of the 20th century (1).

## Mochica Chasqui Pallares: Exploring the Bean Code

by **Mark F. Cheney** *continued from page 5*

show a religious connection to the beans that wasn't explicitly stated elsewhere. She drew the beans being transformed into people, not just symbolically, it seemed to me, but in some kind of creative or evolutionary process (**Fig. 10**).

This seemed like a very similar religious belief comparable to the Maya's *Popol Vuh*. There we discover humans were made from corn by the creator-gods. Perhaps the Moche were created from *pallares* by their creator-gods.

### On-line references

and image reference sources:

1) <https://maritzavillavicencio.lamula.pe/2013/10/14/pallares-mochica-en-paracas/oranek/>



**Fig. 11:** A depiction of *pallares* as warriors or hunters on a Moche vessel (3).

- 2) <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol45/melka.pdf>
- 3) <http://memoriasdeorfeo.blogspot.com/2014/05/cronicas-delecturas-81-aia-paec-ylos.html>
- 4) <http://tuymihistoria.blogspot.com/2014/02/sociedad-moche-segunda-parte.html>
- 5) <http://www.enprosayenverso.com/2015/08/escritura-peruana-pre-incana-rafael-larco-hoyle-.html>
- 6) For a view into the storage rooms of the Museo Larco in Lima, (photo 6R), go to: <http://lc-monster.net/2012/10/16/visible-storage-museo-larco/>

## Upcoming Events at the IMS:

All IMS events for May and June will take place in Room K-413 at Miami Dade College – Kendall Campus. That's Building K-4, Room 13. See [www.mdc.edu](http://www.mdc.edu)

May 11 • 8 pm: *An Intro to the Maya*  
**How Bloody Were the Maya?: Separating Fact from Fiction** – with IMS' very own **Marta Barber**.

May 18 • 8 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation*  
**The Crown Was Held Above Him: Revisiting a Classic Maya Coronation Ceremony** – A Classic Maya coronation phrase is reevaluated with **Marc Zender**, Tulane University.

June 8 • 8 pm: *An Intro to the Maya*  
**Earthquakes and Volcanoes: Geological Contributions to the Development of the Maya Civilization** – with IMS Director of Research **Joaquín J. Rodríguez III**.

June 15 • 8 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation*  
**Climate and Environment of the Maya Lowlands, Then and Now** – with **Mark Brenner**, Univ. of Florida.

## Upcoming Events and Announcements:

May 6: PCSWDC Lecture  
**Ritual Killing on the North Coast of Peru: New Discoveries and a Synthesis of Sacrifice in the Andean World** – Theme of the Pre-Columbian Society of Washington DC May Lecture with Haagen Klaus, PhD, assistant professor of anthropology at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. He is the director of the Lambayeque Valley Biohistory Project. At the Charles Sumner School, Washington, DC. Additional info at: <http://www.pcswdc.org/events/>

May 18: *Lecture: Mind of Maya Series*  
**Exploring the Cosmology and Hieroglyphs of the Ancient Maya** – with David Stuart, renowned Maya archaeologist and epigrapher, and director of the Mesoamerica Institute at the University of Texas at Austin. At the Witte Museum, San Antonio, TX. Details at: <http://mayasa.wittemuseum.org/visit/events/>

May 21: Smithsonian Weekend Program  
**Vanished: Behind the Mystery of Mesa Verde** – Why would the Pueblo Indians, who flourished for centuries in the Four Corners region of what is now southwestern Colorado, leave their familiar land and head south? Staff members from Colorado's Crow Canyon Research Institute offer insights into the enigma. At the Smithsonian (Mall exit), S. Dillon Ripley Center, Washington DC. Get more info at: <http://smithsonianassociates.org/>

June 15: *Lecture: Mind of Maya Series*  
**Maya Lifeways: Making a Living** – Theme of a museum lecture by renowned Mayanist Dr. Norman Hammond, Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at Boston University. At the Witte Museum, San Antonio, TX. Details at: <http://mayasa.wittemuseum.org/visit/events/>



# IMS EXPLORER

Join the **Explorer-ation!** Scholar or not, we welcome submissions from IMS members and other Maya enthusiasts. 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](mailto:mayaman@bellsouth.net)