

November 16, 2016 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.3.17.6 • 13 Kimi 9 Keh • G4

The following was submitted by my recently new Facebook friend, Antonio Novelo, who is a site guide at Lamanai. He forwarded this photo taken with Dr. Pendergrast and I asked him to compose an article for us. Enjoy the fruit of his effort!

Lamanai: Mundo Maya's Most Unique Archaeological Site by Belizean Site Guide Antonio Novelo

Somewhere in the jungles of the Maya world lies a little known, but very interesting and important archaeological site known as Lamanai. The ancient ceremonial center lies in the jungles of northwestern Belize, in the north of Central America, and on the east coast of the Yucatan peninsula. It is located on the banks of the New River in the Orange Walk District.

Lamanai has a long and colorful history that spans at least 33 centuries. When most of the most famous sites of the Maya world were in decline and had been abandoned by the end of the Terminal Classic period, between 800 to 1000 CE, Lamanai continued to flourish and actually had contact with the Spanish in the 1600s and with the English in the 1800s.

Lamanai's existence had been known from the early 1900s, but serious archaeological investigations did not begin until 1974 under the directorship of Dr. David Pendergast of the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto, Canada. I first met Dr. Pendergast in 1978 when I transported tons of supplies in my boat for his workforce at Lamanai. The ROM was the sponsoring entity for the excavations that would end 12 years later, in 1986, when the site was opened to the public and the world at large.

Dr. Pendergast was supposed to go and work in Africa, but back



Antonio sits with Dr. David Pendergast when he visited the site in July 2016 (accompanied by the current site director at Lamanai, Dr. Elizabeth Graham).

then, Belize was an English colony known as British Honduras. As a Commonwealth citizen, he easily got permission to do archaeological work in Belize, first working at Altun Ha from 1964 to 1971.

Archaeo-botanical data recovered from Lamanai in the form of corn pollen that was carbon-dated gives a date of 1500 BCE, which means that there was a very organized community at Lamanai; since the time when agriculture had been established. They were farming, they were growing corn. Corn is very important in the Maya diet, corn is very sacred in Maya culture. The Maya consider themselves to be children of corn.

In the first creation, the Maya gods tried to create humans from wooden sticks, but that did not work because they could not bend and had no feelings.

Volume 45
Issue 11
November 2016
ISSN: 1524-9387



Inside this issue:
Lamanai: Mundo Maya's Most Unique Archaeological Site, (cont. from page 1) 2

Equinoxes in Mesoamerican Architectural Alignments: Prehispanic Reality or Modern Myth? by Ivan Šprajc 3,5,6

INAH Archaeologists Uncover New Discoveries at Teotihuacan 4

Construction at Noh Mul, 4,7 by Joaquin J. Rodriguez III P.E.

Peter Schmidt Awarded the 2016 Yuri Knorosov Medal in Merida 6,8

November 16 IMS Program Announcement; IMS Membership Application 7

Upcoming Events 8

November 16, 8 pm IMS Presentation:



Kaxil Kiuic: Studying and Preserving the Puuc

with Dr. George Bey of Mishaps Colege

In the second creation, they tried to create humans from clay, but that did not work because when it rained on them they disintegrated

continued on page 2



Jim Reed, Editor

Lamanai: Mundo Maya's Most Unique Archaeological Site by Antonio Novelo *continued from page 1*



and washed away. In the third creation, the Maya gods created humans from the kernels of corn and that *did* work.

Dr. David Pendergast did an excellent job in excavating Lamanai and left behind a treasure trove of vestiges for visitors to admire. Visitors can see how the Maya used to construct new buildings on top of the old ones. Today, we would demolish an old building to put a new one in its place. The Maya simply covered the old building by constructing a new one on top of it.

Spanish contact at Lamanai is evidenced by the remains of two Spanish churches built in 1618 by two Franciscan friars named Bartolome de Fuensalida and Juan de Orbita. Evidence of an English presence at Lamanai is evidenced by the remains of a sugar mill built on top of bricks manufactured in England that were brought on board the English ships as ballast. An inscription on a metal commemorative plaque in the sugar mill reads "Leeds Foundry 1866".

Visitors to Lamanai are amazed by what had been buried underneath the jungle before excavations were carried out. The spectacular "Temple of the Mask" boasts two of the largest carved royal portraits found anywhere in the Maya area. The two-story "High Temple" gives a breath-taking view of the ocean of green around Lamanai, interrupted only by the New River.

One of the most elaborate and best-deciphered stone monuments of the Mundo Maya can be admired at the "Stela Temple". It records a very important event that occurred at Lamanai



A beautiful watercolor of Lamanai by artist Stan Loten.



The ballcourt at Lamanai with Structure N10-43 (High Temple) in background, viewed from the North. Both images from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington website at: <http://people.uncw.edu>. Ballcourt also at: www.latinamericanstudies.org/

on March 10, 625 CE. The ruler known as *Lord Smoking Shell* is depicted in full royal regalia.

The spectacular view of the "Temple of the Jaguar" with trees growing on top and backside can be had from the "Royal Complex" and it gives visitors an idea of how archaeologists encounter the huge hills covered with trees, while all-the-while buildings are buried underneath the jungle.

Lamanai also boasts an impressive museum where visitors can admire 2,600 years of human activity recorded on stone monuments, ceramics and other interesting artifacts.

Dr. Pendergast, 83 years young, visited Lamanai on Saturday, July 30, 2016, where he held a symposium with tour guides who work at Lamanai. He left Belize just days before hurricane Earl struck Belize on Wednesday, August 3, 2016. The benevolent Chaac, god of rain, thunder and lightning, spared Lamanai. Trees as high as six-story buildings were brought down, but not a single structure suffered any hurricane damage.

Getting to Lamanai is via the beautiful New River from Orange Walk Town, the ancient inland watery Maya trade route. In those times, the Maya called the New River *Dzuilhuinicob*, that means "River of Strange People" or "River of Foreigners" because of the great number of traders from distant lands who went up and down the river with their trade goods. Perhaps this is the reason for Lamanai's enduring success as a city state: their continued control of the ancient trading route. *Gracias, Antonio!*



The Temple of the Jaguar with accompanying trees growing on top; courtesy of: www.latinamericanstudies.org/

2016 IMS Board of Directors:

Eric T. Slazyk, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C
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/Treasurer/
Library Chair/Website
jmiess@gmail.com

Keith Merwin
Website Chair • webmaster@instituteofmayastudies.org

Beth Wein
Hospitality • bethwein@ymail.com

Gerald Wolfson
Public Relations
gerald.wolfson@att.net

Jim Reed
Newsletter Editor
mayaman@bellsouth.net

Equinoxes in Mesoamerican Architectural Alignments: Prehispanic Reality or Modern Myth?

Relevant highlights from an article by **Ivan Šprajc**

While the equinoctial Sun is commonly believed to have been an important target of Mesoamerican architectural orientations, the results of systematic archaeoastronomical research accomplished during recent decades do not sustain this opinion. Analyzing particular alignments that have been claimed to refer to the equinoxes, we show that such a relationship exists in very few cases, for which reason their intentionality remains questionable; instead of the true astronomical equinoxes, the quarter-days of the year were much more likely referents of several allegedly equinoctial alignments.

Every year on the March equinox, numerous archaeological sites surviving as a material testimony of ancient Mesoamerican civilizations are flooded by increasingly large numbers of visitors. Particularly crowded are some of the largest and most famous sites, such as Teotihuacan, Chichen Itza and El Tajin in Mexico. While multiple groups of modern pilgrims dressed in white (and pertaining to different versions of esoteric movements whose ambitions are to revitalize ancient wisdom) expect to receive supernatural energy and spiritual enlightenment, many other people simply want to share the experience and see whether anything happens.

This modern tradition has little to do with Prehispanic astronomical concepts, and it is surprising that even

in scholarly literature, particularly in general archaeological works not focused specifically on astronomical matters, the importance of equinoxes in Prehispanic times continues to be highlighted in ways that are entirely inconsistent with the results of serious archaeoastronomical research carried out during recent decades.

The equinoxes are often mentioned in tandem with the solstices, apparently because, for many Western-minded modern people sharing superficial but evidently ethnocentric astronomical notions, they represent the only significant moments of the tropical year.

Nobody seems to care that, while the solstices are marked by easily perceivable extremes of the Sun's annual path along the horizon, the equinoxes are not directly observable and can only be determined with relatively sophisticated methods. While the search for equinoctial and solstitial orientations was a general trend in early archaeoastronomical work, largely based on preconceived ideas, it is still rather common in Mesoamerican studies.

The purpose of this article is to call attention to specific cases and to evaluate the viability of arguments about the existence of equinoctial

alignments. In order to do that, however, we must first summarize the current knowledge on the astronomical significance of Mesoamerican architectural orientations.

Orientation patterns in Mesoamerica

The results of systematic research accomplished so

The article by the same name appeared in: Anthropological Notebooks Year XIX (2013), Supplement, Proceedings of the 20th Conference of the European Society for Astronomy in Culture



Ivan Šprajc, Ph.D. represents the Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia.

far indicate that the orientations of civic and ceremonial buildings in Mesoamerica largely refer to sunrises and sunsets on certain dates. It has also been shown that the dates recorded by orientations tend to be separated by multiples of 13 and 20 days. It has thus been argued that the architectural alignments allowed the use of observational calendars composed of calendrically significant intervals, and that these observational schemes – considering the distribution of the most frequently recorded dates in the tropical year – served to facilitate an efficient scheduling of agricultural activities and the corresponding rituals.

In view of the prevalent clockwise skew from cardinal directions, observed in Mesoamerican architectural orientations since the very beginning of serious archaeoastronomical research, it has long been clear that the purpose of recording equinoctial sunrises or sunsets could not have been a dominant underlying motive. The available data clearly show that, among the dates most frequently targeted by orientations, the solstices appear rather prominently, but not so the equinoxes.

The near-equinoctial orientations tend to record sunsets on March 23 and September 21, which fall two days after and before the spring and fall equinoxes, respectively. These dates, together with the solstices, divide the year into four equal periods of approximately 91 days and are commonly known as quarter-days.

continued on page 5



At Dzibilchaltun, an interesting light-and-shadow effect can be observed twice a year in the Classic period Temple of the Seven Dolls. In late afternoons, when the Sun rays enter the building through two windows and two smaller openings in the western wall, illuminated rectangles are projected on the opposite inner wall, moving up as the Sun descends, and disappearing at the moment of sunset; on the quarter days of the year (March 23 and September 20), they disappear aligned exactly with the corresponding openings in the eastern wall. Photos by Ivan Šprajc.



INAH Archaeologists Uncover New Discoveries in Teotihuacan

Archaeologists from Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) have recently finished excavation in front of Structure A, a structure located in the plaza in front of and attached to the Pyramid of the Moon. The plaza area is at the northern end of the Avenue of the Dead.



Various views of the excavations going on down in front of the Pyramid of the Moon. Photos by Meliton Tapia / INAH.

They have uncovered graves, with artifacts and 5 plain green-stone stelae buried within sealed circular pits; an enclosed courtyard of 25 m per side and 10 small shrines within it.

Archaeologists say that the plaza is very different now than how it appeared in the earlier stages of construction in the city. According to Veronica Cabrera Ortega, director of this research project and codirector of the entire site, the coverings over the pits that protect the stelae had to be excavated from the early stages of the city's development, around 100 CE, just at the time when the Pyramid of the Sun was being built and when the first construction stage developed on that of the Moon.

"These findings symbolize a new navel (ceremonial center) of the city,

facing a new cosmic center, (Pyramid of the Moon)", says Cabrera Ortega.

Cabrera Ortega advanced a hypothesis: "Although we have yet to understand a context, it speaks of the importance of green-stone and its link with water deities. It is here in the Plaza of the Moon, that the greatest sculptures of the goddess of fertility, *Chalchiuhtlicue*, were found, and it is likely that worship of the deity was closely related to what we encounter in the sublevels of the plaza today."

Excavations for this project began in 2015 and ended in July 2016.

Sources: Condensed by the editor from two sources, both with the same images: www.jornada.unam.mx, and: www.inah.gob.mx/



A view from a drone looking down into the circular pits. The excavated area has been compared to craters on a lunar landscape. INAH. 🏠

The IMS explores the scene of the destruction at Noh Mul, Belize

Construction at Noh Mul

by Joaquin J. Rodriguez III P.E.

IMS Director of Research

On February 7, 2014, a team representing the Institute of Maya Studies visited what remains of the site of Noh Mul in northwestern Belize. Located amid private sugar cane fields, seven miles north of the district capital of Orange Walk, the site has been the victim of several bulldozing episodes by road-builders in search of road fill, the first occurring in the 1940s and the latest in 2013.

Noh Mul began its long history in the Preclassic (350 BCE to 250 CE). It was abandoned in the Terminal Classic and Early Postclassic. The site

The damage to the large pyramid at Noh Mul, as viewed across a sugar cane field, courtesy of Belize Channel 5 News. Posted 5/15/2013 at: <http://edition.channel5belize.com/archives/85499>



ceremonial center with twin ceremonial groups, ten plazas, a raised sacbe and one ballcourt, as noted by the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH), of Belize.

Noh Mul was first recorded by Thomas Gann in 1897, who conducted several excavations at the site continuing up to 1936. Many of the artifacts recovered, such as polychrome vessels, jadeite jewelry, flint and obsidian, were

removed and sent to the British Museum. Norman Hammond mapped the site, and kept working there until 1986. After the 1940s incident, salvage archaeology found several burials, and the items are curated at the Museum of Belize (NICH).

As they say, every cloud has a silver lining. The destruction has exposed the core of two pyramids,

continued on page 7



represents a major

Equinoxes in Mesoamerican Architectural Alignments: Prehispanic Reality or Modern Myth?

Relevant highlights from an article by **Ivan Šprajc** *continued from page 3*

A few claimed equinoctial alignments in Mesoamerica

Dzibilchaltun

The Temple of the Seven Dolls or Structure I-sub at Dzibilchaltun, Yucatan, Mexico, has been one of the most popular focuses of modern equinoctial pilgrimages. A common belief, never substantiated by a sound argument, is that the passage shaped by four east-west aligned doorways of this building was intentionally oriented to the rising Sun at the equinoxes. The widely publicized photographs showing the solar disk nicely framed by the doorways contribute to the popularity of the event.

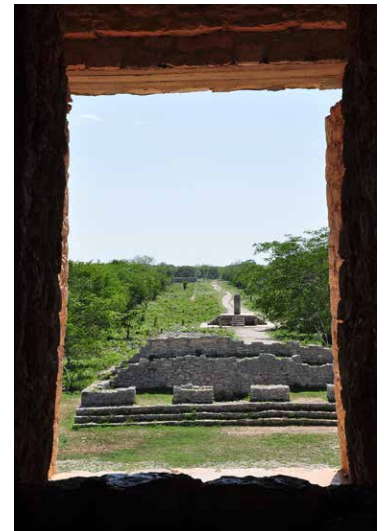
Nobody seems to care that the axial orientation of the temple, skewed about 1° clockwise from cardinal directions does not correspond to the equinoctial position of the Sun on the horizon and that virtually the same picture can be taken from different points and during several consecutive days, but only after the Sun has reached a substantial altitude above the horizon.

While there is no marker indicating the point for observing the equinoctial Sun, an interesting light-and-shadow effect can be observed inside the Temple of the Seven Dolls on the quarter-days.

Chichen Itza

The most famous Prehispanic building believed to reflect the importance of the equinox Sun is undoubtedly El Castillo of Chichen Itza, Yucatan (also known as the Pyramid of Kukulcan). Year after year, thousands of visitors gather at the spring equinox to observe the light-and-shadow effect produced before sunset on the northern balustrade of the pyramid, giving impression of the descent of a rattlesnake with illuminated dorsal triangles.

The ophidian heads decorating the base of the northern stairway make this visual effect even more persuasive. Rivard, who was the first to describe the phenomenon



Since the causeway (Sacbe I) leading westward from the Temple of the Seven Dolls (left) is skewed 1°40' north of due west, and because its central axis extended eastward passes a few meters north of the center of the temple, the appropriate points for observing the equinoctial Sun are located along a line running considerably south of – but not exactly parallel to – the central axis of the causeway. The line also runs several meters south of Stela 3 (right), which would appear to be a convenient marker of the observation spot, because it stands on a platform in the middle of Sacbe I, some 130 m west of the temple. Both photos by Ivan Šprajc.

in some detail, characterizing it as a “hierophany”, observed:

“None of the other three stairways bears any decoration, nor are large serpent heads to be found at its base. One might have expected such heads at the bottom of the southern stairway since the phenomenon is visible one hour after sunrise on the eastern side also. Their absence (if they were originally absent) would seem to indicate that the hierophany was of supreme significance only at the end of the day and not at its beginning.”¹

These circumstances, as well as the fact that, around the winter solstice, a comparable effect can be observed on the northern stairway of a similar pyramid at Mayapan, also known as El Castillo, seem to suggest the intentionality of both phenomena.

It should be underscored, however, that the play of illuminated triangles at Mayapan is visible during about a month before and after the December solstice and, likewise, the Chichen phenomenon does not change much during a few days before and after the equinox. Moreover, the most attractive illumination of the balustrade occurs about one hour before the sunset. For these reasons

it is impossible to ascertain – even assuming the intentionality of the light-and-shadow effect – which was the date targeted by the builders; and it would have certainly been impossible for them to determine whatever date by observing this phenomenon only.

If the play of light and shadow at El Castillo of Chichen Itza is the result of a conscious architectural design, it could only have had a symbolic function; in view of the lack of equinoctial alignments elsewhere, however, it seems more likely that the quarter-days of the year were targeted. If, indeed, the four stairways had 91 steps each, as noted by Landa, we may recall that the solstices and the quarter-days, rather than the equinoxes, divide the year into four equal parts of approximately 91 days each.

Even if there were serpent heads at the foot of each stairway (as also stated by Landa but never confirmed archaeologically), a special importance of the northern direction is indicated not only by the north-facing main entrance of the upper sanctuary, but also by the layout of the substructure, whose single stairway descends from the upper temple northwards. If the significance of the northern stairway reflects the builders’ desire to witness the serpent’s descent near sunset, as suggested by Rivard this would agree

¹Rivard, Jean-Jacques. 1969. A Hierophany at Chichen Itza. *Katunob* 7 (3): 51–57.



Equinoxes in Mesoamerican Architectural Alignments: Prehispanic Reality or Modern Myth?

Relevant highlights from an article by **Ivan Šprajc** *continued from page 5*

with the above-mentioned results of the analyses of large samples of alignment data, showing that the quarter-days were recorded on the western horizon.

Summary

In spite of the popularity of equinoctial pilgrimages to Mesoamerican archaeological sites, and although even many serious researchers still believe that the Sun at the equinoxes had an important role in the precepts dictating architectural design and urban planning, the evidence in favor of this opinion is, at best, scanty.

The famous light-and-shadow effect at El Castillo of Chichen Itza could not have served as a precise marker of any date; if it only had a symbolic significance, the commemorated dates may have been either the true equinoxes or some other nearby dates, including quarter-days. In the Temple of the Seven Dolls at Dzibilchaltun and many other buildings, the alignments that could have been related to the equinoxes are not unequivocally attested in archaeological record, but have rather been constructed on the basis of preconceptions about the importance that the equinoxes should have had.

The doubt cast on most, if not all, of the claimed equinoctial

alignments is based particularly on the known distribution patterns of architectural orientations in Mesoamerica. The buildings clearly exhibit their axial orientations; the fact that the corresponding horizon declinations evidently cluster around certain values indicates that the important civic and ceremonial structures were, in most cases, deliberately oriented to celestial events on the horizon. Since most of the east-west axes lie within the angle of solar movement along the horizon, it is also highly likely that they refer to the Sun's positions on certain dates. One of the most evident declination groups is centered on approximately 1°, probably referring to the quarter-days, but truly equinoctial orientations are virtually absent. It is for this reason that, for the two cases discussed above, we have suggested the quarter-day Sun as a more likely target.

While it would be imprudent – despite the foregoing arguments – to dismiss outright the possibility that some alignments were intended to record the true equinoxes, it does seem significant that the scarcity of equinoctial dates, in contrast to relatively frequent references to the solstices, has also been observed in Maya inscriptional records. In agreement with this

fact is the ethnographic information given by Vogt for the Tzotzil Maya of Zinacantan, Chiapas, Mexico: while they are acutely aware of the solstitial positions of the Sun, and even have names for the solstices in their own language, there are no words in Tzotzil to describe the equinox, nor do the modern Zinacantecos seem to be aware of the equinox positions of the Sun on the horizon.² If the equinoxes, indeed, appear in Maya codices, as has been argued, we should recall that they are all from the Postclassic period; this might suggest that the concept of the equinox came to be understood only in later times.

Equinoctial pilgrimages to archaeological sites should thus be replaced by visits more evenly distributed through the year; such rescheduling may not guarantee a more effective transmittal of ancestral values and spiritual energy, but would certainly have beneficial effects for the conservation of Mesoamerican archaeological heritage.

²Vogt, Evon Z. 1997. Zinacanteco Astronomy. *Mexicon* 19 (6): 110-117. 🏰

Thank you, Dr. Šprajc for this informative report. Check out another of his papers titled: Astronomy in Ancient Mesoamerica: An Overview, at: <http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy101.html>

Peter Schmidt Awarded the 2016 Yuri Knorosov Medal

Our Merida resident correspondent and former president of the IMS, Sid Hollander, submitted a link to an online announcement featured in *K'iintsil*, the Yucatek Maya pages on the *La Jornada Maya* news website.

In early October, at a press conference during the International Festival of Maya Culture (FICMaya), it was announced that Dr. Peter Schmidt is the corecipient of the 2016 Yuri Knorosov medal in honor of his decades of work at Chichen Itza. The medal was delivered on October 14 during a ceremony

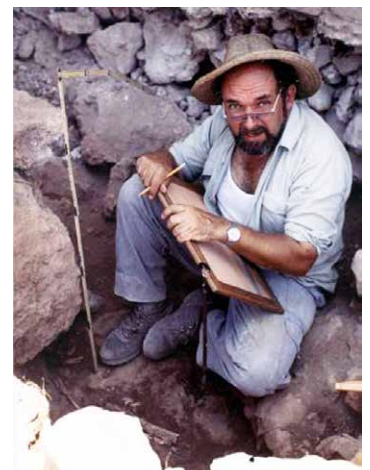
at the Grand Museum of Mundo Maya in Merida.

Schmidt worked in the area around Chichen Itza since the 1970s. Between 1979 and 1980, he defined and helped to establish a bio-reserve around the area, to protect and preserve the flora and fauna as well as all of the archaeological vestiges.

In 1993, he became the project manager of the Chichen Itza Archaeological Research Project, whose aim was to study the materials, archaeology, architecture, timing, iconography, agriculture, settlement patterns, and hydraulic works at the site.

Schmidt, from Hamburg, Germany, actually met Yuri Knorosov when the epigrapher made his first visits to Maya sites.

Schmidt notes "It was satisfying to talk to him, but how little we could *continued on page 8*



Peter Schmidt, early on, deep in the trenches in Chichen Itza. Photo courtesy of the Regional Anthropological Museum "Palacio Canton".

November 16 • 6 pm • IMS Feature Presentation
Kaxil Kiuc: Studying and Preserving the Puuc from the Middle Preclassic Until the 21st Century



George guiding a group of Millsaps students around the site.

with **Dr. George Bey III**,
 Professor of Anthropology and
 Chisholm Foundation Chair in Arts
 and Sciences, Millsaps College



George Bey III

This presentation examines the major results of Yucatan's Bolonchen Regional Archaeological Project as well as efforts to preserve and sustain the contemporary environment of the Kaxil Kiuc biocultural reserve. Over the last 17 years this multi-disciplinary regional project (BRAP) has transformed our understanding of the Puuc Maya. Detailed excavation, mapping and survey have led to a dramatic reevaluation of the early settlement, trajectory of cultural evolution and the abandonment of the region. This research has been carried out in conjunction with comprehensive conservation work at Kaxil Kiuc to preserve cultural resources and protect endangered environments. Presently 4,500 acres are under the protection of a non-profit reflecting a unique public/private partnership between Millsaps College and Mexico. In addition to the discussing the ancient Maya this talk highlights the successes and challenges of creating a biocultural reserve in Yucatan. Kaxil Kiuc's facilities, programs, and conservation efforts have evolved in an effort to develop a sustainable archaeology that recognizes the role of biological resources and cultural heritage.

The IMS is a Community Partner with Miami Dade College – Kendall Campus, Miami, FL
This program will take place in K-413 (in Building K-4, Room 13) • IMS Hotline: 305-279-8110
Go to the college website at: www.mdc.edu for directions and campus map.

Jaguar pelt border courtesy of Steve Radzi. See his portfolio of original Maya-themed artwork at: www.mayavision.com

Construction at Noh Mul
 by **Joaquin J. Rodriguez III P.E.**

IMS Director of Research *cont. from page 4*

including the largest pyramid at the site (see page 4). Rather than a superposition of construction sequences, as is commonly found at many Maya pyramids these seem to be all of one constructive effort. Instead of rubble, the whole core

mass appears made of well-hewn megalithic blocks.

A cist in the large pyramid seems to be intrusive. The masonry top is neither corbeled nor purposely arched. The alternating stones appear to be the coursing of solid masonry where a space has been later excavated.

Elsewhere on the site, a large, deep pit is enigmatic. At approximately 20 ft.-wide and over 30 ft.-deep, it

represents a massive constructive effort. The retaining walls on each side are of well-laid megalithic blocks, and must be quite thick to retain earth pressures for this height.

Today, it is open on one side, so water retention doesn't seem to be its purpose. (It may have been closed off originally.) Ceramic sherds now litter the site; courtesy, I'm sure, of the bulldozer's blade. 🗑️

2016 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>

- 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

Members: Be sure to get your password by contacting our Webmaster Keith Merwin at: webmaster@instituteofmayastudies.org

Mail payment to: The Institute of Maya Studies, Inc. • c/o Miami Dade College – Kendall Campus • 11011 SW 104 Street, Miami, FL 33176

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.



Peter Schmidt Awarded the 2016 Yuri Knorosov Medal

continued from page 6

converse because he spoke only Russian.” Knorosov was one of the most important pioneers in the study of Maya writing, he acknowledged.

In 2008, the INAH Chichen Itza Archaeological Project, under the direction of Dr. Peter Schmidt, re-exposed important hieroglyphic inscriptions in Castillo Viejo, or the Castillo in “Old Chichen”. The west jamb of the temple on top of Castillo Viejo contains hieroglyphic texts that were first published and discussed by Tatiana Proskouriakoff in 1970.

Now the jamb along with the opposite facing east jamb and the two temple pillars in between have been excavated. As a result, nine new hieroglyphic texts were discovered. Those nine – four around the base of each of the

pillars, and one across the base of the east jamb – along with the previously known west jamb, constitute a new set of data with dramatic implications for Chichen Itza studies.

In 1968, before working at Chichen Itza in the Yucatan, Schmidt was the Archaeological Commissioner of Belize. After an investigation of heavy looting at Cahal Pech, Schmidt decided to excavate. Schmidt excavated at the top of Temple B1, and in the central location of Plaza B. He found several important artifacts and tombs.

You can see view all of artifacts Dr. Schmidt unearthed in Belize’s Department of Archaeology, along with some of his drawings and notes.

At Xunantunich, former commissioner A.H. Anderson and Peter Schmidt excavated and consolidated various structures.

In 1968 and 1971, Schmidt conducted

Peter Schmidt at award ceremony on October 14. Standing to his right is the co-recipient of the honor, Fidencio Briceño Chel, a Mayan linguist, who is on the editorial board of K’iintsil for La Jornada Maya. Photo courtesy of the editor’s Facebook friend, Alfredo Barrera Rubio.



excavations in Plaza A-III and Plaza A-I. Schmidt thoroughly excavated rooms of Structure A-6 and reconstructed the roof comb. Along the south side of Structure A-I, he excavated beneath Stela 8 and Stela 10 and beneath an uncarved altar.

Source: Check out news for the Yucatek Maya at www.lajornadamaya.mx/2016-10-05/. Submitted by Sid Hollander.

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

Nov. 16 • 6 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation Kaxil Kiuc: Studying and Preserving the Puuc from the Middle Preclassic Until the 21st Century* – We featured the Kaxil Kiuc Bioserve and its jaguars in our July *IMS Explorer*. Now we feature the ancient Maya site itself in a lecture by one of its codirectors, **Dr. George Bey III**, of Millsaps College.

IMS Program Note:

In alignment with MDC, we now offer nine IMS presentations in conjunction with their calendar year: January – June and September – November. During the summer months of July and August, as well as December, there will be no public lectures. The programs will continue to be held at 6 pm in Room K-413 at Miami Dade College – Kendall Campus, 11400 SW 104th Street, Miami, FL. For more information, contact our Hotline at: 305-279-8110; or by email at: info@instituteofmayastudies.org

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

November 4-6: *Mesoamerican Conference Seventh Annual South-Central Conference on Mesoamerica* – the event provides a venue to bring together scholars in the fields of archaeology, ethnography, art history, and more. The event will feature our good friend Dr. Heather McKillop (Louisiana State University) presenting a program about 3D Imaging Underwater Maya Sites. At the University of Texas at Tyler. Get additional info at: www.southcentralmeso.org

January 10-14: *The 2017 Maya Meetings Tiillan Tlapallan: The Maya as Neighbors in Ancient Mesoamerica* – Tiillan Tlapallan, “Land of Writing and Painting,” is a Nahuatl place of myth and history, evoking the lands far to the east on the Gulf of Mexico. Keynote address by Dr. Marc Zender, Tulane University. The list of presenters includes David Stuart, Stephen Houston, Barbara Arroyo, Karl Taube, Megan O’Neil and Diana Magaloni. Registration is now open at: <http://utmesoamerica.org/maya/2017-maya-meetings>

March 2-5, 2017: *Tulane Maya Symposium Monumental Landscapes: How the Maya Shaped Their World* – Our good friend Marcello Canuto of the Middle American Research Institute (MARI) announces that registration is now open for the symposium. The event will feature the following speakers: Barbara Arroyo, M. Kathryn Brown, Arthur Demarest, Francisco Estrada-Belli, Eleanor Harrison-Buck, Brett Houk, Takeshi Inomata, Holley Moyes, Merced Terry Powis, Keith Prufer, and Brent Woodfill. The keynote address will be delivered by Dr. Arlen Chase of the University of Nevada, on Friday evening. The hieroglyphic forum will focus on new texts discovered from the site of Naranjo and will be led by Alexandre Tokovinine and Marc Zender. An alternative talk will be presented by Christopher Pool of the University of Kentucky. Registration is at: <http://mari.tulane.edu/TMS/registration.html>



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