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May 17, 2017 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.4.8.8 • 13 Lamat 6 Sip • G6

**The Names of the Lords of Xib'alb'a in the Maya Hieroglyphic Script**

Condensed from an article by co-authors **Stanley P. Guenter and Marc Zender**

The ancient Maya gods and their manifold manifestations on monuments, in codices and on beautiful polychrome ceramics have fascinated researchers for over a hundred years.

Many of these gods and their complex, highly patterned and often overlapping series of traits, share conventions of representation with gods of the Borgia group of codices of Central Mexico, such as the well-known Mictlantecuhtli, Cinteotl and Tlaloc, for example.

These similarities have been shown to reflect pan-Mesoamerican beliefs, and similar depictions across space and time have rightly been considered to reflect

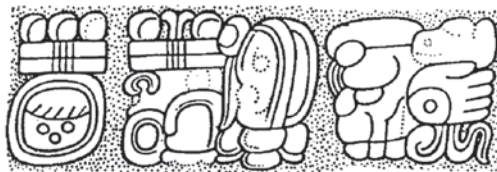
the historical relations of these deities. Karl Taube, for instance, has recently noted that “it is necessary to consider the Maya gods not as isolated phenomena, but as integral parts in the greater ideological system of ancient Mesoamerica”

This polemic was truly initiated by Eduard Seler, one of the first great Mesoamericanists, whose studies ranged over all of Central America – encompassing the traditional territories of the fields of archaeology, ethnography and linguistics – and who laid the groundwork for much of what is known about the Mesoamerican cultural area, and its attendant world system and linguistics.

In fact, it was Seler’s (1898, 1904a) insightful explanations of the Dresden



God L, God of the Night Sun, B'olon-[Y]ook-Te'-K'uh, on the East Door Jamb, Temple of the Cross, Palenque (drawing by Merle Greene Robertson, 1991, Fig. 43).



A



B



C



D

God A's Name, Title and Appearance. A) Death-phrase of Tahoom-U-K'ab-K'ahk', Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway I (drawing by Ian Graham, CMHI 2: 110). B) God A's name, Dresden page 12b. C) God A's title or augury, Dresden page 12b (B & C after Taube 1992: Fig. 1a). D) God A, Dresden page 13a (after Taube 1992: Fig. 1f).



**Jim Reed, Editor**

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**May 17, 6 pm**  
**IMS Presentation:**  
  
Portrait Glyph of God L, Dresden pg. 14c  
**Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: A Comparison with Other Ancient Writing Systems**  
with **Stanley P. Guenter**, Southern Methodist University

Codex Venus pages in light of the Borgia, Vaticanus B and Cospi codices that first opened the door to the identification of the depictions of ancient Maya deities with the cults of their modern-day descendants, whose names and rites have in many cases

*continued on page 4*

**Editor's note:** Recently, friend of the IMS and former presenter Sarah "Stacy" Barber of the University of Central Florida, contacted me after reading our coverage of the ancient palace unearthed at the site of El Palenque, Oaxaca, in the recent April 2017 *IMS Explorer* issue. She reminded me of the excavations and research she has been doing in the Río Verde Valley, also located in Oaxaca. Read on; I love the incised bone flute that this article will focus on!



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## **A Divine Wind: The Arts of Death and Music in Terminal Formative Oaxaca** – Condensed from an article that was originally released in *Ancient Mesoamerica* (23, 2012) by researchers **Sarah B. Barber and Mireya Olvera Sánchez**

While ancient music was inherently ephemeral, gone once its sound ceased, an extensive record of portable objects, visual art, and ethnohistoric documents attest to its importance in Precolumbian Mesoamerica.

Musical instruments appear in exclusive high-status contexts such as palaces and temple precincts. Musicians and instruments were painted onto temple walls and in the pages of codices. They occur in caches in public spaces and in tombs.

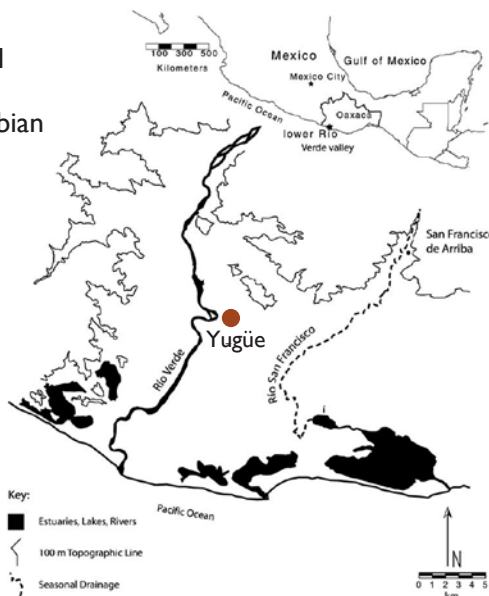
Instruments can be found in the form of modest ceramic whistles and ocarinas in domestic middens and non-elite burials. Their ubiquity in the archaeological record emphasizes their significance; people of all social positions played musical instruments for a wide range of purposes.

While the documentation and organology of Mesoamerican musical instruments has a long scholarly history, consideration of the social context of Precolumbian music is a topic that has only recently been broached by researchers.

The more recent studies suggest that music was not simply an aural accompaniment to certain kinds of social action and that musical instruments were more than tools for producing sound. Instead, recent research suggests music and instruments were enmeshed in communication and interaction between humans and other animate entities within the Mesoamerican universe.



Stacy Barber and Liz Paris enjoying excavating  
●● Burial 14-Individual 16 at Yugüe.



The lower Río Verde Valley on the Pacific coast of Oaxaca and the location of the site of Yugüe.

### **The Burial Excavation at Yugüe**

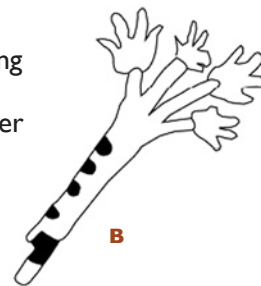
Drawing on these ideas, we seek to expand the discussion of music in Precolumbian Mesoamerica through the detailed examination of a Terminal Formative period (150 BCE – 250 CE) burial from the site of Yugüe in the lower Río Verde Valley on the Pacific coast of Oaxaca (above). Burial 14-Individual 16 (B14-I16) consisted of a sub-adult male wearing an iron-ore mirror and holding an elaborately incised bone flute. Both the incising on the instrument and its archaeological context offer a unique opportunity to consider the social context of music and musical instruments at Yugüe and in Mesoamerica more broadly.

Like many Mesoamerican instruments, the Yugüe flute bears the portrait of an anthropomorphic figure (see various photos on page 6). Given the ability of portraits to literally embody the essence of a depicted entity in Mesoamerican ontologies, we argue that the Yugüe flute was an animate object with a voice and a life essence that actively participated in social action.

Attributing animacy to the flute requires us to consider musical production as part of interactions between human and



A



B



C

External-duct flutes depicted in Precolumbian codices: (a) flute player from the Dresden Codex (redrawn from Thompson [1972] by W. Bayuk), (b) "Hill of the Flowery Flutes" from the Codex Tonindeye (redrawn from Nuttall [1975]), (c) "Hill of the Flowery Flutes" from the Codex Ica Nacuaa (redrawn from Caso and Leon-Portilla [1996]).

continued on page 6

## Woven Memories – Traditional Maya Weaving

by Mark F. Cheney

Mesoamerican cultures have been profoundly influenced by their clothing and textiles. Even ancient Olmec stone sculptures have shown what look like “magnificent textiles” per Michael Coe and Richard A. Diehl’s *In the Land of the Olmec: The Archaeology of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán*. The clothing revealed on Maya painted vases and in murals as found at Bonampak is described as “sumptuous” by Patricia Rieff Anawalt in her book *Indian Clothing before Cortés*.

Even for the modern Maya, traditional dress plays an essential role identifying members of various indigenous communities. Worn as a symbol of ethnic pride and for religious ceremonies, textiles are both personal and cultural modes of expression, as well as wonderfully marketable products for the tourist industry.

Maya women traditionally wore a long wrap-around skirt and a *huipil* (Náhuatl word), a loose cotton tunic, and some wore a simple mantle that covered their breasts, called a *pati*, see example above.

### Fibers, Tools and Dyes

Anciently, fabric similar to linen, which is made from the flax plant,



A woman in a huipil from San Andrés uses a back-strap loom. Courtesy of Janet Schwartz, photographer for the book *Maya Threads: A Woven History of Chiapas*.



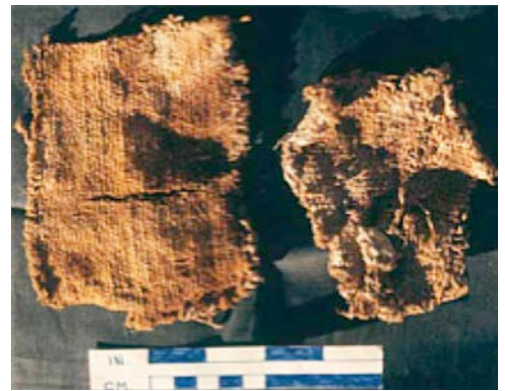
A traditional *pati*. Not every Maya woman wore the huipil with their skirt, when they did wear more than a skirt. According to bishop Diego de Landa, women in Campeche, Bacalar and along the coast, wore a skirt as well as a folded piece of cloth tied around their torsos. He called the folded cloth a *manta* – but it is also known as a *pati*.

was made from the fibers called henequen from agave, maguey or yucca fronds. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, a soldier under Cortés and chronicler of the conquest, said the clothing of the natives was “like linen” in his *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico*.

In Anawalt’s above-described book, she wrote that silk was spun from the cocoons of wild moths. Another reference states, “Wild silk was produced by the *Gloveria paidii*, a moth, and the *Eucheira socialis*, a butterfly, found in the Oaxaca, Mexico, area (de Ávila Blomberg, 1997).

It is suggested by de Ávila Blomberg that wild silk was used in Oaxaca in Precolumbian times, a theory that has been greatly debated. However, in a 1777 document, an excavation of a Precolumbian burial site is described as containing “wild silk” according to Careyn Patricia Armitage from her research, “*Silk production and its impact on families and communities in Oaxaca, Mexico*,” in graduate theses and dissertations, Iowa State University (2008).

The tool most often used traditionally by the women is the ubiquitous backdrop or “back-strap” loom as shown in the *Florentine Codex*. The famous *Florentine Codex* is one of the most important sources on early Mexican crafts and techniques. This codex is a treatise with the full



Textile of cotton and rabbit hair from Acatlan Cave.



Textile of vegetable fiber from Acatlan Cave. Both photos above are by David C. Grove, published at: [www.famsi.org/research/grove/section15.htm](http://www.famsi.org/research/grove/section15.htm).



Depiction of a back-strap loom in use as shown in the *Florentine Codex*.

title of *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España*, written in the sixteenth century. The author, Friar Bernardino de Sahagún, interviewed indigenous people about various aspects of their lives and recorded their descriptions in Náhuatl.

In the Yucatan *kapok* fibers from the seed pods of the sacred *ceiba* tree were twisted and spun into a “soft and delicate” cloth similar to silk per Clavigero’s *History of Mexico I*, as translated by Cullen. Sadly, cloth did not hold up well over the centuries in the Mesoamerican climate. Besides vegetable fibers, more esoteric cloth was woven from cotton and rabbit fur (note samples shown in the photos above).

continued on page 5



# The Names of the Lords of Xib'alb'a in the Maya Hieroglyphic Script

Condensed from an article by co-authors Stanley P. Guenter and Marc Zender

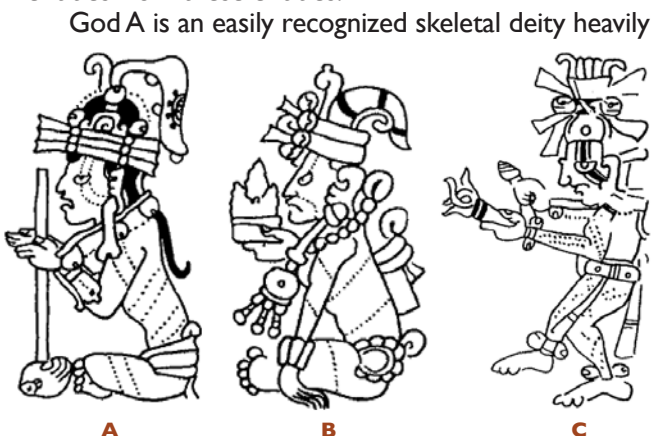
continued from page 1

survived to be collected by modern-day ethnographers. Subsequent identifications of Maya deities and their diagnostic features by Förstemann (1886, 1906), Schellhas (1886, 1897, 1904) and Seler (1887, 1904b) led to the description of some fifteen deities, including, in many cases, their nominal and augural glyphs.

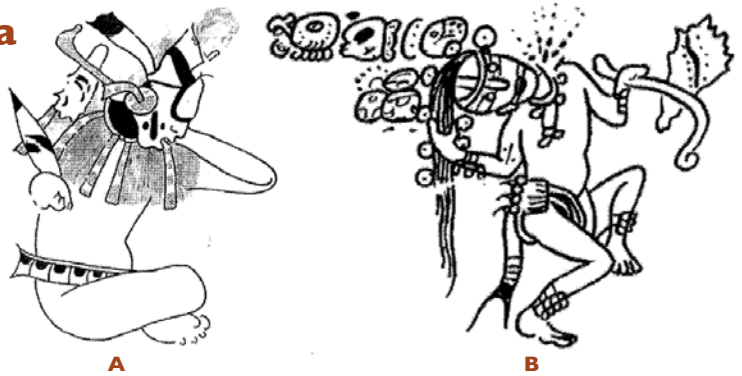
As the greater part of these signs had not yet been read, these deities were given letter designation by Schellhas (1904), and this system was eventually adopted by all other researchers due in large part to the ease with which new additions and emendations could be comfortably accommodated within it. The usefulness of this system, and its entrenchments in the literature, urges its maintenance even during this time of increasing confidence in the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphic writing.

As related in the seventeenth-century K'iché Maya creation epic, the *Popol Vuh*, two brothers – Jun Junahpu and Wukub' Junahpu – quickly found that the names of the lords of Xib'alb'a were the key to successfully penetrating their bleak domain. Upon failing to provide the proper means of address to such notables as “Skullsplitter”, “Bloodgatherer” and “Seven Death”, these brothers failed the first important test. Their heads were separated from their bodies, and they became denizens of the land of death themselves. By contrast, the Hero Twins Junahpu and Xb'alanque passed this test with aplomb. They tasked a mosquito to bite each demon thereby revealing their names when each was asked by another what ailed them. This ingenious ploy allowed the twins to march right into Xib'alb'a and address each Lord by their names. Xib'alb'a and its mysteries would be brought screaming forth into the light; death would be vanquished, so that life would flourish.

In the full article that is available by searching the title on *Academia.edu*, the co-authors follow the example of the Hero Twins by unraveling the coveted names of the Lords of Xib'alb'a. Recent hieroglyphic decipherments are the mosquito they used to coax their names and identities from these entities.



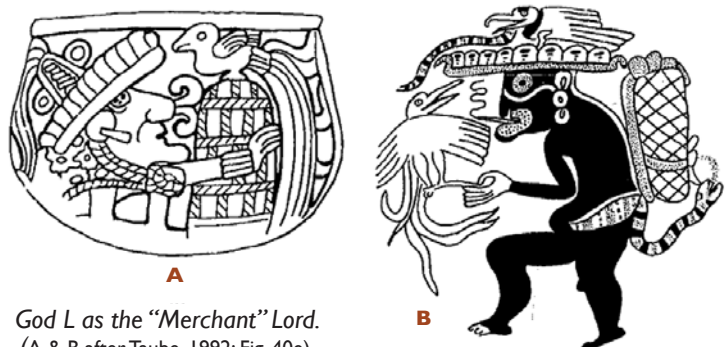
Representations of God Q and his Appellative Glyphs. (all after Taube 1992: A) Dresden page 6b, Fig. 53e, B) Dresden page 10b, Fig 53f, C) Madrid page 84c, Fig. 53g).



A) God A<sup>1</sup> impersonator engaged in mock sacrifice, Altar de Sacrificios vase (after Taube 1992: Fig. 3b) B) God A<sup>1</sup> in act of self-decapitation (redrawn after Taube 1992: Fig. 2g).



God L, enthroned on the “Princeton Vase” (after Coe, 1973, Fig. 92).



God L as the “Merchant” Lord. (A & B after Taube, 1992: Fig. 40e).

God A is an easily recognized skeletal deity heavily associated with death and the underworld. God A<sup>1</sup> is associated with violent death through sacrifice by decapitation. On the other hand, God Q, his Postclassic alter-ego, seems to have been concerned with death by execution. God L has been determined to be both the daytime Sun God and the God of the Night Sun.

**Editor’s note:** This article by Stanley Guenter and Marc Zender was condensed from a chapter that appeared in an UNAM/INAH multi-language publication in honor of Eduard Seler. You can access the complete chapter with all the above mentioned references by searching the article title or authors on [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu).

Stanley Guenter studied archaeology at the University of Calgary, La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia, and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, before receiving his PhD in Anthropology from the latter in 2014.

**Stanley will be our featured speaker on May 19.** See his program announcement on page 7. *IMSers, be there!*

## Woven Memories – Traditional Maya Weaving

by **Mark F. Cheney**

*continued from page 3*

Beyond the fabrics used anciently, however, are dyes made from crushed seashells, plants and insects, and designs that have changed some over the centuries, but the fact that they have endured at all is a cultural miracle.

In my modest collection of things Mesoamerican, one of my most prized possessions is a large (30" x 30") tapestry that I purchased from its creator in Santiago Atitlan on a trip to Guatemala in 1995.

In researching this article, I found a photo of a golden tapestry of a strikingly similar design which had been sold at auction online.

### Additional Resources

Three wonderful, recent books with beautiful photos are: *Oaxaca Stories in Cloth*, by Eric Sebastian Mindling (2016), *Traditional Weavers of Guatemala: Their Stories, Their Lives*, by Deborah Chandler and Teresa Córdón (authors) and Joe Coca (photographer) (2015), and *Maya Threads: A Woven History of Chiapas*, by Walter F. Morris, Jr. and Carol Karasik, along with Janet Schwartz (photographer, except as noted, 2015). *Maya Threads* was reviewed in the April 2016 *IMS Explorer*.

In the more scholarly book by Tia Tohver, PhD, *Weaving with the Maya: Innovation and Tradition in Guatemala* (2012), she explains that “The link between weaving and creation goes back to Precolumbian times... The creation of cloth and the



L) The tapestry I procured in Santiago Atitlan. R) Intricate golden tapestry in online auction.



*Cloth fragments from Cueva de Chiptic, Chiapas Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City.*

act of weaving itself is considered a gift from the Goddess IxChel, she wove the colorful rainbows in the sky and manifested the skill of making patterns to the Maya women in times past.”

For those wanting to look further into this amazing aspect of the ancient Mesoamericans, there are some beautiful photographs of designs from the American Museum of Natural History in Stacy B. Schaefer’s *Huichol Woven*

*Designs: Documenting the Encoded Language of an Ancient Mesoamerican Artform* (FAMSI ©2002) available online at: [www.famsi.org/reports/95010/95010Schaefer01.pdf](http://www.famsi.org/reports/95010/95010Schaefer01.pdf).

Schaefer wrote in the Introduction that the “Huichol Indians, more so than most other indigenous groups in Mesoamerica, have maintained beliefs, customs and traditions with antecedents dating back to Precolumbian times.”

According to Bunson’s *Encyclopedia of Ancient Mesoamerica* (1996), the making of textiles likely began with the weaving of baskets and *petites*, coiled mats used anciently. However, to quote from the *Athena Review Image Archive* online, “Textiles from Precolumbian Maya sites are rare, with most examples coming from underwater deposits such as the Cenote of Sacrifice at Chichen Itza... (and) these cloth pieces found in a Postclassic era cave deposit in Chiapas show colors comparable to those used in wall frescoes.”

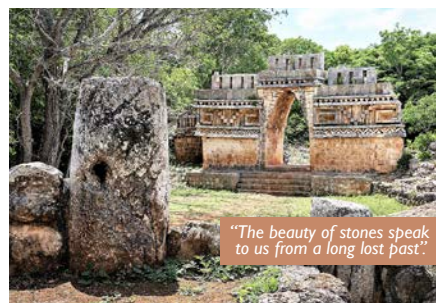
We are indeed fortunate today that so much has been carried down to the present times by the people of Mesoamerica.

## Maya World Images (MWI)

by IMS Fellow **George Fery**



*Maya World Images* brings you the great past of the Maya and their neighbors by showing their art, culture and history through photography. The site is based on images gleaned from field trips over the past thirty-five years, mixed with interviews with archaeologists working in the field. Fery’s photos of the magnificent ancient buildings and works of art are testimonies to the outstanding architectural achievements of the ancient Maya. The “Lectures” also document the surviving customs and traditions of the modern Maya. *continued on page 7*



*Editor’s note: On George’s website he posts informative and educational “Lectures” that focus on various sites. His latest Lecture to be posted features the ancient Puuc site of Labna. Above, a photo of it’s famous arch.*

# A Divine Wind: The Arts of Death and Music in Terminal Formative Oaxaca

Condensed from an article that was originally released in *Ancient Mesoamerica* (23, 2012) by researchers **Sarah B. Barber and Mireya Olvera Sánchez**  
*continued from page 2*

“nonhuman” beings rather than simply as human produced harmonic or rhythmic sound. It also suggests that B14-116 was not simply the interment of a young man and his possessions, but rather the multiple burial of animate beings linked, in life and in death, through their social relationships with one another.

## Archaeological Context

Burial 14-Individual 16 was recovered from a late Terminal Formative period (100–250 CE) cemetery located at the summit of the 10-m-high earthen platform that comprises much of Yugüe’s 9.75-ha area. The area was not domestic, and was used for collective ritual and burial throughout the Terminal Formative period. The cemetery, or Burial Area I (BAI), was a discrete burial group containing the remains of at least 44 individuals.

Burial 14-Individual 16 was a sub-adult male between 15 and 17 years of age buried according to the pattern of other adults in the cemetery. An iron-ore and plaster disc was located below B14-116’s mandible and the flute was resting against his left forearm. The fingers of his left hand were curled around the bell of the instrument.

While it is not possible to reject the hypothesis that 116 was a human sacrifice, we believe that the burial context and contents more strongly support the interpretation that he was a prominent community member who died of natural causes.

## The Yugüe Flute as a Musical Instrument and an Art Object

The Yugüe flute was a vertically held external duct flute made from the left femur of a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). When played, the bone would have been held in an inverted position with the embouchure at the distal end of the bone and the bell at the proximal end.

The Yugüe flute is the earliest example of an external-duct flute reported for Mesoamerica and can be distinguished from most Precolumbian Mesoamerican flutes due to the artistry of its design.

The central element of the image is an anthropomorphic male figure in profile facing toward the bell of the instrument.

The incisions make use of the bone’s topography to imbue a sense of three-dimensionality to the design. The rendering of the image and the motifs present reveal evidence of cultural transmission between both highland-coastal and trans-coastal interaction spheres.

The central figure on the flute bears elements pertaining to both death and fertility, embedding it within widespread Mesoamerican rain, wind, and agriculture deity complexes.

## Conclusion

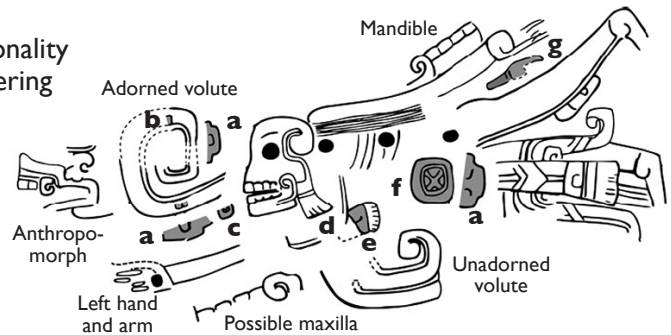
The music of the Yugüe flute was a creative and transformative phenomenon enabling both humans and non-human beings to shift experiential perspectives in such a way that each could interact with the other. It delimited an aural space that was shared by the living and the divine. The creation of such spaces was fundamental to the successful completion of a wide range of social transactions in Precolumbian Mesoamerica, from petitioning for rain to human sacrifice to enthronement to war. Musical instruments were not considered



Close-up photo and illustration of the Yugüe flute, lateral view.



Close-up photo and illustration of the Yugüe flute, dorsal view.



Graphic elements incised on the Yugüe flute: (a) trefoil, (b) paired dots, (c) U-infix motif, (d) pectoral, (e) mirror?, (f) crossed-bands, (g) handled implement.

to be inert objects manipulated by musicians during these transactions, but rather active participants.

Many, if not all, Precolumbian musical instruments probably were animated by virtue of their voices and any images they carried on their surfaces. The Yugüe flute is an unusual example because of its elaborate incising, archaeological context, and raw material, but the many more mundane instruments found in middens or domestic interments may have held a similar place in Precolumbian ontologies. Further exploration is needed because music was fundamental to the ancient Mesoamerican experience. 🏹

Source: Condensed from an article by Sarah B. Barber and Mireya Olvera Sánchez in *Ancient Mesoamerica*, 23 (2012), Cambridge University Press. Submitted by Stacy Barber of UCF.



May 17 • 6 pm • IMS Feature Presentation

## Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: A Comparison with Other Ancient Writing Systems

with **Stanley P. Guenter**, PhD, Southern Methodist University

Over the last three or four decades Maya hieroglyphic writing went from being a largely undeciphered writing system to one epigraphers could read and understand most texts from the Classic Maya period. In this presentation, Maya hieroglyphic writing and the data the decipherment of these texts have provided scholars will be compared and contrasted with the information derived from other ancient writing systems, such as the hieroglyphs of Egypt, the cuneiform writing system of Mesopotamia, as well as a number of the many writing systems of Asia and Europe. In the process, this comparison will reveal how thoroughly Mesoamerican the ancient Maya and their writing system truly were.

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

**This program will take place at 6 pm in K-413 (in Building K-4, Room 13)**

**Go to the college website at: [www.mdc.edu](http://www.mdc.edu) for directions and campus map. IMS Hotline: 305-279-8110**

### Maya World Images (MWI)

by IMS Fellow **George Fery**

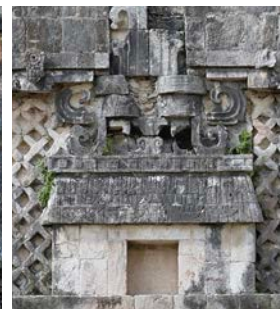
*continued from page 5*

**MWI** "Lectures" are offered to the public and students to increase their interest in the Maya world, as well as other historical and traditional cultures of North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean basin.

Lectures aim at education and information; they could not be possible without the cooperation and support of institutions, archaeologists and scholars from the United States, Mexico and other countries, who contributed data and research papers on archaeological sites' history and architecture.

*continued on page 8*

*Lectures are posted in a dynamic PDF format whereby texts and links can be highlighted, then copy and pasted into your web browser or class report!*



*The Naah represents the wattle and daub dwellings of the common Maya people. They are often found represented on Puuc buildings. Above, we see the Naah on the west side of the Labna Arch (left) and on the south façade in the Nunnery Quadrangle at Uxmal (right). They are also found at Chacmultún.*

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## Maya World Images (MWI)

by IMS Fellow **George Fery**

continued from page 7

George notes: "In the late sixties, extensive studies of ancient beliefs and religions grew to a lifetime dedication to research, both academic and in the field.

"This quest rapidly focused on the search for a common denominator that drove humans and their cultures, to dedicate their hearts and minds to something other than themselves.

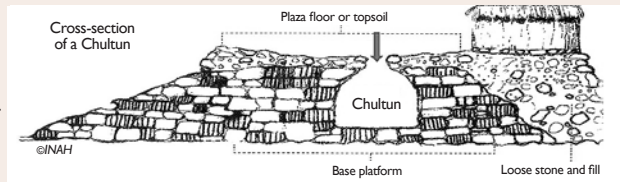
"Years of academic studies, field research and expeditions in the rain forests of South and Central America, as well as archaeological sites in Mesoamerica, alone or with a team of like-minded scholars and professionals, allowed me to further study Precolumbian cultures, and in the process, build an extensive photo library

Here's an example of the educative aspects of George's Lectures:

of hundreds of archaeological sites.

"Traveling and learning, often with great scholars and archaeologists, but best of all, friends, continues and will for years to come. Learning ancient and contemporary myths and beliefs, is the cornerstone for understanding people and cultures. It is even more so for today's traditional communities of the Americas, given the historic impact of the 16th century European contact, and its ensuing cultural and social collapse.

"**Labna** is the new edition on-line in the "Lecture" page at: [www.mayaworldimages.com](http://www.mayaworldimages.com). It is the third after Balankanché and Dzibilchaltun, and will be followed within the next two months by Tulum and Palenque. Additional sites, such



A cut-away view of a Maya chultun by an INAH artist (above) is juxtaposed with a photo of an actual surviving chultun located within the Palace at Labna (below, by IMS President Eric Slazyk).



as Chichen Itza, El Tajin, Teotihuacan, Bonampak, and others, will follow."

George is a Fellow of the Institute of Maya Studies, as well as the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, London, U.K., and a member in good standing of the Maya Exploration Center, Austin, TX. 🏛️

## Upcoming Events at the IMS:

May 17 • 6 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation*  
**Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: A Comparison with Other Ancient Writing Systems** – with **Stanley P. Guenter**, PhD, Southern Methodist University. This presentation will contrast other writing systems of the ancient world to that of the Maya, and reveal how Mesoamerican the ancient Maya and their writing system truly were.

June 21 • 6 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation*  
**Illustrative Travels Along the Maya Coast of Quintana Roo** – with Illustrator/Artist **Steve Radzi**. Steve has recently returned from another adventure in the Mayalands and will share new artwork and amusing travel stories.

### IMS Program Note:

In alignment with MDC, we now offer nine IMS presentations during a calendar year: January – June and September – November. We will take a summer break during the months of July and August.

## Important Announcement:

INAH archaeologists have been working on tunnels under the Pyramid of the Quetzalcoatl (Feathered Serpent) at Teotihuacan for eight years. They have been searching for a tomb of an important ruler at Teotihuacan; but no such tomb has been found. Their progress has been covered many times in the pages of the *IMS Explorer*.

In 2015, a treasure trove of artifacts were found in a secret tunnel and beds of mercury that had to have been brought to the tunnel to simulate an underground river. The earth in this spot had been sculpted into miniature landscapes of mountains and valleys as well.

The tunnel was sealed in 250 CE then re-entered in 530 CE. It is possible that a tomb may have been compromised then. 100,000 artifacts have been excavated, including four adorned greenstone figurines, three

We'll miss the exploits of the robot camera nicknamed "Tlaloc" as it explored the 103-meter tunnel.



women and one man, near the tunnel entrances. Conch shells from the Gulf Coast, Pacific, and Caribbean were found, some with carved Maya glyphs, jade ornaments from Guatemala, rubber balls, ceramics pots from neighboring states, and animal bones from birds, jaguars, and even a bear.

"At the beginning of all this, we thought the tunnel was a metaphoric representation of the underworld, the place of creation and transmission of power, and that we would find a royal tomb in this very sacred place," said lead archaeologist Sergio Gómez. 🏛️

# 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)