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Maya enthusiasts providing public education for 46+ years

A Community Partner of Miami Dade College – Kendall Campus, Miami, FL, USA

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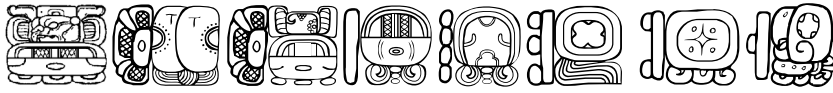
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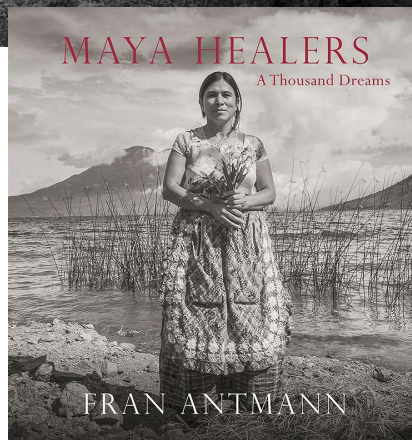


Lake Atitlán with the volcanoes San Pedro and Tolimán.

Editor's Pick: Recommended Reading

Maya Healers: A Thousand Dreams
by Fran Antmann

Maya Healers: A Thousand Dreams, recently published by Nirala Press, explores traditional indigenous healing practices among the Maya people of Guatemala through photographs and narrative. The preface is written by Guatemalan poet Carolina Escobar Sarti and the afterword by Columbia University Professor emerita Jean Franco. Maya Healers is a fiscally sponsored project of the New York Foundation for the Arts and was a finalist for the Lucie Foundation's 2017 Photo Book Prize.



For over a decade, I documented the work of Maya healers, bonesetters and shamans who live along the shores of Lake Atitlán. I accompanied these healers to windowless, candlelit spaces

where these ancient rituals are practiced. The families pray in an indigenous dialect known to the healer, the patient and the people around the lake. The prayers of the extended family and friends are an integral part of the healing process. They pray for the patient's soul, for his cure, and for the healer's/curandera's hands to do their work.



Pedro Mendoza attempting to walk after a healing with the aid of his mother and a friend.

I was drawn to Guatemala for two reasons: my daughter was born there, and Benjamin Paul, a close friend's father was an anthropologist who had documented the life and culture of San Pedro la Laguna for over sixty years. In 2005, shortly after Professor Paul's death at 94, his daughter Janie, my daughter Yasmin,

February 21, 6 pm
IMS Presentation:

Secrets of the Black Door: What Were the Ancient Maya Trying to Tell Us?
with **Keith Merwin**,
IMS Webmaster

and I traveled to San Pedro and I've been working there over the summers ever since. In July 2017, I went to share my book with the healers and donated copies to various municipal institutions in the village, an event that was televised.

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Jim Reed,
Editor

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Dr. Anabel Ford's Philanthropic Magic Donor Spotlight on the Santa Barbara Foundation Website

A documentary film highlighting Ford's decades-long work at El Pilar and surrounding forest, "El Pilar: Preserving the Maya Legacy," was featured at the Catalina Film Festival. The film, which received the Award of Excellence in the conservation category, can be viewed online at <https://vimeo.com/163885061/cebab0ccef>

Trudging through the dense tropical forest of El Pilar, an ancient Maya city located on the Belize-Guatemala border, Dr. Anabel Ford was set on one task and one task only: finding water. Ford, who is recognized as the archaeologist who rediscovered El Pilar, knew that finding water in the Maya Forest was rare. Having led the mapping of the region, however, she also knew that there was a small stream nearby and she was determined to find it. Asking her partner, a master Maya Forest gardener, to lead her to the stream, Ford was astounded when he found the running water in less than two minutes.



Anabel Ford and master Maya Forest gardener catch up on things in the Maya Forest.

"It seemed like magic and so I asked him how he found it so quickly," Ford said. "This man, who knows everything about the area and is completely at ease in the forest, told me he found water following a bug – a bug that I was paying no attention to and was probably mindlessly swatting away from my head. If this man's subtle and symbiotic relationship with the forest is not magic, then I don't know what is."

Ford's interest in the magic of the Maya Forest began when she was an anthropology student at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). Inspired to learn and understand the culture of the Americas and understand its place in today's society, she made it her personal mission to travel to each region of the Americas. Her journey made a detour when she discovered the Maya Forest in Central America. Entranced by the tropical setting, majestic palaces, towering pyramids and sprawling plazas, Ford joined a project there and has been infatuated with discovering the civilization's story ever since.

"I am completely fascinated by finding the origins of complex societies and finding the common threads that tell stories of how humans impact the environment and how the environment impacts humans," said Ford. "If we can understand this relationship and the way people managed landscapes in the past, then we can understand how to do so in the future."

Now in a research position at UCSB, Ford works with students and continues her research of the Maya civilization with the goal of preserving the forest and finding sustainable solutions that can be replicated today in societies around the world.



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"If we do not look to the world around us and take the lessons learned from past societies, then we won't be able to keep our own community of Santa Barbara healthy and beautiful amidst crises, such as the drought," said Ford.

It is Ford's dedication to bringing and sharing the findings of her work back to Santa Barbara that earned her the Educator of the Year Award from the Goleta Chamber of Commerce in 2000. This and other accolades, such as an award from the Rolex Awards for Enterprise, increased coverage of her work locally.

Anabel was encouraged from individuals in the Santa Barbara community to start her own nonprofit, *Exploring Solutions Past*, to put what she learned from her research into action. The nonprofit's three main goals are to promote the Maya Forest as a peace park, to treat the Maya Forest as a garden and useful part of our ecosystem, and to respect the Maya Forest as a place of cultural heritage.

"To have this all come to fruition would be fabulous, because, even something as simple as recognizing that trees are an asset that provide shade to keep things cooler and increase moisture for growing can have a widespread impact in improving our ecosystem and slowing global warming," said Ford. "This connects to honoring our heritage because we learn what is useful to our society and apply solutions."

Whether supporting Santa Barbara's nonprofit sector, helping a UCSB student with research or hiking through the Maya forest in search of a stream, Ford's commitment to helping the community, and the world at large, is what anyone would call pure, big-hearted magic. 🏡

Source: Shared by my new Facebook friend Ehtiram Mammadov (from Baku, Azerbaijan). URL: <http://www.sbfoundation.org/news/donor-spotlight/anabel-ford/>

Maya Healers: A Thousand Dreams by Fran Antmann

There is increasing interest in indigenous people who can apprehend patterns in nature and use their own bodies as sources of healing. Their ancient practices mediate between traditional bone setting, faith-based healing and modern medicine. The photographs in the book speak to the close relationship between Maya communities and the natural and spiritual worlds – lives bound up with the Lake and its winds and the surrounding volcanoes.

Thirty years ago, such ceremonies would have triggered a brutal crackdown. The Guatemalan government, in a campaign of genocide perpetrated until 1996, tried to root out all Maya cultural practices. Despite the death of more than 200,000 and the destruction of 440 villages, Maya practices survived underground and are now part of a resurgent Maya identity.

Vignettes from *Maya Healers: A Thousand Dreams* by Fran Antmann

Vignette #1

Wendy remembers having dreams of curing when she was as young as four. “I had a dream then that told me the day, the hour, and the place where I would find my stone for healing,” she said. She felt something calling her from an area near the coffee fields not far from her house. As she approached the site, she felt chills. And then she saw the stone. She retreated, overcome with fear. She told Juaguina what had happened, but she didn’t believe her. And neither did anyone else.

Wendy continued to dream of the stone. When her eyes were closed, she could feel its smooth surface, cupped in her hands; she would never let it go. Then she had a dream in which a child told her that her stone was still waiting for her. But when she returned to the place near the coffee fields, it was no longer there. Frantically, she



Pascual Abaj, Maya sacred altar shrouded in smoke from a ceremonial fire.

searched, and finally found it, not far away. Returning home, she wrapped it in red cloth and hid it in a box.

A few days later at a friend’s house, a little girl hurt her arm in a fall. Wendy told her that she could help; she was a *curandera*. But the other kids laughed – she was just six years old. Still, Wendy took the girl’s arm and worked on it. And a few days later, the girl returned and asked Wendy to work on her arm again because she was already feeling better. One more session and the girl was cured. From then on, Wendy’s friends and their dolls became her patients. But her parents still doubted their daughter’s gift and warned her not to talk about it.

One day when Juaguina was pregnant with another child, she was struck by lightning as she was walking across the fields carrying a large pot. Tossed to the ground unconscious, she was taken to the hospital where she was unable to move the lower part of her body. The baby would not live, she was told. But Wendy dreamt that she would cure her mother and that she would walk again. And that prophecy came true. “I cured her and the baby using my *instrumento* and natural medicines,” she said. “And finally they believed me. Even the Catholic priest confirmed that I was a healer. And from then on, I no longer got sick all the time.”

Wendy speaks to the moon about her work as a healer, and her dreams guide her to the forested



Juan Mendoza, Maya priest.
All photos in this article by Fran Antmann.



Tata' Xuan, shaman, with the Maya ritual calendar.



V#1: Wendy González curing Jose Luis González

mountains near a volcano where she finds the plants that she uses to heal. The stone that she found as a young girl is always at her side, but now she also has a second stone – a deep black onyx that she found when she was sixteen – which she keeps by her altar in her room, hidden in a cloth beside two sprigs of white flowers, copal incense, and candles. She lights the candles to thank God for her life and for her gift as a healer. It is God who guides her healing stone.

Vignette #2

It is said that the bones, the *huesos*, never lie. Found in clandestine graves



February 20: The Day in Honor of Tecún Umán



Statue of Tecún Umán in Quetzaltenango.

The Battle of El Pinar

In 1522, Hernán Cortés sent Mexican allies to scout the Soconusco region of lowland Chiapas, where they met delegations from Iximche and Q'umarkaj at Tuxpán; both of the powerful highland Maya kingdoms declared their loyalty to the king of Spain. But Cortés' allies in Soconusco soon informed him that the K'iche' and the Kaqchikel were not loyal, and were instead harassing Spain's allies in the region.

Cortés decided to despatch Pedro de Alvarado with 180 cavalry, 300 infantry, crossbows, muskets, 4 cannons, large amounts of ammunition and gunpowder, and thousands of allied Mexican warriors from Tlaxcala, Cholula, and other cities in central Mexico. The contingent arrived in Soconusco in 1523.

Pedro de Alvarado and his army advanced along the Pacific coast unopposed until they reached the Samalá River in western Guatemala. This region formed a part of the K'iche' kingdom, and a K'iche' army tried unsuccessfully to prevent the Spanish from crossing the river. Once across, the conquistadors ransacked nearby settlements in an effort to terrorize the K'iche'.

On February 8, 1524, Alvarado's army fought a battle at Xetulul, called Zapotitlán by his Mexican allies (modern San Francisco Zapotitlán). Although suffering many injuries inflicted by defending K'iche' archers, the Spanish and their allies stormed the town and set up camp in the marketplace. Alvarado then turned to head upriver into the Sierra Madre mountains towards the K'iche' heartlands, crossing the pass into the fertile valley of Quetzaltenango.

On February 12, 1524, Alvarado's Mexican allies were ambushed in the pass and driven back by K'iche' warriors, but the Spanish cavalry charge that followed was a shock for the K'iche', who had never before seen horses. The cavalry scattered the K'iche' and the army crossed to the city of Xelaju (modern Quetzaltenango) only to find it deserted.

Although the common view is that the K'iche' prince Tecún Umán died in the later battle near Olinstepeque, the Spanish accounts

Tecún Umán (Tecun Uman, Tecúm Umán, Tecúm Umam, Tekun Uman, etc.) 1500?–February 20, 1524) was one of the last rulers of the K'iche' Maya people, in the highlands of what is now Guatemala. According to the Annals of the Kaqchikel, he was slain by Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado while waging battle against the Spanish and their allies on the approach to Quetzaltenango on February 12, 1524.

Tecún Umán was declared Guatemala's official national hero on March 22, 1960, and is commemorated on February 20, the popular anniversary of his death. Tecún Umán has inspired a wide variety of activities ranging from the production of statues and poetry to the retelling of the legend in the form of folkloric dances, to prayers. Despite this, Tecún Umán's existence is not well documented, and it has proven to be difficult to separate the man from the legend.



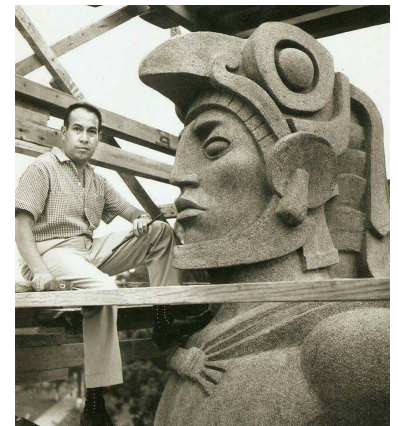
Reproduction of a famous painting named "El Choque" by artist Alfredo Gálvez Suárez, that represents the moment when Pedro de Alvarado encountered Tecún Umán.

are clear that at least one and possibly two of the lords of Q'umarkaj died in the fierce battles upon their initial approach to Quetzaltenango.

The death of Tecún Umán is said to have taken place in the battle of El Pinar, and local tradition has his death taking place on the *Llanos de Urbina* (Plains of Urbina), upon the approach to Quetzaltenango near the modern village of Cantel. Pedro de Alvarado, in his third letter to Hernán Cortés, describes the death of one of the four lords of Q'umarkaj upon the approach to Quetzaltenango. The letter was dated April 11, 1524 and was written during his stay at Q'umarkaj.

The legend

The legends relate that Tecún Umán entered battle adorned with precious quetzal feathers, and that his *nahual* (animal spirit guide), also a quetzal bird, accompanied him during the battle. In the midst of the battle, Alvarado and Tecún Umán met face to face, each with weapon in hand. Alvarado was clad in armor and mounted on his warhorse. As horses were not native to the Americas and peoples of Mesoamerica had no beasts of



In this historic photo, renowned Guatemalan artist Roberto González Goyri poses with his famous sculpture of Tecún Umán that still stands on the grounds of La Aurora Zoo, in Guatemala City.

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Maya Healers: A Thousand Dreams by Fran Antmann

scattered throughout the highlands and recovered years after *La Violencia*, the bones confirm what would otherwise be denied. At exhumations, they speak to what unmistakably happened. Widows and children reclaim the bones of husbands and fathers, sons and brothers, to give them a proper burial and return them to their anointed place deep inside the Earth.

Bones bear witness; bones heal. People speak of feeling whole again when the bones of their loved ones are returned to them; *curanderos* use sacred bones to cure their patients' fractured ones. Broken bones are mended through the transformative power of the *hueso* used in the hands of the bonesetter.

The bones are a gift from God; they carry a divine message. Bones were once scattered by the perpetrators of genocide. Now, their victims and children reclaim their identity, their autonomy, in the bones they use to heal their own.

Vignette #3

Sitting in a makeshift kitchen without walls, Diego constructs a sacred altar on the cracked linoleum floor near the refrigerator. Calmly he lights his candles and recites his prayers. The blue flames illuminate the night. A nearby table is strewn with more candles of different colors, branches, and medicinal plants. Diego scrambles for various objects, and picks up empty soup tins that he uses to mix healing poultices.

Rafael Aju arrives. His leg is aching. He can barely walk. Diego ties branches together and whisks them gently against Rafael's leg, warming up his body in preparation for healing. He lights a red candle to help rid Rafael of his disease. He lights a green one to honor the mountains from which he gathered his plants.

Diego crushes the leaves. Rafael waits.

Then Diego leaves the kitchen and his patient to go down to the lake. Here he performs a healing



V#2: Healer Josefina Vázquez de González with her sacred bone, wrapped in cloth. All photos by Fran Antmann.

ceremony for a different patient who was supposed to attend this night's session, but couldn't make it. By the water, under the night sky, and working only with the patient's photograph, he lights more candles and offers up more prayers.

Slowly Rafael's pain recedes. Like the sound of an animal retreating into the forest, it grows weaker and weaker until it becomes only a memory.

Vignette #4

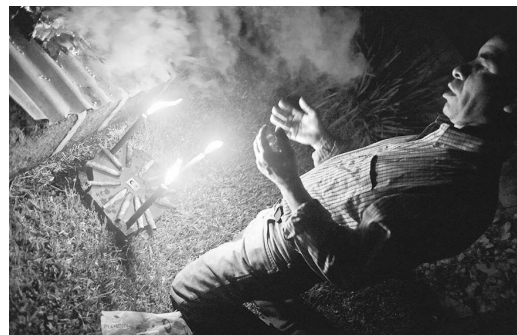
José María, a child healer, began his work with a mangy street dog from the neighborhood. When that dog was just a puppy, he broke his paw in a fight with another dog. Using just his finger, José María was able to fix the dog's broken bone.

Soon afterward, a woman fell down on his street. The neighbors called for José María. By the time he arrived, the woman had passed out and appeared half dead. But the boy had no fear and cured the woman.

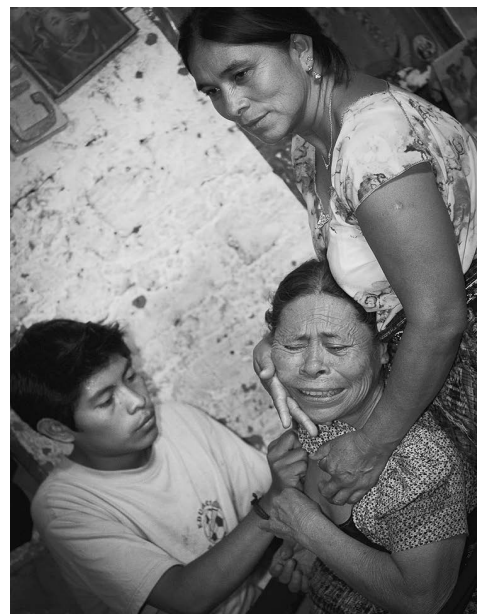
"I am only an instrument of God," he says, and he thanks God for giving him the dog to start his work.

An old man, who was both a Maya priest and a healer, caught sight of José María's hands when he was very young. One glance told him all he needed to know. He informed the boy's parents that their son had the gift to cure.

That same old man led José María to the site, right behind his house, where his instrumento was hidden. The first time the boy saw it, he was afraid to take it because



V#3: Diego González performing a lakeside ritual healing.



V#4: José María Yool González, child healer, healing his grandmother with Lidia González at their side.

he knew he still had much to learn before he could become a healer. He has never studied his craft and no one has ever taught him anything about it; dreams have shown him everything he needs to know.

Finally, after many dreams and after attempting to recover his *hueso* five different times, José María was ready to claim it. By then he knew with certainty that he was a healer and that he would serve his people. So, he picked up the *hueso*. With it, he finds the fracture in an injured person's body and applies strong pressure. The broken bone returns to its place. God, who continues to speak to him through his dreams, guides his hand.

Vignette #4

When Diego González the shaman climbed up to *Chi' Kaqajaay* to find the source of the sacred waters

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Maya Healers: A Thousand Dreams by Fran Antmann

above San Pedro, he first asked the spiritual guardians of the site for permission to approach. Then he placed candles, incense, and cigars at the site's entry.

"Our grandfathers found these sacred waters at a time when there were no pipes, no plumbing," he said. "The sacred water takes care of us, as well as of the animals in the forest. When there aren't people at the waters, all the animals come to drink. The water is sacred, because it comes from the rocks and doesn't run through mud and dirt on the ground."

Diego can hear the words of the ancestors. "Don't ever forget us," they say. "Never cut down trees in this part of the forest because they are sacred."

A grandfather once cut down a sacred tree. Immediately, water and steam seeped out of its trunk. The old man's feet started sinking into the forest bed. Heaving himself out, he hurried off, glancing backward at the fallen tree. But to his amazement, when he returned a short time later,

the tree was standing tall once again. Three days later, the old man died.

"The sacred trees have guardians," Diego said. "And the guardians of the sacred water are the same as those of the sacred forest. The old man died because he hadn't asked for permission to take the tree."

Fran Antmann

Fran Antmann is a photographer, writer and educator. She teaches photography at Baruch College, CUNY. For over thirty years she has been documenting the lives and culture of Maya, Andean, Inuit and Dene indigenous people – in the villages surrounding Lake Atitlán in Guatemala, in agricultural villages and mining towns in the Peruvian highlands, in the Canadian Arctic tundra and in Baffin Island, Canada.

She received her doctorate in Fine Arts from New York University and was the recipient of grants from the Fulbright Commission, the Ford and J. Paul Getty Foundations, the



V#5: The cloud forest near Chi' Kaqajaay.

Puffin Foundation, the Social Science Research Council and five NY State Foundation for the Arts fellowships in Photography and Non-Fiction Literature.

For over a decade she worked on *Maya Healers: A Thousand Dreams* with yearly trips to Guatemala. It was also featured in the Huffington Post and on NBC News.com. Excerpts appeared in *SocialDocumentary.net*; *Viewfind.com*; *EdgeofHumanity.com*; MIPJ: Media, Information, International Relations and Humanitarian Affairs, print/digital/multimedia edition; and Documentum, V.01 The Instagram series.

Editor's pick: Acquire Fran's book at: <http://www.franantmann.com/book-maya-healers> 📖

February 20: The Day in Honor of Tecún Umán

continued from page 4

burden of their own, Tecún Umán assumed they were one being and killed Alvarado's horse.

Another version says he merely attacked the horse in an attempt to knock Alvarado down, having no prior illusion that both man and animal to be one and the same. Tecún Umán quickly realized his error and turned for a second attack, but Alvarado thrust his spear into his opponent's heart. The K'iche' prince's *nahual*, filled with grief, landed on the fallen hero's chest, staining its breast feathers red with blood, and thereafter died. From that day on, all male quetzals bear a scarlet breast and their song has not been heard since. Further, if one is to be placed in captivity, it would die, making the quetzal a symbol of liberty.

Another account claims a much more complex confrontation of religious and material forces. In this version, Tecún Umán himself literally transformed into a quetzal or, in some variations, into an eagle adorned with three crowns – one of gold, one of diamonds and one of emeralds. Other

In the Popol-Vuh, the quetzal appears along with the creation and even before, in the splendid green appearance of the Cucumatz, the plumed serpent, which is the K'iche' name of the Maya God Kukulcan. Courtesy of: <http://orgulloguatemalaco.blogspot.com>



natives had attempted to kill Alvarado, but he was protected by a powerful maiden, commonly associated with the Virgin Mary. Tecún Umán called upon his own magic, and in the intention of killing Alvarado, struck Alvarado's horse dead. Upon learning he had killed only the beast and not the man, he had attempted to correct his mistake, but was quickly impaled by Alvarado's lance.

Local folklore from the area around the former K'iche' capital of Q'umarkaj preserves the belief that Tecún Umán was buried at the small archaeological site of Atalaya, 600 m (660 yds.) from Q'umarkaj itself. 📖

Sources: Texts from Tecún Umán's page on: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tecun_Uman, that reference *The Ancient Maya* 6th Edition, by Robert J. Sharer and Loa P. Traxler, and *Evolución del Reino K'iche'*, by Robert M. Carmack.

February 21 • 6 pm • IMS Feature Presentation
Secrets of the Black Door:
What Were the Ancient Maya Trying to Tell Us?
 – A Study of the symbolism on the outside of Building A,
 Group II at Holmul, Guatemala.
 with **Keith Merwin, IMS Webmaster**



The visible portion of Building A, Group II has fascinated researchers since it was first located in 1910. The unusual doorway, known as the Black Door, and the hallway beyond it, as well as the decorations on one of its outer walls, hinted to the secrets buried beneath. During the 2013 field season, a rare polychrome-painted stucco frieze was located under the final phase of this structure. This presentation will look into the theory that the design of the final structure and its decorations commemorate the buried phases.

The IMS is a Community Partner with Miami Dade College – Kendall Campus, Miami, FL
This program will take place at 6 pm in K-422 (in Building K-4, Room 22)
IMS Hotline: 305-279-8110
 Go to the college website at: www.mdc.edu for directions and campus map.

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Unbundling the Past: Events in Ancient and Contemporary Maya History for February

We might not follow the haab' calendar for newsletters, but we thought you might like to know what was going on this time of year in the historical Maya world.

February 799 was an interesting month for Naranjo and Yaxha, as research presented at the University of Texas' annual Mesoamerica Meetings revealed. The Komkom Vase was discovered recently at the site of Baking Pot by Julie Hoggarth and the folks at the Belize Valley Archaeological Reconnaissance Project. This 202-glyph-long vase describes soldiers from Naranjo who waged a vicious and quite successful war against Yaxha in 799.

Stelae at Naranjo mention this war. But the Komkom Vase provides details, including a fire drilling on 9.18.8.8.12 8 Eb 5 Woj G1 (**February 16**) and the systematic burning of presumed allies of Yaxha over the next few weeks, culminating with the July axing of Yaxha.

Because Christophe Helmke and Julie Hoggarth haven't published their research yet, they asked that images not be distributed. Keep your eyes on Academia.edu for more about the vase.

Other events in February:

February 2, 456 9.1.0.8.0
10 Ajaw 13 Muwan G7:
Sihyaj Chan K'awiil II dies; this king of Tikal may have been a son of Teotihuacan-influenced Yax Nuun Ahiin I (Curl Snout), but, by the end of his life, had established a distinctly Maya style for the city's future.

February 8, 822 9.19.11.14.5
3 Chik'chan 3 Woj G6: Ukit Took' ascended to the throne of Copan. It was a short, rough kingship, and his stela is unfinished, the last written word from a king of Copan.

February 16, 752(?) 9.16.0.14.5 1 Chik'chan 13 Pop G6:
U ki'imak óolal k'iin k'aaba' (happy birthday!) Itzamnaj Bahlam IV. This king of Yaxchilan is memorialized in the Bonampak lintels, where he's shown over a captive from Sak Tz'i'.

Source: Thank you, Zach Lindsey! We look forward to other months! 🏛️

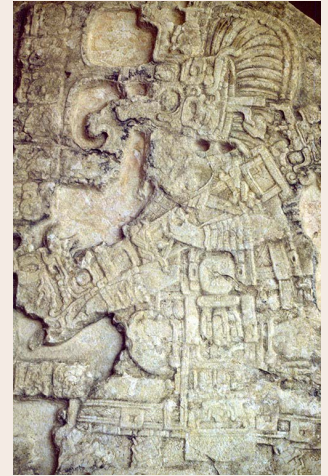


Photo detail of Naranjo Stela 22 that mentions the war between Naranjo and Yaxha. Schele #97057 from the Linda Schele Photo Collection at: http://research.famsi.org/schele_photos_list.php?search=*Naranjo*

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

Feb. 21 • 6 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation*
Secrets of the Black Door: What Were the Ancient Maya Trying to Tell Us?— with **Keith Merwin**, IMS Webmaster. Researchers have been fascinated by the symbolism of this unusual door located in a remote Maya site in the Guatemalan Peten. Is it a portal to the Underworld?

March 21 • 6 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation*
The Naked and the Dead: Ritual and Sacrifice in Early Maya Civilizations — with Michael G. Callahan PhD, Vanderbilt University, and Brigitte Kovacevich, PhD, Vanderbilt University. University of Central Florida Professors Callahan and Kovacevich discuss their latest findings on artifacts, hieroglyphics and architecture from their field sessions in an urban center in Guatemala.

All IMS events will take place in Room K-413 at Miami Dade College — Kendall Campus. That's Building K-4, Room 13. See map on www.mdc.edu

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

February 8: *DeYoung Museum Lecture*
Teotihuacan: A Conversation with Esther Pasztory — A conversation with Esther Pasztory, the Lisa and Bernard Selz Professor Emeritus in Pre-Columbian Art History, Columbia University. 11 am at the Koret Auditorium, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA. Get info at: <http://deyoung.famsf.org/calendar/teotihuacan-conversation-esther-pasztory>

Feb. 16: *Maya Society of Minnesota Lecture*
Critical Steps: Staircases and Design in the Architecture of the Northern Maya Lowlands — with **Kaylee Spencer**, of University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Maline Werness-Rude: Ventura College. My research acknowledges the importance of stairways and steps incorporated in ancient Maya construction in relation to common approaches to ancient staircase design in the Northern Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico. At the Giddens Learning Center, Hamline University, St. Paul, MN. Go to: <https://sites.google.com/ahamline.edu/maya-society/>

March 8-11: *2018 Tulane Maya Symposium*

The Blood Pooled, the Heads Piled Up: How the Maya Waged War — will feature lectures by experts in the fields of archaeology, epigraphy, and ethnohistory, among others. This year's keynote speaker will be **Dr. Matthew Restall**. As usual, we will have various exhibits and workshops throughout the weekend. We look forward to seeing everyone in New Orleans this March! Register now; a preliminary program is available online at: <http://mari.tulane.edu/TMS/index.html>

Editor's Tip: *Online all the time*
Ancient Americas Events — Get in the know with Mike Ruggeri's "better-than-ever!" comprehensive list of upcoming Ancient Americas Lectures, Conferences and Exhibits: Go to: <https://mikeruggerisevents.tumblr.com/>

Check out and get in on the fun on our IMS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MiamilMS/>



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