

April 4, 2018 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.5.6.10 • 10 Ok 3 Pohp G4

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Maya enthusiasts providing public education for 46+ years

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A *RuinHunter's* Original: **Three Days at El Resbalon with Ian Graham** by Lee Jones

Not a catchy title, except for Ian. This *RuinHunter* (as Editor Reed likes to refer to me) was honored to have spent portions of nine separate seasons assisting Ian Graham in the field.

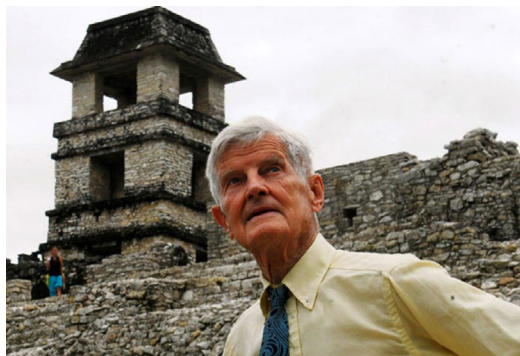
El Resbalon, is not a household word. On February 1, 1986, Ian instructed me to drive to Bacalar, Quintana Roo, Mexico, and stop at the only motel in the area at the time. He arrived several hours later in one of his signature Land Rovers. Land Rovers were an English vehicle, and they were somewhat plentiful in Belize.

At Ian's property at San Andres on Lake Peten Itza, he always had four or five Land Rovers, none in great condition. Ian was a good mechanic and, usually, the first week he arrived in field season, he robbed parts from several to put on the one he planned to use.

The Rovers were relatively uncomplicated vehicles, and the parts were usually interchangeable. This time – a problem. Coming up to Bacalar from Belize, the brakes went out – completely out. The only way Ian could slow down was to frantically downshift, then reverse, in a desperate bid to completely stop. As Ian was demonstrating how he might control the vehicle, he announced that he understood that the road from Bacalar to El Resbalon was horrible and full of potholes.



Maya sites in the vicinity of El Resbalon. Based on a map by Kenichiro Tsukamoto, Vol. XXVI, 2005, *Centro de Estudios Mayas, UNAM*. Site locations superimposed over a recent Google Earth map of the area by the editor.



Ian Graham's first visit to Mexico in 1958 sparked his long involvement with Maya archaeology. Check out: <http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/maya/home/ian-graham>

The next morning, before daylight, we started out. Dense fog, potholes everywhere, children coming in to Bacalar School in the dark on bikes or walking with no flashlights. An hour later, perhaps twenty miles, we arrived at Reforma and picked up Noé, the then guardian of El Resbalon. The road had fewer potholes now and we made the last fifteen miles in less than forty minutes.

April 4, 6 pm
Maya Voices: Connecting the Precolumbian Past to Today's Maya Youth
with **Gabrielle Vail, PhD**, of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Ian's colleague, Eric Von Euw, visited El Resbalon in the mid-70s and photographed the hieroglyphic stairways. INAH arranged for the stairs to be removed to Chetumal. Ian wished to map the site and include El Resbalon in his *Corpus*

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Jim Reed,
Editor

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The Sandscape of Northern Peru: An Unforgettable Adventure to 4,500 Years of History of the Americas – Part II

Texts and photos by
Marta Barber

When Peruvian archaeologist Walter Alva announced in 1987 the discovery of an unlooted tomb in the Lambayeque Valley, the world paid attention. For centuries, the adobe structures that abound in the desertic coast of Northern Peru had been entered by “huaqueros” (looters), in search of gold and ancient artifacts, disturbing the contents and rendering impossible the careful examination of these tombs by scholars.

With more golden artifacts than ever found before in this part of the world, the burial of this Moche warrior in Huaca Rajada was dubbed the “Tutankhamun of the Americas”. The Moche – or Mochica – culture, with its well-known religious centers – “huacas,” would occupy most of what Maya scholars would define as the Classic Period, from about 100 to 800 CE, and is considered the most productive until the arrival of the Inca.

In the first article of this two-part series covering our two-week venture into the civilizations of Northern Peru, we'll discuss our visits to sites built by cultures of the Norte Chico, Chavin and Chimu.

Let's recount the others. The Moche, and its sister groups, Lambayeque (or Sicán), and Túcume, left behind multiple sites and a history of its rituals captured in the thousands of ceramic pottery showing exquisite craftsmanship and brutal acts of sacrifice and death in war scenes.

Unlike Mesoamerica, where cultures are fairly well defined and timelines fairly well known, the north of Peru abounds with sites classified as

belonging to one culture or another, but many as continuation of the Moche. As time progressed in the desert and Moche cities were abandoned, others built not far away show a distinct Moche influence: Lambayeque/Sicán all the way to the



Detail of a polychrome sculpted fresco at Huaca de la Luna. The upper register features a row of “observers” holding hands while watching a procession of captives in the lower register, bound with a common rope around their necks, on their way to sacrifice.



Frescos in high relief from Huaca las Balsas in Túcume are reproduced in the site museum at Túcume.

Chimor and Túcume, both conquered by the Inca before the arrival of the Spaniards.

We made the modern cities of Chiclayo and Trujillo our home bases for this part of our journey. In the last decade or so, Peru has invested heavily in trying to attract tourism to the north. For that purpose, they have built multiple small museums where not only artifacts found during excavations are exhibited, but the history of the culture is explained.

Most of these museums include dioramas showing how the skeletons and other contents were found, as well as detailed replicas of the physical enclosures, providing excellent comprehension of the elaborate burials.

Masks and other objects of detailed workmanship can be seen up close. The Moche masks, mostly made of sheets of metal, are particularly captivating. The gold and lapis-lazuli pieces, of which there are many, as well as ceramic pots, a signature of the Moche, are all in these museums, and they are exquisite.

There are also reproductions of the wall decorations – paintings, carvings, and designs representing gods in mythical scenes. Thanks to the dryness of the region, these decorations are well preserved.

Back at the sites, as you walk on wooden platforms following paths along these structures, you stop to reflect on the quality of the artisans and their messages: Huaca del Arcoiris (Rainbow) with the image of a god, whose hair flows in a wave resembling a rainbow; Huaca del Brujo (Shaman) with a relief of walking prisoners following the priest; El Cao, part of the Brujo complex, where the burial of a female ruler was discovered intact; the massive Huaca del Sol, built with over 130 million adobe bricks; the nearby Huaca de la Luna (Moon), with rows upon rows of reliefs that can be admired at a fairly close distance.

Then there is Huaca Rajada, where the famed Lord of Sipán tomb was found. The multi-layered burial has been carefully reconstructed at the site, while the reproduction at the museum holds some of the real contents.

The museum at El Cao has the remains of the lady ruler in a glass case. Her skin is clearly visible, and so are the tattoos on her arm. Her reconstructed facial features display a no-nonsense ruler who happens to be a woman.

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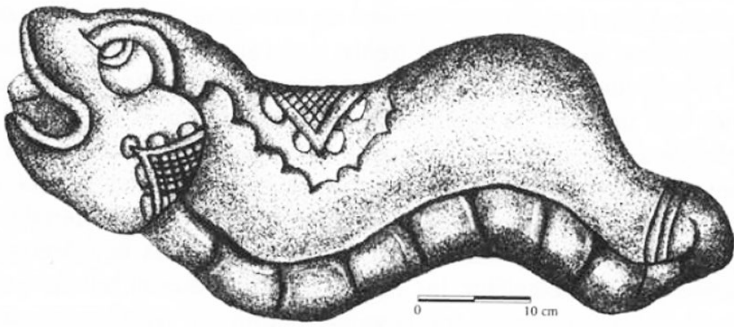
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Monument 4 of El Resbalon. A stone sculpture in the form of a snake, by Kenichiro Tsukamoto. His full paper, that features many more surveyed site maps, is downloadable at: <https://revistas-filologicas.unam.mx/estudios-cultura-maya/index.php/ecm/article/view/77177>

A RuinHunter's Original:

Three Days at El Resbalon with Ian Graham by Lee Jones continued from page 1

of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions project, using Eric's photos, to my knowledge the only photos available of the stairstones in their original locations.

El Resbalon terrain was a "breath of fresh air". After my stints as *machetero* at Uxmal and Xcalumkin, inhospitable, thorny brush, and then Coba, unfortunately just after a major hurricane, I couldn't believe El Resbalon – it has gentle hills and open vistas – a surveyor's delight.

Ian began his survey as always – a first rod at a permanent object, this time at the east side of the "escalera jeroglifica I". Noé and I cut *brechas*, very easy, as the openness of the land was delightful. Ian could barely keep up with his transit.

There is a fine site map now of El Resbalon, created in 2005 by Kenichiro Tsukamoto (reproduced at right) – but, still, it was from a *Katun* ago – so, alas, we were on our own.

For a small site, El Resbalon had everything – a ballcourt, quite a few palaces, and a colonial structure which I can't find on the Tsukamoto's site maps. Plus



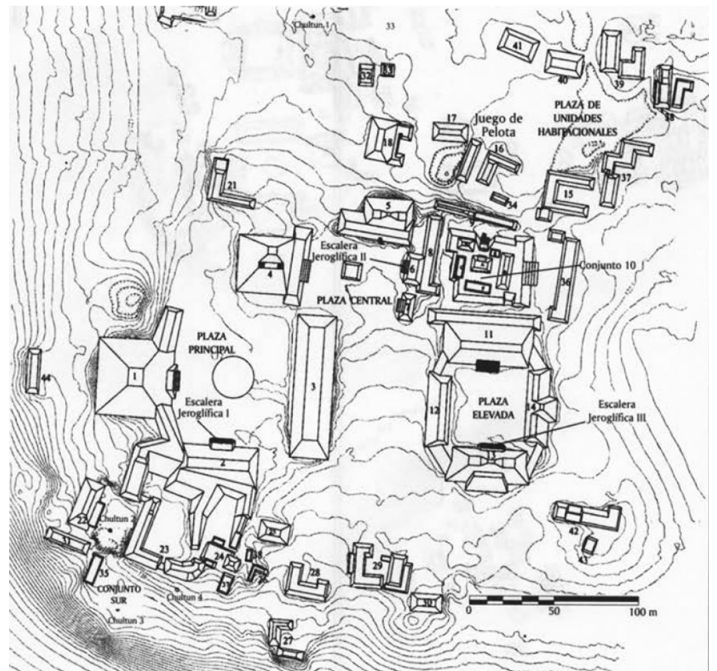
Some of the shelves of glyph blocks from El Resbalon hieroglyphic stairways, that INAH had moved to Chetumal.

three, yes three, hieroglyphic stairways!

Ian was more focused on the structures around the stairways – the only areas where there were lots of glyphs. I noticed, that most, or all, of the mounds had "looter's pits", some very recent! I confronted Noé, and he brushed them off as iguana holes. I brought them up to Ian, who, all of his professional life, combated looters. His reaction was "Oh Lee, there's



Graham published a memoir of his professional life and career, *The Road to Ruins*, in 2010. This lively memoir chronicles Graham's career as the "last explorer" and a fierce advocate for the protection and preservation of Maya sites and monuments across Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize. Copies are available on Amazon/Books.



Site map of the principal group at El Resbalon by Kenichiro Tsukamoto. His full paper is downloadable at: <https://revistas-filologicas.unam.mx/estudios-cultura-maya/index.php/ecm/article/view/77177>

nothing here of value, and we don't have time"

Back from El Resbalon to Bacalar, without brakes, was horrible. On our second night, during the Maya "dry season", about ten inches of rain fell. Next, morning, we started out before sunlight and much fog, Ian trying to control the Land Rover between potholes and children, without brakes. All of a sudden, we saw the reflection on the bikes of little boys who had fallen into a complete breach of the road. We stopped, barely, in front of the abyss of the road, still dark and foggy.

I casually mentioned to Ian if I was correct in that a school bus coming from Reforma and La Libertad had been noticed about this time. He said "Yes, Lee, we've got to do something". I recalled that the bus, with an official

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**A RuinHunter's Original:
Three Days at El Resbalon with
Ian Graham by Lee Jones** *continued from page 3*

capacity of about thirty kids, carried about fifty.

He told me to get out of the vehicle and walk across the “cave-in”. After putting limbs on one side of the hole, he got his Land Rover across somehow. We then blocked the road with the head lights, and waving flashlights, anticipating the bus. It came. The driver was frightened. We told them to return home. The kids were happy.

We finished mapping El Resbalon that day and returned to Bacalar “the long way” – via Dzibanche.

Eric’s photos are lost. Ian’s map is lost. I understand that the glyphs have been documented by Dr. Octavio Esparza Olguin, but I am unable to access them. It would have been good to have a professional draw the glyphs from Eric’s photos. It’s not certain that the stones were set up correctly by way of Chetumal, and, then to Cancun as they were originally at the site.

El Resbalon was, obviously,

an “outreach” of the great site of Dzibanche. There is one known glyph that indicates that El Resbalon, like Dzibanche, was a part of the “famous Kaan dynasty” understandably, since El Resbalon, a small site, is only a day’s walk from Dzibanche. If there were bumper stickers during the Maya classic period, one would read “Honk if you’re not under the Kaan dynasty”!

At the end of the third and final day, overlooking Lake Bacalar with a refreshment in hand, I asked Ian “Why would a little site like El Rebalon have three hieroglyphic stairways, and Dzibanche none?” His reply was “Lee, don’t you know by now that nobody can reckon the ancient Maya?”

Goodbye my friend Ian...
Thanks for all of the great memories.
You live in my heart. *Lee Jones*

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Beyond his world-class status as epigrapher, Graham “knew how to laugh at life and at himself”. Courtesy of: <http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/maya/home/ian-graham>

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

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.

April 18 588: U ki'imak ólal k'iin k'aaba' (happy birthday) K'an II. Described by Martin and Grube (2008) as “perhaps the most successful of all Caracol rulers,” K'an II was born on 9.7.14.10.8 3 Lamat 16 Wo G1. He’s responsible for the largest structure at Caracol and the famous hieroglyphic stairway which profiles the defeat of Naranjo. Unfortunately for him, fates probably turned after his death, since the stairway was found by archaeologists at Naranjo.

April 15, 1947 CE: U ki'imak ólal k'iin k'aaba' (happy birthday) Luis Rolando Ixquiac Xicará. Ixquiac Xicará was born on 12.16.13.6.8 10 Lamat 1 Wayeb G2. Maybe it’s the Wayeb in him, but this ethnic Maya artist has a definite surreal streak; here’s a link to one of his most famous works: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/2/29/Ixquiac-Xicara-No_Es_Facil.jpg

April 13, 639 CE: Chak Itzamk'anahk, Ruler 2 of Piedras Negras, ascended to the throne on 9.10.6.5.9 8 Muluk 2 Sip G1.

Caracol – Although one of the most challenging Belize sites to reach, the trip to Caracol is also one of the most scenic drives. It is the largest known Maya center within the country and holds “Canaa” (Sky Palace), the largest pyramid or man-made structure in Belize at 140 feet tall.



While many of the details of his life have been lost to erosion, he was apparently a powerful military leader and he may have taken over Yaxchilan, according to Martin and Grube (2008).

April 14 606 CE: U ki'imak ólal k'iin k'aaba' (happy birthday) K'inich Bahlam Chapaat of Tonina was born on 9.8.12.14.17 7 Kaban 15 Wo G9.

One of the first of the so-called “child kings” of Tonina, he entered office at a young age, but unlike other young kings such as Pakal of Palenque, his reign seems to have been choked by his advisors. 🏛️



Tonina is a magnificent site, here a stela featuring Tzotz Choj.





L) Reproduction of Burial 11 of Huaca Loro. CL) Reproduction of a burial at East tomb, Huaca Loro. CR) Mummy wrapped in textiles. All three in the Sicán Museum, the results of investigations by the Sicán Archaeological Project. R) Reproduction of a royal burial in the Royal Tombs of Sipán Museum.

The Sandscape of Northern Peru: An Unforgettable Adventure to 4,500 Years of History of the Americas – Part II

Texts and photos by **Marta Barber** *continued from page 2*

The in-situ frescos in high relief at Huaca las Balsas in Túcume

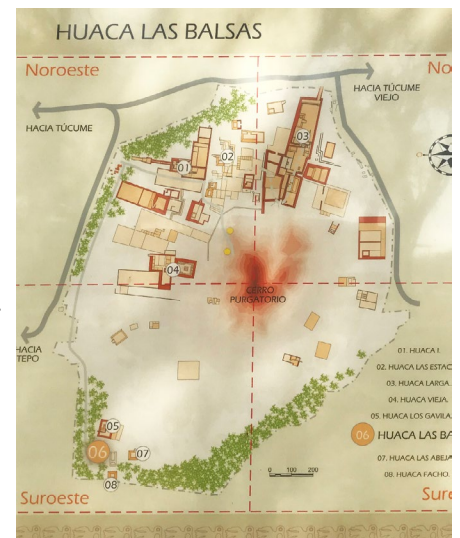
The most astonishing reproduction we saw was at the Sicán site museum. Several burials have been found here, but one in particular caught the group's attention: A decapitated man buried upside down, a finely crafted red mask placed directly in front of his headless neck, buried with two attendants, one sitting at a corner, the other laying down. Oversized arms with gold hands are placed parallel to the "hanging" body along with multiple other objects. The reason for his position is unknown, but parallels can be made with the nailing at the cross of Peter, Jesus' disciple. The tomb appears to be of the elite class.

Another big surprise was the area called the Valley of the Pyramids. Three cities have an approximate total of 250 pyramids, all built with adobe bricks. The first group is called Pampa Grande, from 600 to 750 CE. The second group, 750-1100 CE, is called Batan Grande,

which includes the Huaca del Oro, where multiple tombs were found. The third was built around 1100 CE after structures in Batan Grande had been burnt. This is known as Túcume, built from 1100 to 1500 CE, apparently under the domination of the Chimú culture.

The area is called *Purgatorio* (Purgatory), for the evidence of heavy burning of the structures. Thor Heyerdahl, of Kon-tiki expedition fame, visited in 1988, bringing attention to this forgotten archaeological treasure.

Our group spent almost two weeks driving in and out of the Pan American Highway north of Lima in search of the unknown. Few of us knew anything about this region with the exception of Sipán and the Moche. The names of the *huacas* and cultures become blurry, but the images don't.



Map of Huaca Las Balsas within Túcume.



L) Another reproduction of the burial of one of the Lords of Sipán. R) Our good Fellow of the IMS George Fery takes a closeup photo of the mural of the captives at Huaca de La Luna.

We did see some ugly things – lots of trash along some roads. (The area where we saw it had the worst floods in decades six months before our visit. I've come to understand how difficult clean-ups are after devastating natural events.) We came in contact with everyday things – busy streets, vibrant cities, ordinary lives. We also saw extraordinary things: unique, monumental, exciting and unforgettable. 🏠

Inspiring Achievements of Visual Communicators

Editor's note: You know, I have over 1100 Facebook friends, most living in Guatemala and Mexico, but earlier this year, out of the blue, this young man from a remote town in the Peten jungles of Guatemala, hit me up to be friends. I am so impressed with his story... read on...

Edwin Ramírez Najera is the main energetic force behind a family wood sculpting business in El Remate village, lakeside on Lake Peten Izta, outside of Flores, on the way to Tikal.

How better to meet the daily struggle of supporting their extended families than for these three brothers to utilize their artistic talents?



Artistic Wood Carvers Aspire to Greatness with Edwin Ramírez Najera, El Remate, Peten, Guatemala

Canoe ride to Xibalba: "Among the various gods we know from ancient Maya religion, the paired deities known as the Paddlers are among the most important and enigmatic. The two elderly-looking characters are probably best known as the canoe rowers depicted on several incised bones from Burial 116 at Tikal, and they nearly always operate in tandem". David Stuart (The University of Texas at Austin).



No workshop is complete without a full array of tigers.



Wood sculptures small and large: L) IxChel; C) an impressive stallion; R) the Maize God.



A beautiful near-lifesize sculpted horse prances in the jungle!

In 2011, these three *hermanos* won first and second prize in a local *artesanos* competition. Together, Edwin and his two brothers Rudy Danilo Ramírez and Najera Eriel Ramírez, also recently secured a Q3000 Quetzal prize in a separate local artistic competition.

Perhaps part of the reason the brothers are so well recognized is because they promote good forest sustenation practices. Edwin is proud to say that they only use locally procured hard woods, and they



L) and C) Two other sculptures of IxChel... I'm connecting Edwin with Rosita Arvigo and her IxChel Research Center, just a couple hours away in Belize, to produce pieces for students who want to take home a memento to be cherished. R) Edwin's Facebook pic!

never cut living trees to get the wood they need. He considers the trio of *hermanos* to be protectors of the natural forest.

What I find amazing is that each sculptered piece is unique – each crafted with love and caring. Please contact me at mayaman@bellsouth.com if you'd like to add any sculptures to your collection.

April 4 • 6 pm • IMS Arts and Letters Lecture

Maya Voices: Connecting the Precolumbian Past to Today's Maya Youth



"Maya from the Margins" participants visit the Maya city of Chichen Itza in the Yucatan of Mexico.

with Gabrielle Vai, PhD, of the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill

Hieroglyphic texts painted in Maya books (codices) give voice to the rituals, prophecies, and narratives that guided the lives of Maya people over a millennium from the sixth to sixteenth centuries. A recent program coordinated by Dr. Vai of UNC-Chapel Hill gave voice to twenty-five students of Maya descent from Morganton, NC, and Yucatan, Mexico, who engaged in archival research to study texts written by their ancestors long ago.

Dr. Gabrielle Vai is a Research Associate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research interests focus on Late Postclassic Maya codices and murals and what these tell us about Maya religion, society, and daily life in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.



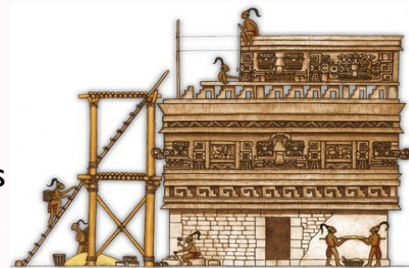
April 18 • 6 pm • IMS Feature Presentation

If I Had A Hammer: Tools and Construction Techniques of the Ancient Maya

with IMS Director of Research Joaquín J. Rodríguez III, PE

Scholars from all disciplines have often wondered how the Maya built their impressive buildings when it appears that they didn't make use of the wheel, use many metal tools, or animals of burden. Structural engineer Joaquín Rodríguez has been there many times and has accumulated a lot of impressive data.

He will reveal his findings.



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

Both of these programs will take place at 6 pm 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.



Speech scrolls indicate language, but no ones know what language was spoken in Teo.

Teotihuacan May Have Been Named Teohuacan

Spanish chroniclers may have altered the name of the Prehispanic city of Teotihuacan to erase its importance as a place of governance, Mexican researchers noted.

The Aztecs may have called the city “Teohuacan” – literally the city of the sun.”

That contrasts with “the city of the gods” or “the place where men become gods” as Teotihuacan has been translated. Veronica Ortega, an archaeologist at the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), said a lesser-known Aztec document contained a pictogram referring to the city as a combination of sun, temple and ruler signs. In the Xolotol Codex, which is in France, the word “Teohuacan” is written underneath.

But later Codices – Aztec pictographic documents drawn up to inform the Spanish about the land they had conquered – contain the spelling “Teotihuacan.”

Ortega said the Spanish were uncomfortable with “Teohuacan” because the sun was a symbol for rulers and they wanted to concentrate all power in nearby

Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital they conquered in 1521.

“They wanted people to see Teotihuacan as a place of worship, but not as a place where rulers were anointed, because they wanted to keep the political center in Tenochtitlan” – the Aztec name for Mexico City, Ortega said.

The debate may seem somewhat academic, because nobody knows what name the inhabitants of the city called it during its apex between 100 BCE and 750 CE, when it had about 100,000 residents.

The city was abandoned long before the rise of the Aztecs in the 14th century. Both Teotihuacan and Teohuacan are words in the Aztec’s Nahuatl language, and nobody knows what language the people of Teotihuacan spoke.

While she doesn’t want to change road signs, or the official name of the site, Ortega said the implications of the name are important because the Aztec rulers continued to go to the city to legitimize their rule. She said Montezuma, the last Azteca ruler, “led processions to Teotihuacan every 20 days,” the length of an Aztec sacred calendar month.

Source: From an article released January 23, 2018 at: <http://www.startribune.com/mexico-s-teotihuacan-ruins-may-have-been-teohuacan/470780103/> Submitted by Scott Allen.



Upcoming Events at the IMS:

Two; Two; Two Programs this month!

April 4 • 6 pm: *IMS Arts and Letters Lecture* **Voices of the Maya** – with **Gabrielle Vail, PhD**, of the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill. A recent program coordinated by Dr. Vail gave voice to twenty-five students of Maya descent from Morganton, NC, and Yucatan, Mexico, who engaged in archival research to study texts written by their ancestors long ago. *Be there!*

April 18 • 6 pm: *IMS Feature Presentation* **Tools of the Maya** – with IMS Vice President and Director of Research, **Joaquín J. Rodríguez III, P.E.** Scholars from all disciplines have often wondered how the Maya built their impressive buildings when they didn’t have the wheel, metal or animals of burden. JJR III will clue ya’ll in!

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:

April 6 • 7 pm: *Maya Society Lecture* **The Archaeology of El Tintal, Petén, Guatemala: a little known, large ancient Maya city** – with **Dr. Mary Jane Acuña**, Director of the El Tintal Archaeological Project and Research Associate at Washington University in St. Louis. Acuña will review El Tintal’s cultural and political context from the Preclassic through the Late Classic Periods with results from four years of archaeological research at the site by the El Tintal Archaeological Project. At Hamline University, St. Paul, MN. Get more info at: <https://sites.google.com/ahamline.edu/maya-society/>

April 25 • 12:30 pm: *Museum Lecture* **Journey to Peru: The Wari, the Inca, and the Road to Machu Picchu** – with **Jennifer Casler Price**, curator for Asian and non-Western art, at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX. See: <https://www.kimbellart.org/event/journey-peru-wari-inca-and-road-machu-picchu>

April 26-29 • *Conference* **Maya at the Lago 2018** – Davidson Day School and American Foreign Academic Research would like to announce the eighth annual Maya at the Lago Conference (M@L) which is a four-day “Everything Maya” event that’s comprised of lectures, workshops, and exciting social events. Participants include Jaime Awe, Marc Zender, Stan Guenter, Dorie Reents-Budet and Mark Van Stone. This year’s honoree is **Mary Miller**. Program and registration is at: www.mayaatthelago.com

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