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March 20, 2019 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.6.6.0 • 9 Ajaw 13 Kum'k'u • G3

The Maya Puuc Ruins of Dzekilná, Campeche by Stephan Merk, Mérida

The rarely visited Maya ruins of Dzekilná (sometimes written Dsecilná) can be found several kilometers north of the small village of San Antonio Yaxché in the northernmost part of the Mexican state of Campeche. They belong to the Classic Maya Puuc phase, explicitly to the Early Puuc (ca 650-770 AD) and Late Puuc (ca 770-950) architectural styles. I have explored Dzekilná several times over the years (1986, 1994, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2017, 2018) to get an overview of its still standing architecture – a difficult enterprise given the extreme dense vegetation that has overgrown the site. The search is not completed yet; therefore what I present here should be considered as a work in progress.

The famous US-American traveler John Lloyd Stephens was the first to report Dzekilná's existence in his bestselling book “Incidents of Travel in Yucatán”, published 1843. In Volume 2, Stephens



Fig. 1: What remains of a vaulted structure located on the huge platform located 300 meters north/northeast of the Main Group.

gives a short and relative un-precise description of the ruins he called Zekilna, on pages 80 and 82: “...we came to a broken, stony ascent, climbing up which I discovered that we were upon the top of an ancient terrace... In a few moments I found myself ascending the side of a lofty stone structure, on the top of which were the remains of a large building, with its walls fallen, and the whole side of the mound strewn with sculptured stones, a scene of irrecoverable ruin. Descending on the other side of this structure, we reached a broad platform, in a good state of preservation, with trees growing upon it... Running off lengthwise from this terrace was a small building... Going in (by the second door), I found an apartment differing in nothing from the most ordinary we had seen in the country.” (Stephens 1843).

This superficial account shows that at that late point of his travel, Stephens had gotten already a bit bored of inspecting ruin after ruin, as it is also proved by the



Fig. 2: Structure 1 in the Far North Group originally contained 5 rooms. Room 2 (shown here) is the best preserved.

IMS Presentation:

March 20, 7:30 pm

Maya – Resonance and Wonder

with **Carl Abbott FAIA Architect / Planner / PA**

Through the eyes of Architect Carl Abbott, experience the creative, exotic World of the Maya.

following notion: “I did most earnestly hope that the path would lead to nothing that might require a second visit” (Stephens 1843, Vol. 2: 80). What Stephens saw did not impress him enough to ask

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Jim Reed, Editor

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Made of limestone, the altar weighs around a ton and was found in the jungle area of northern Guatemala rife with archaeological sites (AFP).

Ancient Altar Reveals Maya “Game Of Thrones” Dynasty

A 1,500-year-old Maya altar discovered in a small archaeological site in northern Guatemala is drawing comparisons to popular fantasy drama television series “Game of Thrones” for its descriptions of the Kaanul dynasty’s political strategies aimed at bringing entire cities under its control.

The altar, carved out of limestone and weighing around one ton was found at the La Corona archaeological site in the jungle region close to the borders with Mexico and Belize, noted Tomás Barrientos, co-director of excavations and investigations at the site.

The 1,500-year-old altar displays an engraving of the Maya king Chak Took Ich'aak.

The altar’s inscriptions reveal a lot about the political machinations of the sixth century Serpent Kingdom.

Barrientos said the altar was found in a temple and showed King Chak Took Ich'aak, La Corona’s ruler, “sitting and holding a scepter from which emerge two patron gods of the city.”

The 1.46-meter by 1.2-meter slab contains a hieroglyphic Mayan inscription corresponding to May 12, 544 CE.

Other discoveries have allowed researchers to determine that King Chak Took Ich'aak also governed the nearby city of El Perú-Waka' some 20 years later.

Barrientos says these pieces of evidence show that the Kaanul dynasty, or Serpent Kingdom, developed a political movement in La Corona that allowed them to defeat their Tikal “arch rivals” in 562 CE and thereafter rule the Maya lowlands in southeast Mesoamerica for two centuries.

That political movement was based around alliances with small cities surrounding Tikal ahead of the final victory push. Alongside those revelations, researchers also found details of a wedding between a princess from the Serpent Kingdom and a King of La Corona, said Barrientos.

“This altar shows us a part of Guatemala’s history and in this case, around

1,500 years ago, I would call this the historical Maya version of Game of Thrones,” he added, comparing the Kaanul kingdom’s maneuvering to that in Game of Thrones of noble families competing over control of the seven kingdoms.

Barrientos said the altar “fills in the gaps” and “pieces together the puzzle” of the Maya culture’s political relationships.

“It’s a high quality work of art that shows us they were rulers entering into a period of great power and who were allying themselves with others to compete, in this case, with Tikal.”

La Corona “was the place where the most important historical Maya political movement began to take shape.”

The Serpent Kingdom expanded from its capital Dzibanche to present-day north Guatemala, Belize and the Mexican state of Campeche, but was finally defeated by Tikal.

“Having information about what happened next, how they were plotting a political strategy here, teaches us a lot about politics in those times and the fight for territory,” said Barrientos.

Excavating and investigating in the remote Maya Biosphere Reserve where La Corona lies can be hazardous, though.

The region is constantly at threat from looting, invasions and incursions by criminal gangs, drug-traffickers and illegal ranchers, accused by environmentalists and authorities of starting forest fires that damage Precolumbian monuments.

Culture deputy minister, Gladys Palala, noted that authorities are trying to counter encroachment by criminal groups besieging Peten, an area ripe with “archaeological remains.”

“Wherever you go and excavate, you find (something). It’s an eminently archaeological area,” she said.

Source: From an article by AFP reporter Henry Morales Arana released 09/14/2018 at: <https://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com/2018/09/ancient-altar-reveals-mayan-game-of-thrones.html#SVOPfXzS8MYfufQ.99> Submitted by Jorge Alberto José Fuentes, Chiapas.



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The ancient carved altar is displayed at the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Guatemala City (AFP).



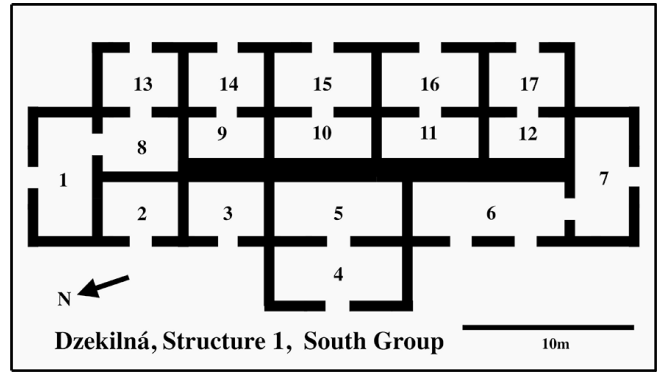


Fig. 3: Room 2 of Structure 1 in the Far North Group features an unusually intensely rounded vault. **Fig. 4:** A rare feature for Puuc architecture are the remnants of a rounded corner at the northeast end of Structure 1 in the Far North Group. **Fig. 5:** George F. Andrews noted that the larger Structure 1 in the South Group may have originally contained 17 rooms and was executed in Late Classic Puuc Mosaic style.

The Maya Puuc Ruins of Dzékilná, Campeche

by Stephan Merk, Mérida *continued from page 1*

his companion, the English artist Frederick Catherwood, to make a drawing of the ruin.

The next visitor to Dzékilná took his job more seriously. During his systematic search for Maya ruins in the peninsula, Teobert Maler inspected the site for two days in March 1887. His description can be found in the German magazine *Globus* (1895) and in Maler's *opus magnum* titled "Península Yucatán" (1997: 63-65). The German-Austrian explorer is still today the only scholar to my knowledge who visited and depicted four groups in that ruin site which he called Dsecilná.

Maler's report about standing architecture is rather detailed; it is accompanied by one layout plan, two sketches of entrances and three photographs, two of them showing carved doorway-columns in form of human or godlike figures.

Only a few other scholars mention Dzékilná in their publications. To my knowledge, these are George F. Andrews (together with Carlos Perez und Lourdes Toscano from CRY-INAH) in 1984, and Nicolas P. Dunning in 1987. Although Harry E.D. Pollock writes about the site in his book *The Puuc*, he only relies on Maler's data (Pollock 1980).

Astonishingly enough, it seems that – with the exception of Maler – the visits of these scholars, including Stephens, were restricted to the South Group, and maybe the pyramid in the Main Group. Dzékilná is listed in the archaeological atlas for the State of Yucatán with the code number

16Q-d(10): 143 (Garza and Kurjack 1980).

This "large site with good-sized mounds is situated in a relatively small valley amidst a broad chain of hills; it spreads over one square kilometer, but appears to be rather dispersed in plan, somewhat like Sayil. Very little standing architecture is evident" (Dunning 1992: 236).

Dzékilná lies east and west along the old wagon road, which connects Santa Elena, Yucatán, with Bolonchén, Campeche. For a better understanding of Dzékilná's dispersed overall layout, I divided the site into the following groups: Main Group or Central Group (Maler's *Hauptgruppe*), North Group (Maler's *I. Terraplen*), Far North Group (Maler's Castillo), West Group, South Group (Maler's *2. Terraplen*), and East Group. According to Maler, the name of the site can be translated as "place of houses made out of stone".

At the time of Maler's visit, most buildings at Dzékilná were visible. However, because the Maya had cleaned the area for growing corn, the explorer overplayed the distance between the architectural groups. He wrote (Maler 1997: 63): "Imagine a wide empty space without a building, measuring more than 1000 paces from east to west and around 2000 from north to south, with an older architectural center in the North and a second younger center at its south side; the east side has many small structures,

Fig. 6: In 2011, Dan Griffin discovered a stone façade sculpture depicting the head of a snake modelled in stucco in the rubble on the western front side of Structure 1 in the South Group.



the western part also small but fewer buildings."

Maler's description is misleading in several points. It implies an open area of up to two square kilometers(!) surrounded by buildings on all four sides. In fact, the unbuilt-on distance between the Main Group, which Maler assigned to the northern center, and the early explorer's southern center is not "2000 paces", but less than 400 meters. I cannot comment on the east-west distance, because so far I have not investigated the eastern part of Dzékilná, but I can, again, reject Maler's proposal of the wide empty space in the site's center: what I call the West Group are several small (and mostly fallen) buildings over a distance of 500 meters from east to west, but starting only around 220 meters west from the GPS-defined center of Dzékilná. These buildings in the West Group are – compared to the South, Central, and North Groups – obviously less important and show features from Early Puuc as well as Late Puuc architecture.

The Main Group mainly consists of a vast and completely fallen structure, most probably a pyramid with a former small building on top.

continued on page 5





L) Nakum bath during excavations. Note that it is carved out of the solid bedrock. Credit: Jarosław Żrałka. C) A fireplace niche, probably used for heating up stones. Credit: Jarosław Żrałka. R) Visualization of Nakum bath. Credit: Piotr Kołodziejczyk Junior/Proyecto Arqueológico Nakum.

Unique Rock-Carved Steam Bath Discovered at Nakum

A unique steam bath carved in rock was discovered by Jagiellonian University (JU) researchers conducting excavations in the ancient Maya city of Nakum in Guatemala. The more than 2,500-year-old structure is theorized to have also been the site of religious rituals.

“We initially thought that we had found a tomb. But step-by-step, having revealed different elements of the structure, we came to the conclusion that what we discovered is most probably a steam bath”, said Wiesław Koszkuł from the JU Institute of Archaeology. In the Maya culture, steam baths were used for ritual purposes in addition to their practical functions. Even today they are attended by pregnant women, which is supposed to help them in labor.

“In Maya beliefs, caves and baths have an almost identical status. This is where both gods and the first humans were born and from where they entered the world. Such places are considered entrances to the underworld, inhabited by gods and ancestors. Caves and baths were also associated with fertility, as the source of life-giving water”, explained Dr. Jarosław Żrałka, also from the JU Institute of Archaeology, who co-directs the excavations.

The bath consists of several basic elements. The archaeologists initially discovered a tunnel bored in the rock that would have been used to divert any excess water. On both sides of the tunnel, there are stairs leading to a two-meter passage to the main part of the bath, which is a rectangular room lined with stone seats for the bathers.

In front of the entrance, researchers uncovered a large oval rock niche that was used as a fireplace for a very long period of time, as evidenced by a thick layer of burnt material. It was estimated that the temperature within the bath must have been very high, as the surrounding rock had broken up in several places. Most probably, large stones had been put next to the fireplace and heated up. When water was poured over the stones, it turned to steam, which filled the room. The excess water went down the drainage tunnel onto the hillside.

Although the lower part of the bath was carved in rock, it can't be considered an artificial cave due to the lack of a natural vault. It is believed that the ancient Maya built a roof of wood, stones and mortar, that kept the steam inside the structure.

In the drainage tunnel, not only was a dark layer of ashes found, but also fragments of ceramic vessels and obsidian tools, that might have been used during bathing rituals.

The bath probably functioned from around 700 BCE to around 300 BCE, when it was completely filled in with lime mortar and rubble. According to Wiesław Koszkuł, this could have been related to a dynastic change in Nakum, or other important changes in the social and religious life of the Maya living there.



Temple E in Nakum. Its construction dates from the Late Classic period. The site of Nakum itself, dates from 3000 years ago and was an important city-state in the Preclassic and Classic Maya periods, between 2500 BCE to 1000 CE. It was a very significant political, economic, and ritual center for centuries.

Whatever the motive for closing the feature, this allowed researchers to discover an intact Maya steam bath, which is unprecedented. Previously, only the remnants of baths were found, despite their importance in Maya religious and ceremonial life.

The bath is located in the north part of the city of Nakum, on its main north-south axis. The archaeologists believe that the bath was used by members of the local elite, not only for hygiene, but also accompanied by priests who presided over religious ceremonies. In Maya steam baths, the washing of the body was accompanied by the symbolic purification of the soul before major religious feasts.

Source: Released 01.12.2019 by Jagiellonian University. Reposted at: <https://archaeologynews-network.blogspot.com/2019/01/unique-rock-carved-steam-bath.html#hlUvs5c2LFVld3GX.97>
Submitted by Mike Ruggeri via the Atzlan eserv. A separate article by Ed Whelan (with the Temple E photo) was released 01.15.2019 at: <https://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/maya-steam-bath-0011324>



Fig. 7: In addition to the stone pieces Andrews mentioned around Structure 1 in the South Group, we also observed façade stones with various motifs; some which are shown here. All together, the stones give an impression how richly decorated the main façade once was.

The Maya Puuc Ruins of Dzékilná, Campeche by Stephan Merk, Mérida continued from page 3

A good 300 meters further north/northeast (Maler placed it northwest of the pyramid) is what the German explorer named the *I. Terraplen* (first terrace or platform). This huge platform of about four meters height carries two large multi-storied fallen and former vaulted buildings on its north and west sides, defining a courtyard open to the south and east. The remnants of walls and still-standing parts of vaults stick out of the mass of rubble representing former rooms on various levels.

The only chamber still intact lies behind a fallen flying staircase in the center of the northern building, on its first floor. The room measures 565 x 313 centimeters and its front side towards the south has an entrance divided by two plain doorway columns with capitals (**Fig. 1**, page 1). Standing parts of this southern front façade show a one-member medial molding, which is a clear indicator for Early Puuc style.

The other structure on this platform once probably had three stories. They are almost completely destroyed, but the remains of a room on its east and its south side, respectively, are discernible. In the debris of this second building, ornamental façade stones with a double T-design, as well as small colonnettes from multiple-member medial moldings, prove that the edifice was – at least in parts – erected in Late Classic Puuc times. Therefore, Maler's proposal according to which the North Group is in general older than the South Group must be challenged.

Two-hundred-fifty meters northwest of the *I. Terraplen* (Maler: 500 paces), and after a long and difficult search, I was able to relocate what the early explorer named the Castillo (castle). Maler's description is not very detailed. He writes that the remains of the "Castillo adorn the upper part of a hill and a small palace without particular decorations lies at its foot".

The buildings are labeled here as the Far North Group. The Castillo today is basically the pile of rubble of a former two-story structure with few pieces of walls still visible. More interesting is the building below (Structure 1, Far North Group): this ca. 30-meter-long 5-room range-type building has an east-west axis and its chambers open towards a terrace in the south. Uncommonly, now there is a mostly-fallen staircase on the northern backside of the building, that once gave access to the roof; nevertheless, a lack of stones seems to prove that the structure never had rooms on the second floor.

The short west wall of the building borders an artificially leveled hill terrace on top of which the *Castillo* stands. From the five rooms of Structure 1, only the second one from the west (Room 2; **Fig. 2**, page 1) is well preserved; it is 530 centimeters long and almost 260 centimeters wide. The entrance is 98 centimeters broad and the vault of the room is unusually intensely rounded (**Fig. 3**, page 3). All the other front façades of Structure 1 are destroyed, whereas the back walls are still standing in many parts.



Fig. 8: The smaller Structure 2 in the South Group consists of five rooms. The westernmost room (Room 5) has collapsed while the other four chambers are partly intact.

There are indicators that the building was erected in various phases and was not planned in the way it was finally executed. My first argument is the size of the rooms. In almost all cases central rooms in structures with an uneven number of chambers are larger than the side rooms.

In Structure 1 this "rule" is reversed: with its only 420 centimeters in length, the central room is clearly the smallest. Second: façade stones on the back wall of the two western rooms are distinctly smaller than the ones of the two eastern rooms. Third: by comparing what is left of the once multiple members of the medial moldings on the back walls of the westernmost Room 1 and Room 2, it attracts attention that the sole intact lower member of Room 1's molding starts on a level below the one of Room 2.

Additionally, those preserved members of the molding are different in style; the one of Room 1 consists of a slanted horizontal line of sticking-out stones, while the analogous member of Room 2 is not bevel but rectangular.

continued on page 7

Unbundling the Past: Events in Ancient and Contemporary Maya History for March by Zach Lindsey

Each month, we feature the Maya glyphic signature of the Gregorian calendar date of the IMS public presentation in the masthead, correlating to the Calendar Round of the Maya @584283. Here, we combine the two, so you can explore what was going on this time of year in the historical Maya world.

March 15, 771 CE: March was good for Itzamnaaj K'awiil (K'awiilo'ob?). Itzamnaaj K'awiil of Naranja, was born on 9.17.0.2.12 13 Eb 5 Sip G7. As king, he defeated Yaxha. But it was also the end of an era. (See March 27.)

March 21, 1851 CE: On 12.11.15.16.0 9 Ajaw 13 Pax G5, Manuel Nahuat was killed in battle. Either a spokesperson for God or a talented ventriloquist depending on your opinion, Nahuat was a leader of the Cruzo'ob movement in the Caste War, the Maya rebellion against central Mexico.

March 24, 603 CE: *U ki'imak ólal k'iin k'aaba'* (happy birthday) K'inich Janaab' Pakal!! This famous king was born on 9.8.9.13.0 8 Ajaw 13 Pop G8. Pakal was the first Maya king that I even knew about, and I'm sure it was the same for at least some of our IMS Explorer readers. Ascending the throne at the

Above right) Pakal's jade funerary mask along with all the jade he was meant to wear on his journey through the underworld.

Photo by George Fery. Check out his Palenque Long-Form articles on: <http://www.georgefery.com/>

Right) Chan Santa Cruz Monument, Punta Sur, Cozumel Island, Mexico.

age of twelve, Pakal won back the stolen gods of Palenque and commissioned some of the site's most important buildings.

March 27, 689 CE: Another Itzamnaaj K'awiil, this time of Dos Pilas, ascended to the throne on 9.12.16.17.15 2 Men 18 Wo G4, beginning a 28-year rule during which he consolidated territory in the Petexbatun region. 🏰



A Once in a Lifetime Opportunity! – An Intimate Glyph Workshop with David Stuart!

Maya on the Mountain: *The Inscriptions of Cobá*

The **Boundary End Center** (BEC) has announced a Hieroglyphic Workshop – led by **David Stuart**, that is slated for April 22-24, titled:

Maya on the Mountain: *The Inscriptions of Cobá*

Cobá has played an important role for BEC. **George Stuart** lived there from 1974-75 with his whole family, including David Stuart; an experience which would shape David's passion for the ancient Maya. During this immersive workshop, we will explore the many monuments of Cobá and discuss their epigraphic content, including several recent advancements.

The fee of \$600 includes 1-1/2 days of workshop, 2 nights of comfortable lodging, a reception night, and 5 meals. All profits will go towards improving the BEC infrastructure. **Maya on the Mountain** is conveniently timed to take place before Maya at the Lago in nearby Davidson.

The BEC is a residential research library located in the heart of the Smoky Mountains, 25 minutes north of Asheville, in Barnardsville, NC. The Center includes an educational facility, where the workshop will occur. The Center is also located next to the entrance to the Big Ivy Section of the Pisgah National Forest, which abounds with hiking opportunities.

IMS readers were some of the first to be made aware of this event... Contact BEC today to participate in this unique opportunity!

You can easily reserve your spot by contacting us at: boundaryendcenter@gmail.com

Maya on the Mountain
– The Inscriptions of Cobá –
a BEC Fundraising Workshop
with David Stuart

April 22-24
at the
Boundary End Center

reserve your seat today
\$600
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The Maya Puuc Ruins of Dzekilná, Campeche

by Stephan Merk, Mérida

continued from page 5

A rare feature for Puuc architecture is the remnants of a rounded corner at the northeast end of Structure 1. Opposite to the usual corner columns made out of one or two pieces this special one is built of various rounded stones (**Fig. 4**, page 3). Corners of that type mainly exist in the Chenes and Río Bec architectural styles much more to the south. Below this rounded corner, a part of the structure's base molding is visible; it consists of three members with small colonnettes in the center. Structure 1 in the Far North Group stems from the times of the Late Classic Puuc style.

Around one kilometer south of the Far North Group is Maler's 2. *Terraplan* or South Group; the later one is, as mentioned above, to my knowledge the only group Stephens, Andrews, and Dunning visited. Mostly two buildings, Structure 1 on the east side of the huge platform, and Structure 2 on the south side, form this group.

The US-American architect George F. Andrews gives a competent short overview of the two buildings. He comments on the larger Structure 1 in the South Group (**Fig. 5**, page 3) which has a roughly north-south axis: "Good sized palace building now much fallen. Appears to have had 17 rooms; three parallel rows of rooms with single, lateral rooms at both ends and a projecting central room in front. All exterior walls have completely fallen. We found mask pieces (eyebrow, broken nose, etc.) in debris together with many colonnettes, indicating the building was executed in Late Classic Puuc Mosaic style" (Andrews 1990).

In 2011, when I visited Dzekilná with a group of people (Humberto and Manuel Bonilla Caamal, Dan Griffin, Karl Herbert Mayer, and Lee Jones). In the rubble on the western front side of this building, Dan Griffin discovered the head of a snake, modelled in stucco and around 30-40 centimeters long (**Fig. 6**, page 3). A tenon at the back of the head is proof that it once was anchored in a façade. In addition to the stone pieces Andrews mentioned, we also observed façade stones with various motifs; some of them are shown in **Fig. 7**, page 5. All together, the stones give an impression of how richly decorated the main façade once was.

The smaller Structure 2 in the South Group consists of five rooms. Four of them stand in line with an east-west axis (Rooms 2-4); in front of the easternmost chamber is an additional room projecting towards the north (Room 1). The westernmost room (Room 5) has collapsed while the other four chambers are partly intact (**Fig. 8**, page 5). The building was erected in various stages as can be observed looking at the different designs of its medial moldings and the unequal width of Rooms 2 and 3 when compared to Rooms 4 and 5 (see **Fig. 9**). Structure 2 belongs to the Late Classic Puuc architectural style.

I was not able to relocate Maler's "*Kleiner Bau mit drei Gemächern*" (Small building with three rooms). The early explorer describes its location as "400 paces" west of the pyramid in the Main Group. Even at the time of Maler's visit, the structure was completely fallen. It has a north-south axis and looks east towards the pyramid.

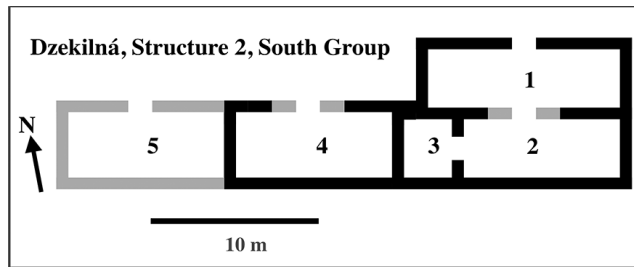


Fig. 9: Notice the unequal widths of Rooms 2 and 3 when compared to Rooms 4 and 5. Structure 2 belongs to the Late Classic Puuc architectural style.

Fig. 10: One of the two rescued doorway columns that once divided the entrance to the central chamber of Maler's "Small building with three rooms" now resides in the Gran Museo in Mérida. (Mayer 1981: 15).



At some point somebody (most probably members of INAH) rescued the two doorway columns which once divided the entrance to the central chamber of the building; they are now in the Museo del Pueblo Maya in Dzibilchaltun and the Gran Museo del Mundo Maya in Mérida, Yucatán. Both columns show on their foresides a frontally depicted human figure, carved in high-relief (Mayer 1981: 15). One of them is shown in **Fig. 10**.

Dzekilná is a large and important Maya site with visible standing architecture in the Early and Late Classic Puuc styles. Its main orientation is clearly north to south; on this axis the most important groups and buildings were set. Almost all of the buildings/groups so far discovered are aligned to face the Main Pyramid in the center of the city. Until today no hieroglyphic inscriptions nor ballcourts – important civic-ceremonial features – were found at Dzekilná, but I am sure that further explorations and/or excavations will bring to light more interesting and considerable evidence of the site's long forgotten history.

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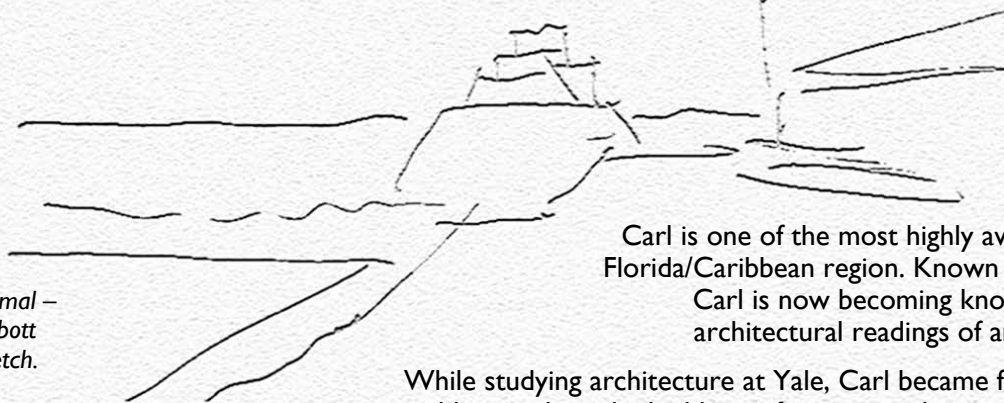
March 20 • 7:30 pm • IMS Special Presentation

Maya - Resonance and Wonder

with **Carl Abbott FAIA**
Architect / Planner / PA



Carl at Dzibanche.



Uxmal -
Abbott
sketch.

Carl is one of the most highly awarded architects in the Florida/Caribbean region. Known for his modern buildings, Carl is now becoming known for his unique architectural readings of ancient Maya sites.

While studying architecture at Yale, Carl became fascinated in traveling the world to explore the buildings of ancient civilizations. He is strongly informed by his experience of the sacred architecture of the Egyptians and Maya – the manner in which their buildings respond to the land and movement of the sun. He will discuss the creative manner in which the Maya incorporated into their architecture the elements of moving shadows, acoustics, astronomy, altered sense of perspective... Also, images of his recent visits to Kom and Xocnaceh with archeologists Dr. Tomás Gallareta Negrón and wife Rosanna who were carrying out field research using current LiDAR surveys.

Carl Abbott has practiced in Europe, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands. He studied Architecture at the University of Florida, then received his Master's at Yale under Paul Rudolph. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and has lectured widely including Harvard, Yale, and Maya at the Playa. The book on his Architecture is titled *INFORMED by the LAND*.

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

This program will take place at 7:30 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.

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The remains of a young woman were discovered by archaeologists in what is now the Nicaraguan village of Bleera Kaanu. Buried some 5,900 years ago, the unusually muscular young woman is the oldest known human buried in lower Central America to date, adding a significant chapter to the region's archaeological record.

Oldest Known Human Burial Identified in Lower Central America

The woman's remains, shielded by an ancient shell mound, a pile of assorted shells designed to mark burial sites or certain spots in the landscape, and the Caribbean's tropical conditions, stayed undisturbed for nearly six millennia.

That is, until a team of Canadian, German and Nicaraguan researchers discovered her final resting site. As the group writes in a study published in the journal *Antiquity*, the find "represents an important contribution to our understanding of the early peopling" of the Caribbean.

Ancient human remains are rarely found in lower Central America and similarly tropical regions, as acidic soil tends to damage bone. Luckily, lead author Mirjana Roksandic, an anthropologist at Canada's University of Winnipeg, says the shell

mound placed over the woman's grave "reduced the acidity of the soil and helped preserve the remains."

Forensic analysis suggests the woman died when she was between 25 and 40 years old. Despite the heavy wear evident on her teeth (a marker usually associated with higher age), the researchers believe she was closer to the lower limit of this age range, as individuals who follow a seafood-based diet tend to exhibit poorer dentition. No cause of death was readily apparent.

Source: Released 01.10.2019 at: <https://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com/2019/01/oldest-known-human-burial-identified-in.html#8dEx31JsB7SlvjMK.97>



The excavated burial of the ancient woman. Credit: Roksandic M. et al., *Antiquity* 2018; Courtesy of BICU-CIDCA.



Laid on her back with legs tucked against her chest and arms prone at the sides of her body, she remained undisturbed for nearly six millennia. Credit: Roksandic M. et al., *Antiquity* 2018; Courtesy of BICU-CIDCA.

Upcoming Events at the IMS:

March 20 • 7:30 pm: *IMS Public Presentation Maya – Resonance and Wonder* with **Carl Abbott**, FAIA Architects. Carl Abbott is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and the youngest member of the original Sarasota School of Architecture. He has traveled extensively to the Maya world. Come to share his passion.

IMS Library Notice:

We are very happy to report that in February 2019, the IMS Library was shipped to the Boundary End Center, where the books and materials will have a long-lasting home to be appreciated for the information they contain. More details in the April *IMS Explorer*.

IMS Program Note:

In alignment with MDC, we now offer nine IMS presentations during a calendar year: January – June and September – November. For more information, contact our Hotline at: 305-279-8110; or by email to: info@instituteofmayastudies.org

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

March 14 • 6 pm: *PCSNY Lecture The Izapa Kingdom and Its Neighbors* – with **Robert M. Rosenswig**, Associate Professor, Dept. of Anthropology and Director, Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, University at Albany–SUNY. The largest of a network of early kingdoms on the Pacific coast of southern Mesoamerica, Izapa provides insight into the origins of urban life and hierarchical political relations. At The Institute of Fine Arts, NYC, NY. Get more info at: <http://pcsnny.org/2018-2019-lectures/>

April 22-24 : *Maya on the Mountain Maya on the Mountain: The Inscriptions of Cobá* – The Boundary End Center (BEC) has announced a Hieroglyphic Workshop led by **David Stuart**. Included are 1-1/2 days of workshop, 2 nights of comfortable lodging, a reception night, and 5 meals. You can easily reserve your spot by contacting us at: boundaryendcenter@gmail.com

April 25-28: *Maya at the Lago Conference 2019 Maya at the Lago* – This is the 9th Annual M@L event! The 2019 Honoree will be Mary Miller.

Participants include Jaime J. Awe, Stanley Guenter, Mary Kate Kelly, Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire, and Marc Zender, with more to come. The program hasn't been finalized yet, but registration is now open at: www.mayaatthelago.com/ To be held at: Davidson Day School, 750 Jetton Street, Davidson, NC, 28036.

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/>



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