

September 18, 2019 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.6.15.2 • 9 Ik' 10 Ch'en • G5

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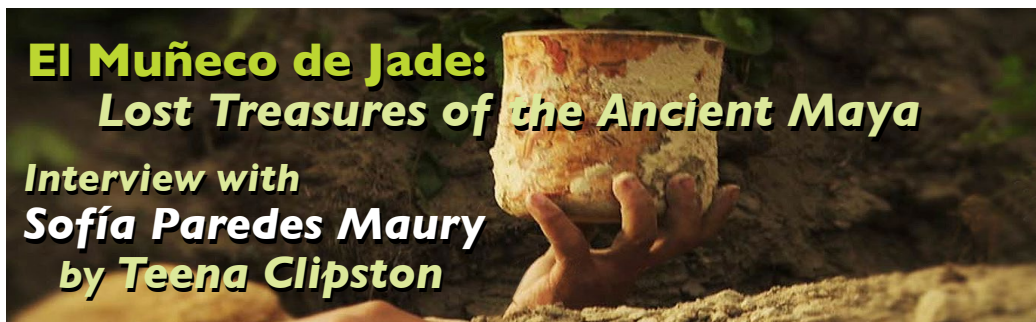
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**El Muñeco de Jade:
Lost Treasures of the Ancient Maya**
Interview with
Sofía Paredes Maury
by **Teena Clipston**

Above: Editor’s screen capture from the documentary feature film *Out of the Maya Tombs*, which explores the tangled issues involved in the collection and study of Maya art. The story is told by villagers, looters, archaeologists, scholars, dealers, and curators. For each, the artifacts have a radically different value and meaning. Check out the trailer at: <http://nightfirefilms.org/films/out-of-the-maya-tombs/>

It came as a whisper in the Chiclero’s ear as the morning sun woke him from a dream, calling him to abandon his work as a gum tapper. The voice, perhaps that of a long-buried king, knew exactly how to entice him. It offered the poor man a dream, to escape his suffering. “This way”, the forgotten ghostly spirit whispered. “This way”. The Chiclero used his machete to slice his way into the thick of the jungle, feverishly following the voice that was now planted firmly in his head, leaving his companions behind at the gum camp. He disappeared into the living, breathing jungle, almost against his will; almost hypnotized by the calling. Then, finally, there on a mound – in the middle of a clearing, bathed in sunlight that penetrated the towering canopy of the jungle, was an object gleaming brightly. It was *el Muñeco de Jade*, a jade figurine. The Chiclero grasped it with a tight fist in a callused hand. At once, he thanked the forest for the gift it had given him and ran back to camp, to tell his good friend: where there was the calling of *el Muñeco de Jade*, there would be more treasures to be found.



Sofía has been on the forefront of exposing the “looting of ancient artifacts” issue for decades. Here she is in front of a looter’s tunnel at Naachtun, locally called El Infierno (“Hell”), located in the dense jungle along the Mexico-Guatemala border. SPM 1999.



Chiclero boiling chicle in his jungle camp, deep within Quintana Roo, Mexico. ©Macduff Everton #04262. Check out former National Geographic Travel Photographer Macduff Everton’s award-winning collection of photographs at: <https://www.macduffeverton.com/> continued on page 3

IMS Program Note:
There is no IMS public presentation scheduled for September.



Many IMS members will be attending the Maya at the Playa Conference on September 26-29.

See “Upcoming Events” on page 8 for details.



**Jim Reed,
Editor**

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Lifetime Member of the IMS:

Suzette Pope (1925–2019)

In Memoriam

Suzette Pope, born September 15, 1925, in Florala, AL, passed away peacefully on the

evening of June 2, 2019, in Kingwood, TX, following complications due to a fall. She is survived by two children, daughter, Stephanie Pope Fisher (husband, Rick) of Kingwood, TX and son, Brent Pope (wife, Terri) of Daphne, AL, six grandchildren and two great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her son (Rodney, d. 1960) and her husband, (Norelle, d. 1996).

Suzette pioneered the contribution of women in the workplace, rising to prominence as Chief Accountant for Dade County Public Schools before retiring in 1994. She was affiliated with more than 40 professional and philanthropic organizations, including Soroptimist International, ASBO, AAUW, the American Legion Auxiliary, where she served as president, treasurer and parliamentarian, and most importantly for us, the Institute of Maya Studies. She also was a champion for the elderly in her community, serving on the Alliance for Aging



Many IMS friends gathered around a dinner table. It is as if Ray Stewart and Beverly West, both in the forefront, are honoring those IMSers who have passed. Behind Ray on the left, Pat Manfredi, Vic Wiggert, and Joaquin Rodriguez. Smiling behind Beverly on the right, Suzette Pope. Photo by Rick Slazyk.

and director of Bay Oaks Home for the Aged. As a result of her dedication to service, she received numerous awards throughout her lifetime including Woman of Impact, Athena Award, Trailblazer Award and Outstanding Woman of Diversity. Suzette was a long time member of Christ Journey Church and her beloved Early Birds class that continually supported and assisted her. She was an avid traveler, visiting over 90 countries and all 7 continents. A service in celebration of her life was held on July 20, 2019 at the Christ Journey Church, Coral Gables, FL. We will truly miss you, Suzette. Your smile lasts forever. 🌟



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PCSWDC Symposium Update:

Alexandre Tokovinine

“I am an anthropological archaeologist with a specialty in Maya epigraphy and 3D scanning. I am interested in the transformations of the ancient complex societies in the context of the

Maya civilization. I have been relying on a combination of archaeological, textual, and visual data to explore the indigenous concepts of place, memory, and identity, as well as specific historical trajectories of individual polities and broader regional networks.

“I am fascinated with the life histories of inscriptions and images as material objects – commissioned by powerful patrons, made and signed by artists, appreciated and displayed, given away at feasts and performances, destroyed, cached or buried.

“My epigraphic research centers on the eastern area of the Peten, in Guatemala, and the adjacent section of Western Belize. It was known as *Wuk Tzuk* (“The Seven Parts”) and *Wuk Kab* (“The Seven Lands”) to the ancient Maya. The great city of Naranjo and the royal house of Sa’aal influenced or directly dominated this region during most of the Classic Period (300-830 CE).

“My other area of expertise is visual documentation of the finds in the field and of the museum collections. I rely on 3D scanning, digital drawing, photography, and photogrammetry.”

Alexandre will be presenting at the PCSWDC symposium on

September 21 with a program titled: **From Temples to Artifacts: 3D Imaging in Maya Archaeology.** 🌟



This late sixth-early seventh-century shrine of Lem Aat, the Hummingbird God of Naranjo, was discovered underneath later additions of the Central Acropolis, at Naranjo.



Structure GT-1, the Acropolis/La Torre, Ek Balam in 3D. This model shows three rooms associated with the burial of king Ukit Kan Lek. His tomb was found in the central room.

El Muñeco de Jade: Lost Treasures of the Ancient Maya

Interview with Sofía Paredes Maury by Teena Clipston *continued from page 1*

Sofía Paredes Maury, now the director of La Ruta Maya Conservation Foundation, is an archaeologist who has conducted extensive research on the looting of Precolumbian artifacts. We sat at a table outside of Santo Domingo del Cerro Cultural Center, surrounded by volcanoes, overlooking the town of Antigua in Guatemala. We ordered coffee. Here, Sofía told me stories of looters and the treasures they have taken from this land. She has had first-hand experience with looters while working undercover within gum extraction camps and rural communities in the Maya Biosphere Reserve of Peten. She has also seen the other end of the looters' trail, during her graduate studies at New York University NYU, when she visited numerous art galleries and did internships at the AMNH and The MET Museums. Through her experiences, she has gained an understanding of how one can heal the damage that has been done by the illegal trade of Precolumbian artifacts.

“The dream of any looter,” Sofía explains, “is finding the Jade Man, el Muñeco de Jade, a character strongly embedded in the local huechero mind and folklore.

As well, these figures can reach approximately \$50,000 USD in a Sotheby's auction.”

Folklore, legends, and magic are all part of the heritage of the Maya of Guatemala. There are many legends that have been told of supernatural activity in ancient sites. Spirits of the ancient Maya have been said to return to roam ruined temples and palaces. It is also believed that spirits attach themselves to Maya antiquities. In the case of **el Muñeco de Jade**, it is not simply a jade piece that would fetch a great sum of money at auction, but it is also a spirit that appears in one's dreams that would lead the way to treasures. The treasures were not only jade pieces, but painted ceramics, sculptures, jewelry, masks, panels, and a whole lot more.



Different styles of ceramics brought back by the chicleros from the jungle. They are now in exhibition to the public (Dos Lagunas Biotope and Uuxactún Collections). SPM 1999.



Boiled chicle pulled out of large kettle in order to form blocks to take to market. Quintana Roo, Mexico. ©Macduff Everton #12418. Check out former National Geographic Travel Photographer Macduff Everton's award-winning collection of photos at: <https://www.macduffeverton.com/>



▲ Abandoned ceramic objects at a chiclero camp. Some looted artifacts reused for cooking or kept as ornaments. SPM 1999



Mules carrying blocks of gum back to the central camp. Archaeological objects are transported out of the forest the same way. SPM 1999

In the 1960s, major archaeological projects, such as in Tikal, were under way and major museum exhibitions had been organized in the United States. It was then that the demand for Precolumbian art began to flourish. The calling of **el Muñeco de Jade** cursed more than the Chiclero: its effects soon spread across the globe. Every major collector wanted a piece of the Maya dream.

“It was an art that the general public had not seen and appreciated before,” Sofía explains.

“Not like Egypt; not like Rome, nor Greece.

Many artifacts left Guatemala in the 1960s and 1970s, which was the beginning of major archaeological expeditions and Maya art exhibitions, but also the peak of looting.

At that time, there were no agreements signed (to protect these antiquities). It wasn't until 1970 that the UNESCO convention was signed.”

The UNESCO 1970 Convention, an international treaty that came into effect in 1972, would, by law, prohibit and prevent the illicit import and export, and transport, of cultural property. However, the treaty could not entirely end the illegal traffic of Precolumbian artifacts. Looting simply continued in a more covert and dangerous manner, luring those cursed by the dream of **el Muñeco de Jade** into corruption, and even murder.

Who are the Looters?

The Chiclero waited for nightfall, then returned to the mound with his friend. His heart raced with excitement thinking of what they might find, and in fear of what might find them. The darkness played tricks on their minds, and their thoughts were plagued by stories of curses and other folk tales. Who would go first into the tomb? According to the curses, the first to enter would surely die. Armed with axes, they ripped the crumbling limestone from the grasp of tree roots and kept digging. They joked of snakes and their deadly bite, and of jaguars hidden, but watching them. Both men agreed

continued on page 6



The Amazing Talent of Walter Paz Joj



This young Guatemalan artist seems to be an ancient/modern Maya scribe!

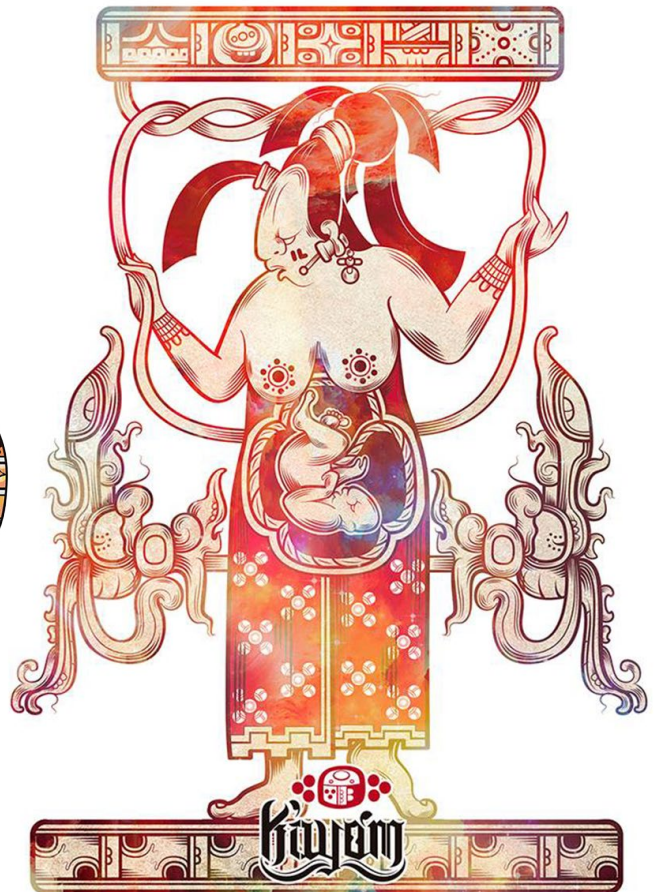
This young man is really someone special. I came across his artwork somewhere on Facebook a year or two ago. I reached out to him, and he quickly befriended me. I have been saving every new image in a special folder hoping some day that I could share them with you.

It is as if his ancient Maya ancestors guide his each and every stroke. They consult with him on use of color and don't allow him to finish a piece unless it's perfect... perfect in every way.

The souls of the Maya of the past emerge on paper as if beckoned forward by the vision serpent itself.



**- Mujer -
Woman**



**- Nacimiento -
Birth**



Walter lives in Panajachel, Lake Atitlan, Guatemala. You can follow him on his Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/ajtzibwinik>

◀ This photo from Tikal was posted by Walter (in red shirt) to his Facebook page. He noted that the tall man was *Nicolas Aj Kulax*. I thought that he looks a lot like Nikolai Grube and when I questioned Sandra Leite about it, Nikolai himself responded. He says: "Kulax or Aj Kulax is simply the Mayanized version of my name, Nicolas! No Maya king, just me! :)" You can follow Nicolas on his facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/muyal.chahk>



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

1 September 1872 CE:

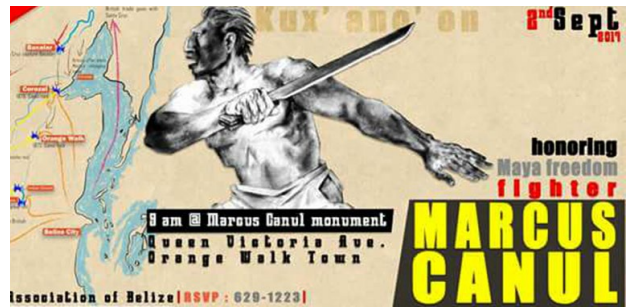
On 12.12.17.11.15 5 Men 18 Xul G1, Icaiche Maya resistance leader Marcus Canul was slain by the British, putting an end to the last major indigenous resistance in Belize. At first, Canul asked for fair things, such as rent concessions for the land the British wanted to use, but when the British refused, he raised an army, only to be mortally wounded in Orange Walk for his troubles.

10 September 640 CE:

On 9.10.7.13.5 4 Chikchan 13 Yax G4, Lady Sak K'uk' of Palenque died. Pakal gets a lot of credit for rebuilding Palenque after its defeat by Calakmul, but it's worth remembering that he was only twelve when he came into office. That means his mother Sak K'uk' was likely an important player in a coup or rebellion against the puppet king from Calakmul, the details of which are lost to history.

21 September 706 CE:

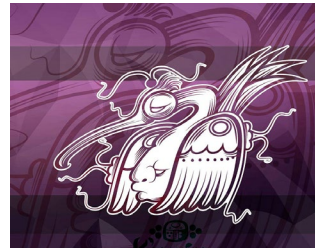
On (9.13.14.13.1 5 Imix 19 Sak G9), K'inich Yo'nal Ahk II of Piedras Negras celebrated the anniversary of his ascension to the throne. But I'm not interested in that. Among the art commissioned for the event was a jadeite "puma" mask which made its way north through trade or conquest until it arrived in Chichen Itza a century later. There, it was cast into the great cenote as an offering, just like the sacrificial victims described in this recent *Forbes* story: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carlymill-er/2019/08/09/skulls-analyzed-from-the-mayan-sacred-cenote-show->



Marcus Canul was one of the better known leaders of the Icaiche Maya. The Icaiche Maya territory included part of northwestern Belize and southern Mexico close to the Río Hondo. The Icaiche Maya were one of the Yucatec Maya groups who were fighting during the Guerra Social Maya (Caste War) 1847 to 1901, but the Maya resistance continued until the 1930s. Courtesy of the *Corozal Daily*.



Lady Cormorant, Maya Goddess Muwaan Mat, from Dresden Codex.

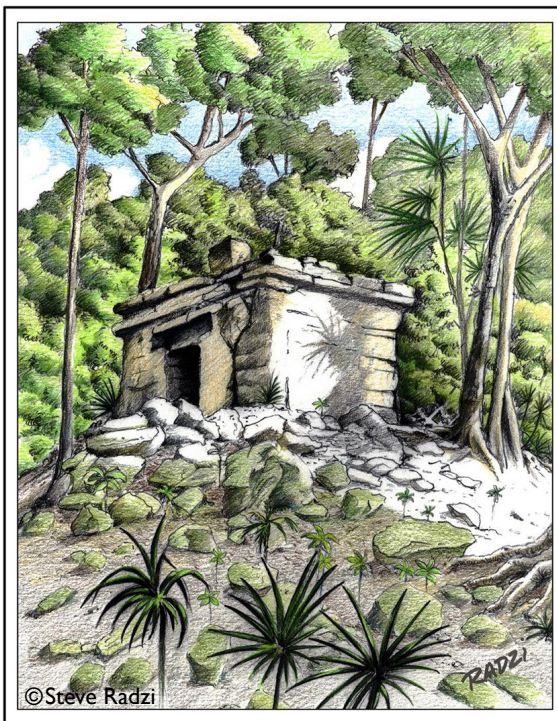


Lady Cormorant, Sak K'uk', by Walter Paz Joj.



The mask is the logogram for "Puma," the childhood name of Piedras Negras Ruler 3. Unlike jaguars, pumas will hunt humans. Thus it is quite appropriate that the logogram for puma is a large cat with the glyph winik, meaning "man," in its mouth. Search Mark Pitts on FAMSJ.org

[that-human-sacrifices-were-sourced-from-far-and-wide-across-mexico-in-1000-ad/#30cea3f4e8b7](https://www.famsj.org/that-human-sacrifices-were-sourced-from-far-and-wide-across-mexico-in-1000-ad/#30cea3f4e8b7)



Tanchah (East) Structure No. 6. Illustrated by Steve Radzi.

Maya at the Playa Update:

Artist Steve Radzi Releases New Illustrations in Time for M@P

Our good friend, Steve Radzi will present an exhibition of his most recent illustrations at the *Maya at the Playa Conference* in Flagler Beach, FL, on September 26–29.

The new collection includes structures from some lesser-known sites along the Quintana Roo coastline in the vicinity of Playa del Carmen, as well as renderings of structural details from sites in the state of Yucatan.

Steve has been illustrating the Maya sites of Mexico, Belize and Guatemala, for over 35 years.

In our October *IMS Explorer*, we'll feature more of Steve's recent artwork.



In the field with Steve Radzi. (Pedro Poot)

Register now for the 13th annual M@P at: <https://www.goa-far.org/about-maya-at-the-playa>

See Steve's complete collection of drawings on his website at: www.mayavision.com

El Muñeco de Jade: Lost Treasures of the Ancient Maya

Interview with Sofía Paredes Maury by Teena Clipston continued from page 3

that being attacked by a jaguar would be far better than being set upon by an evil spirit. They laughed nervously, to break the tension.

Just before the dawn, a final stroke of the axe cracked open a burial tomb beneath them. They peered into the cavity by torchlight. A skull stared up at them from the dirt floor. "Here are my treasures," he spoke to the Chiclero. There were several painted pots arranged around him.

"Who are these looters?" I asked as the sun warmed us and our coffee cups slowly emptied.

"Bueno, who are the looters?" Sofía replied. "It is a question that is very tricky to answer, because it's a line of production, in which there is a scale of hierarchy. The first level is the people who live in the areas around the sites. These can be the gum tappers, or other forest workers in the Peten; or people working in the plantations of sugar cane, coffee, or cotton in other regions of the country."

In Peten, looters are called *huecheros*, the Maya word for armadillo. Some of these *huecheros* began as *chicleros*. Other forest workers have also been potential, and/or incidental, looters.

The chewing gum industry started with Thomas Adams, in New York City. After a failed attempt to turn chicle into rubber, Adams turned his surplus into gum. The Adams Chewing Gum company was formed in 1869, and by 1892, Wrigley's would begin packaging chewing gum and would demand natural gum from the Maya.

The indigenous people who were hired by the gum industry lived off the land, just as their ancestors did. It was their belief that what came out of the forest belonged to them, not only water, plants, and animals, but also that which came out of the ground. If they were hungry, if they were poor, it was the treasures they found underground that provided for them. This is how

they justified their right to sell Maya artifacts.



L) Sofía Paredes Maury (left) and Teena Clipston (right) during interview at the Santo Domingo del Cerro Cultural Center in Antigua, Guatemala. Photo credit: Mercedes Clipston. R) Sofía handles a jadeite mask while preparing for an International La Ruta Maya Fundación exhibition.

"The second level is the intermediaries. These will be the exporters, who are able to get the items out of the country. In one instance, there was someone working in the military who was able to have the support of key staff, to facilitate customs and transportation. He was able to ask for a small plane, or helicopter, and, with a special diplomatic suitcase – as we say '*la valija diplomática*' – to take things out of the country."

The looter needs the intermediary. Without him, he can not sell the artifacts that he has found. The intermediary is the one who has the connections to export the items to international dealers. It is here that we find corruption. The desperation of the looter to improve his life is exploited by those with the upper hand, those with connections, who have the power to negotiate with collectors. Perhaps, in the beginning, they were just business men turning a dollar, but as the laws tightened around antiquities and cultural heritage, a black market emerged. After drug, weapons, and humans, antiquities are the fourth largest illegal trade in the world.

"La Ruta Maya Conservation Foundation was founded in 1990,

by Wilbur Garrett, the former editor of *National Geographic Magazine*. In 2007, under the presidency of Fernando Paiz, one of his Board Members, the organization registered its operations in Guatemala, as the Fundación La Ruta Maya. The foundation's purpose is to manage the recovery of archaeological property for repatriation; and for preservation, study, and educational programs. Currently there are more than 3,000 objects that have been recovered and registered through La Ruta Maya."

Resources:

Out of the Maya Tombs – Night Fire Films, at: <http://nightfirefilms.org/>

Surviving in the Rainforest: The Realities of Looting in the Rural Villages of El Peten, Guatemala – (SPM 1999) by Sofía Paredes Maury, at: <http://www.famsi.org/reports/95096/index.html>

Note: The story of the Chiclero and the pots is fictional, however, based on real events.

Teena Clipston

Author / Journalist / Explorer
Check out Teena's full interview with Sofía Paredes Maury and many other articles at: www.teenacipston.com 📌

Editor's note: In the August 2019 *IMS Explorer* "Unbundling" by Zach Lindsey, I introduced a map of the "Three Hearthstones in the Upper Belize Valley" by Joseph W. Ball and Jennifer Taschek. I have been in email contact with "Don Pepe" for a couple months now, and I couldn't be more impressed by his sense of "being" and his welcomed sense of humor. Here, he offers up the "behind the scenes" story of this image, and a preview into our discussion of "Settlement Patterns"...

Jade Hearth of Creation by Joseph W. Ball

2018 Recipient, Society for American Archaeology Award for Excellence in Archaeological Analysis

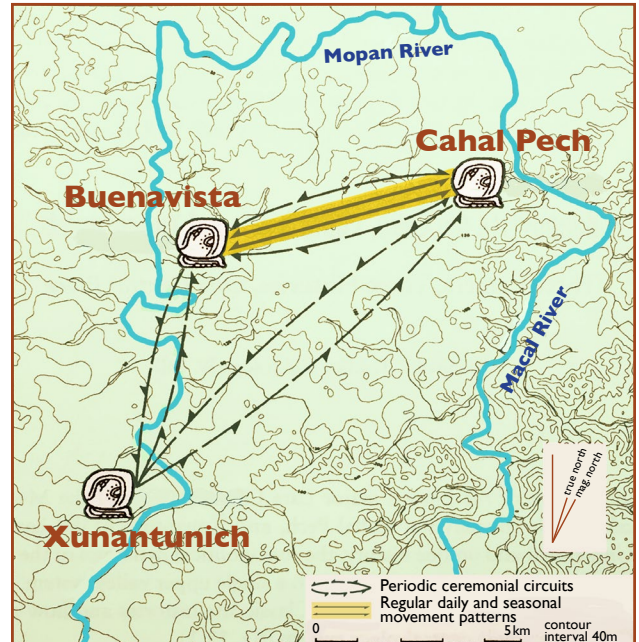
The late 1990s was a time when understanding of the macro settlement patterns and possible settlement system that had characterized the ancient Upper Belize Valley (UBV) was still very much in its infancy. It was also the time when Linda Schele-inspired cosmological interpretations of virtually every aspect of Classic Maya life and culture were very much in vogue. During that time, my wife Jennifer and I, tried to envision a model of settlement patterns that might explain the possible nonpolitical interrelationships of the three major Valley centers – Buenavista, Cahal Pech, and Xunantunich – as these might have been at the height of the full Late Classic period, ca. 745-810 CE.

What the resulting "Three Hearthstones" model depicts is one attempt to envision the possible periodic and regular ceremonial and secular movements among these three centers as these might have been – based both on our understanding of the political histories of these centers, and of Maya cosmology and cosmology-inspired movements as these were understood at the time.

The conceptualization owed much to the rich body of publications on Maya iconography and its inspiring cosmology by Karl Taube, and to the 1980s and 1990s work of Wendy Ashmore, Jessica Christie, and Clemency Coggins, among others, who argued strongly for linkages between ancient Maya civic plans, promenades, and cosmologies. Ashmore, Christie, and Coggins looked at these within individual centers; we sought to expand their vision to a localized regional or zonal settlement system level.

The model envisioned the three major UBV centers as the three sacred "Hearthstones of Creation", together forming the primeval "Jade Hearth of Creation". The actual movements identified were hypothetical, based on what was known of the

The "Three Hearthstones" in the Upper Belize Valley. Some scholars suggest that the ancient Maya sites of Cahal Pech, Xunantunich, and Buenavista, may have been located where they are to mirror the three hearthstones of creation above.



archaeological records of each of the three centers as of the late 1990s. Of course, it is all but impossible for legitimate, valid archaeology – in the end, a purely behavioral science – to actually prove such cosmological or ideological patternings to be true, and our understanding of each of these centers has grown and changed over the past twenty years.

Still, the possibilities of such a model are intriguing, and, in the end, given what we now know of how deeply cosmology did underlie and imbue so much of Classic period Maya culture and behavior, who can say with any real certainty that such models do not have validity – or do? *Quién puede decirlo?... Wáaj máax je'el wa'alik?*

Joseph W. Ball, Ph.D.
Albert W. Johnson Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus, Anthropology
San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

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Palenque



V

now online from George Fery

“Starting in the late sixties, I began extensive studies of ancient beliefs and religions, which grew into a lifetime dedication to research, both academic and in the field. This quest rapidly focused on the search for a common denominator that drove humans and their cultures,



George, happy in his explorer's vest with IMS logo, flies to El Mirador.

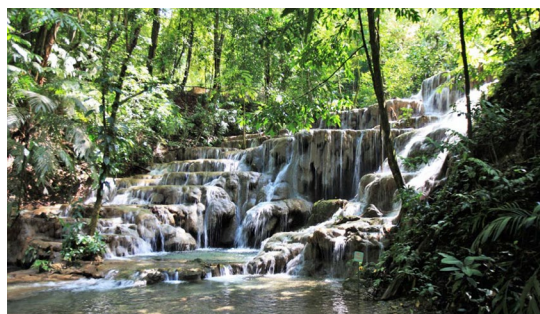
to dedicate their hearts and minds to something other than themselves.

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

“On my website, I am currently uploading a seven-part PDF series called ‘Palenque and Its World’. ‘Palenque V: The Divine Triad’ is now available for reading and downloading. Informative texts go with my archive of photography.” Start exploring at: <https://www.georgefery.com/palenque>



The three temples of the Triad in the Cross Group are built on mounds, relatively close to each other, east of the Otolum river-canal, set in a triangular pattern.



Editor's note: I've spent many an hour enjoying the “Queen's Baths” waterfalls at Palenque. 🏰

Upcoming Events and Announcements:

IMS Program Note:
There is no IMS public presentation scheduled for September.

Sept. 6: PCSWDC September Lecture **Of War, Death, Conspiracy, and Revenge: Deciphering Xunantunich's Role in the Late Classic Political Landscape of the Central Maya Lowlands** – with **Jaime J. Awe**, PhD, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Northern Arizona University. In 2016, the Belize Valley Archaeological Reconnaissance Project made several significant discoveries at the site of Xunantunich. Besides caches of eccentric flints, and a large royal tomb with sumptuous grave goods, the new finds included two hieroglyphic panels that implicate four Classic period Maya kingdoms, among them that of the legendary Snake-head kings. At the Charles Sumner School in Washington, DC. Get more details at: <http://www.pcswdc.org/events>

Sept. 21: *Annual PCSWDC Symposium Ancient Mesoamerica Through 21st Century Science* – **Marcello Canuto** of Tulane will moderate the day-long program along with a team of Mesoamerican scholars engaged in cutting-edge archaeological research. We'll explore the frontiers of archaeological knowledge and practice, while featuring outstanding examples of archaeological research findings made possible through the application of emerging technologies. Save \$15 while discount tickets are still available on the PCSWDC website at: <http://www.pcswdc.org/symposium-2019-e>

Sept. 26–29: *13th Annual M@TP Conference Maya at the Playa* – Sponsored by the American Foreign Academic Research and Davidson Day School in Flagler Beach, FL. **Mat Saunders** has now finalized all of the specifics on their website. Go to the new and improved website to see the list of presenters, their bios, and the daily program schedule. Participants include: Jaime Awe, Arthur

Demarest, Maxime Lamoureux- St-Hilaire, Stanley Guenter, Harri Kettunen, Lisa Lucero, Mary Kate Kelly, and Marc Zender. Enter “IMS” when you register to get the special \$10 IMS Members Only discount, at: <https://www.goafar.org/about-maya-at-the-playa>

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: Get in on all the action! IMS members post interesting links, as well as photos from their recent adventures. Join the **Explorer**-ation! at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MiamilMS/>



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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