

November 28, 2019 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.7.0.13 • 2 Ben 1 Mak • G4

A monthly newsletter published by the **Institute of Maya Studies**

Maya enthusiasts providing public education for 46+ years

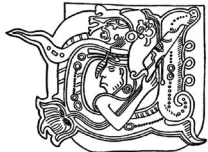
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Pioneer in Maya Studies: Michael Douglas Coe In Memoriam, compiled by Jim Reed

The news of Michael D. Coe's passing on September 25 spread quickly among the Mayanist community. He was a very influential person in furthering ancient indigenous studies in Mesoamerica, South America and Southeast Asia. He was the mentor to countless students at Yale University, including Traci Ardren, who will be speaking at the IMS on Feb. 19, 2020. Coe's books and research papers have inspired millions around the planet.



Michael Coe with one of his discoveries, a carving of a figure with removable arms, maybe representing an ancient ball player, at the Olmec city of San Lorenzo, Veracruz, Mexico, 1967. Photograph: Francisco Beverido/ Estate of Michael Coe.

I first became aware of the news from a post by Elaine Day Schele, who also reposted the original notice by David Stuart.

Elaine noted: "Dear Friends, Just heard that we have lost Michael Coe. I received the news through Dave Stuart. He died of a stroke while in the New Haven hospital, while undergoing treatment for several ailments. I had a phone call with him a week or so ago and he seemed very much himself, going strong at 90."

On September 26th, David Stuart had posted: "Mike Coe passed away last night. One of the greats. An amazing scholar with an legacy like few others in Mesoamerican studies. The study of the Olmec and the Maya were forever changed by his work, his students and his legacy. It was a real honor to be his friend."

Mayanist John W. Hoopes, Professor, Department of Anthropology, The University of Kansas, responded almost immediately: "This is such sad news. Mike, along with the late Ben Rouse, was one of my undergraduate mentors at Yale. In 1980, Mike co-supervised my Senior honors thesis on excavations in northwestern Costa Rica.

"I am so grateful that I had a chance to have lunch with him and visit with him at his beautiful home in New Haven when I was there this past April. It was one of the highlights of my year. We had last been together in Helsinki in December 2012 at the European Maya Conference.

"Mike's work has had a profound impact on my life... He lived a charmed life and will be sorely missed."

The news of Coe's passing also affected the IMS Board of Directors and members at large. Posts were made to the IMS Facebook page and folks went to work to determine when Coe had presented at the IMS. Anne Stuart pointed out that Coe had



Archaeologist and Maya scholar **Michael D. Coe** 5.14.1929–9.25.2019
Courtesy: Thames & Hudson via TheWashingtonPost.com

The IMS and Miami Dade College present:



Our Grand MDC/IMS Maya Adventure

with MDC Student Nicholas Gonzalez and IMS President Rick Slazyk

participated in three seminar series between 1972 and 1978. See Anne's comments at the beginning of "Michael Coe at the IMS" article on page 4.

continued on page 3



Jim Reed, Editor

Pioneers in Maya Studies: submitted by Joseph W. Ball

“Speaking as the last surviving participant in the 1974 Santa Fe School of American Research Advanced Seminar on the Origins of Maya Civilization, we certainly did not get everything right, and we definitely did get a number of things wrong, but, given what we had to work with at the time (1974) data-wise, I would say that we did a pretty good job of creating the seminal and very, very solid foundation on which so many subsequent exciting projects and discoveries regarding the Maya Preclassic and Preclassic civilization have been based.

“Among many substantive and theoretical contributions of note were the first real introduction of warfare among the Preclassic Maya as a catalyst to the emergence of Classic civilization; the first employment of cultural anthropologist Robert Carneiro’s then new theoretical concepts of environmental and social circumscription; and the first truly areal synthesis of Preclassic period data from across the entire Maya lowlands.

“Perhaps the single most important contribution to emerge from the seminar, however, was the unanimous rejection by the participants of any simple, unilinear Darwinian evolutionary models for the development of Maya civilization.

“Contrary to the recent statements of another Maya archaeologist, American Mayanists had rejected such simplistic models in the late 1960s, and by 1974 had adopted fully multilinear social evolutionary models as first introduced by American archaeologist Charles Redman and elaborated in the writings of Mesoamericanists William T. Sanders, David Webster, Kent Flannery, Joyce Marcus, Barbara Price, and several others of the time.

“These are well articulated in several chapters in the 1977 University of New Mexico Press volume, *The Origins of Maya Civilization*, edited by Richard E.W. Adams.

●● Looking back, I cannot imagine



Participants in the 1974 Santa Fe School of American Research Advanced Seminar on the Origins of Maya Civilization that resulted in publication of the 1977 University of New Mexico Press volume: *The Origins of Maya Civilization*, edited by Richard E.W. Adams. Photo courtesy of the School of American Research, Santa Fe, NM. **Standing, left to right:** Jacinto Quirarte, T. Patrick Culbert, Joseph W. Ball, Richard E.W. Adams, Robert McC. Netting, William L. Rathje. **Sitting, left to right:** Michael D. Coe, Robert L. Rands, Gordon R. Willey, Gareth W. Lowe, William T. Sanders.

any group of scholars of that time doing one jot better than we were able to do, and did.”

“Regarding Mike Coe...”

...while I was never one of his students (my degrees and my partner Jennifer Taschek’s are all from solid, Blue Collar Land Grant Universities [UW Madison and U Oregon]), not Ivy League schools – and no regrets regarding that!), I did have the privilege of being a junior colleague of his during the 1970s and ’80s. It was Mike, in fact, who encouraged Jen and I to work at Nohoch Ek in 1984 to follow up the work that he and brother Bill had done there back in 1949.

“That resulted in one of our *Latin American Antiquity* articles which I believe I have posted on ResearchGate. Without question, Mike was one of the most approachable and warmest practitioners of our discipline, and one of the most eclectic and insightful archaeologists and Mayanists whom I can name, past and present.

“Mike was not only a great Mayanist who advanced our discipline in so many different ways, but also a great Olmecista, and a recognized and respected authority on the French and Indian War (he even published a book on this); the ancient Khmer civilization of Cambodia (also authored a book on this!); and, of all things, fly-fishing (he curated a major exhibit on



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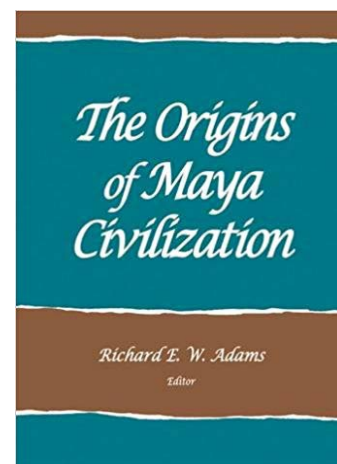
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that at the Yale Peabody Museum!).

“Michael Coe is a person who truly advanced the disciplines of archaeology and Maya studies in multiple ways, and also has left a priceless legacy in his many outstanding students, now themselves respected Mayanists and archaeologists. I was privileged to have known him back in the 1970s.”

– Sincerely, Joseph W. Ball



Professor and Curator Emeritus Michael D. Coe is world famous for his research and publications on the Maya, the Olmec, and many other archaeological topics. His archaeological collections from the site of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlan are housed at the Peabody. Coe was Curator in the Division of Anthropology from 1968 until his retirement in 1994. Explore more at: <http://peabody.yale.edu/collections/anthropology/michael-d-coe>

Olmec. He helped to identify the Izapans as the originators of the calendars first thought to be a Maya invention. See “Michael Coe & Izapana” on page 5. His collaboration with Stephen Houston on a carved stone mask containing 101 glyphs of the “Epi-Olmec” Isthmian script is described in an article titled “Teo Mask Adds to Corpus of Isthmian Script” also on page 5. And, for our online subscribers, I am happy to offer up an extra page 8 of Coe coverage with the story titled “The True History of The True History of Chocolate”, about the book Coe co-wrote with his wife Sophie. Enjoy!

From Michael Coe’s page at Yale University:

Michael D. Coe (born 1929) was an American archaeologist, anthropologist, epigrapher and author. Primarily known for his research in the field of Precolumbian Mesoamerican studies (and in particular, for his work on the Maya civilization, where he is regarded as one of the foremost Mayanist scholars of the latter 20th century), Coe has also made extensive investigations across a variety of other archaeological sites in North and South America. He has also specialized in comparative studies of ancient tropical forest civilizations, such as those of Central America and Southeast Asia. He held the chair of Charles J. MacCurdy Professor of Anthropology, Emeritus, Yale University, and is Curator Emeritus of the Anthropology collection in the Peabody Museum of Natural History, where he had been Curator from 1968 to 1994.

During the Korean War, Coe worked for the CIA as a part of the front organization Western Enterprises in Taiwan created to subvert Mao’s China.

With over four decades of active research experience, Coe is a prolific author of scientific papers across a broad range of archaeological, anthropological and ethnohistorical topics. He has also authored a number of popular works

Pioneer in Maya Studies: Michael Douglas Coe

In Memoriam compiled by Jim Reed continued from page 1

IMS webmaster Keith Merwin dove into the IMS archives to determine exactly when Coe was present in Miami at the IMS and even came up with copies of two of the original seminar program flyers. Of note, David Stuart’s father, George Stuart, appeared in a seminar that Coe moderated for the IMS in 1978. As mentioned in the photo caption at right, I was last in Coe’s presence when he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2010 Maya at the Playa Conference. I cherish the numerous books by Coe in my collection.

Coe is perhaps best known for his work on the ancient Maya, but I really appreciate his dedication to the earlier cultures, like the

for the non-specialist audience, several of which have been best-selling and much reprinted, such as *The Maya* (1966) and *Breaking the Maya Code* (1992). He also co-authored the book *Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs* (1962, sixth edition, 2008) with Rex Koontz.

Coe attended Fay School in Southborough, MA, and later graduated from Harvard College in 1950 and received his PhD in anthropology from the Harvard Graduate School of Arts & Sciences in 1959. Shortly after commencing his graduate studies program there, in 1955, he married the daughter of the noted evolutionary biologist and Russian émigré Theodosius Dobzhansky, Sophie, who was then an undergraduate anthropology student at Radcliffe College. Sophie translated from Russian, the work of epigrapher, Yuri Knorosov, *The Writing of the Maya Indians* (1967). He had based his studies on De Landa’s phonetic alphabet and is credited with originally breaking the Maya code. 🏹

An excellent tribute to Michael Coe by Stephen Houston appears at: <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/oct/03/michael-coe-obituary>

Awards and Recognition

Over the course of his lengthy scientific career, Michael D. Coe was the recipient of a number of awards in recognition of his substantial contributions to the fields of archaeology and anthropology.

These included:

- 1981 – Senior Fellowship, National Endowment for the Humanities.
- 1986 – Member, National Academy of Sciences
- 1989 – Tatiana Proskouriakoff Award. Harvard University.
- 2000 – Hitchcock Professorship, University of California, Berkeley.
- 2001 – James D. Burke Prize in Fine Arts, Saint Louis Art Museum.
- 2004 – Orden del Quetzal, Republic of Guatemala
- 2006 – Orden del Pop. Museo Popol Vuh, Universidad Francisco Marroquín, Guatemala 🏹 ●●●



Michael Coe at Angkor Wat (his thumbnail photo on Coe’s page that is posted on academia.edu.) Coe received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2010 Maya at the Playa Conference. His keynote speech was about Angkor Wat. Source: Yale University.



Act of Delivery of the Order of Pop and Huun Prize (Guatemala, July 25, 2006)

Mayan Language Will Be Taught In All Schools in the Yucatan

The Government of the State of Yucatan is now promoting the incorporation of the Yucatec Mayan language to the higher educational level, as a measure to strengthen the identity in the State. The project also considers all institutions of secondary and preparatory education.

The director of the State Center for Training, Research and Humanistic Dissemination of Yucatan, Fidencio Briceño Chel, said that based on reports of the Indigenous Education subsystem in the State, the Mayan language is taught in just over 100 primary schools in the State, and that they have the objective that in the next school year 2019-2020 the subject will be taught in all schools of this level.

In this regard, he said that they are in the process of creating

a “seed group” with 20 primary school teachers, so that each teacher is also a tutor for at least 40 other teachers to train them with Mayan language teaching techniques.

Briceño Chel said “At this moment we are looking for Mayan language teaching in all primary, secondary, preparatory and university schools. We prepared the care model from basic education to professional level, together with the Autonomous University of Yucatan and the Directorate of Higher Education.”

The official also noted that in the case of the secondary, preparatory and university education levels,



Students hold signs showing the Yucatek Mayan names for the numbers one to 10. Courtesy of Financial Times and their special report “The Maya Maths Revolution” at: <https://lig.ft.com/special-reports/maya-maths/>

the project will be applied in the 2020-2021 school year.

He explained that they analyze which parts of the programs are working for teachers, and will then train them all to follow the same teaching and evaluation criteria. 📌

Source: From an online article by Israel Cárdenas in Merida, released 06.25.2019 on: <https://sipse.com/> Submitted by Zach Lindsey. (Note: the original article is not longer posted.)

Michael D. Coe at the IMS

“Coe was a good friend of our IMS founder, Hal C. Ball, who introduced him to the Institute of Maya Studies. I spoke with him at the “Maya at the Playa” conference the year he was honored (2010), and he expressed much admiration for the IMS. Also, how much he loved going deep sea fishing with one of our members during his multiple visits here.” – Anne Stewart

Michael Coe was the first speaker at the IMS Fall-Winter Lecture Series. Speaking on **November 10, 1972**, his over-all topic was “*The Maya Underworld*”, and he broke his talk into chapters, elaborating on:

- La Victoria: An Early Site of the Pacific Coast of Guatemala
- Mexico
- Jaguar’s Children: Preclassic Art of Central Mexico
- America’s First Civilization
- The Maya
- Early Cultures and Human Ecology on South Coastal Guatemala

The other two presenters, each speaking on separate dates of the three-part series, were Dr. Frederick J. Dockstader, former Director of the Museum of The American Indian, and Dr. Gordon F. Ekholm, former Curator of the American Museum of Natural History.

From the symposium flyer in the IMS newsletter,

Vol. 3, No. 1, Hal C. Ball editor, (January 10, 1974): The Institute of Maya Studies and the Miami Museum of Science are jointly sponsoring a two-evening symposium on “*The Rise and Fall of the Maya Culture, and Its Present Day Parallels*”:


- January 31–February 1, 1974:**
- Dr. Michael D. Coe, Professor of Anthropology, Yale University, was the moderator. Other presenters included:
 - Dr. Munro S. Edmonson, Professor of Anthropology, Tulane University
 - Dr. Hugh Popenoe, Director, Center for Tropical Agriculture, University of Florida
 - Edwin M. Shook, Archaeologist, Mayanist

The panel discussion topic on Friday, February 1, was: “*Causes of the decline of the Maya culture, and analysis of present day parallels*”

The Museum of Science and The Institute of Maya Studies proudly present a Symposium on . . .

“THE RISE AND FALL OF THE MAYA CULTURE AND ITS PRESENT DAY PARALLELS”

January 31 - February 1, 1974
7:45 p. m., Auditorium,
Museum of Science
Miami, Florida



Dr. MICHAEL D. COE, Moderator
Professor of Anthropology
Yale University

Dr. HUGH POPENOE
Director, Center for Tropical Agriculture
University of Florida

Dr. MUNRO S. EDMONSON
Professor of Anthropology
Tulane University

EDWIN M. SHOOK
Archaeologist, Mayanist

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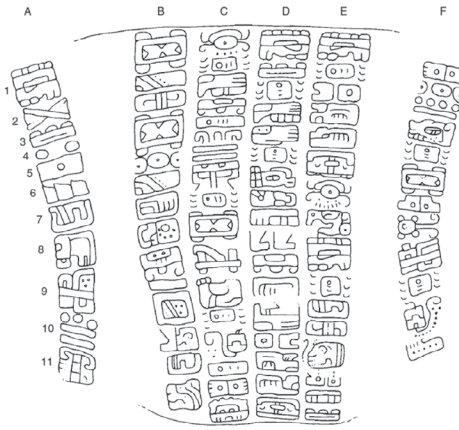
For information call Blayne Kaplan, 854-4242

Event flyer for the Jan. 31–Feb. 1, 1974 event.

During **October 19–21, 1978:**

The IMS sponsored a three-day symposium titled: “*New Horizons in the Maya World*”. Speakers included:

- Dr. Michael D. Coe, of the Peabody Museum at Yale (also moderator),
- Dr. David Kelly of the University of Calgary,
- Dr. Norman Hammond of Rutgers University,
- Dr. Elizabeth Benson, Director of the Center for Precolumbian Studies at Dumbarton Oaks, and,
- Dr. George Stuart of the National Geographic Society.



The Teo Mask, front, glyphs, and back inner-side. The photos are by Michael Coe. The Isthmian script illustration is by Stephen Houston.

Teo Mask Adds to Corpus of Isthmian Script

A Teotihuacan-style mask unearthed from an unknown location in southern Mexico adds some 101 glyphs to the total number currently known for the ancient Isthmian script. Of these, twenty-five are unique additions to the Isthmian corpus, according to archaeologist Stephen Houston of Brown University, and Yale University professor emeritus Michael D. Coe.

The stone mask, now in a private collection, was published by

Houston and Coe in an issue of the journal *Mexicon*, wherein the authors use the mask's inscription to demonstrate their contention that the Isthmian script remains undecipherable.

The Isthmian script derives its name from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the general area from which the known texts originate. It has also been referred to as "Epi-Olmec", based on the belief that it encodes a

language descended from that of the Olmec civilization. The best-known Isthmian inscription is carved on a stela recovered from the site of La Mojarra in 1986.

In their *Mexicon* article, Houston and Coe employ the numbers assigned to Isthmian glyphs by Martha Macri and Laura Stark (1993). 🗿

Source: Mesoweb.com... thank you Joel Skidmore for keeping our love of the Maya alive!
<http://www.mesoweb.com/reports/isthmian.html>

Michael Coe & Izapa

Michael Coe describes Izapa as being a connective link between the Olmec and the early Maya. He supports his argument with the large amount of Olmec style motifs used in Izapan art, including jaguar motifs, downturned human mouths, St. Andrew's Cross, flame eyebrows, scrolling skies, clouds, and baby-face figurines.

Also used to support Coe's hypothesis are elements in Maya culture thought to be derived from the Izapans, including similarities in art and architecture styles, continuity between Maya and Izapan monuments, and shared deities.

Due to the abundance of carved Maya stelae and monuments at Izapa, the term "Izapan style" is used to describe similarly executed works throughout the Pacific foothills and highlands beyond, including some found at Takalik Abaj and Kaminaljuyu.

Izapa is located on wet and hilly land made of volcanic soil; it is still fertile for agriculture, especially coffee and cacao. The weather is very hot

Izapa and other sites from the Formative Period. ▶

and very wet. The area around Izapa was a major cacao producing area known as the Soconusco region.

Izapa gains its fame through its art style. The art found at the site includes sculptures of stelae and also altars that look like frogs.

The sheer number of sculptures outweighs that of any contemporaneous site. Garth Norman has counted 89 stelae, 61 altars, 3 thrones, and 68 "miscellaneous" monuments at Izapa. In contrast to the ruler-oriented sculpture of the Epi-Olmec culture 330 miles (550 km) across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Izapan sculpture features mythological and religious subjects, and is ceremonial and frequently narrative in nature.

Also, in contrast to Epi-Olmec and later Maya stelae, Izapa monuments rarely contain glyphs. Although this could imply that the Izapan culture lacked knowledge of any writing system, Julia Guernsey, author of a definitive work on Izapa sculpture, proposes instead that



the monuments were intentionally language-free and that "Izapa's position at the juncture of two linguistic regions [i.e. Mixe-Zoque and Maya] may have fostered the penchant for non-verbal communicative strategies."

Izapa is also included in the debate of the origin of the 260-day calendar. The calendar was originally thought to be a Maya invention, but now, many scholars have hypothesized that the calendars originated in the area around Izapa. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that Izapa fits the geological and historical conditions better than any previous place thought to be the origin. 🗿

Source: From Michael Coe's presence on:
<https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Izapa>



L) Nicholas and Greg, relax atop a structure at Calakmul. C) Nicholas holds a new book: *The Mayas: The Splendor of a Great Culture*. This work explains in detail the different facets Maya, culture, from its political organization and economy, to the architecture of its magnificent cities, plus, a section on one of the most complex writing, number and calendar systems of the ancient world. R) Nicholas and Greg at Rio Bec. Photos by Rick Slazyk.

My Grand Maya Adventure: From Río Bec to Calakmul!

by MDC student Nicholas Gonzalez

I'd like to start this article by thanking the Institute of Maya Studies for the opportunity to travel to Mexico, where I was able to experience and learn about an entirely unique civilization – the Maya!

I would also like to thank Professor Villa for introducing me to, as well as challenging me, to go out and learn more about an important piece of Mesoamerican history, especially considering that it is rarely taught within our MDC classrooms. As a history major, this scholarship allowed me to broaden my horizons as well as learn about a rarely taught part of early American history.

Although we visited ancient Maya sites every day, there were a few that stood out among the rest, and engaged my interest to know more of the people who once lived out their lives in these remarkable sacred sites.

Río Bec is a very impressive site, as it is situated deep within the jungles of the Yucatan. The remoteness of the site allowed us to explore the site at our leisure, without the crowds one might encounter at a larger, more popular site, like Chichen Itza. Experiencing Río Bec also held a deep importance to IMS members who traveled along with me, as they had been attempting



IMS group photo at Rio Bec. Michael Coe, who refers to the Rio Bec towers as an 'aberrant architectural style', writes: "Here showiness rather than function is what was apparently sought, for characteristic of this style of the Late Classic is the decoration of perfectly ordinary small 'palaces' with high towers imitating the fronts of temple-pyramids; these towers are solid, however, the steps being impossibly narrow and steep, and the 'doorway' at the summit leading to nothing. To today's 'functionalists', the fakery of the Rio Bec style is somewhat repellent, but no one could help but be awed at these mysterious sites crumbling in their jungle fastness." – Michael D. Coe, *The Maya*, p. 112-3.

to reach the site for several years, but were always turned away due to bad weather. Luckily, this year the dry season was still in effect and the roads were passable, offering us access to the coveted ruins. I was honored to be able to experience the site with the group.

Calakmul would by far have to be one of the most impressive sites in the Americas to visit. The massive temples only offer a brief glimpse of what the city must have looked like during its peak. Yet the greatest part of the trip into Calakmul was the exclusive access that the IMS was given to the inside of the main temple. Within the main temple we were able to see original friezes with original paint still stuck on the stones, all preserved over the course of a millennia.

Over the course of the week, the IMS group explored many different sites, yet it's hard to pick and choose which parts were better than others as the entire trip was one great experience. In the end, my voyage through the Yucatan to these ancient sites allowed me to become more educated about the Maya civilization. I'd also like to offer a special thanks to those who made this trip the wonderful experience that it was: Rick, Martha, Keith, Sandra, Jeffrey, Karen, Greg, George, James, and Jose. I will always cherish this adventure! 🏰



El Tigre: the original name of this Chontal Maya ancient city was Itzamkanac. There are several outstanding architectural groups, some dating back to 600 BCE. Here, there are moulded stucco masks with the face of the deity Itzamná (who happens to be the mascot of the IMS!) Photo: George Fery.

**A Special Student Assembly Event – presented
by the IMS and Miami Dade College:**

**Our Grand MDC/IMS Maya Adventure!
with MDC student Nicholas Gonzalez
and IMS President Rick Slazyk**



The alluring Chontal Maya site of El Tigre. Marta Barber notes: "I am so pleased that the IMS group, including Nicholas, made it to El Tigre. It is a very remote site, once accessible only by canoe or boat. The last time the site was visited by a member of the IMS was Paul Pettenude in the 1990s. Great going, guys!"
All photos by Rick Slazyk.



IMS group photo at The Fly Catcher Inn. Nicholas seems to be smiling the most!

◀ *At El Tigre, a stucco mask of Itzamná with a human face – the mascot of the IMS!*

It was a memorable IMS adventure, and this special MDC/IMS program promises to be a very memorable presentation for the students of MDC. **MDC student Nicholas Gonzalez**, applied for, and received an IMS scholarship to travel to the Mayalands with a group of IMS members. Nicholas, together with IMS President **Rick Slazyk**, will share their experiences, along with beautiful photos of the Maya sites that they visited, including Río Bec, Calakmul, and El Tigre.

Of special note: Two IMS Adventure scholarships for 2020 will be announced!

Want to attend? Call the IMS Maya Hotline at 305-279-8110 for date, time, and room location.

2019 New Membership and Renewal Application

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Remembering Sophie!

The True History of...

The True History of Chocolate by Aylin Öney Tan

Michael Coe remembers fondly their trip to Rome and talks about how it all got started. It must have been sometime around 1975. That trip to Rome proved to be life changing. Michael Coe is lovingly talking about his late wife, Sophie Coe, in Oxford, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of The Sophie Coe Prize in Food History.

They liked to travel. Both being anthropologists, and Michael Coe having also studied archaeology, they were curious about discovering different cultures and liked traveling to various countries. They had been to Turkey several times, visiting all the archaeological sites on the Aegean coast, traveling to Kars and Lake Van; when they were in the ancient Armenian city Ani, they were all alone in that magnificent site, and the other side of the border was still Soviet Russia. It was the years when traveling in Turkey required huge stamina, great determination and a passion for curiosity.

But, it was an English bookshop in Rome that changed Sophie's destiny. Already an accomplished cook, she was very much interested in cookbooks and learning about food cultures. She found the book *Mediterranean Seafood*, all about Mediterranean fishes, and fell in love with the book instantly. The book contained the local names of each fish in various languages around the Mediterranean, including the scientific name, and provided ample information about the fish, together with fish recipes from various countries. It was like no cookbook before. It was a book written by Alan Davidson, a curio man quite obsessed with food. Being a diplomat, Davidson traveled and lived all around the world, loved food, and above all fish, and ended up writing about fish wherever he had the chance to live, from the north Atlantic to Southeast Asia.

Writing about fish stemmed from necessity; when he served as the British ambassador in Tunis, his wife Jane asked him to look for a cookbook on local fishes, as she could not recognize any of the local varieties. Not being able to find one, he wrote the book himself with the help of Giorgio Bini, who was a great Italian ichthyologist, the world's greatest living authority on sea fish in the Mediterranean at the time, and happened to be visiting the Davidsons.

It was only a few years after the book was published that Sophie Coe discovered it and decided to write to Davidson, who was eventually going to become her mentor. Davidson encouraged Sophie to write about food, publishing her articles in PPC (*Petits Propos Culinaires*), the journal of food studies and history he was editing. Davidson also initiated the most profound symposium on food history, "The Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery." Over time, the Davidson and Coe families became friends;



L) Sophie D. Coe (1933-1994) was an anthropologist, food historian and author, primarily known for her work on the history of chocolate. Her friendship with Alan Davidson and her association with the annual Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery led her husband Michael Coe, with the help of Davidson and Harlan Walker, to set up the Sophie Coe Prize after her death in 1995. It has been awarded annually ever since and continues to be the most prestigious established prize in the field, reflecting the quality of Coe's own work. This photo was taken by her husband in the summer of 1970, and was submitted by Elaine Schele. R) Sophie and Michael, together in Rome, circa 1975.

At right: Still available, Sophie D. Coe & Michael D. Coe, *The True History of Chocolate*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1996. ISBN: 0-500-01693-3.

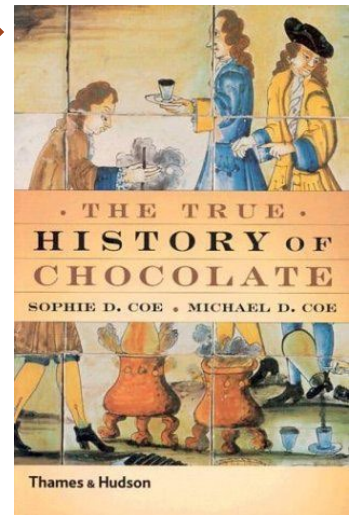
the Coes visited the Davidsons whenever they came to London, Sophie Coe presented many times at the Oxford Symposium. Eventually her interest was focused on chocolate and she wanted to learn about its true history. That was inevitable, as Michael Coe was a specialist on Mesoamerican and Precolumbian cultures; it was like her destiny studying a food item that had its roots in Precolumbian America. She initially wrote a book titled *America's First Cuisines* in 1994, and then started working on a new book solely on chocolate. Alas, her health fell short in completing her study, and in the course of writing her book, she died of cancer.

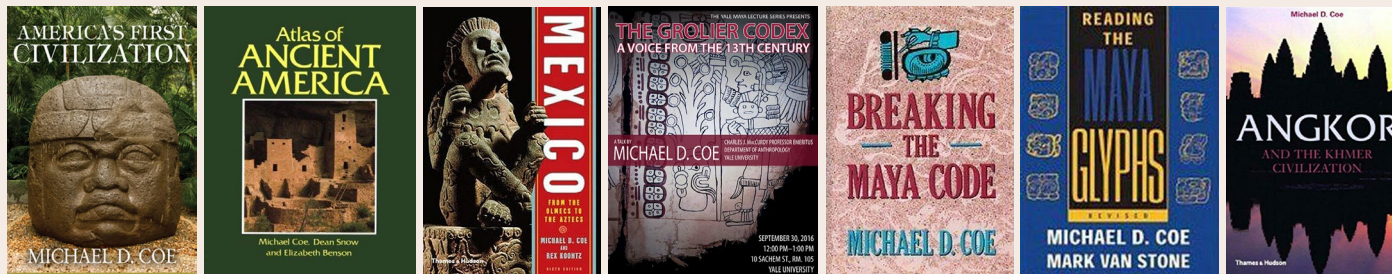
Losing his wife, Michael did not let her down, and pursued her passion to complete the book. He did the most romantic thing a man could do: He went back to Rome, hired a flat in Via della Ripetta, took with him all of Sophie's notes, bought a typewriter, and finished her book. It took him a year. That is the true story of *The True History of Chocolate*, published in 1996.

Thanks to their trip to Rome, Sophie's never-ending enthusiasm about food studies and Michael's dedication to his wife, we are in Oxford celebrating the 20th year of the award with a lunch – and every course on the table has chocolate. The prize dedicated to her name is described as "the longest-running and most generous prize for writing in food history in the English language." First awarded in 1995, every year an outstanding article in culinary history that embodies new research or provides new insights receives an award of 1,500 pounds (\$2335).

I'm indebted to Sophie Dobzhansky Coe myself. Her award had been life-changing for me too, as I was awarded the prize in 2008 by my first ever Oxford Symposium article titled *The Poppy: Potent yet frail*. I've been solemn; I truly miss them both. 🕯️

Source: Condensed by the editor from an online article by Aylin Öney Tan, submitted by Keith Merwin. Complete article accessible at: <http://www.hurriyet-dailynews.com/opinion/aylin-oney-tan/remembering-sophie-84986>





Resources: Explore Coe Hyperlinks:

Michael Coe, a bibliophile, wrote 18 books that were published starting in 1961. Most went to multiple editions, usually with different cover designs, and many were translated into other languages.

Of such works as *Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs* (1962), *The Maya* (1966), and *Breaking the Maya Code* (1992), Stephen Houston commented, Dr. Coe “combined a fluency of expression with real learning and real accomplishment as a first-rank scholar on his own.”

Coe also published countless research papers over the decades. On his *academia.edu* page, Coe has more than 50 papers to view, with many available to download. Go to: <https://yale.academia.edu/MichaelDCoe>

Coe has many papers posted to his page on ResearchGate.

Cycle 7 Monuments in Middle America, at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229502774_Cycle_7_Monuments_in_Middle_America_A_Reconsideration

Magnetic Exploration of the Olmec Civilization, at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253487039_Magnetic_Exploration_of_the_Olmec_Civilization

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228001659_Archeological_Linkages_with_North_and_South_America_at_La_Victoria_Guatemala

Archeological Linkages with North and South America at La Victoria, Guatemala, at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228001659_Archeological_Linkages_with_North_and_South_America_at_La_Victoria_Guatemala

Also see Coe’s numerous videos and interviews on YouTube.

More Than a Drink: Chocolate in the Precolumbian World, at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPjQ82-MIS>

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Upcoming Events at the IMS: Through the spring of 2020!

November Special IMS/MDC Student Assembly: **Our Grand MDC/IMS Maya Adventure** – Recipient of the 2019 IMS Student Scholarship, **Nicholas Gonzalez**, will weave his story of visiting ancient Maya sites with a group of IMS members. IMS President **Rick Slazyk** will also be sharing his points of view along with his great photography of important Maya sites like Río Bec, Calakmul, and El Tigre. It was a memorable IMS adventure, and this special MDC/IMS program promises to be a very memorable presentation for the students of MDC. Rick will have a special announcement for 2020!

2020 promises to be another great year of IMS Presentations:

Jan. 15 • 7:30 pm: *IMS Public Presentation* **Shamanic Arts of the Americas** – with **Constantino Manuel Torres**, Professor Emeritus of Florida International University. Manny is an archaeologist and ethnobotanist specializing in the ethnobotany of Precolumbian Mesoamerica, South America, and the Caribbean.

Feb. 19 • 7:30 pm: *IMS Public Presentation* **Soft Technologies and the Role of Plants in Classic Maya Identity** – with **Traci Ardren**, PhD in Anthropology, Yale University; Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Miami; Book Author. Traci is an anthropological archaeologist interested in New World prehistoric cultures. Congratulations to Traci on being awarded a prestigious Dumbarton Oaks fellowship for the spring of 2019. In her program, she’ll discuss her latest research gleaned at Dumbarton Oaks.

March 18 • 7:30 pm: *IMS Public Presentation* **Making a Home at Yaxnohcah, Campeche, Mexico** – with **Debra S. Walker**, PhD University of Florida; Book Author. Debra is a Registered Professional Archaeologist, specializing in the ancient Maya and pottery analysis. She has undertaken research in Belize (Cerro Maya), Guatemala (Naachtun), and Mexico (Yaxnohcah 2011-present). Currently, she is a research curator at the Florida Museum of Natural History (Gainesville).

April 15 • 7:30 pm: *IMS Public Presentation* **Dense Human Populations, Over-exploitation of Natural Resources, and Protracted Severe Droughts: A Recipe for Classic Maya “Collapse”** – with **Mark Brenner**, PhD University of Florida. Mark is a limnologist/paleolimnologist with special interests in tropical and subtropical lakes and watersheds. Mark’s research addresses interactions among climate, environment, and humans.

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. Copy & paste: <https://mikeruggerisevents.tumblr.com/>

Check out and get in on the fun on our IMS Facebook page: Join the **Explorer-ation!** Copy & paste: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MiamiIMS/>



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