

IMS enthusiasts from across the planet Wish You Well!



From Ian Murcell of Mexicolore in the UK: "I hope you all are keeping well and safe. The world has truly turned upside down. London is going through a tough time. Every Thursday evening at 8 pm, the whole country comes out onto the doorstep and we clap/cheer/shout as a gesture of thanks to our wonderful national health service staff who truly are in the front line of this. Last Thursday, I took out a Mexican conch shell trumpet and blew that! Our family had personalized masks made up with the message 'Smiles are infectious!' We're determined to stay positive and work to seeing a better world come out of all this. All good wishes and take care." Ian



From frequent IMS Explorer contributor, and international man of many talents (and intrigue)... Karl Herbert Mayer (aka "Special K") in Austria! Looks as if he's venturing out to perhaps visit his favorite international restaurant!



Zach Lindsey, his wife and baby, sent in well-wishes from their bunker in Austin, TX. He notes: "The beba is just a tad too young for masks; they're still a choking hazard. But, she let me don one for a few moments in the name of solidarity!" ArqueoGato



Nicholas Hellmuth in front of his home office, next to wild native *Heliconia collinsiana* in the FLAAR ethnobotanical research garden, Guatemala City. "At age 75, until Coronavirus subsides in USA, it is safer in Guatemala during May. A face mask is required here to enter a grocery store. Best regards" NH.



"Together we'll make it through this!" IMS President Rick Slazyk



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#QuédateEnCasa! From Antonio Benavides C. and Sara Novelo O., of INAH Campeche, Mexico.



Janice Van Cleve, contributor to the IMS Explorer on many occasions, sent this photo from Washington State. "No, this is not a holdup. I'm just ready to go out for groceries and bunker supplies" JVC



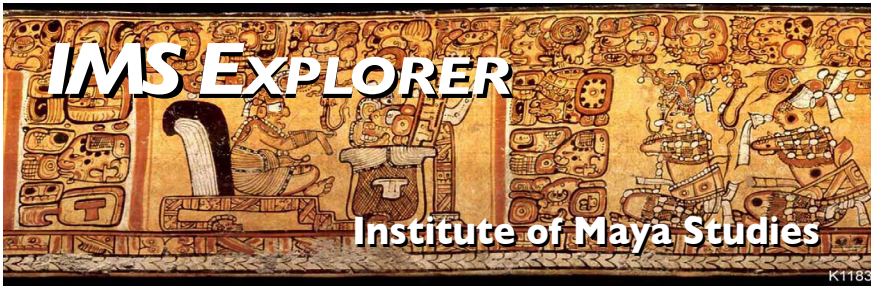
"Exiting the food store in my Parrot Head Club cap, and a special mask with a HEPA filter my sister made for me. Stay healthy, stay safe, and stay sane!" Editor Jim Reed



Donna Yates, author of this month's Buenavista Vase article, is properly attired to venture out around the city of Maastricht, in the Netherlands. "Stay safe!" DY



Our good friend, writer, and photographer, George Fery sent in this image: "I'm on my way to the Commercial Bank of China to collect my Rimbi at the rate of COVID-19 today in Texas!"



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Cinco de Mayo • May 5, 2020 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.7.8.12 • 5 Eb' 15 Wo • G1



The Black Witch Moth as an Avatar of Tlaloc
by Karen Bassie-Sweet

A number of Classic Period narratives document the military actions of a Kaloomte' lord named Sihyaj K'ahk' who was affiliated with, if not from, Teotihuacan. In 378 CE, Sihyaj K'ahk' dispatched the Tikal king Chak Tok Ich'aak I and changed the political

landscape of the Maya lowlands (Stuart 2000). A new military cult based on the Teotihuacan Tlaloc deity was soon adopted by the Maya.



Teotihuacan semantic marker for obsidian.



Obsidian eccentric

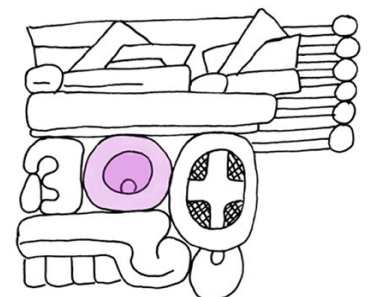
Tlaloc frequently has a trilobed nose element that represents an obsidian eccentric.

There is considerable evidence that this Tlaloc deity was incorporated by the Maya into their pantheon as a meteor deity specifically identified with obsidian (Bassie-Sweet 2011; 2019, in press; Bassie-Sweet et al. 2015).

Like most Mesoamerican deities, Tlaloc had a number of different avatars including a Lepidoptera form (the order of insects that includes moths and butterflies). The Lepidoptera Tlaloc has Tlaloc's round eyes with the antennae, hooked proboscis and scalloped wings of a Lepidoptera. It had been



A primary diagnostic trait of Tlaloc is round eyes that represent the finger holes of a spear thrower (Nuttall 1891).



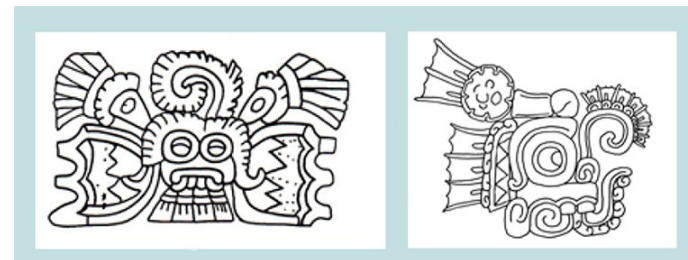
assumed by researchers that this form was based on a generic butterfly, but the characteristics of the Lepidoptera Tlaloc indicate it was based on the Black Witch Moth (*Ascalapha odorata*) (Bassie-Sweet 2011, 2019; Bassie-Sweet et al. 2015: 136-39).

In Teotihuacan art, a semantic marker for obsidian is a zigzag motif while the Maya semantic marker for obsidian is the T712 sign.

continued on page 4



T712 obsidian bloodletter.



Teotihuacan Lepidoptera Tlaloc.

Maya Lepidoptera Tlaloc.

IMS Program Note:
All classes and events at Miami-Dade College have been suspended, therefore there will be no IMS public presentation in May.



Jim Reed, Editor

What We've Lost: Two Stories of the Famous Buenavista Vase

by **Donna Yates** Associate Professor at Maastricht University's Department of Criminal Law and Criminology in the Netherlands – an archaeologist in a criminology department

In this article I will present two stories about one Maya vase: what we would have thought if the vase was looted and what we know because it wasn't.

When an artifact is looted its archaeological context is lost and, thus, our ability to learn about the ancient past from the piece is either greatly reduced or totally obliterated. When scholars try to reconstruct contextual information about looted artifacts, they risk making up stories that have no ties to reality. Looted artifacts introduce false information into what we know about the past and rob us of our ability to learn about our heritage as humans.

Back in 2007, I used this example to discuss context loss for an undergraduate course I was teaching at Cambridge. A few years later, I randomly ran into one of the students from that course in another country, both of us out of context ourselves. She told me she still remembered this vase, this example, and that for her it was the most memorable story from the course.

I'm not the first to use this vase to illustrate this point. Dorie Reents-Budet, no doubt, uses this example far more elegantly than I do in her book titled *Painting the Maya Universe* (1994), but I don't have access to it at the moment. You're stuck with just me!

Exhibit A: The Vase

Tall and elegant with a gentle swell around its middle, this is a gorgeous classic Maya vessel. A study in oranges and creams, the vase is executed in the so-called Holmul dancer style, named after a similar pot found at Holmul, a Maya site in the Peten, Guatemala. Hundreds of looted Holmul-style vessels have appeared on the International art market. It portrays two individuals in regalia that is so far beyond elaborate – their vestments are downright mythological. Both figures are the Maize god. His back-rack is a model of the Maya universe: a celestial bird on a sky band, a cosmic dragon, a waterlily jaguar, and a sacred mountain. Above is a band of hieroglyphs that states that the vase was made for Lord K'ak-Til, the divine lord of Naranjo, and that it was meant to hold fresh cacao beans. Quetzal feathers sprout out in all directions. The Maize god's fingers move almost musically. From his nose and mouth come divine breath.

Analysis I: If the Vase was Looted

Let's say, for example, the vase appeared, without any archaeological information, as a looted and trafficked antiquity on the International art market. Thousands of similar Maya vessels have suffered that fate. We would know absolutely nothing about the piece except what was on it: the information contained in the



The Buenavista Vase, now curated by the Institute of Archaeology, Belize. Image by Justin Kerr #4464. Access the Kerr Maya Vase Database at: <http://research.mayavase.com/>

Looted Holmul-style vessel in the Art Institute of Chicago listed as from the "vicinity of Naranjo". True or false? (Image from "anonymousswisscollector.com").

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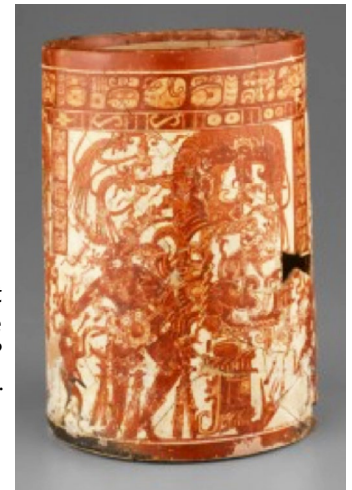
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writing and the iconography. You see, it is a common assertion that there is still a lot of academic value left in looted antiquities, especially antiquities with writing on them. Collectors, dealers, museums and so on, maintain that information recovered from trafficked cultural objects aids our understanding of the past. If that is the case, what would a reasonable scholar conclude about this vase?

1. It was looted from the Guatemalan site of Naranjo. It is in the 'Holmul-dancer' style and Holmul is a site in Guatemala. Also, the Guatemalan site of Naranjo is mentioned and everyone knows that Naranjo was torn to bits in the '70s and '80s by looters looking for pottery.

2. It was used by a Naranjo ruler named Lord K'ak-Til, since it says it was made for him.

3. It perhaps came from Lord K'ak-Til's tomb since Maya pottery is usually found in tombs, but we wouldn't know that for sure.

4. It perhaps held cacao beans at some point since it says that it did, but we likely would no longer be able to do scientific analysis on the piece since it was cleaned for sale on the market. That's it – end of story. *continued on page 7*

Shaman Lords and Hoards: An Archaeology of the Objects We Bury

by Jeffrey R. Vadala, PhD

Throughout history, humans have collected and buried groups of objects together, whether for ritual purposes (e.g., offerings to the gods) or pragmatic reasons (e.g., for secret stores of food). Today, many cultural groups still practice caching objects for a variety of reasons. Anthropological and archaeological research suggests that caching is often correlated with specific social practices, such as the construction or rebuilding of sacred architecture, the performance of religious ceremonies and human burial practices and funerals.

Caches, which are also called “votive” deposits, are frequently buried during symbolically charged ritual events, and they can include unique cultural objects that have important cosmological meanings.

When archaeologists encounter caches as they excavate a site, they first characterize, then describe the contents of these bundles and record detailed information about their location. Later, they use this information to interpret cultural meanings. Even though they are commonly encountered during excavations across the world, few archaeologists have written about caches as a cross-cultural phenomenon.

The themes that I have mentioned above, the rebuilding of sacred architecture, the performance of religious ceremonies, and human burial practices and burials, are topics that are indexed on a powerful new search engine coming out of Yale University. Named *eHRAF Archaeology*, the database is a significant tool for conducting comparative research in archaeology, since it contains books, articles, excavation reports, and other documents that are subject-indexed at the paragraph level.

To demonstrate how *eHRAF Archaeology* can be used to facilitate cross-cultural research on specific kinds of artifacts (such as can be found in caches), my original full-length paper on the subject compared several examples of caches that

are described in the collections. Included are an ancient Maya cache related to early Maya royalty, a South American cache, possibly associated with divination, and caches of weapons that may have been hoards. I described the trouble archaeologists can run into when determining whether a cache is a ritual offering or whether it is an underground hoard meant to be accessed later. I conducted this brief survey of caches in *eHRAF Archaeology* by searching for “cache” and “votive deposit” in the keyword section of the Advanced Search.

Evidence of Ancient Maya Kingship and Ritual Events

In the Maya region, caches are one of the most commonly found types of assemblages, or object-groupings, that archaeologists encounter (Freidel et al. 1993, 235). Despite their ubiquity, they appear to have no practical function. If they were not used in a utilitarian manner, why were caches so common? What did they represent?

Exploring these questions in a groundbreaking study, David Freidel and Linda Schele (1988, 555-556) found that cached ritual offerings could provide a window into understanding how the Maya form of divine kingship was conceived during its early development in the Late Preclassic period (400 BCE to 200 CE).

Their study focused on one of the most illustrious Maya caches found at the site of Cerro Maya (formerly known as Cerros, Belize). Known simply as “Cache I”, this find was buried on a massive platform (see *Figure 1*) that contained several small temples (called an acropolis). The cache contained

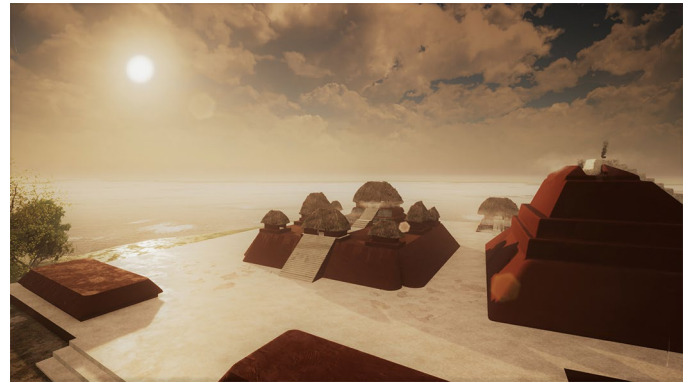


Figure 1: 3D image of Structure 6 (in center) at Cerro Maya where Cache I was discovered. Virtual graphics by Jeffrey R. Vadala.



Figure 2: Quincunx arrangement of Cache I. Image used with permission of Cerros Research Online Catalogue (CROC). Archived at Florida Museum of Natural History.

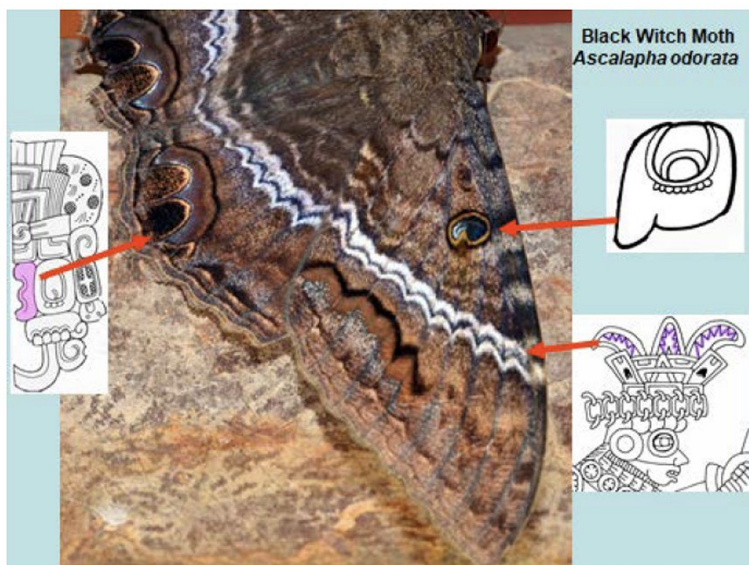
five carved stone heads (pendants) and a variety of ceramic, shell, and stone offerings (see *Figure 2*).

Exploring the symbolism in depth, Schele and Freidel (1992, 121) argued the Cache I’s unique quincunx pattern (five carved stone heads in a cross arrangement with 4 carvings in corners and a central carving in the middle) was symbolically designed to represent Maya beliefs regarding royalty and cosmological directionality. Most simply put, the four corner pieces represented the four directions and the central head represented the shaman lord who sat in the central axis of the cosmos. Cache I was an important find because it was one of the first discoveries that linked the Classic Maya form of shamanistic



The Black Witch Moth as an Avatar of Tlaloc

by Karen Bassie-Sweet *continued from page 1*



The Black Witch Moth is one of the largest of the Lepidoptera species with a wing span that can reach almost 7 inches. Its wings have the scalloped edges of the Lepidoptera Tlaloc, and they are decorated with elements that are similar to the Teotihuacan obsidian zigzag pattern, the T712 obsidian sign, and Tlaloc's trilobed obsidian nose element.

Omens were an important aspect of Mesoamerican world view. Throughout the region, the appearance of a Black Witch Moth was viewed as an omen of death (Bassie-Sweet et al. 2015: 139). In fact, the Aztec called the Black Witch Moth *micpapalotl* or *miquipapalotl* "death moth" while the Ch'ol name

is *pejpem xib'aj* "moth demon". When a Maya warrior took on the guise of this Lepidoptera, he was sending a powerful message to his foe. He was literally dressed to kill.

In Maya texts, there is an avatar of Tlaloc that is named as 18 Ub'aah Kan. In my initial Tlaloc study, I followed the interpretations of earlier researchers that this creature had centipede attributes, but these traits are also found on caterpillars. The 18 Ub'aah Kan is the larva form of the Black Witch Tlaloc (Bassie-Sweet, in press). 🏹

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Editor's note: To me, it's always "sweet" to share with you another scholarly article by an acclaimed Mayanist, researcher into many of the same things that I find interesting, and a down-right nice person. Karen Bassie-Sweet is adjunct lecturer at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada; that means she's worked hard and gone beyond the call of duty for decades. She is author or coauthor of several books – at times with Nicholas Hopkins – just check out the references above! While researching additional images for this article, I was able to catch these two Black Witch Moths in the world wide net!



Shaman Lords and Hoards: An Archaeology of the Objects We Bury

by Jeffrey R. Vadala, PhD *continued from page 3*

kingship to the Preclassic period (Freidel and Schele 1988, 556).

Building on this research, and using data found in excavation reports in *eHRAF Archaeology*, I argued in my 2016 dissertation that Maya caches found in residential and monumental architecture were deposited during the course of historically motivated ritual events. To understand the ritual events associated with these enigmatic bundles, I turned to ethnographic research to find a contemporary parallel.

I found that both Evon Vogt's (1998, see also 1969) and Brian Stross' (1998) ethnographic research described rituals where offerings were buried in architecture in a similar manner. Vogt (1998) described how contemporary Maya peoples in the highlands of Chiapas practice elaborate multi-day rituals that conclude with the burial of spiritually charged offerings. More specifically, Vogt found that when building new homes, the Maya believe that their homes require ritual practices that ensoul the architecture itself. For a home to become properly ensouled, spiritual energies in and around the architecture require the burial of offerings alongside prescribed rituals (burning of candles, prayer, etc.).

Noting the importance of this process, Stross found that elements of the ensouling rituals are connected to each stage of architectural construction (1998, 32). When ensouled correctly, the architecture provides proper and safe living spaces for Maya families (Vogt 1998). All said, contemporary Maya people view these ritual dedications as far more than symbolic gestures. Instead, dedicatory offerings are fundamental elements of a proper home.

In my dissertation, I argued that caches provide evidence that similar ritual practices probably existed at Cerro Maya and other Maya sites with caches. After exploring Freidel's earlier excavation records, I found that caches were associated with both simple and

complex dedicatory offerings deposited during architectural construction events. This included religious spaces (temples) and elite and non-elite residences (Cliff 1986).

After considering the architectural spaces associated with each cache, I found that the dedicatory rituals enacted in these spaces would have either divided social groups or brought them together. With this in mind, my analysis concluded that caching events played important roles in the creation of social relationships in royal and non-royal circles while also serving as powerful markers of ritual history (Vadala 2016, 25).

The final section of my original paper is titled "The Problem with Caches: Ritual Deposits or Hidden Hoards?" and focused on what is known as the "Silver Hoard No. 2" from the Spillings Hoard (see [Figure 3](#)).

With these examples in mind, it is important to note that caches do not always serve exclusively ritual purposes. In fact, it can be very difficult to distinguish ritual deposits – often intended to stay put over time – from hoards, or stored bundles of objects, that are intended to be accessed later. Because of this, it's important to examine the contents of caches in terms of the possibilities of practical use.

Conclusion

Together, Cache I (Freidel and Schele 1988) that was excavated from within Structure 6, and the Spillings Hoard serve as striking examples of religiously inspired deposits. Additionally, my 2016 ethnographically-inspired research supports the interpretation that these buried objects carry important information about the development of Cerro Maya's social history. That said, the archaeological record is not always so clear – especially when archaeologists lack ethnographic information or caches



Figure 3: Silver Hoard No. 2 from the Spillings Hoard at Gotland Museum. Photo by W. Carter. (CC by A-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia.)

primarily include utilitarian items. Without the context of religious architecture and other outward signs of religious practice, caches containing utilitarian objects like those pictured in [Figure 3](#), must be interpreted as potential hoards. Although they may provide little insight concerning religious beliefs, hoards can give insights to ancient tool use, value systems, trading, and more. In cases where the ritual intent is clearer, caches can provide a unique opportunity to explore specific beliefs, ideologies, and ritual events at ancient sites (Vadala 2016).

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Yaxchilan Lintel 8 as seen in a rubbing by Merle Greene Robertson. Lintel 8 was found by Teobert Maler in debris at the east end of Structure I.

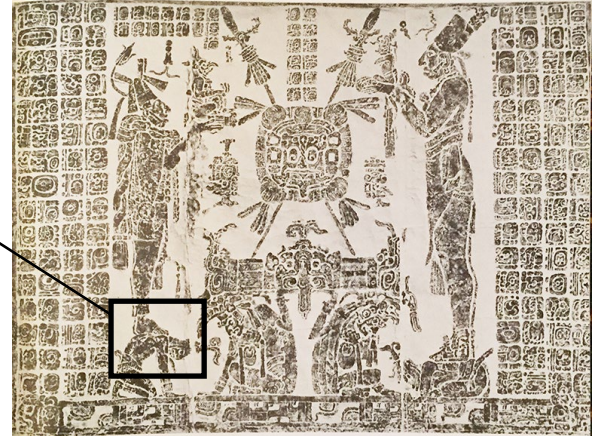
21 May 635 CE: Happy Birthday K'inich Kan B'ahlam II! Born on 9.10.2.6.6 2 Kimi 19 Sotz G9, Kan B'ahlam was the oldest son of Palenque ruler Pakal. He was a deft propagandist who commissioned the Cross Group at Palenque. The panels in these temples combine creation myths with a powerful argument for Kan B'ahlam's right to rule in a rich, poetic melding of reality and metaphor. That said, the poor guy may be best remembered for having six toes, as **Merle Greene Robertson** and others noted all the way back in 1976. Hey, there are worse things to be famous for!

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

7 May 755 CE: On 9.16.4.1.1 7 Imix 14 Sek G3, Yaxuun B'ahlam IV of Yaxchilan and his sajal (or lesser lord) K'an Tok Wayib' captured the unfortunate Kok Te' Ajaw and "Jeweled Skull." Artwork like the portrayal of this event on Lintel 8 suggests a change in Maya government. In the Early Classic era, there were few, if any, portrayals of lesser lords like K'an Tok Wayib', but as the Classic ground on, the lesser lords started popping up all over the place. This may mean they were gaining more power – one possible factor in the collapse of the Maya kingship system.



Detail of his six toes! One toe was very much longer than his big toe and the other four!



Kan B'ahlam II (on left) and his deceased father Pakal are the main protagonists in the Tablet of the Temple of the Sun, in the Cross Group at Palenque. Rubbing by Merle Greene Robertson.

Shaman Lords and Hoards: An Archaeology of the Objects We Bury by Jeffrey R. Vadala, PhD

continued from page 5

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Jeffery invites you to check out his website where you can access all of his latest research, and endeavors in virtual reality. Go to: www.jeffreyvadala.com

Greetings
Maya
enthusiasts.
Stay safe,
and healthy.
– JRV



Jeffrey R. Vadala holds a PhD in Anthropology (University of Florida 2016), an MA with a focus in Archaeology (California State University Los Angeles 2009), and a Bachelor of Science (University of California Riverside 2005). Vadala a.k.a. "The Digital Anthropologist" is a writer, archaeologist, anthropologist, and scholar of emerging digital culture. He anthropologically studies trends of digital culture and how virtual reality can be used as a social medium. Additionally, his research uses virtual reality software and hardware as analytical tool for archaeological research that focuses on ancient Maya architecture and ritual practice.

What We've Lost: Two Stories of the Famous Buenavista Vase

by Donna Yates *continued from page 2*

Analysis 2: The Real Story

We are lucky. This is one Maya vase that escaped the looting caused by international demand for illicit Maya ceramics. This pot is known as the Buenavista Vase, as it was excavated at the site of Buenavista del Cayo, Belize in 1988 by field archaeologist Jennifer Taschek, and conserved and analyzed by her lab archaeologist colleague and husband, Joseph Ball.

It was found in the modest crypt-burial of an elite adolescent male within Structure BV-1, a pyramid on the site's main plaza. The young man was buried wearing jaguar pelt mittens, and his body was covered with over 8000 obsidian blades.

The youth wasn't Lord K'ak-Til. Buenavista is 13 kilometers away from Naranjo. The vase was found in Belize, not Guatemala. Archaeologists now believe that Lord K'ak-Til had the vase made as a gift which he gave to the ruler of Buenavista, very possibly the young man buried in the tomb, or perhaps his father. We can imagine a grieving father placing the beautiful piece in the grave, and burying his son. We'd get none of this had the vase been looted. We'd today believe that it had been stolen from Guatemala. Instead, everyone can today visit the Buenavista Vase where it belongs – in the National Museum of Belize.

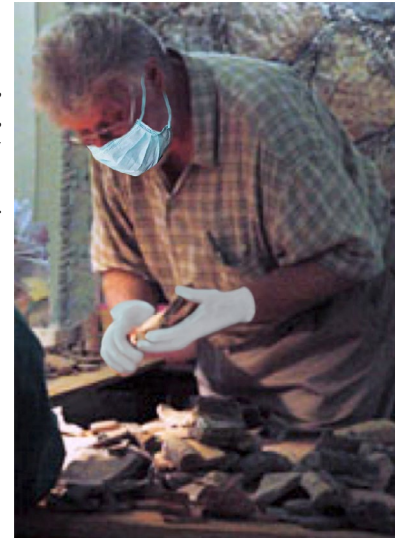
But Wait... There's More!

For a hundred years, the entire Maya region was embroiled in a vast and complicated war, a Maya "world" war between city-states allied with the city of Mutul (today known as Tikal, Guatemala) and the "Divine Lords of the Snake" from Ox Te' Tuun (now known as Calakmul, in Mexico). Naranjo, itself a large and powerful kingdom, was swept into the war as a subordinate ally of Calakmul. In 682 CE, Calakmul established a new ruling dynasty at Naranjo through

Joseph W. Ball, an archaeologist, scholar, and educator (and frequently mentioned in the pages of the *IMS Explorer*), restored the Buenavista Vase.

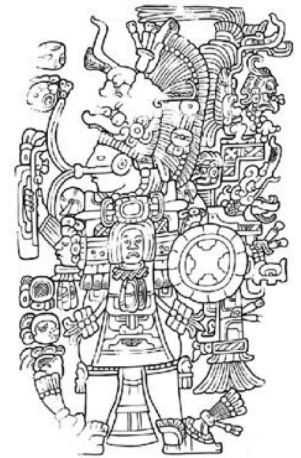
a woman named Wak Chanil Ajaw (called Lady Six Sky before her name was able to be read). Thanks to the Buenavista vase, we also know that Naranjo was allied with Buenavista, and so we can begin to speculate whether Calakmul's influence during the war reached Buenavista, or maybe even the whole region of Belize.

The Buenavista vase is the only document we have that ties Buenavista to Naranjo, and the only document that hints at a connection to Calakmul. With this one archaeological find we have expanded our understanding of Classic Maya socio-politics with links that span three modern countries. We would have none of this if the vase had been looted. Remember how I remarked thousands of looted Maya vases exist in international collections. Imagine all that we have lost! 🏹



Editor's addition: Holmul Dancers in mythology and historical pageantry: At right, the historical figure, K'ihnich Yook wearing the backrack of the Maize god, with the saurian burden associated to the Kanu'l place name (La Corona, Panel 1b). (Drawing by Christophe Helmke, based on photos by Felix Kupprat, and a preliminary drawing by David Stuart.)

Donna Yates received her PhD and a MPhil from the University of Cambridge, and a BA from Boston University. She studies antiquities trafficking, archaeology, art crime, politics, race, heritage, South Asia, and Mesoamerica.



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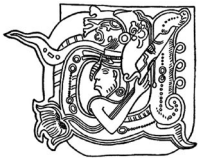
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Institute of Maya Studies

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In Memoriam
Treasurer for the IMS:
Beth Wiggert

Dear friends of the IMS,

We are sorrowed to relate to you that our mother, Beth Wiggert, passed away on April 10, 2020. Her passing was quick, so somewhat of a shock, but we are thankful that it did not entail the uncertainty of extended hospital or nursing home care in these unsettled times.

Mom grew up in Madison, WI, and met Vic, her husband of 46 years, as participants in Channing Murray activities through the Unitarian Meeting House (First Unitarian Society of Madison) while both were attending UW-Madison. Mom gave back to her community as a volunteer throughout her life, working at and for the UU Congregation of Miami and the Institute of Maya Studies, training women to serve as troop leaders for the Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida, serving her community as a poll worker for Miami-Dade county, and tutoring students with learning disabilities at Palmetto Jr. High School.

Beth enjoyed camping, bird watching, classical music, listening to murder mysteries on her tablet, growing African violets and orchids, traveling both

Vic & Beth Wiggert enjoy the Chihuly exhibit at Fairchild Gardens in Miami.



Beth loved the outdoors.

within the US and internationally, learning about Mesoamerican cultures through visits to numerous archaeological sites in Central and South America, and providing a warm and welcoming place for her children's friends to gather.

In lieu of flowers, we have requested that memorial contributions be made to the UU Congregation of Miami < www.uumiami.org >, The Nature Conservancy < <http://nature.org> >, Doctors Without Borders < www.doctorswithoutborders.org >, or the World Health Organization < www.who.int >.

Sincerely, Joy & Jerry Wiggert

"Beth was an integral part of the Institute of Maya Studies for many years, along with your dad, both dear friends. Many a Saturday we would meet at their home to work and share stories about IMS and our kids. They were also fellow travelers. Both of them were solid, giving and caring individuals. They were admired. They were respected and appreciated." – Sincerely, Marta Barber 🏡



Digital Cenote Tours are the Future of Archaeology in Yucatan

The Great Maya Acquirer Project (Gran Acuifero Maya: GAM) will digitize cenotes located in Yucatan and Quintana Roo. They will be digitized and the results will be presented in a simultaneous exhibition in three countries: the national museums of Anthropology in Mexico and Switzerland, as well as the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C.

GAM received a donation of \$100,000 from the Ministry of Culture of Switzerland to digitize six cenotes."

This type of work, said archaeologist Guillermo de Anda, director of GAM, contributes to another form of preservation. If any archaeological remains happen to be found, they will not be removed from the site.

"The purpose of the Great Maya Aquifer Project is to maintain the sites unaltered. The idea is to make

reproductions accessible to a large public and create virtual museums," explained De Anda.

With respect to the archaeological remains, the GAM director said, only one skull has been found. They are particularly interested in its characteristics: "It is probably thousands of years old, when the

cave was dry, and it has two important marks on the right parietal, probably produced by megafauna that carried the head into this cave. This speculation comes from the fact that we have not found another bone", De Anda said.

"In Quintana Roo we will work in the cenote of the God of Trade 'Ek Chuah', which is part of the Sac Actun System, the largest flooded cave in the world. While, in the Chichen Itza Archaeological Zone, we will focus on the Holtun cenote, which, while it has already been extensively studied in its shallow regions, contains many elements such as vessels, sculptures of Tlaloc and anthropomorphic representations in its deepest sections, at a depth of 40 and 45 meters", added De Anda.

Source: Posted by *The Yucatan Times* on February 20, 2020 at: www.theyucatanimes.com 🏡