

Maya Enthusiasts Wearing Masks... and a Wombat Alert!



Elaine and David Schele wish you well from their bunker in Austin, TX.



Ah Q'ij Rigoberto Itzep Chanchovac has written a new book about the history of Momostenango and the K'iche' Maya. In the copy he sent me, he notes that the original name of the town is *Sholmumus*. Who knew?



Archaeologist of fame, David Sedat, sent in this photo of he and his wife on their balcony in Copan, Honduras. The town is under total lockdown; no cases reported.



"It's not over till its over, and when it is over, they still won't get us! Stay Safe Everyone." So declares this great friend of the IMS and professional illustrator extraordinaire, Steve Radzi, together with his wife Linda, outside their retreat in Coral Springs, Florida.



My god Facebook friend Jorge Alberto José Fuentes, who used to send me news items to publish from Chiapas, now lives in Jalisco, MX. I've told him that he is the most "Olmec-looking" friend that I have... he doesn't see it... do you ?



One of my best friends for 45 years is Carlos León Corado, in Puerto San José, Guatemala. Note that the beach is under total lockdown. Ironic because Carlos is a retired lifeguard. He now works for Anna Café, a worldwide exporter of coffee. Starbucks orders their coffee beans by the shipload!

News from Down Under: Wombat Alert!

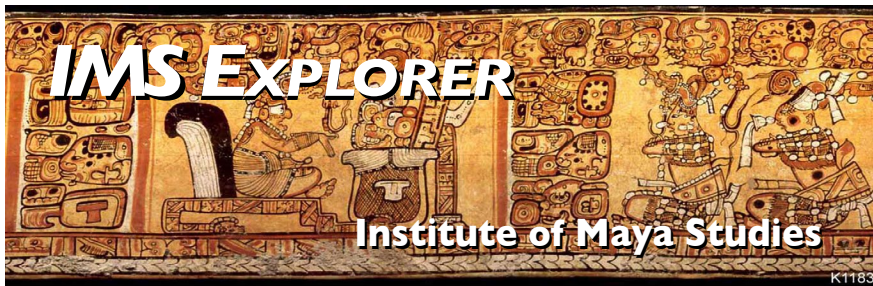
The authors of *Maya Gods of Time* sent this update from Flinders Island, off of Tasmania!



Best wishes from Alex and Jenny John: "Jenny is home schooling her three daughters, while raising three wombats. The wombats are better behaved! Alex, a General Practitioner, is battling at the frontline of COVID, and (at the age of 41) has finally learned how to correctly dress and undress (in protective clothing).



"We continue to populate our website, cataloguing the animations hidden within Maya art. Our present focus are the Bonampak murals and Quirigua monuments. Stuck at home? Check out our new animations at: mayagodsoftime.com "



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Flag Day • June 14, 2020 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.7.10.12 • 6 Eb' 15 Zotz • G5

The Importance of Tak'alik Ab'aj's Stela 87

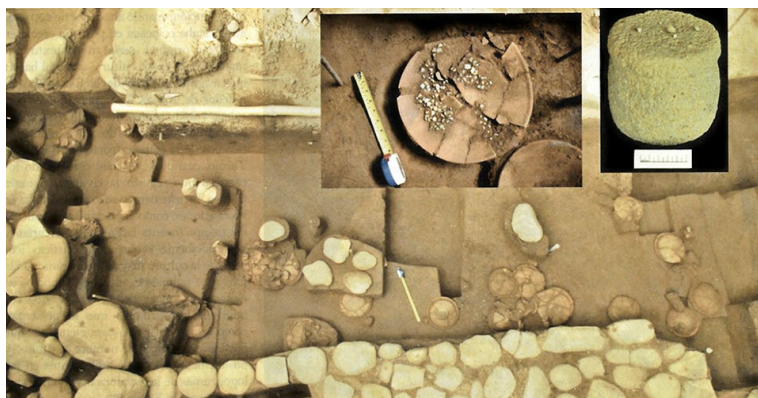
Initially submitted by **Christa Schieber de Lavarreda**



Artist's illustration of element details superimposed over a 3-D scan of the actual Stela 87.

Submitted by Christa Schieber de Lavarreda on behalf of Parque Arqueológico Nacional Tak'alik Ab'aj / prensalibre.com

Editor's note: Back in March, Christa was proud to send me the story of Stela 87 that was initially released in Spanish in *Arqueología* magazine. I was elated and was glad that a new discovery at the site of Tak'alik Ab'aj was so important. I asked her if she had a version in English, but she replied "no, not at this time". So, I waited, secure in my bunker, and let a few months transpire. Now, the wonderful news has hit the international news services and I could activate my "Google translate"! *Enjoy!*



Overhead shot of a view of the tomb contents. Submitted by Christa Schieber de Lavarreda on behalf of Parque Arqueológico Nacional Tak'alik Ab'aj / Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes / Viceministerio y Dirección General Patrimonio Cultural y Natural.

Sometime around the year one hundred BCE, the skillful hands of sculptors at Tak'alik Ab'aj carved a stone stela with a new purpose. They did not modify its shape, they followed the natural contour of the object and gradually carved the image of a ruler. They had done it before, on other monuments, but this time something was different. Next to the protagonist, they also carved a series of abstract symbols that represented ideas. They erected the stela in its place and it remained there for more than a century. Then, other powerful people

moved it from its original place. They took the stela to the base of a residence and deposited it as an offering, face down, along with other monuments and precious objects.

Flash forward two millennium... in 2012, archaeologists excavating at Tak'alik Ab'aj unearthed the tomb of a powerful king, who may have led the transition from Olmec to Maya culture between 700 and 400 BCE. The technical specialists in charge of all excavations at the site, Christa Schieber de Lavarreda and Miguel Orrego, are good friends of the IMS. Christa receives each *IMS Explorer*. *continued on page 4*



The virus has begun to enter the Guatemalan Highlands. But the K'iche' Maya are prepared with beautiful masks made of handwoven cloth. Momostenango Spiritual Elder Tat Rigoberto Itzep Chanchovac sent in this most poignant portrait.

IMS Program Note:

There will be no IMS public presentation in June.



Jim Reed, Editor

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Teotihuacan Writing? by Janice Van Cleve

Dr. Joanne Michel gave an interactive video presentation on the subject of writing at Teotihuacan. She first outlined the work of previous researchers and delved into the problem of what language did the Teotihuacanos actually speak? Up until recently, the generally held opinion was that the language was Nawa. Subsequent research has shown that Nawa was late in coming to the Valley of Mexico, well after the fall of Teotihuacan. Current contenders are Mije-Sokean and Totonac.

To find evidence of either of these, Dr. Michel used a four-part methodology. Frequency of a symbol is the starting point. Is it mostly used as a component of a complex symbol or mostly stands alone? Next, how often does it occur? Third, can we determine how it is used? Does it show up in other similar languages like Zapotec, Aztec, or Xochicalco? Finally, can a sentence structure be discerned?

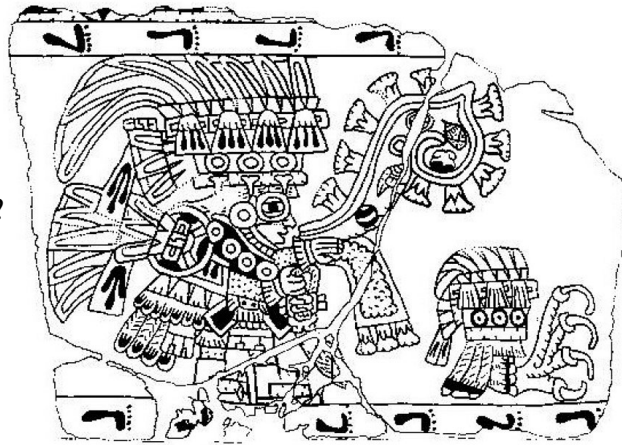
While Teotihuacan contains a wealth of murals, there are not a lot of potential language symbols. Dr. Michel focused on three sources: The Wagner Mural Collection in San Francisco; Room 23 in the Sun Temple complex; and the La Ventilla glyphs – the last two at Teotihuacan. (Three years ago, I was fortunate enough to travel with other IMS members and we received special permission to examine La Ventilla in depth.)

The Wagner Murals show a row of trees and each one has a different symbol on the trunk. Dr. Michel observed that



Snake with the body coiled, its head is bigger than the body. A forked tongue comes out of its mouth. On his head, a disproportionate deer antler. (Glyph 11 in the illustration at far right.)

trees are rooted in the ground and therefore have often been interpreted as locative, rather than as names or words. Unfortunately, the murals were looted, so we do not know their provenance. (Author note: The Technantitla barrio shows a parade of individuals preceded by differentiating



Teotihuacan mural of a "possible" named person.

symbols that may indicate names. The Las Colinas Vessel shows a similar parade.)

Room 23 contains a large number of symbols, but grouping them has not yielded any meaningful order. The speech scrolls emanating from the individuals, however, portrayed in the murals could be significant.

A variety of symbols appear, some inside the speech scroll and some attached to it.

La Ventilla contains symbols organized in specific locations and there is evidence of frequency and combinations. The ones on the floor seem to represent stand alone items but some on the wall in rows may be phrases. Dr. Michel concluded that there is little overlap between the symbols in Room 23 and those in La Ventilla.

She suspects that the latter may be logographic and may be a proto form of writing. However, since La Ventilla has not been fully excavated, the 42 observable glyphs are far too small a sample to make any determination.

Some useful book resources include: Michel, Joanne: *Is There Pre-Columbian Writing at Teotihuacan?* (2005); Cowgill, George: *Ancient Teotihuacan* (2015); Hedrick, Annabeth: *The Teotihuacan Trinity* (2009); and Van Cleve, Janice: *Who Was Spearthrower Owl?* (current) See <http://mayas.doodlekit.com>

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The glyphs from the Plaza de los Glifos in La Ventilla in numerical sequence. All glyphs are oriented as they are in situ, with north at the bottom and south at the top of the figure.

Dr. Michel showed this image in her video. The editor located this version in "Reinterpreting the Plaza de los Glifos, La Ventilla, Teotihuacan," by Christophe Helmke and Jesper Nielsen, in *Ancient Mesoamerica*, 22, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Drawings by Rubén Cabrera Castro (1996d:33).

Maya Spirituality on Mexicolore.com • Part I, by Jim Reed

“We are hugely grateful to Jim Reed, Independent Maya Researcher, Board Member of The Institute of Maya Studies and The Maya Conservancy, for this enlightening and personal introduction – and invitation – to explore the world of Maya spirituality”

– Ian Murcell, Mexicolore (Note: This exposé was written for a young audience in the UK, especially in London.)

On the road to find out...

“You know, the most important part of a ceremony is the love in your heart. If you don't have that, it doesn't make any difference what rituals you do. If you have that love, all the rituals will work, no matter how you perform them.”

– Miguel Angel Vergara (Maya wisdom keeper, book author, teacher)

“Living life has shown me the awesome power of cooperation and communication. These skills not only made our human ancestors formidable survivors, they became the very building blocks of language and civilization, giving birth to religious experience, art, music, and dance. It took millions of years of programming to make you... you, and scientists and researchers are now realizing that the key to understanding ourselves and our future, lies in decoding what we inherited from our prehistoric past.”

– Josh Gates (Expedition Unknown; planetary adventurer)

As you explore the world of Maya Spirituality, this journey will be an opportunity to not only learn about the lives and customs of the ancient and modern Maya, but to learn about

The flames ignite the participant's offerings in a Wajshakib' B'atz' ritual celebrating the beginning of a new sacred Tzolk'in 260-day calendar cycle (the Maya New Year) in Momostenango, Guatemalan Highlands. Photo: Jim Reed.

yourself. You will see yourself in a new light, connected to the wider world around you, connected to all that exists, connected to the “source”.

As the famous Lebanese prophet Kahil Gibran noted: “You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars. You have a right to be here.” Gibran strongly believed in the power of generosity and in taking the best out of every experience, good or bad.

The Maya and My Spirituality

I do not attempt to make the following a dry and mundane account of just another interesting topic. As I have been accumulating the information that I envisioned myself to be sharing about Maya Spirituality, it has morphed into a realization of the importance of the many life events that have shaped my current existence, and, most importantly to me, that others could learn from my experiences. I have a unique point of view concerning Maya Spirituality, because I have lived it, and continue to be involved with it. Many scholars, professors, and authors, have shared their knowledge derived from their peer-reviewed academics as well as “on-line” sources of the subject, but, I doubt that there is any one of them who has

Maya Cosmogram:

Here is a new image that I created to show many of the



important aspects of Maya cosmology. The Hero Twins, the main protagonists in the Popol Vuh (the Maya Creation Story), ignite a sacred fire at the base of the Sacred Tree of Life. The smoke rises from the tree's roots imbedded in the nine dark layers of the Underworld, up to the branches of the tree, in the thirteen bright layers of the Upperworld. All elements come from actual carved stone stelae at the ancient Maya site of Izapa, the birthplace of the calendars.



Jim Reed feels “at home” among his Spiritual Elder friends in the K'iche' Maya town of Momostenango.

An active ritual ceremonial altar connected to the sacred Tzolk'in calendar cycle is just a few



meters to my right. Among the K'iche' Maya, the astronomer-priests are called nik' wakinal, “those who look into the center.” Even today, the modern priests perform rituals and sacrifices to keep the world rolling, to keep time moving forward.

actually experienced some of the different aspects of Maya Spirituality that I have.

I believe that I relate to the world around me as being “spiritual”, not “religious” in nature. Like the Maya, I conceive of the world around me as a multi- vibrational, multi-dimensional cosmic whole. It *all* has meaning and was meant to be. In the following, I intend to weave a tapestry of words, images, and mental images to offer a glimpse into Maya Spirituality, both ancient and modern, entwined together with my own learning, my own experiences, my own insights, my own teachings.

I consider myself an independent researcher into all things Maya, past and present. For a K'atun now, (about 20 years), I have been the editor of this

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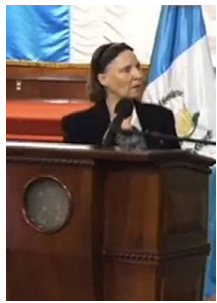




The Importance of Tak'alik Ab'aj's Stela 87

Initially submitted by **Christa Schieber de Lavarreda** *continued from page 1*

In September of 2018, the archaeologists discovered Stela 87, that had been deposited below plaza level in front of Structure 89 during the structure's dedicatory cache ritual. On March 10, 2020, Stela 87 from Tak'alik Ab'aj was officially presented to the public



by Christa Schieber de Lavarreda (at left), in the National Palace of Guatemala with the participation of the Minister of Culture and Sports, Lidiette Silvana Martínez, and the President of the Republic, Dr. Alejandro Giammattei. The monument was epigraphically and iconographically studied by an international team of experts. On behalf of the project, Nikolai Grube, Sven Gronemeyer, Christian M. Prager and Elisabeth Wagner also participated.

Tak'alik Ab'aj archaeological site, located in Retalhuleu in the southwest of Guatemala, is one of the oldest cities in Mesoamerica. The site was initially inhabited by Olmecs from around 1,500 BCE to 100 CE.

"The great importance of Stela 87 is that it is an early example of the development of writing in all of Mesoamerica," said Nikolai Grube, adding that "Tak'alik Ab'aj was a place of experimentation with writing." Grube who is working on the decipherment of the pre-Maya hieroglyphic script, noted that the stela is dated to 100 CE and represents an example of very-early Mayan writing. Grube pointed out that the stela provided no "linguistic reading," but it does show evidence of a well-dressed ruler along with his titles in "an early Mayan text."

Schieber explained that the stela was located in the residence of one of the most powerful rulers of the site and would have been an offering. The analysis of the iconography and writing on the stela also shows that it had a sacred value and as an offering, it served to "empower" the ruler.



Stela 87 remained in situ and was propped up for initial analysis while it was still located below ground level.

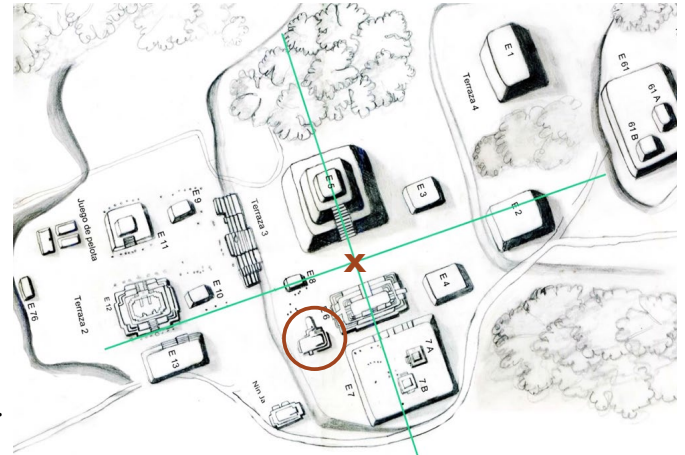


Illustration looking down on the Central Group of Tak'alik Ab'aj. The center of alignments at the site is marked with an X and the location of Structure 89 in Plaza 3 is within the circle.

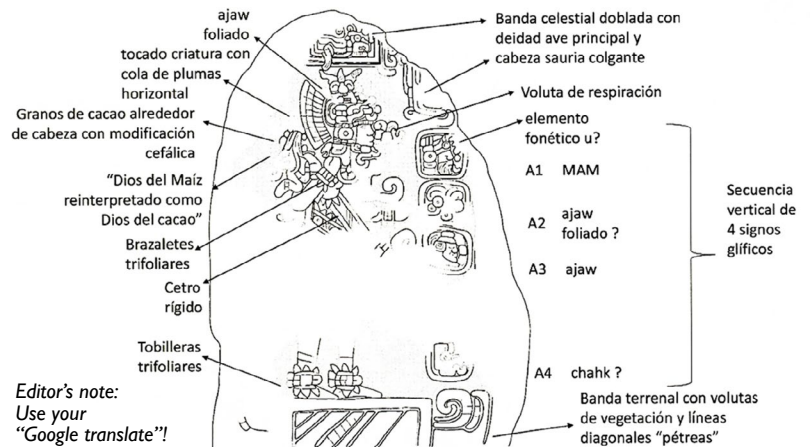


Illustration (in Spanish) of the basic universal themes and elements depicted on Stela 87, which features a genuine ruler from the Preclassic Period (by Nikolai Grube, 11/10/2019). Both illustrations above submitted by Christa Schieber de Lavarreda via *Arqueología* on behalf of Parque Arqueológico Nacional Tak'alik Ab'aj / Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes / Viceministerio y Dirección General Patrimonio Cultural y Natural.

"They knew that the power of the present is empowering with the past," Schieber said. "The monument was found upside down, the figure is of a king and there is a character who speaks of another, who is probably his ancestor. He has a bird that we suppose inhabits this region, there is a detail in the center that has been seen as the 'god of corn', Yum Kaax, but in this case, we believe that it may be the deity of cacao, very common on the Pacific coast"

The best thing to come out of the presentation at the National Palace was that President Dr. Alejandro Giammattei announced that the construction of the long-planned museum at Tak'alik A'bij will resume. It is hoped that the museum will be operational in approximately eight months. The presentation of Stela 87 also served



Model of the "El Caracol del Tiempo" museum, designed by Alejandro Flores, now set to be constructed at Tak'alik A'bij. Photo: Rolando Miranda.

to relaunch the candidacy of Tak'alik Ab'aj as part of the list of World Heritage Sites that UNESCO maintains.

Source: Texts were obtained and translated from three online sources by the editor, including elperiodico.com.gt; ancientpages.com; and prensalibre.com.

Maya Spirituality on Mexicolore.com • Part I, by Jim Reed

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monthly newsletter of the Institute of Maya Studies, the *IMS Explorer*, based in South Florida, USA. I am in contact with and share the views, comments, research, and publications of notable Maya scholars (known as “Mayanists”), archaeologists, and book writers.

Towards the end of the previous millennium, I lived in Belize for 1-1/2 years, and in Guatemala for 5-1/2 years. For 18 years, I led group adventures to the Mayalands, to visit the ancient sites, to climb the pyramids, to enter the caves, to dine on the local cuisine, and to interact with the Maya people that we encountered along the way.

In this century, my experiences evolved into being a participant in many important Maya ceremonies and rituals, as well as being sanctified by a Maya Spiritual Elder in a ritual so that I could perform ceremonies on behalf of the Maya. Hunbatz Men traveled at his own expense to visit with me at my home in South Florida.

I believe it all began for me back when I was still in High School. When I was about 15, I started reading “un-school-like” books about subjects that I was interested in, like yoga, meditation, astral traveling, reincarnation, and personal empowerment. I was particularly interested in a series of books written by English writer Tuesday Lobsang Rampa. His popular *You Forever* (1965) was a book of instruction for those trying to develop special powers, with subjects such as astral projection, telepathy, the aura, and clairvoyance. Rampa notes:

“You must do your part. Anything that is worth having is worth working for.

Things that are given away, free, are usually so given because they are not worth charging for. You must open your mind; you must be willing to absorb new knowledge. You must ‘imagine’ that knowledge is flowing into you”.

I also enjoyed the books of Hermann Hesse, especially *Siddhartha*, that explores an individual’s search for authenticity, self-knowledge, and spirituality.

“If your compassion does not include you, it is incomplete”.

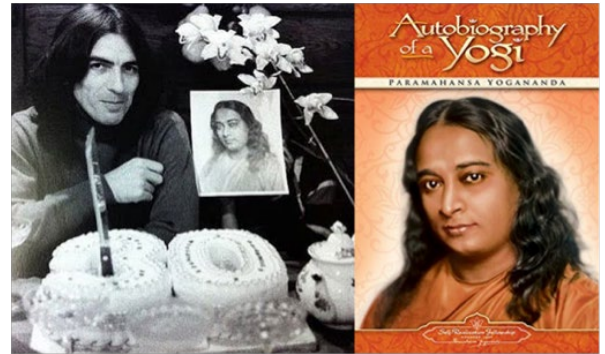
George Harrison, during what looks like his 30th birthday celebration, includes a photo of his most influential spiritual guide. It appears to me as if George is ready to cut the first piece of cake and offer it in spirit to someone very special to him...
Paramhansa Yogananda.

“I have no right to call myself one who knows. I was one who seeks, and still am, but I no longer seek in the stars and books; I’m beginning to hear the teachings of my blood pulsing within me”.

“Keenly aware, cast your own net... seek a deeper truth than what is mundanely available. I became a watcher, a seer, a doer... and eventually, a knower”.

At 18, before I graduated from school, I was teaching Hatha Yoga at the local ashram in Deerfield Beach, Florida. A little known fact is that one of England’s Fab Four, your own George Harrison, had a grandmother who lived in Deerfield Beach. Every once in awhile, a small notice in the local paper would appear to note that George had been spotted again, walking along the beach at 2 am! I heard that a guru from India would be speaking at the ashram. I went to see him, but he spoke for only about 10 minutes, then asked everyone to get into the Lotus Pose, and that we would all meditate together. After about ten minutes of meditating, I heard what sounded like a door opening, so I opened just one eye to peek, and in walked George! So, I got to meditate with George sitting just 8 feet away, facing me, for two hours! A few months later, George released his song “My Sweet Lord”, and the name of the guru was chanted in the final chorus of the song.

George, aka the reluctant Beatle, was always curious about a few questions like “what is our purpose in life? Where did we come from? and, where do we go after we are done?” Trying to find answers to these questions, he became more and more spiritually inclined and in this process, he got introduced to the book *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramhansa Yogananda. It is



Artist’s conception of an astral traveling experience. During astral projection the astral body leaves the physical. For some of you, perhaps the astral travel idea seems crazy.

But, astral travelling has been practiced throughout history, and there are thousands of documented cases and scientific experiments that demonstrate that astral travel is real.

considered as one of the most influential spiritual books ever written. It was first published in 1946 and it still sells heavily worldwide. The book greatly influenced my understanding of what it means, and all that it entails, to become spiritual. I read the book in my early twenties, and it still occupies a special place on my bookshelf.

Once, when I was 19, I had my first astral traveling experience. It didn’t happen for me until I had given up trying. I was lying on my back attempting to sleep, when I noticed my feet rising up. I felt a slight “click” in my navel area, and then I found myself floating above my body, looking down at my sleeping self! I floated out into the living room and attempted to move a chair so that I could prove to myself that what I was experiencing was real... but my hand kept just moving right through the wooden armrest. I was elated. But mostly, I proved to myself that I was really living in a multi-dimensional universe,

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

15 June 641 CE: On 9.10.8.9.3 9 Ak'bal 6 Xul G3, a little boy confronted his destiny. The six-year-old K'inich Kan B'ahlam, future leader of Palenque, was involved in an important ritual. Unfortunately, we don't understand it very well – but he commemorated it on the Cross Group tablets forty years later. It may have been his first public presentation as heir, or his entrance into a cult or school. That's admittedly a lot of options! Discussions of youth-time rituals besides the *yax ch'ahb'* (first bloodletting) are rare, so we don't have much to compare it to. David Stuart is working on a new translation which may put some of the questions to rest, but the details of K'inich Kan B'ahlam's youthful ritual will probably always be murky.

29 June 672 CE: On 9.12.0.0.0 10 Ajaw 8 Yaxk'in G9, the king of Nim Li Punit, Janaab' Ohl K'inich, donned a powerful magic item before a scattering ritual. That item was a jade pectoral necklace with an “Ik” wind symbol on the front. Some readers will remember when this beautiful artifact was discovered in 2015 (and reproted in the *IMS Explorer*).

It was so well-known in antiquity that artists portrayed it on later stone monuments.

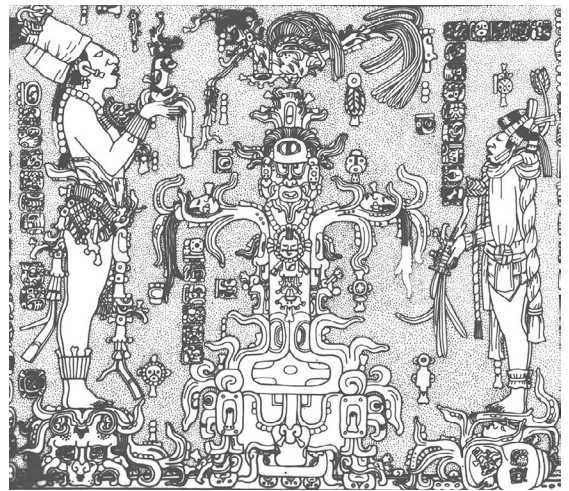
Panel Temple of the Foliated Cross. Kan B'ahlam dedicated the three Cross Group temples in a 3-day ceremony starting July 21, 690 CE, honoring the Palenque Triad while making a statement about his legitimacy to rule and his creative abilities.

The Linda Schele Drawing Collection, courtesy of LACMA. ©2000 David Schele. Note: Elaine Schele's photo wearing a mask on page 7 features a design from the Temple of the Foliated Cross!

As with many objects with history written upon them, the inscription on the back is almost as much about the thing (an “uuh,” or necklace) as it is about the king who wore it. In fact, we don't know too much about Janaab' Ohl K'inich, but that his very existence forces us to reconsider the importance of the Maya periphery – and that he had great taste in pectorals!

You can read more about the pectoral here:

https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/feature/a_pendant_fit_for_a_king



UC San Diego archaeologist Geoffrey Braswell holds a replica of the Maya Nim Li Punit jade pectoral. Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications.

Did You Miss the 2020 Mesoamerica Meetings Symposium Talks? “Center and the Four Corners: City, Symbol, and Space”

Dear friends of Mesoamerica,

We hope this message finds you safe at home and healthy during this challenging time.

For those who were unable to attend **The 2020 Mesoamerica Meetings 2-day Symposium** this past January (or for those of you who would like to revisit some of your favorite 2020 Symposium talks), we have exciting news! We are pleased to announce that our digital streaming service is still available, and now in June, we are offering a new reduced fee of \$25.00 to sign-up through our online registration platform.

Registering for the digital streaming service provides you with unlimited access to our password-protected video archive of **The 2020 Mesoamerica Meetings Symposium**, where you can stream talks to your personal computer, tablet, or cell phone. This offer for digital streaming and access to our online content will be available until Friday, July 31, 2020.

To learn more about our digital streaming service and how to register, please visit our Digital Streaming and Video Archive webpage. You can also download a Symposium program complete

with presentation abstracts speakers biographies, and program schedule.

We hope you enjoy the new research in Mesoamerica through our program extended over the summer, while we shelter in our homes and spend much of our days online.

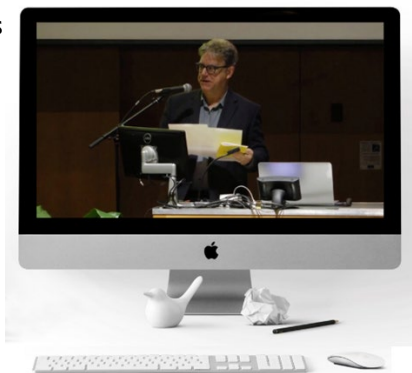
Take care!

What can you expect from our digital streaming service? Watch this free 55-minute recording of the keynote presentation given by Dr. Stephen D. Houston for a sneak peek!

<https://vimeo.com/vcubeinc/review/38755321811be7f90738>

Registration

Register and pay for digital streaming using our online platform: <https://www.cvent.com/events/the-2020-mesoamerica-meetings/event-summary-5a560411aaf245fdaed08c9b-5081febe.aspx>



More Mayanists Wearing Masks



Jade lady of renown, Mary Lou Ridinger, from La Antigua, Guatemala, says: "Like jade, life is precious... wear your mask?"



Ron Ferette, now residing in Gettysburg, PA, was a board member of the Pre-Columbian Society of Washington D.C. Ron, thanks for being a member of the IMS!



Stephan Merk, Maya researcher and Adjunct Collaborator for Mexican, submitted his photo wearing a mask from Merida, Mexico. Mexico has been experiencing an increase in C-19 cases in these weeks.



Wonderful friend of the IMS (and a former *IMS Explorer* newsletter editor), Shushila Oliphant, **survived C-19** back in March. From Miami, Florida, Shusi notes "it lasted for 9 days, but I found it to be manageable!"



Heather McKillop, along with her dog Daisy, sent in this festive selfie from the parking lot of the LSU lab in Baton Rouge, LA. Heather is a professor in the Department of Geography & Anthropology at Louisiana State University. She and her team plan to re-start fieldwork within the saltworks of Belize in 2021. "Please do visit us in 2021! We will be excavating the Ek Way Nal underwater site – where we found the jadeite gouge with the wooden handle!"



Expect the unexpected from Sofia Paredes Maury who directs exhibits of Maya artifacts worldwide on behalf of La Ruta Maya Foundation, based in Guatemala City. She first sent in this photo holding a Classic Period ceramic mask of the face of a jaguar, painted with the colors of a real jaguar. She next sent in this more "now" mask pic.



From Austin, TX, Mayanist extraordinaire Elaine Schele submitted this photo where she dons a new mask. Can you guess its motif?... *You're correct!* It's the panel from the Temple of the Foliated Cross, by Linda Schele!

2020 New Membership and Renewal Application

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New Renewal

Benefactor: \$350

Patron: \$150

Century: \$100

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Membership in the IMS includes attending one lecture a month; a year's subscription to our downloadable monthly *IMS Explorer* newsletter; and access to all features on our website: past newsletters, videos of IMS lectures, upcoming program announcements, IMS photo archives, and more!

Institute of Maya Studies

The Institute of Maya Studies is totally member-supported! If you are not a member, please take a moment and join us. Membership brings benefits and helps the IMS offer educational programs to the public. If you are already a member, please encourage your friends to join. If you need any assistance, call our Maya Hotline at: 305-279-8110





Enjoy: **The Mayanist**
from Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire

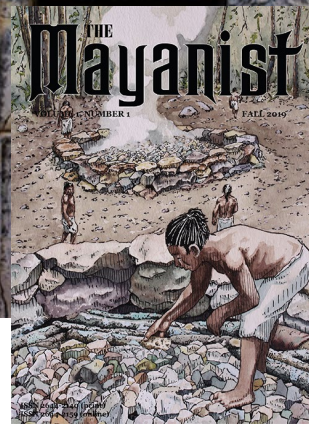
Dear colleagues,

I thought you may be interested in downloading a free copy of the second issue of the new peer-reviewed journal I co-edit with Mat Saunders of AFAR, *The Mayanist*. Please feel free to circulate this journal with your network, since it is entirely open-access. The first issue is here also.

<https://www.goafar.org/publications>

Wishing you a good end of the virtual week and thanks for sharing. Best, Max.

Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire, PhD
Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Davidson College



Vol. 1, No. 1



Vol. 1, No. 2

American Foreign Academic Research, more commonly recognized as AFAR, is an organization dedicated to the advancement of archaeological field research, cultural site preservation, and the belief that the science can be advanced through the education and outreach of professionals and non-professionals alike. Through education, research, and financial support, AFAR is actively opening the eyes of the world to the wonders of archaeology. 📌

Maya Spirituality on Mexicolore.com • Part I, by Jim Reed

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and that there was no reason to fear death. I now know death to be just a transition from one state of being to another.

I also started to be able to “see” auras – the emanations of light surrounding the human body. I noticed this especially when I was in a classroom setting. Go ahead, try it. Don’t focus on looking at the teacher, but focus your perception beyond them. By “seeing through them”, if aware, you’ll be able to see an emanation of light surrounding their head and shoulders. Artists of the past painted these emanations around the religious figures in their paintings. It is more or less the same technique used by Maya *curanderos* and *curanderas* (healers) when they venture out to look for healing plants and herbs. The plants glow, and call out to them.

What they need to help an ailing patient will just “appear”.

Living among the Maya in Belize

When I was 21, I went to Belize (once known as British Honduras) with a couple of friends who had purchased land in the Cayo District, in the westernmost area of Belize that borders Guatemala, to open a yoga retreat. Their land was on a mountain ridge between the town of Benque Viejo, and San José Succutz Village. We had a Maya family helping us to build a six-room thatched structure – at the time, the largest thatched building in Belize. We planned to have small thatched “cabins” up a trail to the mountaintop, where we could place the visitor’s meals at the front door, and they could self-isolate, and meditate while viewing a Maya pyramid that was perched upon a mountaintop across



A quaint sign that welcomes visitors to San José Succutz Village, depicts the Maya site of Xunantunich that is on the other side of the Mopan River (visible in the background).

the Mopan river. That project only lasted for a year-and-a-half, until my friend’s funds ran dry, but that pyramid was where my Maya journey really began. And living on the land in Belize was an opportunity for me to get to know and interact with modern Maya people.

To be continued in the July IMS Explorer.

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