

Minnesota Archaeological Society

The inscriptions below are from a 1,000-year-old pot that was discovered in 1957 near Red Wing, Minnesota by an MAS member.
The thunderbird motif is representative of Middle Mississippian iconography.



Summer 2013



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Throwing
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“Dramatic” New Maya Temple Found, Covered with Giant Faces

Archaeological “gold mine” illuminates connection between king and sun god.



The Maya sun god as shark-man—one of his several guises on a newfound monument in Guatemala. Photograph courtesy Edwin Román, Brown University.

*National Geographic Daily News
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/07/120720-maya-temple-el-zotz-masks-faces-science-houston/>*

by Ker Than, July 20, 2012

Some 1,600 years ago, the **Temple of the Night Sun** was a blood-red beacon visible for miles and adorned with giant masks of the Maya sun god as a shark, blood drinker, and jaguar.

Long since lost to the Guatemalan jungle, the temple is finally showing its faces to archaeologists, and revealing new clues about the rivalrous kingdoms of the Maya.

Unlike the relatively centralized Aztec and Inca empires, the Maya civilization—which spanned much of what are now Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico’s Yucatán region (Maya map)—was a loose aggregation of

Dear MAS Members,

The letter from the President is intended as a vehicle to inform the general membership of the Minnesota Archaeological Society of recently transpired activities of the Board of Directors. The following is a brief recap of the events, discussions, and decisions of the past quarter.

In Memory of Tony Romano:

On the evening of May 14, 2013, Dr. Tony Romano, DDS, passed away suddenly from a heart attack at his home in Pine City, MN. Tony was a long-time Minnesota Archaeological Society member an avocational archaeologist, flint-knapper, lithic researcher, experimental archaeologist, and contributor to *The Minnesota Archaeologist*. He was the driving force behind the Pine City N.W. Fur Co. Knap-in. Tony actively participated in the Lake Superior Basin workshops, mentoring many professional and avocational archaeologists and flint-knappers and always having time for active discussions ranging from archaeology to Ojibwa linguistics.

I had known Tony for over twenty years. He was highly intelligent, quick-witted, and one exceptional individual. I considered him a friend and mentor and I will miss him. He will be missed by many.

Annual Dinner Meeting:

The Annual Dinner Meeting was held on April 19th, 2013 at Hamline University, 774 Snelling Ave. St. Paul, 55104, Anderson Hall Room 111. Robert Boszhardt, Co-Director of the Mississippian Initiative Project, spoke to us about his current research into an early Mississippian colony at Tempealeau, Wisconsin. Thirty-one paying members attended along with approximately ten students who attended the lecture only.

Maya Exhibit at Science Museum of Minnesota:

Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed is now open at the Science Museum of Minnesota. I previewed the exhibit on June 20th. I spent about two hours and personally believe it is one of the best the SMM has ever presented. Many artifacts are to be viewed, some for the first time outside of Belize, interactive experiences, and great videos that you can spend a time watching. Also there is an Omni Theater presentation that compliments the exhibit. Both the exhibit and Omni presentation opened June 21, 2013 and run through January 5, 2014. I highly recommend them

Archaeology Week:

Minnesota Archaeology Week is scheduled for September 14th through the 21st. A calendar of events is to follow.

Nifty Quotes:

“Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position, or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character.” (William Arthur Ward)

Rod Johnson: President

For comments or suggestions, send a letter to President: Minnesota Archaeological Society, Ft. Snelling Center, St. Paul, Minnesota 55111 or email rodjohn33@msn.com

city-states. (Read about the rise and fall of the Maya in National Geographic magazine.)

“This has been a growing awareness to us since the 1990s, when it became clear that a few kingdoms were more important than others,” said Brown University archaeologist Stephen Houston, who announced the discovery of the new temple Thursday.

El Zotz, in what’s now Guatemala, was one of the smaller kingdoms, but one apparently bent on making a big impression.

By 2010 archaeologists working on a hilltop near the ancient city center had discovered 45-foot-tall (13-meter-tall) Diablo Pyramid. Atop it they found a royal palace and a tomb, believed to hold the city’s first ruler, who lived around A.D. 350 to 400.

Around the same time, Houston and a colleague spotted the first hints of the Temple of the Night Sun, behind the royal tomb on Diablo Pyramid. Only recently, though, have excavations uncovered the unprecedented artworks under centuries of overgrowth.

Solar Power

The sides of the temple are decorated with 5-foot-tall (1.5-meter-tall) stucco masks showing the face of the sun god changing as he traverses the sky over the course of a day.

One mask is sharklike, likely a reference to the sun rising from the Caribbean in the east, Houston said.

The noonday sun is depicted as an ancient being with crossed eyes who drank blood, and a final series of masks resemble the local jaguars, which awake from their jungle slumbers at dusk.

In Maya culture the sun is closely associated with new beginnings and the sun god with kingship, Houston explained. So the presence of solar visages on a temple next to a royal tomb may signify that the person buried inside was the founder of a dynasty—El Zotz’s first king.

It’s an example of “how the sun itself would have been grafted onto the identity of kings and the dynasties that would follow them,” he said in a press statement.

Maya archaeologist David Freidel added, “Houston’s hypothesis is likely correct that the building was dedicated to the sun as a deity closely linked to rulership. The Diablo Pyramid will certainly advance our knowledge of Early Classic Maya religion and ritual practice.”

Houston’s team also found hints that the Maya, who added new layers to the temple over generations, regarded the building as a living being. For example, the noses and mouths of the masks in older, deeper layers of the temple were systematically disfigured.

“This is actually quite common in Maya culture,” Houston told National Geographic News. “It’s very hard to find any Mayan depiction of the king that doesn’t have its eyes mutilated or its nose hacked ... but ‘mutilation’ is not the appropriate term to describe it. I see it as more of a deactivation.

“It’s as if they’re turning the masks off in preparation for replicating them in subsequent layers ... It’s not an act of disrespect. It’s quite the opposite.”

“Gold Mine of Information”

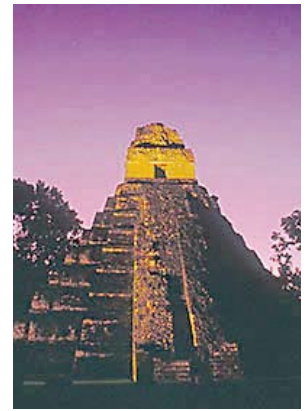
Maya scholar Simon Martin said the masks on the newfound El Zotz temple are “completely unique” and valuable, because they could help verify theories about Maya portrayals of the sun god.

“We have images of the sun god at different stages ... but we’ve never found anything that puts it all together,”

World-Premiere Exhibition is now open!

Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed

In *Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed*, **Science Museum of Minnesota** visitors will discover what archaeologists know about the ancient Maya, as well as the unresolved questions they continue to investigate.



The ancient Maya are one of the most complex and advanced civilizations of the ancient world, well known for their monumental architecture and distinctive art styles, their intricate knowledge of astronomy and time-reckoning, their complex political organization headed by royal dynasties, and their writing systems, some of the most sophisticated in the ancient world. Although much is known about the Maya elite, popular information about their working classes is less accessible. Recent archaeological discoveries have begun to shed more light on everyday domestic life and the relationships of non-elites to the ruling class.

Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed will explore the fascinating social, natural and spiritual realms of the ancient Maya through the eyes of powerful kings and queens and the lesser-known people who were the backbone of Maya society. It will feature immersive environments, authentic artifacts, and hands-on activities that tell the story of the ancient Maya and their modern descendants.

Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed is at the **Science Museum of Minnesota** through January 5, 2014.

Dates To Remember

Catch Rod Knapping

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| July 6, 2013, 11a.m. – 2 p.m. | Trail Days, Welch Village, MN |
| July 9, 2013 | Junior Archaeology summer camp, Carver County Historical Society, Waconia, MN. |
| Aug. 3, 2013, 11a.m. – 2p.m. | Trail Days, Welch Village, MN |
| Sept. 7, 2013, 11a.m. – 2p.m. | Trail Days, Welch Village, MN |
| Sept. 14-21, schedule to come | Archaeology Week Fair, Ft. Snelling State Park. |
| Sept. 28, 2013 | All Day Archaeology Day, Kathio State Park, Onamia, MN |



Minnesota Archaeology Week: Sept. 14-21

Kathio State Park All Day Archaeology: Sept. 28

Paleoamerican Odyssey Conference: Oct. 17-19, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Midwest Archaeology Conference: Oct. 24-27, Columbus, Ohio

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center 2013 Awards & Lecture - Dr. Guy Gibbon, *Prehistoric Lifeways through Time in the Upper Mississippi River Region*: Nov. 7, 6p.m. social hour, 6:0 p.m. awards, 7p.m. lecture, La Crosse, Wisconsin

<http://www.dulutharchaeologycenter.com/page8.html>

Join the Minnesota Archaeology Society

USA

Standard: \$30.00 (one person)
Household: \$40.00 (two or more)
Senior: (65 plus) \$15.00
Active student: \$15.00
Institution: \$60.00

Both USA and Canada

Sustaining: \$100. (Receive free MAS mugs.)

Benefactor: \$250. (Receive free MAS mugs plus a seat at the annual dinner meeting as an honored guest.)

Canada

Standard: \$40.00 (one person)
Household: \$50.00 (two or more)
Institution: \$70.00

Attention Institutions: Did your library receive Volume 70, 2011 and Volume 71, 2012 of The Minnesota Archaeologist? If not, please let me know.

Thanks so much. Anna Morrow

Newsletter

Send your MAS news & notices to the Editor: Deborah
Schoenholz
schoe030@umn.edu

www.mnarchsociety.org



University of Wisconsin LaCrosse Offering Field Experience

Archaeology Field Experience (3 days) or Archaeology Field Experience (5 days)

For adults and high school students

These multi-day events include both field and lab experiences and are well rounded opportunities for those who want to learn about the process of archaeology. Explore what it is like to participate in an actual archaeological excavation by working alongside professional archaeologists in the field. Participate in small-scale excavations (test units) and survey work. Lab work may include washing ceramics, stone tools, and other remains, and sorting them into basic categories. An experimental archaeology component of the event may explore making stone tools and pottery. Optional lab hours and local field trips will be available after regular field school hours. No previous experience is necessary.

This experience is open to high school students through adults. Fee includes a one year MVAC membership. Supervised dorm facilities are available for high school students at an additional cost of \$205 for 3 days. These events are funded in part by a grant from the La Crosse Community Foundation Richard W. Brown Family Fund.

Dates: Monday - Wednesday, July 8-10, 2013

Time: July 8 - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., July 9-10 - 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Location: 259 Cartwright Center, UW-La Crosse

Fee: \$350 for 3 days, \$500 for 5 days

Program Numbers: 81-44 and 81-45 respectively

For registration information please contact the

University of Wisconsin - La Crosse

Office of Continuing Education and Extension, 608-785-6504

Online registration at: <http://www.uwlax.edu/conted/artleisure/index.html>

For information on activity content please contact:

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center's Archaeology Education Program at 608-785-8454 or e-mail Jean.



A precontact history of Minnesota that reveals the relevance of archaeology to our understanding of the world today

ARCHAEOLOGY OF MINNESOTA: The Prehistory of the Upper Mississippi River Region

By Guy Gibbon

University of Minnesota Press
| 2012

ISBN 978-0-8166-7909-6 | \$34.95

From archaeological materials, Guy Gibbon reconstructs the social, economic, and political systems—the lifeways—of those who inhabited what we now call Minnesota for thousands of years before the first contact between native peoples and Europeans. Gibbon shows how the study of Minnesota archaeology is relevant to a broader understanding of long-term patterns of change in human development throughout the world.

For more information, including the table of contents, visit the book's webpage: <http://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/archaeology-of-minnesota>



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said Martin, of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, who was not involved in the project.

“We’ve had to assemble [the sequence] from bits and pieces of information and just trust that we got it right. This could be an opportunity to see the whole thing stage by stage.”

The temple is also wonderfully well preserved, Martin added, making it a “real gold mine of information.”

“We’ve seen a few places where whole buildings have been preserved,” he said. “But normally what happens is [the Maya] smashed up a building and then built on top of it, so when you dig into a building you don’t find very much of their decoration.”

By contrast, Maya workers at El Zotz went to great pains to preserve the original temple structure, going so far as padding it with earth and small rocks before building on top of it.

Facing Out

Archaeologist Karl Taube points out the craftsmanship of the masks. “They’re three-dimensional. The faces push out of the side of the facade. You don’t really see that very often ... because if they project too much they fall off. But here they were able to pull it off.

“With the play of light on these things, the faces would have been extremely dramatic,” said Taube, of the University of California, Riverside (UCR), who also was not involved in the project.

Project leader Houston added that the masks’ color—crimson, according to paint traces—would have also helped them stand out. “With that bright red pigment, it would have had a particularly marked effect at dawn and at the setting of the sun,” Houston said.

Blazing red and perched on high, the Temple of the Night Sun was meant “to see and to be seen,” Houston said.

Importantly, it would have been noticeable from Tikal, a larger, older, and more powerful kingdom that El Zotz may or may not have been on friendly terms with.

“We tend to think of kings being completely autonomous, but for the Maya, a sacred king was often part of a hierarchy of kings,” the Penn Museum’s Martin said.

“So the people at El Zotz at times may have been heavily under the influence of Tikal, and when powers were weak at Tikal, they may have been completely independent or may have linked themselves with more powerful kings somewhere else.”

“A Lot More Discoveries” to Come?

Despite the obvious care that was taken to construct and preserve the

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newfound temple, it wasn't used for long. Evidence at the site suggests the building was abandoned sometime in the fifth century, for reasons unknown.

"It's like they just dropped their tools and left" in the middle of once again expanding the temple, Houston said. "I think what you're looking at is the death of a dynasty."

The answer to this mystery and others could become evident as more of the Temple of the Night Sun is uncovered.

"Only 30 percent of this facade has been exposed," UCR's Taube said. "I think there're going to be a lot more discoveries and a broader understanding of what this building actually shows in the future."

Minnesota Archaeological Society

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Ability to Throw Played a Key Role in Human Evolution

Posted by TANN Anthropology, Breakingnews, Early Humans, Human Evolution
http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com/2013/06/ability-to-throw-played-key-role-in.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+The.ArchaeologyNewsNetwork+%28The+Archaeology+News+Network%29#.UdHJXbwQs3V

It's easy to marvel at the athleticism required to throw a 90-mile-per-hour fastball, but when Neil Roach watches baseball, he sees something else at work – evolution. Throwing at high speeds is unique to humans and it helped *Homo erectus* to hunt two millions years ago. That ability – to throw an object with great speed and accuracy – is a uniquely human adaptation, one that Roach believes was crucial in our evolutionary past. How, when and why humans evolved the ability to throw so well is the subject of a study published June 26 in the journal *Nature*. The study was led by Roach, who recently received his Ph.D. from Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and is now a postdoctoral researcher at George Washington University. What they found, Roach said, were a suite of physical changes - such as the lowering and widening of the shoulders, an expansion of the waist, and a twisting of the humerus – that make humans especially good at throwing. While some of those changes occurred earlier during human evolution, it wasn't until the appearance of *Homo erectus*, approximately 2 million years ago, that they all appeared together. The same period is also marked by some of the earliest signs of effective hunting, suggesting that the ability to throw an object very fast and very accurately played a critical role in human's ability to rise to the top of the food chain.



MAS Board Member Chuck Diesen explains how to throw and atlatl to a participant in the 2005 Archaeology Fair at Ft. Snelling.

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Occasional Publications in Minnesota Anthropology:

1. *The Objibway Indians Observed: Papers of Fred K. Blessing Jr.* 1977.
2. *Some Studies of Minnesota Prehistoric Ceramics: Papers Presented at the First Council for Minnesota Archaeology Symposium.* 1978.
3. *The Lake Bronson Site (21KT1): A Multi-Component Prehistoric Site on the Prairie-Woodland Border in Northwestern Minnesota.* 1978.
4. *The Alton Anderson Site (21WW4), Watonwan County, Minnesota.* 1983.
5. *A Handbook of Minnesota Prehistoric Ceramics.* 1978.
6. *The Dead River Site (21OT51).* 1979.
7. *Ojibwewi-Ikidowinan: An Ojibwe/English Word Resource Book.* 1979.
8. *Bibliography of Ojibwe Resource Material.* 1981.
9. *Current Directions in Midwestern Archaeology: Selected Papers from the Mankato Conference.* 1981.



Contact Anna Morrow at anmorrow@q.com or 612 922 7006