

August 11, 2020 • Maya Ceremonial Era Long Count: 0.0.7.13.10 • 12 Oc 13 Yaxk'in • G9



# Uk'ay Ajbuj: Otherworldly Owls in the Mundo Maya

by  
**Harri  
Kettunen**

by Harri Kettunen • Department of World Cultures • University of Helsinki • Finland

Photo: Great Horned Owl, by photographer Terry VanderHeiden. Check out his work at: [imagineight.com](http://imagineight.com)

Worldwide, owls are considered to be mysterious creatures that are regularly associated with darkness, death, and negative auguries, and the Maya area is not an exception. However, the relationship between humans and owls appears to be somewhat ambiguous, as owls are occasionally attributed with positive connotations, especially among hunters. Ancient Maya relationship with owls appears to be reflected in modern beliefs, as is evident from linguistic and iconographic sources. However, as regards epigraphy, although Mayan languages abound terms for different types of owls, only a handful of these appear in the written sources. In addition, representations of owls in Maya writing and iconography share some common features with other traditions in Mesoamerica, as well as the rest of the world.



The Madrid Codex has seven owls, and there are three written references above owl figures in a set of altogether eight birds on top of representations of the White Earth Goddess on pages 94-95 (95c shown) of the codex. The references clearly mark the birds perched on top of the head of the goddess.



**Jim Reed,  
Editor**

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Owls are enigmatic creatures that are worldwide considered to be bad omens and harbingers of death. According to Hull and Fergus (2011: 48): “Owls throughout Mesoamerica are negative auguries par excellence. [...] With the Ch'ol Maya, the *kuj* (*tecolote* in Spanish), or Mottled Owl (*Ciccaba virgata*) is said to be a ‘saboror’ (‘knower’).’ When it cries ‘*jukuku jukuku*,’ it is a sign that someone will die.”

In the full article, I explore Maya concepts of owls, to map related linguistic terminology and ethnotaxonomies, and to study the artistic representations and epigraphy of owls in the Maya area. Connections to other Mesoamerican cultures and concepts are briefly mentioned – although more systematically to be discussed in a forthcoming study on owls in the Mesoamerican cultural area.

### Owls in the Maya Area

There are 18 species of owls in the Maya area and 11 in the Maya lowlands (König and Weick 2008; Howell and Webb 1995). The American Barn Owl (*Tyto furcata*) is the only species in the family *Tytonidae* present in the area. Typical Owls (*Strigidae*), however, are abundant. If you access the hyperLink provided at the end of this article, I provide a list (Table 1) that presents these species with their scientific

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**IMS Program Note:**  
It is summer break time at Miami-Dade College, accordingly, there will be no IMS public presentation in August.

# Ignored, Forgotten, or Simply Not Recognized? Edible Seeds and Edible Fruit of *Gonolobus* Lianas by Nicholas Hellmuth



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In the years I was learning about the Classic Maya, I knew Dennis Puleston while I was working at Tikal in 1965 and 1966. So I am familiar with his research on the ramon nut as an overlooked

*Fruit of Gonolobus liana with open seed pod growing in Aldea Cruz Blanca, San Juan Sacatepequez. Photo Rosa Sequen/FLAAR.*



edible food of the Classic Maya. Mention of this tree by Cyrus Lundell three decades earlier was an inspiration. But now I have found a food source not mentioned by Lundell nor by Puleston: seeds and fruit of the *Gonolobus* liana. There are many species of this woody vine in most areas of Guatemala, Mexico, Belize, Honduras, etc., and several are edible. Different species are in Peten, Alta Verapaz, Izabal, Sacatepequez, and most Highland and Boca Costa areas of Guatemala. I was not aware of *Gonolobus* being a food source until about 2014. And now, today in 2020, I am getting recipes from Kaqchiquel Maya and Pokomchi Maya families. Plus one of our plant scouts in Peten is saying the same thing: *Cuchamper* (a local Spanish name) is also eaten throughout Peten.

In the section on plant family *Apocynaceae* in the helpful coverage of Peten Itza Maya edible and medicinal plants, not one *Gonolobus* is listed. Plus none of the other close relatives that may also have at least one edible species are listed whatsoever in this very impressive research project on *Plants of the Peten Itza' Maya* (Atran et al. 2004: 150-151). Yet, our Peten plant scout, Teco (Moises Daniel Pérez Díaz) knows of three species in Peten, of which one is edible and another is medicinal.

In monograph after monograph on edible plants of the Americas, no *Gonolobus* fruits or seeds are listed, despite the fact that botanists Standley and Williams clearly indicated in 1969 that some species of vines of the *Apocynaceae* family, specifically of Guatemala, are edible. But, somehow the edible aspect of *Gonolobus* never was “noticed” by the Carnegie Institution of Washington scholars, and I bet it is missing from 99% of any chapters on food in all textbooks on “The Classic Maya.”



*Fruit of Gonolobus liana growing in Aldea Cruz Blanca, San Juan Sacatepequez.*

Photo Rosa Sequen/FLAAR.

The *Gonolobus* vines throughout our ethnobotanical research garden have been producing seeds, floating on kapok-like fluff for up to 50 or more meters from the seed pods. This daily rain of seed “parachutes” floating through the air in front of my home-office is what reminded me of this fruit. So our team has been working this week to rescue this plant from obscurity.

Fortunately the list of all Belize plants reminds the world that there are 6 species of *Gonolobus* in Belize and two are edible (Balick, Nee and Atha 2000: 123-124). So we are now updating lists of *Gonolobus* for Guatemala.

## Medicinal potential for *Gonolobus*

The Maya people have between 550 and 650 or more local native medicinal plants available to them (the number depends on whether in the Highlands or the Lowlands, whether in a seasonally dry area or an area with more moisture much of the year).

In the helpful monograph on *Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Belize* (2000: 123-124) Balick, Nee and Atha list medicinal use for *Gonolobus fraternus*. And, on their page 192, Balick and Arvigo list the specific medicinal use for this *Gonolobus fraternus* (*Messages from the Gods*, 2015).

But, for the edible aspect, no *Gonolobus* is listed in the comprehensive book of *Edible Wild Plants* (Medsgers 1939).

No *Gonolobus* is listed in the index of *Cornucopia II: A Source Book of Edible Plants* (Facciola 1998).

Josefina Sequen, a Kaqchiquel Maya student who helps us with our projects, gave us a complete set of recipes for *Gonolobus*. When we asked if her sister Rosa Sequen could photograph some fruits, she simply went into the forest, found the fruits, photographed them (and then she ate some: seeds and fruit).

The Pokomchi Maya family who helps us learn about edible and usable plants in southern Alta Verapaz also sent some recipes to us.

*To be continued in the September IMS Explorer.*

# Uk'ay Ajbuj: Otherworldly Owls in the Mundo Maya

by Harri Kettunen *continued from page 1*

names, followed by their English and Spanish names, based on König and Weick (2008).

It is noteworthy that while English has but one generic term for owls, Spanish has many across the Spanish-speaking world, such as *autillo*, *búho*, *cárabo*, *cuscungo*, *estucurú*, *lechuza*, *mochuelo*, *múcaro*, *ñacurutú*, *tecolote*, *tuco*, and *tucúquere*.

In the Maya context *tecolote*, *búho*, and *lechuza* are the most common, of which *tecolote* and *búho* appear to refer (generally) to larger “horned” owls (i.e., owls with ear tufts) and *lechuza* to smaller owls without ear tufts and/or to Barn Owls with distinctive facial disks. However, in a strict (ornithological) sense, the Spanish *lechuza* refers only to the family *Tytonidae*, i.e. Barn Owls (Bernis 2000: 123), and not to the various owls in the *Strigidae* family that the term *lechuza* frequently refers to in common usage.

What is important regarding the linguistic work done on Maya languages (and Mesoamerican languages in general) is that, when not specified, the term *lechuza* could refer to different owls in different areas, based on the identification of different informants.

Owls, or owl-like birds, have been identified in Maya monuments and architecture. Dos Pilas Stela 2 portrays a frontal image of a bird with ear-tufts; Piedras Negras Stela 9 depicts a bird with large eyes in the headdress; and in the Terminal Classic Chichen Itza owls with spread wings adorn the West Pier of the Temple of the Owls (Stone and Zender 2011: 212-213).

Depictions of owl-like birds in Maya art include the famous headdress of God L (top right). The headgear on the owl belongs to God L, an Underworld deity, and owls are, of course, related to underworld gods.

We have two frontal view owl signs in Maya writing. One of them is the well-known Teotihuacan-inspired owl sign with Tlaloc-style goggle eyes (A center right) that still eludes secure decipherment. Another one is a recently found owl sign at Tonina

*Detail from K2796 showing the owl-like bird in the headdress of God L. Photograph by Justin Kerr.*



with a *ji* phonetic complement (B), pointing towards a possible *kuj* ~ *kuuj* reading for the owl sign.

Another avian creature with owl characteristics can be found in the Dresden Codex (C), with a potential phonetic value *kuy*.

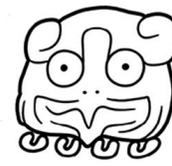
As regards the naming practices in the Maya area, few names incorporate terms for owls. In ancient Maya texts, names that have owls in them can be found at Yaxchilan, La Corona, Río Azul, Xultun, Caracol, and Jaina.

It is also worth noticing that names with animal components on them are common around the Maya area, but at the same time highly concentrated, particularly in the Usumacinta area (Kettunen 2016).

One of the well-known names that has owl characteristics in it is Spearthrower Owl. However, in some cases Spearthrower Owl does not look like an owl, nor does the *atlatl* look like an *atlatl*.



A

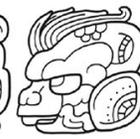


B



C

A) Owl sign on Tikal Marcador (F9). Drawing by Christophe Helmke. B) Owl sign on an unpublished monument from Tonina. Drawing by Harri Kettunen; based on a photograph provided by INAH/Ajimaya/C.N.A./Carlos Pallán Gayol. C) 13-KUY on Dresden Codex, page 18. Drawing by Harri Kettunen.



Variant spellings of “Spearthrower Owl”. Drawing by Christophe Helmke.

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Source: Access the original 38-page PDF posted by Harri Kettunen at: [https://www.academia.edu/33200993/Uk\\_ay\\_Ajbuj\\_Otherworldly\\_Owls\\_in\\_the\\_Mundo\\_Maya](https://www.academia.edu/33200993/Uk_ay_Ajbuj_Otherworldly_Owls_in_the_Mundo_Maya)

# Xkalupococh: A Maler Puuc Site Revisited by Stephan Merk



Detail of Xkalupococh I by Explorador Maya Eduardo González Arce, 2018.

The German-Austrian explorer Teobert Maler (1842-1917), to whom we owe first notice of so many Maya sites on the Yucatan peninsula, visited in June of 1889 two groups of ruins, which he named Xkalupococh "I und II Ruinengrund" (Groups I and II). Six years later, in 1895, Maler saw a third group and baptized it Xkalupococh "III Ruinengrund". He published a description of the complete site together with one photograph 1902 in the German magazine *Globus*. This was a slightly shortened version of the text he had written in his manuscript *Península Yucatán*, which – edited by Hanns J. Prem – was released as a book, in 1997.

Maler was most probably not the first explorer who mentioned this ancient site. John Lloyd Stephens, together with Frederick Catherwood and Dr. Cabot, paid on his second journey to Yucatan, a visit to the Maya ruins of Xkampon in 1841. At the end of his brief description of the place he writes: "From this (Xkampon) old walls were again visible, which the Indians called Kalupok." (1843, Vol. 2: 80). Stephens does not give a direction but, as we know today, Xkalupococh III lies only 2.5 km southwest of Xkampon. Most likely Stephens saw Xkalupococh only from the distance; at least he does not give any description of the site. Probably when mentioning the "old wall", the U.S. American traveller referred to the still-standing wall of a building on a high hill (and therefore visible) at the south end of Xkalupococh III.

Exactly one century after Maler's discovery, Hanns J. Prem and his wife Ursula Dyckerhoff, were able to



relocate Xkalupococh III

in 1989, and in 1992, Prem together with Peter Schmidt and Nicholas P. Dunning, rediscovered Xkalupococh I (George F. Andrews, 1989). Unfortunately the location of Xkalupococh II could not be verified until today, due to the German-Austrian explorer's vague description and the dense vegetation in that area. Aside of Maler, to my knowledge, Harry E. D. Pollock (1980: 207-208), Andrews (1989), and Dunning (1992: 267-269) published about Xkalupococh but only the latter has visited the site; the other texts are exclusively based on Maler's report and Prem's personal information. On my part, I inspected Xkalupococh in 1993, 2011, 2013, 2017, and 2018.

Xkalupococh is a dispersed place, a loose arrangement of ruin clusters in a generally north to south direction, situated in a valley and on adjacent hills. It is treated here as one single site, even though its groups are separated from each other by more than one kilometer distance and so far no settlement remains are known in the areas in between. The rarely visited place deep in the dense Yucatecan forest reveals several structures with well-preserved front façades, offering a good opportunity to study all of the Classic Puuc styles (Early Puuc, Intermediate style, Classic Puuc Colonnette, and Classic Puuc Mosaic) within one small Maya ruin site.



Fig. 1a: Maler's image from 1889 showing the well-preserved front façade of Structure I in Xkalupococh I. Courtesy of Ibero-American Institute, Berlin (N-040 s 134).



Fig. 1b: Flash-forward to 2018: A comparison with Maler's photo attests that the building's southern front side has explicitly suffered since 1889. Photo by Stephan Merk.

## Xkalupococh I

This is the southernmost of the Xkalupococh groups. It consists of several platforms with stone mounds, indicating fallen former vaulted buildings. Only one building is relatively well preserved. It stands on the north side of a platform on top of a gentle rise and has two rooms along an east-west axis. It is 12 m long and 4.15 meters wide. The undecorated and only roughly

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## Maya Spirituality • More Belize • continued • by Jim Reed

While in Belize, my friends and I lived just 2 kilometers from the Guatemalan border. On occasion, we would pass through the border to drive just 50 km to the grand Maya site of Tikal. At that time the road was still unpaved, and clouds of dust would rise up behind us. The dirt road was known as “Bandito Highway”; as there were rumors that one could be stopped by some not-so-nice opportunists. But, we always had good luck on our adventures in and out of the jungle. We stayed at Tikal, not in hotels, but in hammocks, hanging from the trees in the camping area, once again under a canopy of beautiful stars.

On one occasion, we entered the site together, but when we entered the great plaza of the North Acropolis, we split up. My friends wanted to venture off to explore the pyramids in an area known as “Mundo Perdido” (Lost World). I decide to climb Temple I and meditate in the room high above. Within the large doorway at the top of Temple I, there are three successive rooms. I sat in the Lotus position with my back propped up against the inner back wall. I began meditating and “om-ing”; my oms in just my normal volume voice. I was lost in my own Mundo Perdido.

Later in the day, when we regrouped for lunch, my friends asked me if I had climbed Temple I. They asked if I was om-ing up there. I replied in the affirmative and pondered, “why do you ask?” They replied that they could hear me, and the sound of my oms was loud and

carried all across the great plaza! I had discovered the amazing sound acoustics that the ancient Maya had built into many structures across the Mayalands. It would take scholars and researchers decades to suggest what I had witnessed on my own. Certainly a memorable spiritual experience for me!

### The Belizean–Guatemalan Territorial Dispute

As an aside for you History buffs, I’d like to share some little known facts that I gleaned from contributors to online resources and enhanced with my own experiences. The Belizean–Guatemalan territorial dispute is an unresolved territorial dispute between Belize and Guatemala, neighbors in Central America. The territory of Belize has been claimed in whole or in part by Guatemala since 1821.

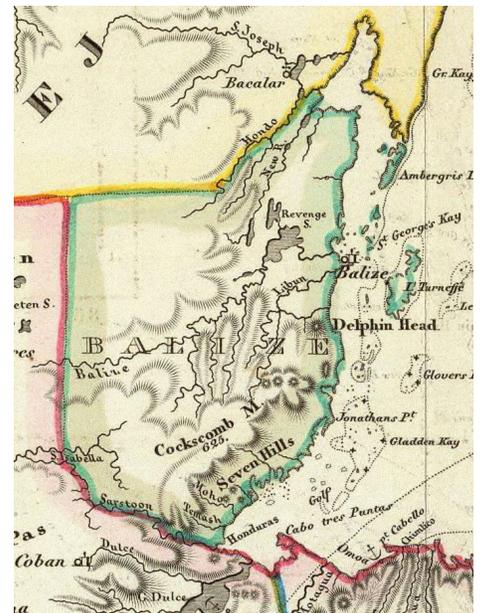
The present dispute originates with imperial Spain’s claim to all New World territories west of the line established in the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. England, like other powers of the late 15th century, did not recognize the treaty that divided the world between Spain and Portugal.

After indigenous Maya tribes had massacred Spanish conquistadors and missionaries in Tipu and surrounding areas, shipwrecked English seamen, then English and Scottish Baymen, settled by 1638, making their presence permanent by 1779. Establishing a short military alliance with Amerindians from the Mosquito Coast south of Belize, they also often welcomed former British privateers. Tipu is a Maya archaeological



World-class view looking up along the trunk through the branches of this world-class Ceiba Tree that you encounter on the trail while walking into Tikal. Photo by George Fery.

Map of British territory in the Yucatan from 1840 that features the Belize of that time. From the Berghaus *Physikalischer Atlas*.



site in the Maya Mountains near the Belize–Guatemalan border. This site is situated near the Macal River. Further downstream is located the Maya site of Chaa Creek, and as another tie-in, Rosita Arvigo’s land backs up to Chaa Creek!

Guatemala declared its independence from Spain in 1821, and Great Britain did not accept the Baymen of what is now Belize as a crown colony until 1862, 64 years after the Baymen’s last hostilities with Spain. This crown colony became known as “British Honduras”. A series of meetings, begun in 1969, ended abruptly in 1972 when Britain, in response to intelligence suggesting an imminent Guatemalan invasion,

*continued on page 6*



The North Acropolis at Tikal, featuring Temple I, where I did my “om-ing”. Here, a well-attended Maya ceremony is taking place in the plaza... they’re burning lots of copal incense and spiritual offerings.



# Maya Spirituality • More Belize • continued • by Jim Reed

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announced it was sending an aircraft carrier and 8,000 troops to Belize to conduct amphibious exercises.

Guatemala then massed troops on the border. Talks resumed in 1973, but broke off in 1975 as tensions flared when a Guatemalan tank entered the plaza of Xunantunich! Guatemala began massing troops on the border, and Britain responded by deploying troops, along with a battery of 105 mm field guns, anti-aircraft missile units, six fighter jets, and a frigate. Following this deployment, tensions were defused, largely as a result of many Guatemalan soldiers deserting and returning to their homes. At the time, Britain continued to protect the Belize from Guatemala, consisting of an army battalion and No. 1417 Flight RAF of Harrier fighter jets.

Here is where I enter the picture, as I was living near the border in 1975. I personally witnessed British troops digging their “fox-holes” along the flat, sandy areas along the Mopan river below the town of Benque Viejo. Their rifles were pointed upstream, towards Guatemala. On more than one occasion, I saw Harrier jets fly overhead – with their load of bombs tucked neatly under their wings!

The coup-d’etat came when my Maya friend and I once again made our way up to the top of El Castillo pyramid at Xunantunich. We were surprised to find a team of British soldiers up there, but I think they were more surprised to find a gringo with a Maya friend sneaking up behind them! We made friends and shared conversation for a long while. I think they preferred smoking my cigarettes better than the type they could procure in their dispensary. Best thing was, they let me look out through their very high-powered binoculars that were large enough to have to be mounted on a tripod. Amazing clarity...you could see people walking in the streets of the border town more than two kilometers away! I am sure a couple of them were friends of mine, who I had met while tubing down the river, and pulling ashore on the

*Britain’s Prince Harry reaches the top of El Castillo pyramid at Xunantunich across the river from Benque Viejo del Carmen, on his visit to Belize in March, 2012. Photo by Chris Jackson/Reuters.*

Guatemalan side of the river, to meet smiling Maya people. The women would wash their laundry on the rocks along the shoreline, while the men bathed in the crystal-clear pools.

## Benque Viejo del Carmen

As with most of Belize, history shows that the Maya have been occupying Benque Viejo for more than 2,000 years. After the Maya, in the early 17th century, British settlers arrived in the country attracted to the abundance of hardwoods in Belize’s dense rainforests. British loggers settled in the area near the banks of the Mopan River to cut the valuable logwood. As the demand for logwood decreased, the British set their eyes on the next prized hardwood – mahogany. The logs were floated downstream the rivers to Belize City where they were gathered and exported to England for the construction of exquisite train carriages and fine furniture.

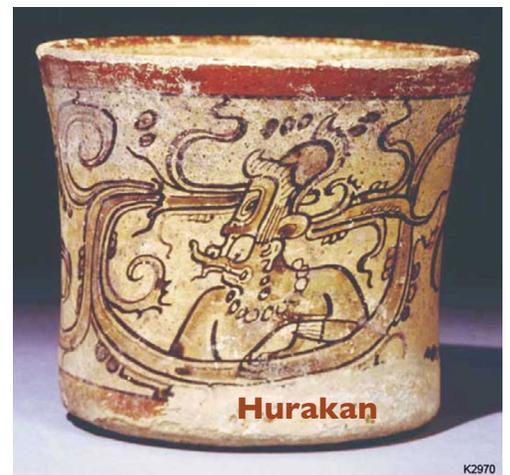
So, I’ll move on now, as I did then. When our project in Belize ended, my friends drove themselves and their new baby, Demian, up through Mexico, and back to the U.S. As another tie-in, Demian is the name of a character in a book by the same name, by one of my most influential authors, Hermann Hesse. I decided to backpack into Guatemala, and make my way up the Pacific Highway to California, and then across the U.S. to my parent’s home in South Florida. A three-month adventure!

## Fun Facts:

Did you know that the English word “hurricane” comes from the Taino (the indigenous people of the Caribbean and Florida) word “Huracán,” who was the Carib god of evil? Their Huracán was derived from the ancient Maya weather god, “Hurakan”. According to the



*By 1878, Benque Viejo is described as “an Indian Village” like this photo from the town’s archives, but it was not until 1904 that Benque Viejo was officially recognized as a town by the colonial government.*



*Popol Vuh*, which recounts the Maya Creation Myth, Hurakan is the god of wind, storm, and fire. Hurakan or Hunraqañ in K’iche’, is “the one-legged” god, (God K, or K’awil), and one of three creator deities, collectively called “the Heart of Heaven,” who participated in three attempts to create humanity first from mud, then wood, then successfully from maize. The Creation Myth also reveals that Hurakan caused the Great Flood after the first “true” humans angered the gods. 🏠

# Xkalupococh: A Maler Puuc Site Revisited by Stephan Merk continued from page 4

finished side wall in the west indicates a planned extension there. A comparison with Maler's photo attests that the building's southern front side has explicitly suffered since 1889 (Figs. 1a and 1b, page 4). While the structure was almost complete then, today large parts of the western room's façade have collapsed, including its doorway. Additionally, the upper molding is now entirely gone.

The front side's plain lower wall zone once was interrupted by three packs of triple banded vertical columns, placed close to the corners and in the center. When Maler visited the building the columns on the eastern corner had already fallen off the core, and today only the central pack has survived time and destruction. Above a three-member medial molding with a continuous line of short colonnettes as the middle part, rises an elaborately decorated Classic Puuc Mosaic style upper façade. As known, in this style the decoration in the upper wall zone was put together with pre-cut specialized stones in the form of a mosaic.

Above each doorway was an expanded abstract geometric mask in a V-like design, representing a snout, created by columns in the background and by square stones, flanked on both sides by G-frets, indicating eyes. The two abstract masks were divided by two central banded half-round columns in the upper façade's center.

**Fig. 2:** The back wall of Xkalupococh I is still in good shape and hasn't changed since Maler's visit. Photo by Stephan Merk.

The complete composition can best be enjoyed on Maler's photo, while today much of it is no longer visible. Andrews in his manuscript assumes the same motive for the structure's eastern end wall; however, almost nothing of the design has survived.

Astoundingly well preserved is the back wall which has not altered since Maler's times (Fig. 2). The three-member medial molding above the zone of plain veneer stones is composed by an apron-member at the bottom, a line of recessed plain stones alternating with packs of three short columns in the middle, and a row of plain flat stones sticking out on the top. The upper wall shows panels of plain stones, alternating with pairs of central banded façade columns and vertical rows of small triangles between each pair of colonnettes. The design of the final upper molding is identical with the one on the medial molding.

The eastern room in this structure (Fig. 3) is almost intact and measures inside around 470 x 300 cm. Its vault is slightly rounded. On both sides of the doorway are cordholders in the lower and upper parts. The half destroyed western room could not be inspected more in detail because there were nests of active wasps and a frightened porcupine.



**Fig. 3:** A look into the east room of Xkalupococh I. Photo by Stephan Merk.

In front of the building stands a stone sculpture, which is already visible on Maler's photograph of Structure I in Xkalupococh I. This sculpture is 60-70 cm high, rectangular, and shows on the upper part of its two smaller sides a protruding decoration that resembles a classic three-member molding consisting of a rectangular stone line sandwiched by two apron-type members. Maler supposed that the stone once stood in a building niche while Dunning estimates it as part of the upper molding.

*To be continued in the September IMS Explorer.*

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## Unbundling the Past: Events in Ancient and Contemporary Maya History for August

by Zach Lindsey

### 7 August 1847 CE:

On 12.11.12.3.18 13 Etz'nab 6 Sek G6, a group of Maya leaders organized by Jacinto Pat met in Columpich, Quintana Roo. Sweat must have poured down their faces as they discussed the execution of their friend Manuel Antonio Ay. By the end of their meeting, they had crystallized plans to attack the Mexican federal government in what would become known as the Caste War. But revolutions are tricky. Pat and other leaders in the Caste War were their own worst enemies. Pat himself was killed by other Maya folks, but his legacy lives on in Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo, where his descendants still live.



JACINTO PAT



Paddler Dieties ferrying the Maize God to where the cosmic hearth will be set. The turtle carries the three stones. By artist J.C. Argyle; check out his work at: [www.halfgoblin.com](http://www.halfgoblin.com)

**11 August 3113 BCE:** On 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u G9, the gods got together to place three stones in the sky. These three stones formed the ring of the "cosmic hearth." Just like traditional Maya homes, which are built fireplace-first even today, the current version of our world began with those three stones. This date marks the beginning of the long count calendar, and it is probably the most important date in the Maya calendar. It must've been a heck of a party. The Paddler Gods were there, Chaak and Itzamna may have been around, and the reincarnated Maize God probably made an appearance. Happy birthday, world!

## Maya Exploration Center featuring Dr. Ed Barnhart

Maya Exploration Center Director Dr. Ed Barnhart has almost three decades of experience as an archaeologist, an explorer and an instructor. He is a Fellow of the Explorers Club, has published many papers, and appeared in over a dozen documentaries about ancient civilizations.

Barnhart received his Masters degree in May of 1996 and began teaching Anthropology classes at Southwest Texas State University the following September. He taught Archaeology and Anthropology classes at SWTS until 1998 when he was invited by the Mexican government to direct the Palenque Mapping Project.



In 2003, Barnhart founded the Maya Exploration Center

**Winning photo!** I submitted this photo that I took while attending a Wajshakib' B'atz' (Maya New Year) ceremony led by Tat Rigoberto Itzep Chanchovac (standing at left) in Momostenango, Guatemala. The image will be featured for the month of June in the 2021 Mayan Calendar! The Wajshakib' B'atz' in 2021 is June 28th. Thank you, Ed!

and since that time has organized and led over 200 study abroad programs for students around the globe. He has appeared on the *History Channel*, *Discovery*, Japanese Public Television, and in multiple independent documentaries.

Besides teaching as well as facilitating and leading group adventures worldwide, Barnhart's pet project is the popular Mayan Calendar that he produces each year. The 2021 Mayan Calendar is scheduled to be printed in August. You can now pre-order your calendars for the coming year. Check out this hyperlink to the site: <http://www.mayan-calendar.com>



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