

Structure under excavation in mid-1976. One of the Olmec-style jaguar mask-like façades can be seen at the lower left.

Map of Belize.

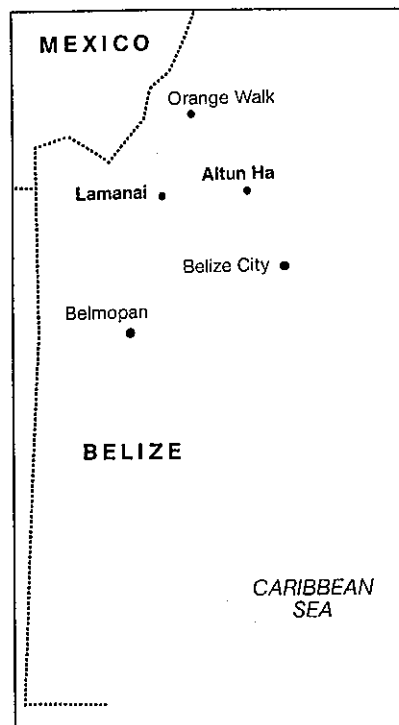
### Royal Ontario Museum Excavation: Finds at Lamanai, Belize

The summer of 1976 marked the third season of excavations at the ancient Maya center of Lamanai located in northern Belize. The work, conducted by the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada, will continue until at least 1981. Although the site has been known for over three-quarters of a century, no real work had been undertaken there prior to initiation of the museum's project which began in 1974.

Lamanai was selected for long-term investigation primarily because occupation at the site was known to have extended into the Historic period dating to the sixteenth century and reached back to the pre-Classic period of the third to fourth centuries before Christ. This late date is not in evidence at any other recorded Central Lowlands site, with the probable exception of Tayasal located in the Petén in Guatemala. The primary aim of ROM's expedition has been the recovery of data on post-Classic period dating to the tenth to the sixteenth century and Historic period.

At the beginning of the 1974 season, surface collection on the excavation's camp indicated intensive use of a restricted portion of the land bordering the lagoon on which Lamanai fronts during the latter part of the post-Classic period. Work in structures within and adjacent to the camp located at the southern end of the site yielded large amounts of architectural data and artifacts from the late post-Classic period. It seems that a rich and at least moderately extensive development existed into the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries and is roughly comparable to the florescence at the Maya center of Mayapán in northern Yucatan.

Approximately 178 vessels have been recovered from the ninety-three last post-Classic burials and eleven offerings encountered at Lamanai. They include forms not recorded elsewhere in Maya sites. Types of pottery which exhibit affinities with Mayapán ceramics, especially in the form of segmented





The remains of the church at Lamanai. Only the apse was made of masonry; the nave, which covered much of the left foreground, was constructed of perishable materials.



Jade mosaic mask.



A large censer from a late post-Classic burial, with carved and appliqué decoration, the latter retaining traces of stucco and polychrome painting. Height, 50 centimeters.

flanges at vessel bases generally above tripod feet or high pedestals, were also uncovered. Incised decoration resembling that of Mayapán often embodies serpent motifs and is common in the predominant red-to-red-orange monochromes. Appliqué animal and human heads are also frequent. Two unusual painted censers or incense-burning vessels of the late post-Classic period have been recovered, and they are not paralleled in the pottery collections from other sites.

Mayapán-type figurines have been found in fragmentary condition in midden deposits, and in one large mass in building core, but no complete specimens have yet been encountered. Nine of the late post-Classic burials were accompanied by metal objects, including several types not previously known. In addition, a wide variety of shell, bone and stone artifacts has been recovered, plus a crystal pendant and bead. Middens have yielded large quantities of ceramics, and a considerable number of small artifacts, providing an excellent picture of the late pre-Historic period life at Lamanai.

The existence of the remains of a Franciscan church near the southern end of the site had been recorded in the nineteenth century. Seventeenth century documentation on the church provides us with the ancient name of Lamanai which can be translated as "drowned insect." Excavation has demonstrated re-use of the church following its burning in A.D. 1641 by Maya who rejected the Catholic church and returned to their old religious practices. The date of use cannot be fixed with precision, but it is likely to fall in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Preliminary examination of ceramics from this period indicates no appreciable

difference from those of the immediately preceding era, suggesting that early Historic period materials may well be unrecognizable in the Central Lowlands except on the basis of context.

The 1976 excavation of a low mound immediately south of the church has revealed a cemetery placed there because of the virtual absence of soil adjacent to the church, which itself was literally founded upon a rock. Examination of approximately twenty percent of the mound remains has yielded data on a construction sequence that probably began in the Classic period dating to the third to ninth centuries and possibly continued into the Historic period. Grave after grave was cut into the architectural mass in the roughly seventy years of Franciscan influence at Lamanai. Most of the more than sixty burials thus far encountered were not accompanied by grave goods, but two small metal objects which may be of European manufacture along with one fragmentary bone rosary were recovered. The latter was probably of local manufacture.

The major effort in 1976 was directed at excavating one of the larger structures, called N10-9, situated on the west side of the site where most of the late post-Classic material was found. The building, reaching nearly twenty meters high, was surrounded at the base by a massive late post-Classic midden, and it is clear that some minor additions to basal platform facings were made during this period as well. The bulk of the architectural complex is, however, of an earlier date. The last major additions were made in the seventh century after Christ or later, and follow alterations which may date from the second half of the Early Classic, about A.D. 400-450.

The structure which precedes the Classic phase and later additions is marked by strongly Olmec jaguar masks on the façade of its large basal platform. The shape and construction suggest affinities with the architectural tradition of Cobá located in Quintana Roo in Mexico. No precise date can yet be assigned to this building, but placement in the early part of the Early Classic, which dates to the third to fourth centuries after Christ, or earlier seems likely. Offerings recovered from what is probably the late Early Classic portion of the complex include a jade mosaic mask, which is composed of almost 100 separate pieces of jade, a group of 570 obsidian cores, together with a pair of large jade earplug flares, a carved pendant and uncarved beads of jade, and sixty-nine obsidian flake blades.

The investigations carried out thus far at Lamanai provide a strong basis for suggesting that this center somehow

what context?

escaped the effects of the collapse of Classic civilization. Lamanai achieved great wealth and political influence in the centuries just preceding Spanish contact, while Altun Ha and other centers only short distances away fell into decay. The causes of such a phenomenon were undoubtedly multiple, but one major factor may have been the role of the New River, called the *Dzuluinicob*, which flows from its lagoon headwaters northeastward to the sea.

linking Lamanai with the post-Classic world of northern Yucatán. The role of Maya traders from the Campeche coast of Yucatán in maintaining such a link probably effected a flow of ideas and materials both northward and southward. It may never be possible to reconstruct the intriguing political bonds which seem to be reflected in Mayapán and Lamanai ceramics. Forthcoming seasons at Lamanai should, however, shed light on the

scope and substance of post-Classic developments. We can only hope that more data on the Classic and pre-Classic periods will provide an understanding of the complex forces which kept ancient Maya civilization flourishing here, while elsewhere in the Central Lowlands it flickered out.

DAVID M. PENDERGAST  
*Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto*

## General Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America

From December 28-30, 1976, about two thousand people convened at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City to attend the joint annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America and the American Philological Association. Five sessions (four double), were devoted to the reading of 114 papers, including site reports and discussions of current archaeological research. Special groups, committees and school councils met throughout the three days.

The meeting was highlighted by a series of impressive panels and guest speakers. A special symposium, *Europe and the Mediterranean*, chaired by G. Kenneth Sams of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, examined the relationship of the Mediterranean world, and of Greece in particular, with central Europe and Celtic culture during the seventh through third centuries B.C. *Recent Approaches to New World Archaeology: Material for a Dialogue with Old World Archaeologists?*, moderated by Michael Jameson of Stanford University, presented new approaches to the study of the Inca, Maya and Moche peoples of Central and South America. Both of these programs reflect the AIA's commitment to archaeology throughout the world.

Two extraordinary speakers came from Europe to report on their excavations to

the congregants as a whole. Paolo Matthiae of the University of Rome discussed his sensational findings at the ancient kingdom of Ebla in northern Syria in a lecture entitled, *The Royal Palace and State Archives of Ebla: New Light on the Ancient Near East in the Third Millennium*. Christos Doumas, Ephor (Director) of Antiquities of the Dodecanese and Director of Excavations at Thera, spoke on *Works and Days in Bronze Age Thera*. Doumas' appearance initiates a new AIA program of bringing representatives of foreign archaeological services into contact with American archaeologists. He spoke at the banquet after Frederick R. Matson, President of the Archaeological Institute of America, presented the twelfth annual Award for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement to Lucy Shoe Meritt, preeminent scholar, editor and teacher of Classical Archaeology. The citation and reply appear on pages 74-75.

A film festival in which 17 movies on archaeological themes and a continuous program on Science in Archaeology were presented. In the latter, eight prominent scientists spoke extensively on new techniques expected to be useful in archaeological research. Cooperation with various nearby institutions expanded an already crowded schedule. The Jewish Museum had an exhibit entitled

*The Book and the Spade: Archaeology and the Bible*; the Metropolitan Museum of Art presented a lecture on the *Re-installation of the Metropolitan's Egyptian Collection, Phase I*, by Christine Lilyquist, Curator of the Egyptian Section. The Pierpont Morgan Library sponsored a series of lectures on the art of Ancient seal engraving by three distinguished foreign scholars: John Boardman of Oxford University spoke on *Greek Gem Engravers, their Subjects and Style*; Pierre Amiet of the Louvre Museum on *L'épanouissement de la glyptique mésopotamienne: Le répertoire mythologique d'Agadé, ca. 2340-2180 av. J.-C.*; and Nimet Özgü of Ankara University on *Seal Impressions from the Palaces of Acemhoyuk near Aksaray (Turkey) ca. 1850-1700 B.C.* AIA members were also invited to a reception in their honor at the Brooklyn Museum on the afternoon of December 29.

Elections for officers by the Council of the Archaeological Institute of America had the following results: President, Robert H. Dyson, Jr., University of Pennsylvania; Vice-President, Claireve Grandjouan, Hunter College; Treasurer, Edward Glassmeyer and General Secretary, Elizabeth Whitehead. The next meeting of the AIA will be held December 28-30, 1977 in Atlanta at the Hilton Hotel.

### Symposium on Greek Dark Ages

The New York Society of the Archaeological Institute of America and Hunter College in New York City will present a symposium on the Dark Ages of Greece on April 30, 1977, at Hunter College. The program will deal with the period of profound change that marked the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age in Greece.

The Society received a \$1000 Grant from the AIA's Regional Symposia Program. Kyriakos Nicolaou of the Cyprus Museum will speak on *The Origins of Greek Geometric Pottery and Questions of Continuity*. Other papers will be presented by Günter Kopcke, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University; Jeremy Rutter, University of California at Berkeley; Paul Wallace, State University of New York at Albany; and Frederick A. Winter, Hunter College. Discussants will

be Claireve Grandjouan, Hunter College, and Evelyn Lord Smithson, State University of New York at Buffalo. Papers, with photographs, will be available for purchase at the symposium, and after from the AIA, 260 West Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013, for \$3.75.

For further information contact: Holly Pittman, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue at 82 Street, New York, NY 10028, (212) 879-5500, X 510.