

# Mayan Esteem Project Report

**Eric Samson, Director**  
**Summer 2001 Vol. 3, no. 1**

The Mayan Esteem Project spent the 2001 field season mapping sites in Chilón, Chiapas, Mexico for the National Institute of Anthropology and History of Mexico (INAH) proposal. Several goals to submit this proposal have passed while we wait to find a Mexican archaeologist willing to sign on for the life of the project. We have several good prospects for this position but must wait for essentials like money for salaries and completion of educational degrees. Composition and compilation of the proposal packet continues.



A monument from a private collection from Bolon Kin, Chilón, Chiapas - brown sandstone, approximately 125 cm X 50 cm.

The focus has changed for the initial phase of the INAH proposal. What is probably a Late Classic to Post Classic site named Bolon Kin just west of Chilón has emerged. Bolon Kin is less disturbed than the site at

Na Choj', Natenzun and Muktenah just east of Chilón. Bolon Kin ("Jaguar Festival" in Tzeltal) has had some looting excavations but these are minimal and have been filled. At right is a photograph of a looted monument from the site in a private collection in Chilón. Depicted are a rabbit (top-center foreground) and either a deer or a peccary (top-left). Some experts have said the monument probably dates from the Late Classic, however extant painted text on stucco (no photo available) seems to indicate a Post Classical site. There may be a problem with the reported provenience of the monument.

Thank you to the owners of the land where the ruins of Bolon Kin lie, Rita Ortega Vda. Constantio and Herman Yute, for permission to measure, post signs to respect the ruins and to fill the looters excavations. Thank you also to Moctézuma Molina Diaz for accompanying us to the ruins and to his wife, Conche Constantino for her help with communication.

Chilón is rich in ancient Mayan architecture with four separate sites having been reported thus far within a 10km radius of the town center. The INAH proposal will include phases for exploration of each site. Another important part of the INAH proposal is a cultural center and museum. A museum will serve to house important artifacts as they are discovered. We are asking INAH for an amnesty period for Chiloneros to donate artifacts in their possession to begin a collection for a public museum and to document artifacts that would otherwise be lost to the archaeological record.

Welcome to Mardi Mitchell, an architect from Galveston, Texas, who has joined the Mayan Esteem Project as head of the mapping and rendering projects necessary for the INAH proposal. Her former work as an architect has included residential, recreational and museum space. Her commitment to the Mayan Esteem Project is greatly appreciated.

Mary Robison has supplied a copy of Gertrude DUBY Blom's notes on her visit to the ruins at Natenzun in October of 1958. Robison is a doctoral candidate in archeology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and spent the 2000 field season scanning DUBY Blom's notes at Na Bolom in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. DUBY Blom's entry with little functional editing from the trip by her and her husband, Franz Blom:

Trip to Chilón from the 7th to the 8th of Oct. 1958

Luna had invited me to go more than 2 weeks before I could start and before the ruins were publicized all over the place. The destruction had already taken place then. Everybody accuses everybody for the looting. I decided to go to the presidencia and ask them to come with me. The presidente Isidor Jimenez, newly installed, offered to go with me together with the comandante de policia. That suited me alright. We started out at 7 in the morning and after reaching the Puente de salida [bridge of exit] we had picked up some more people and we started to climb the cerre [cerro: hill]. We were some 20 people climbing up. It took us from the puente to the point where one leaves the carretera [road] to climb to the ruins 40 minutes going quite fast. It is possible to drive to that point and then to ride up on horses to the ruins. We went on foot and it took us another 40 minutes quite fast again. Very soon the first construction stones can be seen. Pretty soon retention walls some in good state. The way up goes through pine and oak forest and there is a lot of undergrowth.

The cerro de Nahtomtzum (the people say it means Cerro de Borrage [Borrego?: lamb] but surely carro de Venado [deer]) can be seen clearly from the road and it has a shape of a piramide. The cerro becomes narrower as one climbs and the top is quite narrow. There the worst destruction took place. Before reaching the top somebody also was making an enormous hole.

The lajas [slabs] of the top were taken away it seems, big holes were dug, monuments smashed to pieces or scratched off. A big deep hole goes into a tumba which seems to me in crossform. There was a ascelet [sic] they say not there anymore. One narrow low room of the tombs is painted in bold forms black and red on white stucco but badly scratched. They say it was a venado maybe it still can be made out having a good flashlight to light it up. They say that carloads were taken in to Yajalón, but lots of pieces of smashed up stucco decorations are piled on a heap and also scattered around, some were flung down the mountain.

We went then, tumbling down the side of the piramide, almost straight down, holding on long grass, crossed a milpa [field] and went the cerro called Muctana (Casa enterrada [buried house]). That cerro is not so high but much more space, larger and long and walls everywhere. Some digging was done there too but it seems years ago. Not recently. It is difficult to see much there as the undergrowth is very thick. To the [blank - probably south] is the cerro called Na Cho (casa del tigre), as high as Na tom Tzum and is

another high peaked cerro (do not know name on both seem to be walls I was not up there. I had very little money and could not risk to stay another night in Chilón or take a special car to Yajalón. The Indians go up there to burn velas [candles].

Un tal [a certain] Alfonso Jimenez is accused to have done the most destructive job up there. He is from Chilón. The people from Chilón accuse the subalterno [subordinate] de Hacienda from Yajalón to have taken away lots of things but it seems he went there to protect the ruins from further destruction and keeps the things locked up in his oficina.

A stele previously reported (Mayan Esteem Project Report, Vol. 3, no. 1) to be from Tila is probably originally from Palenque. The stele is currently at the Cathedral of San Geronimo in

Bachajón, Chiapas. Apparently the stele was gifted to a former governor of Chiapas and was at his residence in Tila and then donated to the cathedral in Bachajón. The damaged emblem glyph (in detail below with a photo of the complete stele at right) shows enough detail to suppose it could be from Palenque.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2000 Modern Mayan Artists drawing contest and to all the participants who showed great artistic ability. Students were asked to draw the Mayan ruins of Chilón as they imagined they were when people still lived and worked at the known Mayan sites. Three bilingual (Spanish and Tzeltal) elementary schools from Chilón participated in the contest. Each student received a premium for their participation and grand prizes were awarded to age categories from six to twelve (and up).

Winners from Venustiano Carranza Elementary School were Angelina Moreno Hernandez, age 6; Micaela Hernandez Silvano, age 7; Pedro Hernandez Moreno, age 8; Patricia Hernandez Gomez, age 9; Jeronimo Ernandes Albero, age 10; Manuela Hernandez Silvano, age 11; Luis Fernando Alvero Gusman, age 13. From Emiliano Zapata Elementary School the winners were Visento, age 6; Benancio Alfonso Jimenez Moreno, age 7; Maria Elena Hernandez Jimenez, age 8; Juan Raul Jimenez Aguilar, age 9; Martin Benjamin Jimenez Demeza, age 10; Benjamin Hernandez Jimenez, age 11; Elias Demesa Jimenes, age 13. And winners from Fray Bartolome de las Casas Elementary School were Juan Carlos Diaz Sanchez, age 7; Juan Nicolas Maldonado, age 8; Jose Guadalupe Peres, age 9; Javier Alvano Mendes, age 10; Roselia Perez Mendez, age 12; Juan Perez Jimenez, age 13; Jose Alvaro Vazquez, age 13.

All of the drawings were exhibited at the Texas Memorial Museum of Science and History during the month of March, 2001. Students agreed that their art works could be sold to support the Mayan Esteem Project and enough money was made to pay for our web page hosting for over a year thanks to those that bought art work. Special thanks to Thunder Cloud Subs, H.E.B., Texas French Bread and El Milagro Tortilla Factory for their contributions of food for the opening reception and to Mrs. Susan Harwood for the printing of the exhibit announcements. Many thanks also to Bent Lyles and the Texas Memorial Museum staff for hosting the exhibit and for their support and help.



The Mayan Esteem Project extended the art contest again this field season to visit more rural schools in the designated region within 10km of the center of Chilón. Eight schools participated in the contest this year, some with as few as eight students and some with as many as 85. The works will be exhibited at a yet to be determined space during the Maya Meetings in March 2002. There are still more schools that have not been served by the art contest and we hope to continue this educational program next year. Thank you to Archaeology Magazine and advertising director Charlene Sugihara for supplying the prizes

for the contests for the past three years. And thank you to Dulce Maria Beltran Sanchez, director of the Casa de la Cultura in Chilón and her staff for their cooperation in conducting the art contest each year.

We had the opportunity to give a presentation about the Mayan Esteem Project to a nonprofit organization registered as the Comité de Solidaridad del Municipio de Chilón in June, 2001. Thanks to Adan Trujillo Hernandez for inviting us. The director of the Mayan Esteem Project is available to give presentations to interested groups.

A special thank you to Sebastián Encino Gutiérrez, the president of Chilón, for his help these past three years. We wish him luck after he leaves office this October. And good luck to the new candidates.

Thank you to engineer Miguel Perez Gomez for his help in measuring the ruins and continued thanks to webmaster, Amanda Krebs for her maintenance of our web page.

The Better Business Bureau of Central Texas has listed the Mayan Esteem Project on its web page of nonprofit organizations. As a US IRS 501 (c) (3) organization your contributions are welcome and give you the benefit of a charitable tax deduction in the US. Please use the contact information below if you are interested in making a contribution.

The Mayan Esteem Project's application for City of Austin Cultural Contracts funding for 2001 was denied for the second time. We will not reapply in the near future.

The Mayan Esteem Project held its third annual Oversight Board meeting in December 2000. A bad ice storm prevented half of the board from attending. In attendance were Carol Hayman and Scott Henson. Discussion consisted mostly of finding grant opportunities.

What follows is a balance sheet for the year 2000. The Mayan Esteem Project will not be required to make financial filings with the IRS until there are revenues greater than \$25,000 per year. We are currently looking for an accountant to audit our books for the purpose of grant applications.

2000

Expenditures.....	\$3,360.80
Revenues.....	..\$2,000.00
Total.....	-\$1,360.80