

indications that the individual, who was probably around 40 years of age at death, 1.70 m tall and of robust (if not corpulent) build, may have been a woman. Apart from negative evidence, such as the lack of the otherwise ubiquitous stingray spines used on the penis in autosacrifice, there is the fact that, among the burial offerings, which include food and drink, a bone *malacate* (spindle-whorl) had been placed on the tomb slab. Two women are known to have ruled over Palenque, Kanal-Ikal and her granddaughter Zac-Kuk, and it is hoped that DNA, physical and chemical analyses (incl. C14) of the bones, a study of the glyphic texts, and an examination of the burial offerings will aid the identification. Four years of study are planned at this time.

Fourth volume of "The Maya Vase Book" published

NEW YORK (J. Kerr). Volume 4 of Justin Kerr's "The Maya Vase Book: A Corpus of Rollout Photographs of Maya Vases" is to appear on 1 September, 1994. These photos present a cylindrical object, such as a vase, as a flattened single image, enabling the viewer to see the entire surface of the cylinder. Volume 4 contains rollout photos of 125 vases, but with only 15 pages in full colour. The book, priced at US \$45, is 183 pages in length and wire-bound for ease of copying. The new volume, which has an essay by Karl Taube on the birth iconography found on an unusual rectangular polychrome vase, and a dictionary of Maya hieroglyphs attested on the ceramics compiled by Nikolai Grube and Werner Nahm, can be ordered from Kerr Associates, 14 West 17 St., New York, NY 10011.

Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc. founded

CRYSTAL RIVER (S. N. Bardsley). The foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc. was formed in 1993 to foster increased understanding of ancient Mesoamerican culture. The goal of the foundation is to support research in art history, archaeology, anthropology, epigraphy, linguistics, sociology and other related fields focussing on precolumbian Mesoamerica.

The foundation is located in Crystal River, Florida, and involves three major departments: the Granting Facility, the Research Facility, and the Conference Facility. The Conference Facility is arranged to accommodate small study sessions. The Research Facility consists of a comprehensive Mesoamerica-oriented library, a privately owned precolumbian art collection, and individual offices for scholars. The Foundation Granting Facility is funded by an endowment for research grants determined annually by a grant application competition. The research grants are not restricted to investigations conducted only at the Foundation premises.

The Foundation Facilities are intended to provide recent college graduates, master's and doctoral candidates, and active professionals with opportunities for scholarly contributions to the advancement of Mesoamerican studies. Projects may include field work, library research, writing support, special projects in the social sciences, art history, humanities, or a combination of these. Along with opportunities for intellectual and professional growth, the Foundation's intent is to encourage cross-cultural interaction and mutual understanding on a person-to-person basis in an atmosphere of academic integrity and intellectual freedom. For more infor-

mation, contact: Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc., 268 South Suncoast Boulevard, Crystal River, Florida 34429, Fax: (904) 795-1970.

The Original Maya Cylinder Vase?

SAN FRANCISCO (Karen Olsen Bruhns). It is known that numbers of Native American ceramic forms have been derived from non-ceramic prototypes. The best known (and earliest?) is the *tecomate*, modeled after a globular gourd container which is still used in much of Latin America for tortillas, seeds, etc. In both Mesoamerica and South America various bowl shapes also appear to have been modelled after gourds, as do numbers of bottle and jar forms. Non-ceramic prototypes are not all strictly natural objects. The Teotihuacan signature vessel, a cylindrical tripod topped with a conical lid and characteristic ball- and tuft- knob, was apparently originally a basketry container. The origin of other cylindrical vases, especially the variations on the cylinder shape that are characteristic of the Classic Maya, has not really been considered. I suggest that this shape too has a non-ceramic prototype.

While visiting the site of El Tazumal in western El Salvador in the summer of 1993, I entered one of the tourist shops that ring the pyramid to look at the current crop of archaeological replicas made in the region. These replicas include many cylinder vases, generally painted in fairly crude imitations of the Late Classic copador style found throughout the region. On a shelf in one of these shops I saw a line of cylinder vases, some painted in modern copador style, others painted with garish scenes of wildlife and inscriptions in the current Maya script (and featuring abundant use of Maya blue paint!) (Fig. 1). These latter vessels were not ceramic but were rather formed of sections of the giant bamboo (probably *Gynerium saccharoides*). They were of different heights and diameters, but all approximate the dimensions of both modern and Precolumbian ceramic cylinder vessels. The bamboo vases are watertight, although I have not seen them in common use as gourd vessels of various kinds, perhaps because humble drinking containers are now plastic bags with a straw stuck in them. When cut at the joint these bamboo vessels can have either a flat base or they can be cut so that the base has a slight bulbous flare and a sort of low ring. These treatments are also seen on Maya cylinder vases. Given the size and shape congruencies of the bamboo cylinders and those of ceramic and the propensity of people to model ceramic forms upon those of natural containers, it is tempting to look at these bamboo vases as being the original model for what was to become the most characteristic form of Late Classic Maya ceramics.



Fig. 11. Shelf in a tourist shop in Chalchuapa, El Salvador. The four vases on the left and the one on the right end of the shelf are modern replicas of Maya cylinder vases. The six cylinders in the centre are of bamboo.