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The Lunacy Behind the Mayan Aliens Story

On November 30, 2013 the internet churned out dozens of copied articles entitled "Mexican Government Releases Proof of E.T.'s and Ancient Space Travel". The original article was posted by intellihub.com along with some over the top photos like the one shown here to the right. We at MEC are used to tracking down the origins of odd stories like this, but this one got weirder than usual.

Tracking the story down led to a first article posted by Reuters on August 17th, back in 2011. Its title was "Maya Secrets to be Revealed by Mexican Government in "2012" Doc". As it turns out, that "doc" was a planned documentary from Raul Julia-Levy, son of the famous actor Raul Julia. At first Julia-Levy said he could not talk about the secrets, but then on September 26, 2011 Reuters posted a second interview in which he said "Mexico will release codices, artifacts, and significant documents with evidence of Mayan and extraterrestrial contact, and all of their information will be corroborated by archaeologists". Luis Augusto Garcia Rosado, the Minister of Tourism for the State of Campeche, was quoted in that same article to say, "New evidence has emerged of contact between the Mayans and extraterrestrials, supported by translations of certain codices which the government has kept in secure underground vaults for some time". Garcia Rosado also mentioned "landing pads in the jungle that are 3000 years old".



Artifact said to be from Calakmul depicting an alien being beamed into a spaceship

Subsequent articles revealed that the "evidence" was found at the ancient Maya city of Calakmul and that the documentary was to be called "Revelations of the Mayans - 2012 and Beyond". Filming began in March of 2012, but by summer it was stalled due to a dispute between Julia-Levy and executive producer Elisabeth Thieriot. Julia-Levy accused her of running off with the footage and said she was wanted by the Mexican government for stealing state secrets. Thieriot countered that Julia-Levy had misled her, breached his contract with her,

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Letter from the Director



MEC had a great year. Our education programs were well attended, our research advanced nicely and our public lectures

projects and the latest discoveries in human evolution. I'm particularly happy to include a piece from Dr. Gerardo Aldana about his innovative new forum on Maya astronomy. Last but not least, this ArchaeoMaya introduces my new app - "Tulum - Be Your Own Guide". I'm hopeful that it will become a powerful new tool to promote education about Maya civilization.

As I sit at my desk in Austin writing this letter, I'm happy to be looking back at one of MEC's better and more productive years. November marked 10 years for MEC as a non-profit research and education institution. During that decade we've led over 100 study abroad programs, not just in the mundo Maya, but all over the world. We've made an impact on thousands of lives, not just students and enthusiasts, but also the indigenous communities we've supported along the way. I look forward to continuing our good work in 2014 and hope that you, the members of the MEC community, will join us in exploring, appreciating and preserving our ancient heritage.

So, 2013 is done. As this newsletter goes out on the day of winter solstice, I begin a well-deserved break with my children and lovely wife Cassandra. Wherever this newsletter finds you, I hope you too are relaxing with family and friends. Until next year, best regards and thanks from all of us at MEC.

Happy Holidays,

were enjoyed by 100's of people. We had student groups of all types and from as far away as Taiwan. Our first ever Palenque to Copan trip was fraught with road closures, heavy rains and illness but turned out to be a memorable adventure all the same. Christopher Powell led an exciting trip to Belize and Guatemala this month for our continuing partnership with Crow Canyon Archaeological Foundation, a relationship we are proud to be in. My Teaching Company Great Courses series of lectures "Lost Worlds of South America" has been very well received this year and attracts many new people to MEC. In part because of its success, the Teaching Company has contracted me to create another series, this time on Mesoamerica. It's a challenge to create so many lectures, but I'm enjoying the opportunity to research all the latest discoveries and advances in the field.

We start this edition of ArchaeoMaya with a bit of fun - getting to the bottom of the latest claims of Maya - alien contact. One of these days maybe one of us will dig up a space ship, but until then we will have to keep on crediting the Maya with their own impressive achievements. Also in this edition, we explain the republican agenda to end support for international research pro-

The Mayan Hieroglyphic Astronomy Collaboratory

MAYAN HIEROGLYPHIC ASTRONOMY



An Invitation letter from UC Santa Barbara Professor Dr. Gerardo Aldana:

Over the history of Maya Archaeology some very notable figures coming from outside the field have had substantial impacts on it. Tatiana Proskouriakoff was trained as an artist before she received an invitation to work at Piedras Negras. John Teeple was a chemical engineer, but found that he had extensive amounts of free time to puzzle over Mayan astronomical records while he traveled back and forth across the U.S. by train. These and other scholars found their way into Maya archaeology through personal and/or professional connections.

Today we have new forms of communications, which carry the potential to create more inclusive intellectual spaces. At the same time, though, these mass media venues carry significant risks, perhaps most poignantly exemplified by "2012."

The Mayan Hieroglyphic Astronomy Collaboratory is an attempt to develop an inclusive online community allowing for multiple voices to be heard, but still operating within the scope of rigorous academic scholarship. The hallmark of such rigor is peer review—in this case, though, that review will be conducted in an open and transparent environment. And while ideas can be discussed freely within the Discussion Groups of the site, two specific vehicles will drive the project: the Working Papers and the Notes.

Once these essays are posted on the web site, members of the Discussion Groups can take up the individual themes and points within them. An essay on architectural alignments, for example, might raise questions about the methods used by ancient Mayans to produce them. These questions can be debated within the Discussion Forum on Methods independently of the statistical or ethnohistoric evidence used in other parts of the essay. In this way, essays can be vetted transparently, and an article doesn't have to be judged in a thumbs-up or -down fashion. Some parts might turn out to be extremely productive, while other parts may fall by the wayside. In either case, the resulting argument can be revised and then submitted to a traditional venue for formal publication. Along the way, however, a community will begin taking shape around a shared set of assumptions, methods, and objectives.

We invite interested students of Mesoamerican astronomies to join the virtual Collaboratory by subscribing to the Discussion Groups and/or submitting Working Papers or Notes.

<https://sites.google.com/site/glyphastro/>

The Lunacy Behind... (continued from Page 1)

and had failed to produce any creditable evidence of E.T. contact.

The film was derailed and was not produced before its target date of December 2012. In January of 2013 an arbitration hearing conducted by the Independent Film and Television Alliance ruled in favor of Thieriot, concluding that Julia-Levy had fraudulently induced Thieriot into the operating agreement. They also discovered that the Mexican government had never raised concerns about Thieriot as Julia-Levy had claimed.



Another of Julia-Levy's fabricated artifacts showing spaceships and astronauts

Digging further into Raul Julia-Levy's life reveals that these were just a few of his lies and deceptions. As it turns out, he's probably not even Raul Julia's son. Julia's widow announced in 2005 that a con-man named Salvador Alba Fuentes was posing as his son in order to make connections in Hollywood. Julia-Levy responded by saying that Julia had been with his mother in Cuba, but that he promised her not to provide the details of their relationship. Then in 2007, Julia-Levy had been called to testify in the murder trial of Phil Spector, the record producer mogul who killed his girlfriend actress Lana Clarkson at his California home in 2003. Julia-Levy was then rejected as a witness after a background check discovered that he had used fake names, fake social security numbers, and had lied about attending Harvard and USC.

So why is the "Mexican Government Releases Proof of E.T.'s" back in the news? Because Julia-Levy (if that's even his real name) has regained the rights to his film and is back in production. As for his claims about the Mexican government, INAH has yet to even acknowledge them. Thieriot has announced that she will produce her own documentary – one exposing Julia-Levy's lies and about how con-artists like him work the aliens angle to attract media attention. She also plans to lambast media outlets like Reuters and the Guardian for failing to do the proper research before publishing sensational stories. So, in the end, it appears we will have to continue crediting the Maya themselves with their incredible achievements, not the E.T.s.

Pillars of the Classic Maya: Palenque to Copan

February 21 - March 2, 2014

Led by Dr. David Hixson, this tour will begin in Palenque and go by land, river and rainforests all the way to Copan in Honduras.

<http://www.mayaexploration.org/tours.php>



Congress Takes a Swing at Maya Archaeology

Congressional republicans Eric Cantor of Virginia and Lamar Smith of Texas have been leading a call for tighter control of the National Science Foundation's funding. They question the research priorities of the NSF and seek to defund any projects that fail to provide a "demonstrated return on investment". As a specific example, they stated, "Congress is right to ask why NSF chooses to fund research on Mayan architecture over projects that could help our wounded warriors save lives".

In an excellent rebuttal, Society for Historical Archaeology President Paul Mullins wrote in the Huffington Post, "Their apparently reasonable claim for fiscal sobriety conceals their skepticism about the value of social science, and it underscores an anti-scholarly agenda that aspires to erode the nation's longstanding commitment to science." He went on to point out that archaeological research currently represents a meager 0.1 percent of NSF's sequestered and shrinking budget.

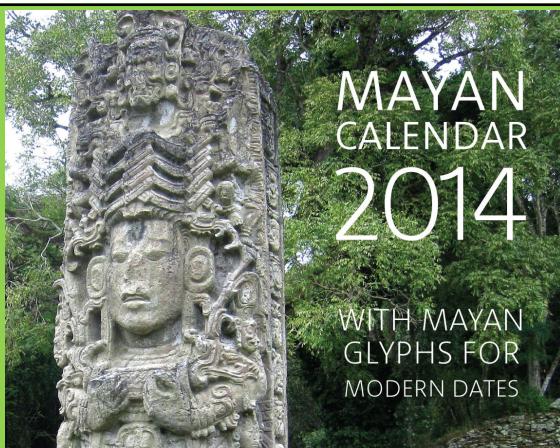
Lamar's bill, the High Quality Research Act, not only targets social science for eradication from the NSF, but it also has a distinctly isolationist bent. The bill's new three point criteria for funding approval states first and foremost that a project must be "in the interests of the United States to advance the national health, prosperity, or welfare, and to secure the national defense". In other words, any and all projects focused anywhere outside the USA would be rejected.



Republican Representative Lamar Smith of Texas

Currently, proposals submitted to NSF are evaluated through a traditional peer-review process in which scientists and experts with knowledge of the relevant fields evaluate the project's intellectual merits and broader impacts. Lamar's bill proposes to add a congressional oversight review, one that could trump the opinions of peer-review.

If the High Quality Research Act passes, it will spell the end of all the international goodwill that NSF funded projects have engendered over the years. Luckily for Maya archaeology, NSF is not our only source for project funding. Their 7 billion dollar annual budget will be dwarfed by the over 150 billion dollars of private funding projected to be given to science in 2014.



The 2014 Mayan Calendar - Mayan Glyphs for Modern Dates

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News From the Field

400,000 Year Old Fossil DNA

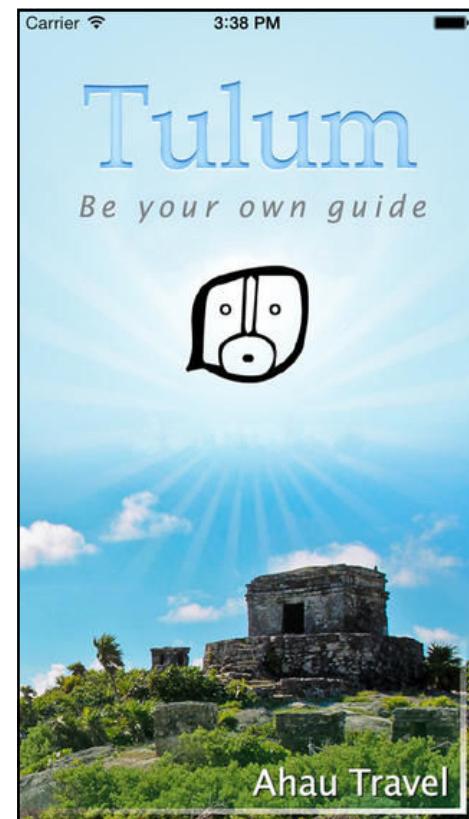
In the last issue of *Nature*, scientist announced the successful extraction of DNA from a 400,000 year old human thigh bone. Before this extraction, the oldest DNA recovered was 100,000 years old and came from a Neanderthal. The bone was recovered from a cave in Spain and archaeologist Juan Luis Arsuaga expected it to be an early ancestor of Neanderthal. But to his surprise, it was genetically matched to a lineage of humans named Denisovans. The only other discovery of Denisovans came from an 80,000 year old specimen found in Siberia. How did this distinctly different early human get so deep into Neanderthal territory? The find has scientists rethinking the whole story of evolution and human migration.

Siberian Ancestors of Native Americans Discovered

DNA extracted from a 24,000 year skeleton found in Southern Siberia has provided the missing clue to the origins of Native American genetics. To the surprise of the Danish research team, the individual was not of East Asian descent like the area's current population, but instead shared genetic similarities to modern populations in Western Eurasia. More importantly, he also had significant genetic connections to modern Native Americans. It's been known for some time now that Native Americans had partial East Asia ancestry, but where was their other DNA from? This new study suggests that Western Eurasian people lived in Siberia in the distance past and interbred with East Asians. Those people then crossed Beringia and became the genetically distinct first Americans.

Tulum – Be Your Own Guide

After over a year in development, Dr. Barnhart's iPhone app "Tulum – Be Your Own Guide" is complete and on sale through Apple's online Appstore. It's the first of its kind and has the potential to revolutionize how people visit archaeological sites. It works somewhat like a museum audio tour, but its GPS navigation capabilities allow its users to go anywhere in the site in any order. The "what is that" function allows them to point their phone at any building to receive information about it. The "take me there" function allows them to choose from a list of site features and to be guided there. As the user walks toward their destination, a navigation arrow keeps them on course and the distance in meters reduces. Once they arrive, information is provided in both text and audio file. Photos confirm they're in the right place.



"Tulum – Be Your Own Guide" is not only a self-guiding tour tool, but it's also the most complete source of Tulum information ever compiled. The site's chronology, temples, and excavations history are all available in both text and audio accompanied by many photos and drawings. Even if one has no plans to visit Tulum, it stands alone as a scholarly publication about the site.

It's the first app of its kind, but hopefully not the last. Plans to make more "Be Your Own Guide" apps are already being drafted by Dr. Barnhart, but he's looking for reviews and constructive criticism to improve this first one. Please download it from the Apple Appstore and give him your feedback.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tulum-be-your-own-guide/id731412870?mt=8>



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