

The Aztlander

Communicating the Americas

The Discovery of the
Tomb of the Jade Jaguar
with Nicholas Hellmuth
September 19



Vol. 2, No. 9
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Together,
we have you
covered...
Enjoy!

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Welcome to *The Aztlander* !

Jam-packed with Scholarly Focus articles and up-coming zoom and in-person events!

The Aztlander is a free-flowing, hyperactive on-line publication designed with you in mind. Easy-to-read, with no formal contents; our cover design and highlight color will change each month. We welcome your feedback, comments, and suggestions!

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Greetings Aztlanders!

Welcome to your August issue of *The Aztlander*. We have a lot of cool stuff to read and zooms we're announcing to keep you busy through the hot months!

Monday, September 19 • 7 PM CST • 8 PM EST

Our **September** zoom event will feature **Nicholas Hellmuth** with a program titled:

“The Tomb of the Jade Jaguar”

Dr. Nicholas M. Hellmuth had beginner's luck to discover one of the most richly stocked royal burials of the entire ancient Maya realm. He accomplished this while still a student at Harvard, while working on the University of Pennsylvania archaeological project at Tikal, Guatemala. It is rare that an archaeologist has an opportunity to find the burial chamber of one of the great kings of an ancient civilization. *This will be really special!*

On September 19, 2022, Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth will present a lecture, in English, on the Tomb of the Jade Jaguar, Burial 196, Tikal Structure 5D-73. This became the subject of his Harvard undergraduate thesis back in the 1960s. The PDF version is several hundred pages long and available as a download on www.Maya-archaeology.org. The lecture is now updated with fresh information and lots of photographs inside and outside the royal burial.

“The presentation will discuss archaeology and architecture (how the royal tomb was built stage-by-stage; then how the pyramid was constructed terrace-by-terrace). Curiously, this pyramid had no temple on the top, but the architecture of the terraces is identical to the architecture of the terraces of Temple I (only Str. 5D-73 has 5 terraces; Temple I has 9). The contents of the Burial 196 are nearly identical to contents of Ruler A's burial under Temple I. Thus, I estimate the occupant of the Tomb of the Jade Jaguar was a brother or son of Ruler A. Why was there no temple on top of the pyramid? It is facing Temple II (at the west end of the Central Acropolis, but one meter outside the acropolis, on the level of the main plaza).

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A photograph by Nicholas Hellmuth of the contents of the burial, occupant, a jade sculpture in the shape of a jaguar, spondylus shells, and ceramics. A splendid royal burial indeed.

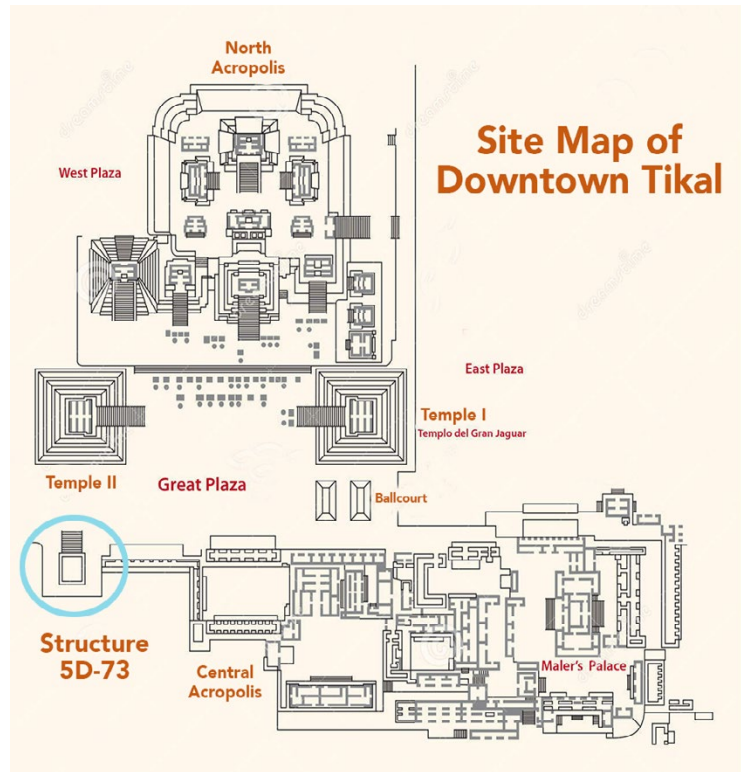


Aztlander Scholarly Focus: Nicholas Hellmuth*

“The Tomb of the Jade Jaguar” *cont. from the previous page*

“The presentation will show all the polychrome vases including one of a man smoking a cigar. One vase had cacao-sized seeds inside (so not liquid cacao but also the seeds). The photographs will show a series of about a dozen incised vases, all same style (same color, same material) but each scene is literally copied by another person from the previous vase. The original scene is in Tikal Temple I, Burial 116; all the copies are across the plaza in Burial 196. Some are clearly incised by people who were not artists whatsoever. We will then show the same for Tikal burial polychrome ceramics: some are painted by people who were not artists. I estimate this has not been discussed in type-variety archaeological reports on ceramics of Tikal.

“The slides taken in 1965 are in perfectly preserved color and we will show the penis perforators (two of them). The royal personage was buried with a special outfit used specifically and only for penis perforation rituals (did he get infected from too many such ceremonies



Tikal site map showing the location of Structure 5D-73, on one edge of the Great Plaza, to the side of Temple II.



Tikal Structure 5D-73 prior to excavation. Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth.

and died?). He also had a jaguar pelt cloak and a headdress of what was probably quetzal feathers (obviously nothing but powder remained from having rotted over a thousand years).



A partial view of the array of ceramics within the burial. Photo by Nicholas Hellmuth.

“I estimate that since I was already a photographer at age 19, that this tomb is the literally most photographed royal burial of its era in all of Guatemala’s Peten. Hopefully in today’s digital era, recent excavations have even better and even more thorough photography.”



Check out all there is to view, read, learn, and download at:

www.Maya-Archaeology.org