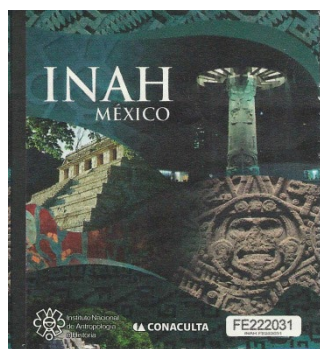


Archeology Conservancy Trip to Tabasco and Chiapas, Mexico  
3/25-4/4/2015

Wednesday, 3/25

Get up and head of airport for 10:30 flight. Get there at 9:00 only to find our flight was at 9:30 and not 10:30. Can't get on the flight. Rebook on flight that gets into Villahermosa at 11:15 pm. Luckily things were cancelled for the evening because of people coming in on late flights. Things went smoothly after a rocky start. Lunch in Atlanta; dinner in Mexico City. On landing, we were graced with a beautiful, complete double rainbow. In Mexico City, our bags were out before the luggage started to arrive (it made the earlier flight even though we didn't). In Villahermosa, our big bag was the second to last one out. Meet Gay in baggage claim. Go out from baggage claim and Jim Walker (whom we knew from our earlier Copan trip) was there to meet us. However, there are no taxis to take us back to hotel. Finally get one. Get to the hotel and to bed at 12:30. Set the alarm for 6:45 am. At least we made it.



Thursday, 3/26 – La Venta/Olmec Day

After breakfast in the hotel (many nice Mexican item for breakfast) went to La Venta. Quite a small site (actually the site was originally quite big, but the cleared area was small and oil exploration and an airstrip for the oil companies destroyed a lot of it). Most of the big sculptures were taken away (we saw them later in the afternoon in Villahermosa). There were reproductions in the part and some originals in the museum. The dominant feature in the park was a large earthen mound (think Cahokia size). We climbed to the top and looked down on plazas on two sides. Sculptures were in basalt (huge rocks and pillars) which came from over 100 km away. The joy of the museum was a figurine group made from green stone. This and many of the other monuments were buried.

From La Venta, we drove back to Villahermosa and got in a huge traffic jam along the way. So large that we were almost too late to go to the archeological park. Arriving a bit more than an hour before closing, we race through. First through the zoo (where we see coatimundis) and then on to the Olmec sculptures. This was a quick tour but we did see stele, heads, altars (thrones?), pillars, and a pillared burial vault that came from La Venta.

Went to dinner with a group and ordered traditional Mexican foods. I had chili rellanos (which the waitress forgot) and Jan had stuffed plantains. Then back to the room.

Friday, 3/27 – Comalcalco

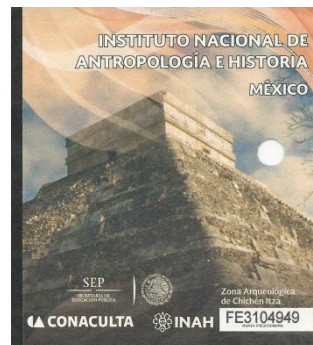
After breakfast, go to Comalcalco, the westernmost Mayan site. It is on the coastal plain with very little rock building material around. The buildings were constructed from clay bricks and mortar. The mortar was made from crushed and burnt shells rather than from limestone (that was used at the other sites). About ½ of the wall material was the mortar which translated to a heck of a lot of shells.

The style of the structures was similar to other Mayan sites though the building materials were different. It was very misty for the entire walk through the ruins.

While we were in the museum, it really rained. Had a sandwich box lunch under a shelter at the park and then back on the bus. The construction traffic jam was not as bad today. Once through it we were off to Palenque.

Go into town for dinner. Select a restaurant right off the plaza. Lots of activity on the plaza on this Friday night. There was a school children talent show going on as we got out of the restaurant. Walked back to the hotel, washed clothes and went to bed.

Did I say it rained? Not hard while we were at Comalcalco, but then it poured while we were having lunch and while we were in the museum.



#### Saturday, 3/28 – Palenque

Up early, breakfast with a huge crowd, and just make the bus in time. Spend more time at the various ticket booths than driving to the site. Get a wonderful local guide in addition to John. Walk through the woods and see various “elite” residences with vaulted ceilings that are distinctly Mayan. Then on to the main plaza with its tall mortuary temples (staircases built into the sides of the hill and the palace. Go into one of the temples to see the sarcophagus of the “red” queen (her burial casket was red with cinnabar). Climb around the palace to see the various plaster works and glyphs. Went to the two higher temple complexes. See spider monkeys and hear howlers. Then off to lunch, a “sit down” affair. Come back to site and walk around the north group. Walk down hill to another elite residence alongside a stream with a waterfall. This residence had a steam bath. (John is really into steam baths.) Get back to the parking lot and hit the gift shop (a guide book and a tee shirt are our purchases). Back to the hotel, shower and then to a lecture. Dinner in the hotel and then back to the room.

#### Sunday March 29 – Bonampak

Up and drive to Bonampak. We have seen the National Geographic renditions of the murals in the magazine and in an exhibition in San Francisco. Murals in a set of three small rooms halfway up the temple staircase. The battle and execution mural is in the center; celebrations of a baby are on both ends. Must find the National Geographic that contains their renditions. Lentils in all the doorways are sculpted on the undersides. In the center of the plaza is a celebration stela of Bonampak’s victor over Palenque. Lunch and drive to the kick off point for the boat ride to Yaxchilan. Find an orchid growing around a tree at the rest stop. No activity after dinner.

#### Monday, March 30 – Yaxchilan

Take boat ride to Yaxchilan. Guide sees crocodile in river but we miss it. There are cormorants along shore. Tour site. Walk in through house at end of plaza. Particularly good lentils and stelae. Son is competing with father building bigger and better buildings are each place. Climb to first temple. Ball

game stucco in front of temple and sculpted lentils over the doors. Statues inside. There is a carved stalactite in front of the temple. Jan spots the same orchid that we saw at the rest stop yesterday growing up in a tree. A very long climb up to the upper acropolis. Jan is pulled quickly up the hill by the guide. More stela and lentils. Then a climb down to a smaller acropolis. A nice courtyard but no sculpture. Climb the rest of the way down and have lunch. Guide decides it is too hot and takes us back up the river. Don spots a crocodile in the water and our guide finds one pulled out along the bank (about the same place he spotted one this morning; his personal crocodile). At the hotel, we rest but are awakened by howler monkeys that are close. Find a male making the noise, two females and a baby on the back of one of the females. Jan comes down and spots a wood pecker in the tree next to the monkeys. Lecture on Mayan calendar before dinner. It is still HOT!

Tuesday, 3/31 – Back to Palenque

Bus ride in the morning, lunch and then a free afternoon. We enjoy it by just walking around the site. It is hot but bearable. Walk up to the temple of the foliated cross. Get a good look back at the other temples and the palace from there. Walk through parts of the palace and then down the trail to the gift shop. Jan gets a tee shirt this time. Take bus back to hotel.



Wednesday, 4/1 – Tonina

Leave hotel at 7:30. Long driving day. Stop at Cascades de Auga Azul and walk along the river viewing the various waterfalls among the vendors. Get back on the bus and head for Tonina. Eat lunch on the bus. Get to the site and walk in (there are horses to ride in if you wanted). Not as hard a climb as Yachilan because we would climb and look, climb and look. Many nice stucco reliefs. On one level are burial crypts like Palenque but not as big. Walk back to museum. Here are the original sculptures. Back on the bus and head for San Cristobal. Eat dinner in hotel and then to bed.

Thursday, 4/2 –San Cristobal

Lecture in the morning about textiles and their production by “Chip”. Walk through central area. He shows us the church and a cloister. Walk through the market in both directions. Go get a big lunch and then we are on our own. Again walk through town. Get a shirt for Randy. Go to the weavers coop and look at shirts. Buy one for Jan. Go through the history museum. See Pre-Columbian collection including some intricate textile fragments. Go upstairs and view modern textiles (mostly blouses) on display and in drawers. Go get a Margareta at El Paridiso (a restaurant that Chip recommended). Randy has two. Forgo dinner and stagger down to the street and take a cab back to the hotel. Go to bed early.

Friday, 4/3 – Good Friday, Modern Maya

Take bus to San Juan Chamula on their feast day. Walk past a cemetery on the way to the market and the central square. Judas dressed as a cowboy is hung by his neck in front of the church. Market is very crowded. Have real trouble just walking through. Navigate to plaza in front of the church. Can't go in...Too long a line. Walk back to bus. On to Zinacanta. Stop first at a weaver's shop. Have hot tortillas and look at textiles. Buy a table runner (which later fades badly in the wash). Go to

square and into church. Very crowded. Officials sitting out in front. Try some of their houch. People both in and out of church in their traditional garb. Judas is also hanging out in front here too. Sit and wait for two hours waiting to watch a procession but nothing happens. Go to hacienda and have a big buffet lunch. Drive to Tuxtla Gutierrez stopping at Chiapa de Corzo along the way. Stop at "famous" fountain which is being restored. The Mormons have a big dig here that goes down to 900 BC. John says that they are doing good archeology despite their religious bent. On to Tuxtla. Our room is hot...air conditioning is out. I stop up toilet and Jan is mad. Go to John's final lecture that sort of gives a historical linear overview of the trip. Hotel changes our room to a slightly cooler one. They give us fans also which really feel good. Air conditioning comes back on in the middle of the night. Go to bed without supper at 9:00.

Saturday, 4/4 – Trip home

We must get up at 4:30 to catch bus at 6:00. We are a bit lucky in two respects: 1) other people had to catch a 4:30 bus for a 6:00 flight and 2) 4:30 here in Mexica is 6:30 in Cincinnati. Get to the bus on time and the airplane leaves early. Have to check carry-on but get to pick it up in Mexico City. Have trouble finding our gate but get there in plenty of time (10:45 for a 2:55 flight). Dinner in Atlanta and home late.



## Group Photo



### Front row (from left)

Mark Michel  
James Mallinson  
Bill Thompson  
Elinor Hobart  
Sudha Newman  
Janet Stoker  
Don Fiero  
Mary Schultz  
Dennis Mahan  
Jane Taylor  
Clif Taylor  
Helga Teiwes  
Don Kucera

### Second row

Marilyn Mallinson  
Nancy Kenmotsu  
Nancy Surdoval  
Bob Newman  
Kathleen Fiero  
Jan Johnson  
Randy Johnson  
Paula Reynosa

### Standing

John Pitts  
Siobhan Hancock  
Gay Walker  
Jim Walker  
Lane Leckman  
John Henderson  
Rosanna Miller  
Ann Wood  
Judith Issacs