

PALENQUE: NEWS & LATEST DISCOVERIES

SUMMER 2001 - EXCERPT

By Merle Greene Robertson

Reconstructing the Mask of the “Red Queen”

Under the direction of Palenque archaeologist Arnoldo González Cruz, restoration expert Juan Alfonso Cruz Becerril is working on the INAH project of restoring the mask of the “Red Queen” from hundreds of pieces of jade and jadeite that comprise it. Photos of the entire tomb area have been blown up to full-scale, showing the placement of every piece. Each piece of jade has been outlined and numbered on the pattern, and when a piece is found that fits, it is placed on the pattern. Infrared photos show overlapping pieces and these are treated in the same way. Fonsi has made a clay model of the head of the interred person, and as he finds where a piece goes he puts a paper piece of the same size on this model. In this way, he will be reconstructing the entire mask in paper on the model first and from there will proceed to put the entire “Mask of the Red Queen” together. What he is doing is truly amazing.

Temple of the Inscriptions Drainage

Arnoldo González and Christopher Powell have just

started an INAH project at Palenque of looking for any water drainage behind the Temple of the Inscriptions that may be going into the tomb. The stairs into the tomb and the tomb itself are very damp. Even in the dry season when it is hot and humid but there is no rain, the stairs to the tomb are wet. However, during the rainy season when one would expect the steps to be wet, they are drier. If no drainage system can be found on the hillside behind the Inscriptions Temple, they intend to build a drainage system that should divert water away from the tomb. The water has to be prevented from coming into the tomb from the outside and collecting behind the stucco sculptured figures on the walls in order to prevent further deterioration.

National Geographic Article

The National Geographic Society is going to devote 20 pages to Palenque in the April 2002 issue of their magazine. Ken Garrett has been at Palenque twice now taking pictures of Palenque and Temples XIX and XX especially for this

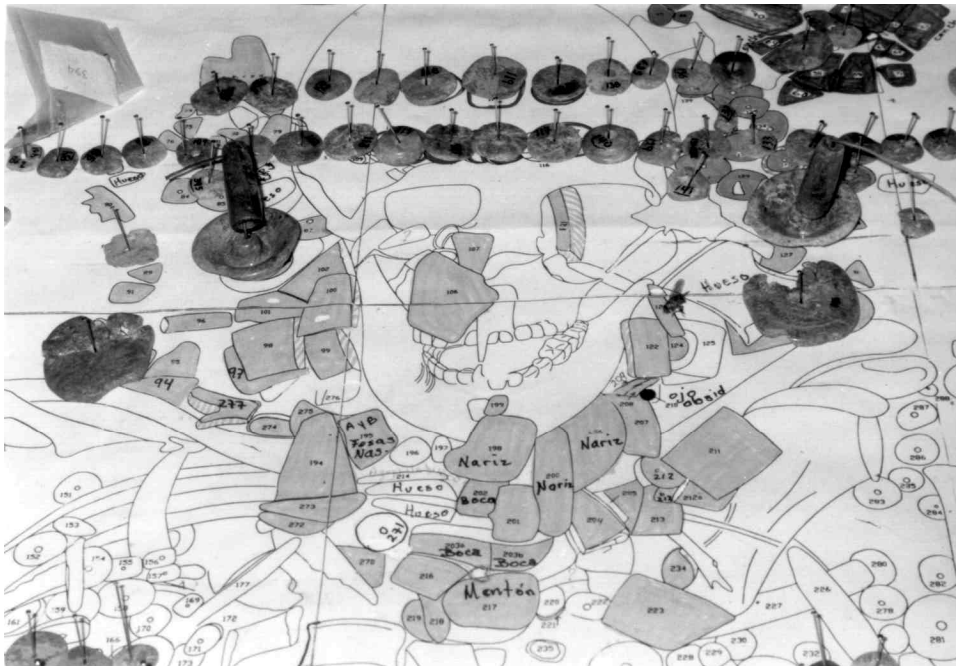


Figure 1: As pieces of jade are found for the Mask of the Red Queen, they are placed on this full-scale pattern.



Figure 2. Alfonso Cruz putting together the mask of the Red Queen.

issue. Jeff Osburn, the NGS Assistant Art Director, was gathering data there also. Kazuhiko Sano is preparing two paintings of activities that could have taken place at Palenque at the time of K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb', the ruler at the time of Temple XIX. He

was interviewing Alfonso Morales and me about dress, hairstyles and other characteristics of the time and place that would be appropriate for the painting.



Figure 3. Marcia Valle assembling additional new fragments for the stucco panel in Temple XIX.