

# PRINCIPAL DIAGNOSTIC ACCESSORIES OF MAYA ENEMA SCENES

by

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(Illustration numbers refer to illustrations of thesis by P. De Smet)

1. **ENEMA JUG:** Furst and Coe were the first to recognize a certain shaped pottery jug as a central feature in the enema ritual (1977). The direct association between jug type and specific ritual comes from the Coe scene and from a second Tepeu 1 jug in a private collection (Hellmuth Photo Archive A-313). None of the three Tzakoi 3 cylindrical tripods which show enema administration include a jug (or any other ceremonial paraphernalia) in the simple scenes (Figs. 44a-b; 45). The two paintings showing the actual enema administration are both on vases of the "enema jug" shape. Five additional vases show jugs of the same shape with enema clysters on top or nearby (Figs. 18b \*\*). These paintings of the definite enema clyster in direct association with a pottery container of a specific shape suggest this type of pot was characteristic of the enema ceremony. More than 100 Classic period pictures of such jugs are now known for Peten and Campeche-Yucatan style paintings. Some throne scenes have two to five jugs, often of varying size.

The shape, not the size, is the distinguishing characteristic. Enema jugs have a neck much narrower than the rim. The neck may either be tall or squat. The top rim is wide and sometimes quite thick. The ratio between the rim, neck, and body dimensions varies widely. The jugs can vary in height from .25 m. to over one meter, holding an estimated 4 to 20 liters (1 to 5 gallons) of liquid if filled. Some enema jugs have handles on the body. Two jugs -- possibly of the enema sort -- on a Chipoc style painting (R. Smith 1952: Fig. 15, h, C.I.W. Contrib. 56) have handles on the neck. Occasional enema jugs are bound with ropes. One Peten

vase and a Peten plate each show a Dance after Decapitation Sacrifice dancer carrying an enema jug with a tumpline (native carrying strap around the forehead holding the jug on the back). One of these scenes includes a clyster (Fig. 35). In a complex jug presentation scene (Hellmuth 1976:rollout Fig. 4 ; not a sacrifice related portrait) two monkeys and a deer-like animal each carry enema jugs on netted tumplines. Enema jugs may be plain, painted with a variety of designs or with a single hieroglyph. Since some enema jugs have round bottoms and thus would have tended to tip over, certain jugs are pictured resting securely in pot. One painting pictures an enema jug with a lid (Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, labeled as being from Honduras).

Once the basic shape of an enema jug is recognized, two can readily be identified from Tikal polychrome vases, one from Temple I's Burial 116; another which I excavated in Burial 196, from Structure 5D-73, the burial of a ruler closely related to Ruler A in Burial 116. Many of the sherds of large jugs found in excavations on the palace floors of Tikal and of Uaxactun, labeled traditionally in technical pottery monographs as "water jugs" or "storage jugs" could in fact have been used in enema rituals. Chemical analysis needs to be done on the residue on the bottoms of excavated jugs.

Several enema scenes picture celebrants drinking next to the same jugs from which the clysters are evidently filled. This fact has led me to recognize that the overall ritual was dedicated to deliberate consumption of large amounts of a certain liquid. Taking an enema was only part of a much longer ceremony. The enema manner of ingestion was used after the celebrant could take no more orally. Thus the jugs which conservative colleagues prefer to term "water jugs" does not rule out their simultaneous utilization in the enema ritual. And, in all those cases where any special use can be determined for these jars, that use is associable with enema clysters. Enema clysters are easy to identify on vases, even

when they are not inserted into anuses (see Trait 3).

Although jugs often seen in the Dresden Codex have the same general shape 8th century enema jugs, no enema symbolism is yet identified in any codex. In the Classic period, smaller, portable jugs, have handles on them and are carried by dancers in the Dance after Decapitation. Such jugs sometimes are decorated with Akbal hieroglyphs. Whether these are portable versions - containing the same essentially alcoholic beverage - as the large enema jug is not yet ascertained. I do not believe they are "copal bags."

2. **"ROW IN JUG TOP"** of unidentified objects sticks out of the top of some enema jugs (Fig. 17). These objects are usually in a parallel row, standing out 2 to 6 inches. They are each about the size of a large, wide, bird plume. These objects are not always rigid; otherwise their constitution is unknown. They may be of cloth, or perhaps even actual plumes. In one instance a pair of stylized "smoke" curls issue from the jug through the row of bars. I postulate that these may be essence bars - leaves or segments of a plant steeping in the watery concoction to add flavor or other chemical essence deemed a necessary ingredient for this apparently potent liquid. There is, though, no proof whatsoever for this hypothesis. Further study of additional examples from private collections is as needed.

Several Yucatan /Campeche region polychrome paintings on low bowls have fat, rounder, nipple-ended objects sticking out from enema jugs. These are either a regional variation or a different substance. It is also possible that these are food solids meant to soak into themselves essence already in the enema jug liquid, so the bar can later be sucked, eaten, or smoked. We need to find a painting where these bars are being handled outside of the jug to see their full size and perhaps thereby learn something of their content and function.

3. **ENEMA CLYSTER.** The clyster is most likely formed of a bone tube (which is inserted into the anus) and a squeezable bulb (of native rubber or animal The whole apparatus is the same size and shape of modern "ear intestine).

syringes" used for blowing water into the ear to cleanse them. A beautiful specimen is pictured in color on the polychrome graffiti at Tikal in the palace buried intact by the Maya under Structure 5E-55 (Orrego and Larios 1983: front cover and Lam. 11,A). More than 25 other examples are clearly rendered in Peten paintings (Figs. 3; 7a; 8; 10; 11; 12a; 14b; 16a; 17; 24; 32b; 33; 62). The long bone tube is clearly pictured in a polychrome painting in the Museo Popol Vuh (Fig. 62). Another naturalistic rendering is in Fig. 16a. The specimens of Fig. 18b were repainted in Miami and are not accurate in minute detail (the Miami painter misunderstood the bone tube), though the overall scene is correct in a general sense. Sometimes a little "gasket " can be seen holding the bone tube in place on The bulbous end of the clyster often has a nipple-like end. A frequent, diagnostic trait of the clyster is the oval or semi-circular black design on the top middle of the bulb. Feline personage 22 on the Grolier Vase of the 31 Gods holds an excellent example (M.Coe 1973:Grolier 37). The seashells held by personages 1 and 24 on the same vase includes the same symbol.

In use, the enema clyster was dipped into the water jug to suck the liquid into the bulb. Then the enema was either self-administered (especially during the Early Classic; Hellmuth 1985) or inserted or assisted by a young female attendant (Late Classic). Several scenes picture an enema clyster and a drinking cup or U- thing resting directly on top of the enema jug.

To get a rigid bone tube into the anus could have been painful without a preliminary lubricant, and indeed on one bowl a celebrant has his hand near his anus seemingly applying something (Fig. 13e), while a spider-monkey-man behind him holds the syringe ready to inject the bulb.

I suspect that many of the deer bone tubes found in excavations of Maya temples, palaces, middens, and burials are actually the tubes of enema clysters. Willey comments on the frequency of such bone tubes: "The bone tube, usually a short polished section of an animal long bone, is a very typical Maya lowland artifact" (1978: 168), which to him (before the Furst and Coe article) were of then

unknown function.

Musical rattles may at first be confused with enema syringes, since they both But, enema clysters never have pendants or attached consist of a bulb on a stick. decorations as do musical rattles. No enema celebrant ever has two clysters, one in each hand (or one rattle and one drum (tucked under the arm) ) - the standard arrangements for rattle musicians. The clyster has its characteristic side decoration, and the person holding a rattle will not usually wear the clothing of an enema participant or attendant. Associations and costumes - in addition to enema differences in the object itself - permit ready differentiation for the iconographic specialist.

4. **BIB** of overlapping segments of material is the single most diagnostic trait after the enema jug and clyster (Figs. 7a-b. 13a-c; 17). The direct association of these bibs to scenes with enema jugs or syringes is so fixed that I originally termed these "enema bibs," but of course they are worn on the wrong end for The identification as vomit bib came from a Tepeu 1 bowl in the Museo Popol Vuh (Fig. 25). Regurgitation was a natural result of the excessive drinking which was a prelude to the enema (Figs. 13c; 24; 25; 27). Bleeding after mouth torture or tooth pulling is a possibility for Fig. 24 but is not yet suspected in the other scenes. Artistic portrayal of bleeding after tongue sacrifice is not documented even in scenes of known relationship to tongue piercing, such as at Yaxchilan. Anthropologists have recorded that when the Lacandon Maya consume fermented balche beer that the natives normally regurgitate the first sips they take due to the unpleasant and harsh taste of this intoxicating beverage. Late Classic paintings demonstrate that most of the "enema" ceremony involved ritualized preliminary drinking and toasting.

After I had identified the bibs, during a presentation of the enema ritual diagnostics at a lecture, Dept, of History of Art, Yale University, ca. 1978-79, Michael Coe accepted the bib identification and pointed out to me that the bib was the same size, shape, and of the same material as the turbans worn in the

same enema scenes. From this observation I suggest the term bib-turban (when worn on the head) or turban-bib (when worn as a bib). The Whipple Vase and a vessel in a West Berlin museum each show the turban-bib held by a female attendant near the man who will be dressed.

These special items of dress are made of hundreds of overlapping segments of unidentified material. On some paintings the segments look like feather ends, in other paintings like flower petals. They could also be bits of painted cloth. The suspicion that perhaps the little oval units of the bib construction might possibly be flower petals (or painted copies on cloth) comes from the overlapping pattern of suspected flowers on stems in bouquets being sniffed in certain throne room enema scenes. One of the pots I excavated from Tikal Burial 196 shows a suspected bouquet of flowers or leaves in a wicker basket next to a small enema jug. In the only scene yet found where the contents of the enema jug itself are pictured (when the jug is turned upside down and emptied) comparable little overlapping units are coming out of the jug (Fig. 4).

When the accessory is worn as a bib, then an enema ceremony is thereby identified. When worn as a turban (especially in Chama style paintings) an enema ceremony is not necessarily being enacted.

5. **U-THING:** A Red Band style, Tepeu 1 bowl in the Museo Popol Vuh shows three enema enactments, each with two net-headdressed God N devotees on either side of a large 5 gal. enema jug (Fig. 7a-b). Two of the jugs have clearly identifiable enema syringes on top. All three jugs include an enigmatic U-shaped thing on top also. Since other enema jugs picture drinking cups on top (with or without an adjacent enema clyster) perhaps the U-things are just a special shape of drinking cup. Three of the celebrants hold identical U-things as though they were going to eat them - or drink out of them. A woman on the Whipple Vase holds a U-thing while she applies make-up (?) to an enema participant. Whatever its use, it appears restricted to enema scenes.

6. **OFFERING BALLS:** On the right of the throne in the Princeton #7 scene is

a ceramic container with five little balls which Coe correctly identifies as "offerings." With the advantage of a photographic archive of other Maya paintings from private collections and museums it is now possible to relate this bowl to others, and then to use this identification to recognize the same balls on vases of the traditional corpus, such as on a Tikal Burial 116 vase under a lord's throne. In the adjacent panel is another throne with an enema jug underneath it. This ceramic container in the palace scene has tripod supports and contains the same little oval offerings as on a lively presentation of enema celebrants, a syringe, enema jug with stick bundle (Fig. 17) (see item \*, next). I suspect the offering balls were edible. They may have a little semi-circle painted at their tops, sometimes just like the design on the enema clyster.

A bowl possibly from Campeche shows a man seated in front of a large enema jug holding a large bowl (different than the plates with the offering balls) full of what seems to be comparable offering balls, except here they seem almost to be some kind of fruit. Four of the identical round objects are sticking out of the top of an enema jug in the same position that essence bars are normally found. Still another Campeche or Yucatan bowl has two more clearly defined balls right on top of the jug with the diagnostic little split or semi -circle (really a thin "U"). These little balls may well be to steep in the enema liquid to impart essence, or to soak up essence already in the jug's liquid.

7. **STICK BUNDLES** are pictured just below the bowl of offering balls on the scene with a Holmul Dancer backrack. These sticks are in two bundles projecting out of a medium sized enema jug. A man holds a clyster nearby and several other attendants wear vomit bibs. On a vase in a West Berlin museum a woman (wearing clothing with a painted, tabbed "turtle carapace" symbol associated with enema attendants, see diagnostic Trait # 12) offers a bundle of sticks to a man. On a Dance after Decapitation vase (Fig. 33) the sticks are again projecting out of an enema jug, here carried by a feline actor with turban-bib and with a syringe strapped onto his belt front. He looks like a drug peddler coming into town with

his wares. Any such sticks as these would traditionally be identified as perforators, especially for bloodletting by penis perforation. But so far no personal bloodletting is associated with the enema ceremony. The only blood is from occasional decapitation. Since in two cases the stick bundles are inside the enema jug, possibly again they are steeping or soaking up some flavor or stimulant. They seem too thin to be cigars, but tobacco should not be ruled out. Their identity and function is unclear. Are the little bundles held in Grolier 43 (non-enema scene) and contained in a serving dish in Grolier 48 (a definite enema jug scene) the same? We can only hope to find in a private collection a painting where these sticks are being handled in some manner where their full size and shape is clearer. So far they are partially obscured by the container in which they are held.

8. **DRINKING CUPS** in a variety of sizes and shapes are held by enema attendants and celebrants in many scenes. The normal pattern is two men on either side of an enema jug drinking and toasting one another for some time before actually receiving an enema. Often attractive young ladies serve the cups. Obviously drinking cups are so common in other non-enema contexts that the mere presence of a drinking cup is not enough to identify a scene as related to an enema unless the celebrants are wearing a bib. Paintings often show a drinking cup resting on top of the enema jug. It is possible that U-things (Trait # 5) are a special form of drinking cup.

The Cholula murals of the drunkards is certainly similar to many of the drinking scenes around enema jugs on Maya polychromes (Artes de Mexico, Año XVIII, No. 144, 1971).

9. **PELLETS** is a general name for small unidentified objects. In two or three scenes with enema jugs the celebrants are popping little pellets or cookie sized edibles into their mouth. The way they hold these items so reverently as they eat them, the general posture of the celebrant in his setting, suggest that these little snacks are either mighty tasty or else pack quite a stimulating effect upon

ingestion into the body system. My original notes nicknamed these "ecstasy cookies" but that term of course could not be objectively substantiated. The pellets are so small that it was hard for the Maya artist to add any symbols to aid in the identification of their content or meaning.

10. **CIGARS** are smoked in several enema rituals (Figs. 12c; 13b-c), but are so widely used elsewhere that they are not diagnostic of the enema ceremony. Robicsek's book describes the effects of smoking a Mesoamerican cigar.

11. **PETAL BOUQUETS** on long sticks are held by lords and attendants in several throne scenes where enema jugs are nearby. That they are in fact pleasantly scented flowers is suggested by a little bird hovering over a bouquet on Grolier 28 (not an enema scene) and also by one vase where the lord seems to be sniffing at the bouquet. Did the Maya also take stimulating snuff? If so, they consumed drugs through every opening of their body except their ears. Their ears received stimulants from pulsating drum and rattles. The traditional tendency in Maya academia to render conservative interpretations is inappropriate in a situation such as the highly evolved Maya rituals which involved a total chemical assault on every sense organ from a wide variety of stimulants administered in sequence. We must also remember that certain of these drinking and injecting rituals took place before the bloody sacrifice of babies (Hellmuth 1978:212 and two other vases, unpublished, Hellmuth Photo Archive) as well as of adults followed by a gory dance of crazed priests and ritual attendants.

12. **BUMP OUTLINED DECORATIONS ON WOMEN'S HUIPILS** are noticeable on enema related scenes A-358a; 456981-66 (West Berlin); and 48667-2. Some stylized water lilies (in other, unrelated scenes) have the water lily pad with the same pattern of bumps around the edge.

13. **CONGLOMERATE MONSTER GOD HUT** is a special construction seen three times in front of enema rituals, on the Whipple Vase (Fig. 18a), on the other side of Fig. 22 (Hellmuth Photo Archive A-358a); and on the other side of Fig. 21 (Hellmuth Photo Archive 486667-2. This hut is composed of a stack of monster

faces. Whereas the Whipple Vase is totally overlined and partially re-created in Miami, discovery of the other two untouched Maya paintings in original condition certifies reality of the overall layout of the Whipple Collection scene.

Standardized enema ceremony participants include:

**Water Lily Jaguar** is as frequent in enema jug scenes as he is in Dance after Decapitation paintings though his costume may be different in each situation, the Dance after Decapitation he wears a red or orange scarf. For the enema ritual he wears a turban-bib. Several Tepeu 1 multiple resist style paintings show one of each feline together (private collection, Zurich), demonstrating that the two costumes are both separate yet can be worn in a combined ritual - an enema associated with sacrifice. That it is a human actor wearing a costume is clear from another vase where the celebrant's head sticks out from his feline costume (Hellmuth 1978:210, upper left).

**Spider Monkey** is as common in enema jug scenes as he is in Dances after Decapitation. In death ceremonies, though, the monkey conflates with a deer, and may wear a red or orange scarf, or carry a fruit- like object. In enema scenes the monkey more likely has an enema turban-bib and may wear a loincloth (Figs. 13a-e). The deer is not as prominent in enema scenes as is the monkey, except where God D is present.

**Drug bird** is distinguished by a beak with fat, out-turned end. This beak is unlike any real bird yet this avian character is present in at least four enema scenes. Hellmuth 1978:210 illustrates one. On a matched set of two nearly identical Late Classic Peten plates an anthropomorphic dancer in net weave body stocking (yet not in this case a God N) has one of these special bird beaks attached to his face. Of the many different birds in enema rituals, this is the easiest character to recognize.

**Enema birds** in general are more common in highland Guatemalan paintings (Fig. 9), but birds do occur on Peten plates together with enema jug drinking

One Late Classic plate in the Denver Art Museum has highland type bird celebrants next to enema jugs. Some of the birds shake musical rattles, just as on the series of highland vases (one of which is in the American Museum of Natural History, New York). Altogether at least five different species of birds are represented in this group of highland vase paintings and other species are sure to be recognized as additional vases become available for study. Whereas birds in Dance after Decapitation scenes tend to be raptorial, have slit stomachs, or carry snakes, enema birds tend to be simpler and more anthropomorphic. Birds also occur in lowland paintings, as on a Red Band style bowl (Fig. 12b).

**Big lipped frogs** are dominant personages on one Tepeu 1 enema scene (Fig. 13a). One holds a giant water lily in his lap. The frogs on this one bowl have large, round eyes and thick, almost bird-beak like lips. Other frogs, but differing in anatomical and mythical detail, appear on the Vase of the 31 gods (Grolier 37). In some of these 7th-8th century paintings it is hard to distinguish between toads and frogs, or even iguanas.

**Other animals** appear in enema scenes. One may be an armadillo (Fig. 12b). The Vase of the 31 Gods (Grolier 37) pictures other beasts. Since every rendering is a little bit different it is difficult to ascertain whether the differences are stylistic or anatomical.

**Rain Beast** is the name given by Coe to the officiating deity on the Whipple Vase. He is generally considered to be GI ( though Coe keeps them separate).

**God N or devotee** is the principal celebrant. A full-fledged God N is elderly and wears a conch shell (or turtle shell or snail shell). A devotee may be of any age, and shows his devotion to the God N cult by wearing net weave knapkin headdress (Figs. 7a-b; 9b. God N, and devotees, appear in many other ceremonies besides those related to enemas.

**God D** (Fig. 14c), especially when seated on a planetary band throne often has enema jugs associated with him (Fig. 15). This elderly slouching god may have a rabbit or young woman (the Moon Goddess most likely) on the throne behind him.

God D appears in many scenes other than those related to enemas. He appears himself, rather than in the guise of devotees.

**Women** wearing huipils decorated with bump-outlined forms are diagnostic of enema attendants.

### **DISTINCTIVE RITUAL TYPES WHICH EMPLOYED ENEMAS AS PART OF LONGER ENACTMENTS.**

There is not really just one "enema ritual." Actually, enemas were taken in:

- A) plain palace settings with minimal special costumes and pageantry (Figs. 16; 35).
- B) multi-actor settings but still with minimal costumes (Fig. 36).
- C) With God N devotees, often with the Cauac Monster God Hut, and female attendants (Figs. 7; 11; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 23).
- D) As complex enema rituals, generally with animals (Figs. 5; 12; 13; 17; 24 [Type E also]; 34 ). ) as part of the Dance after Decapitation Sacrifice (Figs. 24 [aspects of Type D]; 27; 28; 31; 32; 33 40; 41; 42).
- F) By God D (Figs. 14; 15; 38 [ God D is on other side]). As cataloging of photographs continues additional categories of enema ritual can be classified.

Based on more than 50 Late Classic scenes, I propose the following hypothetical reconstruction of the ceremony, Type C, which shares many features with Type D.

Two specially dressed men seat themselves on either side of a giant enema jug, often with an attractive young female attendant. A clyster and drinking cup are ready on top of the container of special drink. With small cups the celebrants dip into the jugs, fill their containers, and drink. They keep drinking to a state of intoxication. 16th - 17th century Spanish chroniclers document that such alcohol consumption was a standard part of Maya rituals. One purpose was to induce visions, a form of communication with their gods. Celebrants or attendants costumed as deer, felines, and spider monkeys dance in bearing additional jugs in tumblines. Other bizarrely costumed characters also appear.

All of this interaction takes place in front of a Monster Face Conglomerate "God Hut," a ceremonial structure of perishable material. Inside the hut reigns the

supervising , or honored deity, in two cases GI (Whipple Vase (fig.24) and the vase of Fig. 22 (on the other side); in one case a God K-like supernatural, (Fig. 21, other side, 486667-2). In the background a musical group plays, with gourd rattles, turtle carapace rasped with deer antler, and small drums. Women attend to the pre-enema preparation, fanning, undressing, massaging, costuming, and applying make-up to the men who will receive the clyster. Two paintings picture the women holding the bib-turban ready to dress the man nearby. All the while the men continue drinking from cups dipped into the enema jugs. The participants also make use of special little "cookies" and "U-things" (either another edible or make-up material). Flower-like bouquets are offered and sniffed and potent cigars are smoked continuously. At a certain point the God N devotees parade near their enema jugs, with the female attendants behind them, getting ready to take off their loincloth apron. The devotees render obsequience to the god in the conglomerate hut. As a final event, the men recline and bend over to receive the enema, administered themselves, or by the women.

The Vase of the 31 Gods (Grolier 37) depicts a variant, and even more complicated enema ritual, featuring God D (though not a sky band God D type enactment). The multiple-resist Tepeu 1 vases (Figs. 31; 32; 33) and the same ceremony on vases of other styles (Figs. 24; 25; 27; 28; 62), present the combined enema ritual together with the Dance after Decapitation Sacrifice. Figs. 16 and 35 show the simpler, Type A enema administration.

I feel it is a fair conclusion from the frequency of drinking scenes on Maya pottery, combined with Landa's and Margil de Jesus' comments on native Maya alcoholic consumption in religious rituals to recognize that drinking in the Maya palace reached high levels comparable to that of ancient Greece and Rome, if not more. The Cholti-Lacandon of Sac Balam, Chiapas (Nuestra Senora de los Dolores de Lacandon, 1694-ca.1710) had attendants whose job it was to keep the caciques drinking and intoxicated four days in a row for a single ceremony (Margil de Jesus 1984). And the Maya were religious all year long. Considering that at the same

time the Maya were smoking native cigars of considerable potency in nicotine alone, not to mention other stimulants not found in a Havana puro or in a Marlboro, eating pellets and balls of potential stimulating action, and then injecting chemical substances directly into their body through an enema clyster, would certainly affect them. We cannot discount the effect of music and dance. Ecstatic states can be obtained through suggestive music and dance alone, and bare breasted Imagine what young females may not have gone entirely unnoticed either, condition they were in on the morning after a four-day ceremony. Aztec excesses are simply better documented. Maya polychrome paintings at last make available for the Maya what Spanish chronicles and Aztec codices, long ago provided for central Mexico.

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