

# Enema Rituals of the Classic Maya and nearby Cultures of Mesoamerica

## Bibliography and Suggested Reading

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### **A comprehensive Bibliography can Facilitate Additional Research on Maya use of Enemas**

In 1977 Coe and Furst were the first Mesoamerican scholars to recognize the enema ritual, enema clyster and enema jug as pictured on Classic Maya polychrome ceramics and in figurines. Hellmuth 1978a ,1978b, and 1978c were a second set of multiple publication(s) on enema iconography. Then came Taube 1998, De Smet 1981, De Smet 1985, Hellmuth 1985, De Smet and Hellmuth 1986. Now the world had enough documentation to fuel additional articles, books, and mention of enemas. Two volumes by De Smet and Loughmiller 2020 updated the earlier studies.

Now, in year 2022, enema ritual research publications that really showed the breakthrough quantity of iconography of scenes and publications by capable chemist that documented the chemistry of what was most probably inside a Maya enema jug and enema syringe have received an international reward and will thus become even better known. So as preparation for the announcement of this international award, we (Hellmuth and De Smet) are preparing additional publications. In the meantime, we (Hellmuth and Toralla) have prepared this updated bibliography. Many of the entries are annotated by Hellmuth. María José Toralla is a university student working together with the FLAAR Mesoamerica team to prepare bibliographies on each and every subject that Nicholas jumps to and from every week, every month, every year. Today it's a long jump from 1978, 1985, 1986 to 2022.

Throughout Mesoamerica there are indications that confirm the use of enemas, that is, instruments (clyster is a technical name for the wide tube "syringe") to introduce liquids into the lower digestive tract. Although most pre-Hispanic enemas were made with

perishable materials such as gourds or bules, intestines and even rubber, some were made of ceramics and persist as archaeological evidence (Taube 1998). There are abundant representations of the use of enemas in Classic Maya art, especially in Late Classic vessel scenes, but along with the archaeological evidence, we also have the colonial collections and current traditions of the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica (Taube 1998).

Information from pre-Hispanic scenes and later testimonies clearly show that enemas had various uses in Mesoamerica: to cure, to purify and to introduce hallucinogenic and intoxicating substances into the body. So probably some for medicinal purposes but the scenes on Classic Maya vases and bowls are for festivities and personal enjoyment (albeit usually in the company of assistants, colleagues, and often with women). Felines (or men dressed as felines) are also common in Maya enema scenes.

### ***Medicinal enemas***

The use of enemas to administer medication is well documented among the 16<sup>th</sup> century Aztecs. There are a lot of medicines that were applied anally through enemas, to cure diseases such as bloody urine, hemorrhoids, diarrhea, urine retention and persistent cough or cough with phlegm and blood. There is also knowledge that the medicinal use of enemas is applied in other parts of Mesoamerica, in addition to that practiced by the Aztecs. Among the contemporary Maya of the Guatemalan highlands, enemas are used to cure dysentery and constipation (Taube 1998). Another interesting observation is that cacao (*Theobroma cacao*) was used by the Maya to heal sores and wounds through the application of enemas or as a psychotropic agent (Arias 2013). Hellmuth estimated that cacao was used because of the multitude of chemicals inside *Theobroma cacao* (and slightly different chemicals but also some of the same in *Theobroma bicolor*).

It is likely that enemas were also used in ancient Mesoamerican ceremonial purifications for the purgative qualities. So, some Maya wanted to get the drugs into the body to stay and create the desired reaction; but perhaps other people wanted to clean out their intestines. Today many doctors ask you to have an enema done before they examine the inside of that part of your body. Healing and purifying are closely related categories, and purification rituals were often part of the healing process. In some contexts, enemas must have been part of a ritual purification complex that included fasting, cleansing, and bathing, often in a temazcal, a sweat bath. You can see an impressive 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. sweat bath at Piedras Negras and also at the much easier to reach contemporary Classic Maya site of Nakum (in Parque Nacional Yaxha, Nakum and Naranjo, PNYNN).

### ***Intoxicating enemas***

In addition to their use for healing and purification ceremonies, among the Tzakol 3, Tepeu 1 and Tepeu 2 periods, enemas were used to introduce alcoholic and perhaps hallucinogenic beverages into the body, as these are more rapidly absorbed from the lower digestive tract. The use of hallucinogenic enemas is well documented among the native peoples of lowland South America (Taube 1998). The Maya used enemas to

administer these substances to attain more intense trance states more quickly. Researchers have discovered dozens and dozens of Mayan ceramics depicting scenes in which hallucinogenic enemas and/or balche (alcoholic beverage) were used in rituals; some figures are shown vomiting while others just starting to receive enemas. There are also anthropomorphic figures demonstrating the self-administration of psychoactive enemas (Carod 2015). There are even monumental sculptures (sculpted door jamb, Campeche region, that show an enema syringe (Taube 1998 cited by De Smet and Loughmiller 2020: Fig.24a).

There are few other direct references to the anal administration of hallucinogens in Mesoamerica. Alcohol, on the other hand, seems to have been the preferred substance for this purpose. The mouths of the vessels have spouts where the foam of the fermented alcoholic beverages can be seen. In Late Classic depictions, these vessels are sometimes marked with the phonetic glyph *chi*. In some Mayan languages as Chol and Tzeltal, *chi* means "pulque", "maguey", and other alcoholic beverages, while *ah chi* means "drunk." In Yucatecan *cii* means "maguey" or "wine" (Chávez 2013).

Although the enemas contained alcohol, it seems likely that hallucinogens or other substances were added to enhance them. The presence of enema scenes and specific inscriptions identifying flasks as "the dwelling place for tobacco" (*yotoot u may*) support the claim that these vessels were used as containers for various forms of tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*), including snuff, tobacco juice, or enema liquids derived from tobacco leaf infusions (Groark 2010). Keep in mind that the tobacco used by the Classic Maya was most likely significantly more powerful than in cigarettes of today. Plus, I have devoted two decades to researching which plants the Maya (and Zapotecs and Aztecs and everyone else) used as "flavorings" for tobacco and as flavorings for cacao. These chemicals could have potentially interacted with each other. If you had the FLAAR list of ingredients for tobacco you would either never want to smoke again, or, you would want immediately to smoke every day what the Maya had in their cigars! You don't need to put "hallucinogens" into your tobacco to get a multiple happy result from smoking because of all the flavorings from native Maya plants.

Same for Cacao (cocoa, chocolate): we have dedicated hundreds of field trips to every ecosystem in Guatemala to find, photograph and then research each and every leaf, flower and more plant parts than you want to hear about that were added to cacao powder to make beverages over a thousand years ago.

I drink dark chocolate (milk chocolate with brown organic sugar) every day (or eat brownies). I do not use the dozens, scores of other ingredients that I know about from decades of research (I photographed cacao for Sophie Coe and Michael Coe's books on chocolate of Mesoamerica; our photos are in all three editions). We have the largest photo archive in the world on flavorings for cacao; we hope someday a generous soul will provide funds so we can publish 5 coffee-table books to show the photos to document all this field work and research.

We have also found other plant parts that the Maya imbibed; some are so tasty (not

drugs, but the sheer taste was so unexpected that you would not have needed drugs).

In addition to TWELVE years of field trips every several months, since 2018 we are doing an average of 10 field trips per year, one week per field trip with an entire team of photographers and biologists, in remote areas of Guatemala. We currently are deep into our year 2021-2025 project of cooperation and coordination with CONAP to explore the biodiverse ecosystems of the 21,600 square kilometers of the Reserva de la Biosfera Maya (RBM, Peten, Guatemala) focusing on areas that have never been reached by a research team because of their being no roads to get even nearby. So, we are finding flora, fauna, and ecosystems not previously documented or whatsoever published.

So there are lots of plants to add to your beverage, your tamale, your pozol, and on holidays to your enema (sorry, we don't taste-test either enemas nor the hallucinogenic plants because we are finding so many non-hallucinogenic plants that make all of us so happy with our research that we don't need mind-altering drugs).

I estimate that year by year ethno-chemical experts such as Peter De Smet and others around the world will find new ingredients for enemas.

The enema clysters that that appear in the polychrome vessel scenes are extended oval tube-shaped, with a large opening on one side. This is the typical form of Petén-style enema clysters during the Late Classic. Currently we can find almost identical bules that are used as tobacco containers among the Tzeltals of the Highlands of Chiapas (Taube, 1998). One of the Q'eqchi' Mayan botanical research assistants of FLAAR Mesoamerica reports that grandmothers in the Maya Highlands still use similar items (for medicinal enemas) and that children often are on the floor playing with these (not administering them). We now have photographs that we will publish together with all our other FLAAR Reports in mid-September. This was a totally unexpected ethnobotanical discovery.

There is also an additional different use of enemas suggested: as instruments to enrich the digestive tract with probiotics, which have been proven to have beneficial effects on human health. In view of the topicality of the topic on the effectiveness of probiotics to inhibit the growth of intestinal pathogens, the history of pre-Hispanic enemas as instruments to apply probiotics is especially relevant (Lemus 2007). The work of Lemus presents the hypothesis that enemas were also used as means to enrich the digestive tract with probiotics and prebiotics. That said, by far the majority of 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century Maya ceramics show "drunken orgies" with enemas as a key ingredient (they also drank the same liquid). I doubt the Maya painters were showing health medicine in the scenes of celebrants; health use of enemas is a valid ethnobotanical research topic but the iconography is focused on the use of chemical ingredients to further altered mental experiences. We all think that it was just the Aztec that were into all of this; the dozens of enema scenes should finally make it more realistic to understand what the Maya royal families were really like.

## **Today studies and Epigraphy and Iconography, popular test pits and stratigraphy**

Still today the focus of traditional archaeology is correctly on artifacts and architecture, but epigraphy (the study of hieroglyphic writing) has improved dramatically in the recent several decades, initially influenced by Tatiana Proskouriakoff, Heinrich Berlin and now by dozens of professors at universities around the world. Iconography has been expanding since Michael Coe's 1973 Grolier Club monograph, *The Maya Scribe and his World*.

A study made by (ethno-chemist) De Smet and (iconographer) Hellmuth (1986) mentions the discovery of a crucial vessel that allowed the identification of other Maya vase paintings as enema scenes, and soon other were also led to believe that the ancient Maya took intoxicating enemas for ritual purposes. Many species have been proven to be used as enema ingredients such as: *Agave* species, *Anadenanthera* species, *Brugmansia* species, *Ilex guayus* and *Lophophora williamsii*.

Some recent studies like the one written by Gamboa *et al.* (2021) say that the use of enemas was not only part of ritual or therapeutic moments but could also have accompanied practices of a sexual nature in search of pleasure that, perhaps, generated addiction, as evidenced in the contemporary medical documentation. As a traditional archaeologist and iconographer, I was not trained in any university to study sexual scenes in Maya art. But nowadays it's obvious that the Maya had sexual appetite as do all other humans. Increasingly the newer generation iconographers are documenting sexual scenes. But my research is focused on enemas, especially the jugs, clysters, bibs, and other accessories and items of clothing. Females are often shown topless in 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century paintings; but that is the way most grandmothers are in their rural houses in remote areas. They put on a blouse when they leave the house for the market.

## **Enemas finally accepted as featured research by Mayanists and other Specialists**

Archaeologists today still appropriately focus on stratigraphy, middens, artifacts, and architecture. But today there are hundreds more Mayanists than a century ago. Today there are more stelae, more murals (San Bartolo and Holmul, for example), more ceramic scenes with provenance (the discoveries at Holmul and other Maya sites). When doing any iconography study that includes stelae, altars, lintels, etc., the percent of scenes of savage captures in warfare and subsequent human sacrifice is appalling. It was assumed that only the Aztec were gruesome slaughterers, but the Cacaxtla murals show other cultures were the same (as we already know from the Bonampak murals, nicely pictured in several monumental publications by Mary Miller, two helpful full-color volumes by UNAM team, and earlier CIW (Carnegie) reports). Plus, the number of Maya scenes of what appear to be rulers standing over captives destined for human sacrifice is sadly notable.

Later this year we will provide further documentation on enema iconography with additional information. Peter De Smet will also have additional information on the

chemical aspects of the enema. It helps when scholars with different backgrounds work together.

## References Cited

All the entries here are on enemas, enema iconography, and the associated chemical aspects. All other topics are well known, and I want the present bibliography to help learn more about what is available on enema as medicine, enema for health, and enema to inject every mind-altering chemical you can imagine.

### **ARIAS, Jiapsy**

2013 Un vertiginoso viaje etnohistórico dentro de los “Imaginario alimentarios” en el simbolismo del cacao en México. Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México. 19 pages.

Available online.

### **CAROD, F. J.**

2015 Hallucinogenic drugs in pre-Columbian Mesoamerican cultures. Alucinógenos en las culturas precolombinas mesoamericanas. *Neurología*, Vol. 30, No. 1. Pages 42-49.

This is the English edition. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nrleng.2011.07.010>

Preview online:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2173580814001527>

### **CHÁVEZ, Mónica**

2013 Cuerpo, enfermedad y medicina en la cosmología maya del Yucatán colonial. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. 491 pages.

Available online:

<https://www.cephcis.unam.mx/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/18-cuerpo-enfermedad.pdf>

### **DE LA GARZA, Mercedes**

2019 Sak naab, la flor divina del agua. Un acercamiento a su significado simbólico y su uso ritual. Pages 207-287 (Capítulo VII) in: *El Poder de las Plantas Sagradas en el Universo Maya*, Coordinadora Mercedes de la Garza. Unam (Universidad Nacional Autónoma De Mexico). Mexico.

The word enema is on her pages 228, 232, 233, 234, 235 plus on captions to enema scenes: Fig. 61,b, 62, 64.

This chapter is devoted to white water lily plant as an ingredient in liquids consumed during rituals by the Classic Maya.

I would recommend adding Rands work on water lilies; plus Hellmuth PhD dissertation plus several Hellmuth documentations in FLAAR Reports of which part of the water lily was consumed by fish.

**DE SMET, Peter and HELLMUTH, Nicholas**

1986 A multidisciplinary approach to ritual enema scenes on ancient Maya pottery. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, Vol. 16, No. 2-3. Pages 213-262.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8741\(86\)90091-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8741(86)90091-7)

Preview online:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/0378874186900917>

**GAMBOA, José, CASERES, Orlando and Lucía QUIÑONES**

2021 Los enemas entre los mayas prehispánicos: ¿clismafilia o práctica sexual ritualizada? In Peña, Edith and Hernández, Lilia. *Cuerpo, géneros y sexualidades Conextos mesoamericanos y contemporaneos*. 42 pages.

Available online:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355982746\\_Los\\_enemas\\_entre\\_los\\_mayas\\_prehispanicos\\_clismafilia\\_o\\_practica\\_sexual\\_ritualizada](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355982746_Los_enemas_entre_los_mayas_prehispanicos_clismafilia_o_practica_sexual_ritualizada)

**GROARK, Kevin**

2010 The Angel in the Gourd: Ritual, Therapeutic, and Protective Uses of Tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) Among the Tzeltal and Tzotzil Maya of Chiapas Mexico. *Journal of Ethnobiology*, Vol. 30, No. 1. Pages 5-30.  
<https://doi.org/10.2993/0278-0771-30.1.5>

Available online:

<https://bioone.org/journals/journal-of-ethnobiology/volume-30/issue-1/0278-0771-30.1.5/The-Angel-in-the-Gourd--Ritual-Therapeutic-and-Protective/10.2993/0278-0771-30.1.5.full>

**LEMUS, Enrique**

2007 Antecedentes prehispánicos del uso de probióticos y prebióticos. Universidad Tecnológica de la Mixteca. 1 page.

Available online:

[https://smbb.mx/congresos%20smbb/morelia07/TRABAJOS/Area\\_IX/CART\\_ELES/CIX-2.pdf](https://smbb.mx/congresos%20smbb/morelia07/TRABAJOS/Area_IX/CART_ELES/CIX-2.pdf)

**TAUBE, Karl**

1998 Enemas rituales en Mesoamérica. Curación, purificación e intoxicación. In Ritos Prehispánicos, *Arqueología Mexicana*, Vol. VI, Num. 34, Mexico. 6 pages.

Available online:

## **Bibliography on Enemas, focused on understanding enema rituals, enema accessories (clysters, vomit bibs, enema jugs, etc.)**

This is a bibliography focused entirely on enema rituals of the Early Classic and Late Classic Maya and enema practices of other associated nearby cultures in Mesoamerica, rest of the Americas to the north, and lower Central America and South America. But is definitely focused on the Maya of Mesoamerica.

This segment of the bibliography is primarily on the iconography, especially on enema accessories. There is a separate segment on the chemicals in Maya enemas and chemicals in other American enemas that could have been considered also by the Classic Maya.

The chemical aspects are well documented by Peter De Smet, but there are so many articles and books on psychoactive drugs that we list only publications that stand out.

The sources for the following list of suggested reading are obviously De Smet 1985, De Smet and Loughmiller-Cardinal 2020, and the other publications by Mayanists specifically on enemas. But we have added discussion of other books on the Classic Maya and comment in annotations whether or not they even mention enema; and of so, whether they provide new insights. If you had enemas as your thesis or PhD dissertation topic surely you could find additional citations but until then, the following bibliography is the most comprehensive up to autumn 2022.

### **ARIAS González, Jiapsy**

- 2013 Un Vertiginoso Viaje Etnohistórico dentro de los “Imaginario Alimentarios” en el Simbolismo del Cacao en México. *An. Antrop.*, 48-I (2014), 79-95. Mexico.

Suggests cacao may have been used in enema; but appropriately does not state that this is documented. So a careful suggestion. I agree, cacao may have been used but we need to find cacao residues in enema jugs and/or cacao inscriptions related to the enema jug.

### **BARRERA Rubio, A. and Karl A. TAUBE**

- 1987 Los relieves de San Diego: una nueva perspectiva. *Boletín de la Escuela de Ciencias Antropológicas de la Universidad de Yucatán* 14(no.83):3-18.

### **CAROD-Artal, F. J.**

- 2011 Hallucinogenic drugs in pre-Columbian Mesoamerican cultures. *Neurología*. 2015;30:42-49.

Mentions balche in Mayan ritual enemas. He suggests “During ceremonies, participants’ vomit was collected in bags that were then hung around their necks.” (Page 43).

I nick-named these “vomit bibs” but since the same bibs are frequently seen in processions where no enemas are yet administered most iconographers preferred to find another name. Now that I have re-entered the iconography of enema rituals, I agree that a different name is better because you can find these, or similar bibs worn by warrior lords and other elite personnel. But I am not sure these were bag-like; the vomit splattered in front; so, these bibs kept the vomit off your chest (but not sure that it protected your knees! These bibs need an entire MA thesis to discover how many different ceremonies they were used in. And, most importantly, what were the repeated segments: flowers, another plant part, cloth?

**CAROD-Artal, F. J.**

2015 Hallucinogenic drugs in pre-Columbian Mesoamerican cultures. *Neurologia*. 2015; 30(1):42-49.

Discusses enemas, but from point of view of ethnobotany, not iconography of accessories. When studying enemas, it helps to have documentation of both the scenes and what ethno-chemists estimate may be in the enema jugs.

Available as download:

<https://www.elsevier.es/en-revista-neurologia-english-edition--495-pdf-S2173580814001527>

**CARLSON, John B.**

1988 Tripod dish with enthroned “God D” and enema cult imagery. In *The Face of Ancient America: the Wally and Brenda Zollman Collection of Precolumbian Art*. L. A. Parsons, J. B. Carlson, and P. D. Joralemon, editors. Pp. 92. Indiana University Press.

**CARLSON, John B.**

2007 Comments on enema aspects in the Jay I. Kislak Collection. Pages 12 and 13 in Sharer, Robert J, 2007, *From the Olmec to Columbus*. Pages 1-53 in: *The Jay I. Kislak Collection at the Library of Congress*, Arthur Dunkelman, editor. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The CONTENTS of the Kislak Collection lists Robert Sharer’s name for Chapter I, *From the Olmec to Columbus*. But I had marked this as a chapter by John Carlson. Then I began to notice that the author was citing Carlson, so I looked for another PDF download and saw only Sharer’s name in CONTENTS. But I notice that other scholars (De Smet and Loughmiller 2020)

cite Carlson. I don't have the actual book, so I cite both Sharer and separately Carlson, but the comments on the enema should be cited to Carlson.

Item 17, page 12, ceramic flask

we see him here in his god house holding up what is surely a native tobacco leaf (*Nicotiana tabacum* or *Nicotiana rustica*), with his diagnostic bundled hair lock and wide-brimmed feathered hat tucked under his left arm. This crouching pose is also characteristic of the so-called "Maya Enema Ritual" which is depicted quite explicitly on many Maya vases as well as several flasks (see entry 19). Tobacco enema mixtures are documented in the Americas and it is highly likely that some flasks, such as this one, were created to hold special may preparations. —John B. Carlson

Item 19, page 13:

Right: This remarkable flask takes the form of a miniature Maya enema vessel with the applied figure of the bearded Old Enema Man stretched out around the belly of the pot. He is self-administering his enema with a bulb-style clyster. Based on other flasks of similar design—including true effigies of the Old Man—coupled with the fact that tobacco-based enema practices are well documented in the Americas, flasks such as this may have contained specific may tobacco enema preparations (see entry 17). Thus, the various enema rituals were likely fundamentally a tobacco-based practice, probably for ritual entheogenic as well as medicinal purposes. Native tobacco itself is a powerful hallucinogen when taken in strong doses. Based on ethnographic evidence, other substances, which may have included peyote, toad venom, *Psilocibe* mushrooms, and morning glory seed extract, were added to what were probably alcoholic brews such as balché. The effects would have been rapid and highly inebriating. —John B. Carlson

**CIUDAD, Andrés, IGLESIAS, Ma. Josefina and Miguel SORROCHE**

2010 El ritual en el mundo maya: de lo privado a lo público. Sociedad Española de Estudios Mayas. 488 pages.

Available online.

**CASE, Justin, GAL, Fun and R. STUART**

2004 The Enema Project: Taking it Past the Limit? The Entheogen Review, Volume XIII, Number 2: 41-48.

Raises the questions of whether enemas were a way of administering mescaline-containing cacti. Mentions research by De Smet 1983 and De Smet 1985 but this article is primarily on the Moche of Peru. However his discussion of drinking drugs vs enema injection of drugs is worth noting because it seems that either he or colleagues actually tried both.

I have not tried to inject drugs either way and do not intend to. But it is helpful to document the actual aspects of a civilization: not an imaginary majestic portrait of impressive architecture and remarkable art. We now realize that even some stone sculptures showed the enema syringe. But most enema scenes are on vases, bowls, and a few plates, mostly in 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century.

Although several ingredients have been suggested, I am open to encouraging research on lots of additional plants. So this article is a good start in that direction.

**COE, Michael**

1973 The Maya Scribe and his World. Grolier Club, New York.

This is the first monumental publication that showed the world how much we can learn by looking at the scenes depicted in Maya ceramics. 90% of previous ceramic studies of the previous century were on classification of size, shape, style, and dating each style.

This 1973 publication included a vase with two enema clysters in an enema ritual (Vase of the 31 Gods) but no one in the world recognized enema ritual accessories in 1973. So, the clyster was not recognized until four years later, in Coe and Furst.

**COE, Michael D. and Peter T. FURST**

1977 Ritual Enemas. Natural History, Vol. 86/3: 88-91.

One single solitary polychrome Maya scene on a pottery jug led to this recognition. Within one year I was able to find dozens of scenes in the Museo Popol Vuh, Universidad Francisco Marroquin. These dozen Early Classic and Late Classic Maya paintings I shared with Coe (since I was Post Graduate Fellow at Yale for many years starting circa 1968). Plus I shared all my archive with ethno-chemist Peter De Smet for his 1980's PhD dissertation.

**COE, Michael D.**

1982 Old Gods and Young Heroes. The Pearlman Collection of Maya Ceramics. The Israel Museum. 128 pages.

One personage on one vase is correctly identified as having an enema clyster (page 111, Figure 6, God A' (A prime). This enema clyster is a shorter than usual, with a tube longer than usual. The individual is vomiting. He wears no bib.

Grube provides a helpful line drawing of this enema personage in his 2004: Fig. 2.

**CRISELL, Rob**

2001 Pleasure Gardens, Alcohol Enemas, and Chocolate Covered Tamales. *American Archaeology Magazine*, Vol. 5, No. 1. 10 pages.

Available online:

[https://issuu.com/americanarchaeologymagazine/docs/5.1\\_spring\\_01\\_singles\\_hr/s/13245438](https://issuu.com/americanarchaeologymagazine/docs/5.1_spring_01_singles_hr/s/13245438)

**DE LA GARZA, Mercedes**

1990 Sueño y alucinación en el mundo Nahuatl y Maya. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. 141 pages.

Available online:

<https://es.scribd.com/document/354745727/Sueno-y-alucinacion-en-el-mundo-nahuatl-y-maya-Mercedes-de-la-Garza-pdf>

**DE PASTINO, Blake**

2007 Rare Maya "Death Vase" Discovered.

Christian Wells, University of South Carolina, is quoted by De Pastino as saying:

Soil samples taken from in and around the vessel were found to contain pollen from corn, cacao, and false ipecac, a plant that causes severe nausea when eaten.

These traces suggest the vase may have been used in ancient rites the Maya practiced producing trancelike states through intense physical purging, said Christian Wells, an anthropologist at the University of South Florida who led the excavation.

"The way to have contact, to communicate, with ancestors is to have visions," Wells said .... "And you have a vision either by cutting yourself and bloodletting - which there's really no evidence for in this case - or by having some very powerful chocolate enema, or by drinking your brains out and throwing up.

Available online:

<http://www.uux.cn/viewnews-1244.html>

**De SMET, Peter A. G. M.**

1981 Enema Scenes on Ancient Maya Pottery. *Pharmacy International*, Oct. 1981, pp. 217-219. Elsevier/North- Holland Biomedical Press.

I do not have a copy of this article (Hellmuth).

**DE SMET, Peter**

1983 A multidisciplinary overview of intoxicating enema rituals in the western hemisphere. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, Vol. 9, No. 2-3. Pages 129-166. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8741\(83\)90031-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8741(83)90031-4)

Primarily on enemas of South America, but mentions Huastecs and Maya on page 140; has section on Maya enema scenes starting on page 150. cites Hellmuth on pages 140, 142, 143, 150.

Preview online:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/0378874183900314>

**DE SMET, Peter**

1985 Ritual enemas and snuffs in the Americas. 280 pages.

This is the published version of his PhD dissertation. He credited all sources and provided an entire special Appendix B to document all the iconography tips and tons of photographs from the FLAAR Photo Archive.

Available online:

[https://www.academia.edu/42951840/Ritual\\_enemas\\_and\\_snuffs\\_in\\_the\\_Americas](https://www.academia.edu/42951840/Ritual_enemas_and_snuffs_in_the_Americas)

**DE SMET, Peter and Nicholas HELLMUTH**

1986 A multidisciplinary approach to ritual enema scenes on ancient Maya pottery. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, Volume 16, Issues 2–3, June 1986, Pages 213-262.

This is a nice update by De Smet of both his discussion of the chemistry of enemas and Hellmuth's contributions on the iconography (the identification of accessories associated with the ceremony) that was an appendix in De Smet's 1985 PhD dissertation.

Download:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/0378874186900917>

**DE SMET, Peter and LOUGHMILLER, Jennifer**

2020 Patients, Practitioners, Practices, Plant Drugs: Drink/enema rituals an ancient Maya art. Part I. 66 pages.

Available online:

[https://www.academia.edu/44799913/4P\\_9a\\_Drink\\_enema\\_rituals\\_in\\_ancient\\_Maya\\_art\\_Part\\_one\\_text](https://www.academia.edu/44799913/4P_9a_Drink_enema_rituals_in_ancient_Maya_art_Part_one_text)

**DE SMET, Peter and LOUGHMILLER, Jennifer**

2020 Patients, Practitioners, Practices, Plant Drugs: Drink/enema rituals in ancient Maya art. Part II. 40 pages.

Available online:

[https://www.academia.edu/44799914/4P\\_9b\\_Drink\\_enema\\_rituals\\_in\\_ancient\\_Maya\\_art\\_Part\\_two\\_figures](https://www.academia.edu/44799914/4P_9b_Drink_enema_rituals_in_ancient_Maya_art_Part_two_figures)

**DIAMOND, Jared**

2001 Anatomy of a Ritual – ingestion of hallucinogens via enema. *Natural History* Jul 2001 110(6) 16, 18-20. American Museum of Natural History.

Quick coverage of enemas in general and how taking drugs there is better than drinking or other methods. Mentions Maya enemas but article is more on enemas in general. No new images.

<https://indexarticles.com/reference/natural-history/anatomy-of-a-ritual-2/>

**DOYLE, James**

2016 Creations Narratives on Ancient Maya Codex-Style Ceramics in the Metropolitan Museum. *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, Vol. 51. 32 pages.

Very important article because it shows lots of other iconography in addition to enemas.

Preview online:

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/691105>

**FIGUERIDO, Joaquim and DO SAMEIRO, Maria**

2020 Enema syringes from the “botica” of the Mafra convent. Chapter 4. In Do Sameiro, Maria, Duffin, Christopher and De Sousa, Germano, *Medical Heritage of the National Palace of Mafra*.

Available online:

[https://books.google.es/books?id=plfSDwAAQBAJ&dq=%22enema+scenes%22+ancient+maya+pottery&lr=&hl=es&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.es/books?id=plfSDwAAQBAJ&dq=%22enema+scenes%22+ancient+maya+pottery&lr=&hl=es&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

**FURST, Peter T. and Michael D. COE**

1977 Ritual enemas. *Natural History* 86, No. 3, pp. 88-91.

**GAMBOA, José, CASERES, Orlando and Lucía QUIÑONES**

2021 Los enemas entre los mayas prehispánicos: ¿clismafilia o práctica sexual ritualizada? In Peña, Edith and Hernández, Lilia. *Cuerpo, géneros y sexualidades Conextos mesoamericanos y contemporaneos*. 42 pages.

Explores the sexual aspect of enema rituals, and shows scene of homosexuality in Naj Tunich Cave (no enema associated); shows scene of masturbation in enema ritual.

Available online:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355982746\\_Los\\_enemas\\_entre\\_los\\_mayas\\_prehispanicos\\_clismafilia\\_o\\_practica\\_sexual\\_ritualizada](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355982746_Los_enemas_entre_los_mayas_prehispanicos_clismafilia_o_practica_sexual_ritualizada)

**GARZA, Mercedes de la**

2019 Sak naab, la flor divina del agua. Un acercamiento a su significado simbólico y su uso ritual. Chapter VII, pages 207-287 in *El Poder de las Plantas Sagradas en el Universo Maya*, Mercedes de la Garza, Coordinador. UNAM, Mexico, 230 pages.

The word enema is on her pages 228, 232, 233, 234, 235 plus on captions to enema scenes: Fig. 61,b, 62, 64.

This chapter is devoted to white water lily plant as an ingredient in liquids consumed during rituals by the Classic Maya.

I would recommend adding Rands work on water lilies; plus Hellmuth PhD dissertation plus Hellmuth documentation of which part of the water lily was consumed by fish.

**GRUBE, Nikolai**

2004 Akan—the God of Drinking, Disease, and Death. In *Continuity and Change: Maya Religious Practices in Temporal Perspective*, eds. Daniel Graña Behrens, Nikolai Grube, Christian M. Prager, Frauke Sachse, Stefanie Teufel, and Elizabeth Wagner. *Acta Mesoamerican*. 19 pages.

Available online:

<https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/31506237/Akan-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1662245608&Signature=cb~AYog94UlcKstU09b0XYV2FbF7rodIcejOUGwyG9I4FDHLIAKVkaNkvbYFKJukTnyprZ RifnE4MdVGRTKfFz4XhBsrdOtLJ45vTIXtXI0aXBUZvF-o~qjfp424alqguQBsKIKs1Bp3vCPJ0rUtegVopQbltTfVzefpU5pYV4CZW69T2Bwz4Jdz6ORox3-5j6EndMIWGM8OxNsoBz9ItVtjXEGpQwYefsx62FIInT7BPqUwL9ji1-47YXIDv7gk99msd-JEnMZ3495bM4WRK1icSMnjinKiAVFpwh4yMFMVOMdDBh5CwbpLBU9tm>

[yWhRSRdIYYgYdWTcXH2rBWA &Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA](#)

**HENDERSON, Lucia**

2008 Blood, water, vomit, and wine: Pulque in Maya and Aztec belief. *Mesoamerican Voices*, No. 3. 27 pages.

Available online.

**HALPERIN, C. T.**

2014 Maya figurines: intersections between state and household. University of Texas Press.

**HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.**

1976 Tzakol and Tepeu Maya Pottery Drawings. Foundation for Latin American Anthropological Research, Los Angeles. Part I, drawings; Part II, text.

Frank Comparato was manager of FLAAR in this decade, so our office was in Culver City, a suburb Los Angeles. Independently he founded his own separate publication company, Labyrinthos. These drawings were published by FLAAR.

We do not have the Part II text ; we have only most of the drawings (Part I). The only known copy in any library in Guatemala has only Part I and that is missing about 10 figures. So, my comments are only on the illustrations that we have.

Fig. 2 has two jugs of enema shape but lack the usual glyph that identifies the contents. But God D on the throne definitely is happy with the aroma that is clearly rising from the jug in front of him: no clyster; no bibs.

Fig. 4 is an obvious enema scene: jaguars, monkeys, deer, buffoon, lots and lots of enema jugs.

Fig. 14, personage 3 is carrying a possible enema accessory (the smaller jugs carried by hand with a rope or leather strap). Need to learn what the skeletal Xibalba demon is carrying on his backrack.

Fig. 21, Monkey and Xibalba Skeletal Death Demon each carry portable "enema jug shape" containers. But glyph on the side is Kan Cross, not the expected pulque sign.

**HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.**

1977 Classic Maya Vase Paintings, which now allow the Identification of Enema Iconography. paper read the International Symposium on Maya Art,

Architecture, Archaeology, and Hieroglyphic Writing, June 25 - July 2, 1977, Foundation for Latin American Anthropological Research, Guatemala City.

In the 1970's the impressive conferences of the national museum and Asociacion Tikal had not yet begun, so FLAAR organized a conference in 1977. The chances of finding a typed or xeroxed copy of this 1977 discussion of enema iconography is about zero. But it is notable that once I learned from Coe and Furst, within a few months I had additional documentation. Then in 1978 I published two more discussions of enema: one in "an unpublished paper" mentioned by De Smet in his appendix to his PhD dissertation. And several pages and illustrations of previously unknown enema scenes in my guidebook to the Classic Maya.

**HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.**

1978a Notes on Enema Scenes in Maya Pottery. Unpublished notes, FLAAR.

This is cited by Peter De Smet. During many years I prepared catalogs of each topic in Maya iconography and catalogs of each ceramic period. 90% of these I still have (such as several thousand pages) but have not yet found these hand-typed notes on enemas.

I hope a student can find a xerox copy at a university library since I often shared my notes (with Peter De Smet as an example). But so far, I don't have a copy, so the title I put here is an estimate.

Perhaps the title was *Classic Maya art showing dances after decapitation sacrifice*. I identified this common ritual event several in the collection of Jorge Castillo, several years before the Museo Popol Vuh was founded (first in Zone 1, then moved to Zone 10, then moved to UFK campus).

**HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.**

1978b Principal Diagnostic Accessories of Maya Enema Scenes. Pp. 137-148, Appendix B in De Smet 1985.

This is the published version of Hellmuth 1978<sup>a</sup>, revised and updated by De Smet in 1984. It was subsequently republished as De Smet and Hellmuth 1986.

The reason this Hellmuth 1978 report was issued so many times is because it had dozens, scores, of photographs of enema scenes not pictured in any journal article or book.

**HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.**

1978c Tikal, Copan Travel Guide. A General Introduction to Maya Art, Architecture & Archaeology. FLAAR.

Enema scenes on pottery are pictured on pages: 166-167, 188, 210, 212.

Since this is a "travel guide" it is not expected that it include lots of discussions of iconography. But since I had found lots of vases and bowls with enema ritual scenes, these enema scenes are discussed on:

p. 196

p. 210: enema bib, enema jug.

p. 212; first published mention of enema syringe on Castillo Bowl vomit bib, enema jug, enema syringe

By 1978 (within one single year after Furst and Coe recognized the enema accessories) I was able to find 50 paintings showing smoking, enema rituals, or comparable.

**HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.**

1984 Principal Diagnostic Accessories of Maya Enema Scenes. FLAAR. Pp: 137-148, Appendix B, in De Smet PhD dissertation.

Pp 137-148; then captions Appendix C, pp. 149-159; then the actual photographs, Plate 1, 2, 4 through 14c, 16 through 33, 35 through 38, 40 through 43.

Originally written 1978 (see that year on previous page). Updated in 1984 and included (with full credit) by Peter De Smet in the 1985 published version of his PhD dissertation.

**HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.**

1985 Principal Diagnostic Accessories of Maya Enema Scenes. Preliminary Notes in Maya Iconography, No. 5, F.L.A.A.R., Culver City, CA.

We do not have this in the FLAAR library. If you have a copy available, a scanned copy in open PDF format would be greatly appreciated.

**HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.**

1985 Principal Diagnostic Accessories of Maya Enema Scenes. Pp: 137-148, Appendix B, in De Smet PhD dissertation.

This is listed several times since it was written first in 1978; then revised November 1984, then included in the De Smet dissertation publication; and then revised again in 1986 in co-authored De Smet and Hellmuth 1986.

The reason this Hellmuth 1978 report was issued so many times is because it had dozens, scores, of photographs of enema scenes not pictured in any journal article or book.

### **HELLMUTH, Nicholas**

2022 Time-line of Discovery of Enema Paraphernalia and Enema Rituals. FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala).

Work in progress, to be published by mid-September.

### **HELLMUTH, Nicholas**

2022 Classic Maya Enema Scenes not previously Published, Classic Maya Enema Ceremonies on Vases in Museo Popol Vuh, UFM, Enema Accessories pictured in Maya Plates, Vases, Bowls Elsewhere, Iconography of Enema Jug, Enema Clyster, and Enema Scenes in general. FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala).

Work in progress, first draft to be published by mid-September.

### **KERR, Justin**

2001 The Transformation of Xbalanqué or the Many Faces of God Aprime. Maya Vase Database.

Covers many topics (so not a report on enema iconography). That said, has lots of enema scenes scattered in the illustrations. If you spend week-after-week studying enema iconography you soon realize that God A' (Aprime) is present in many (but not all) enema rituals. And much of the ritual includes performances by actors dressed as naguals, supernatural's, demons of Xibalba, etc. Pure pageantry. Of course, once you drank your share of the alcoholic beverage and injected your share of the alcoholic and drug-laced enema, you would rise up (or descend down) to experience visions of Xibalba.

### **LEMUS, Enrique**

2006 Los Enemas Prehispánicos como Instrumentos para Aplicar Probióticos. Instituto de Agroindustrias. 4 pages.

Cites illustrations from Taube 1998 but the Lemus article is on the benefits of probiotics being ingested via enema. Shows one enema insertion scene not in Taube 1998; I have not seen this Veracruz enema scene elsewhere. Lemus cites Johnson 1992, but that book I do not have in my library.

It is always helpful to have additional comments on the potential ingredients and the potential effects of these plant chemicals. But it is obvious the Classic Maya were seeking drunken and hallucinogenic effects; but nice to know they may have received some probiotics also (though most of what went in even via enema was probably vomited or pooped out).

Available online:

<http://repositorio.utm.mx/handle/123456789/199?mode=full>

**LOOPER, Matthew**

2019 The Beast Between, Deer in Maya Art and Civilization. University of Texas Press.

An excellent report; one of the best that I have read.

**LOWY, B.**

1972 Mushroom symbolism in Maya Codices. *Mycologia*, 64, 816-821.

Lowy visited the FLAAR camp at Yaxha during the 1970's. He was still looking to see if hallucinogenic mushrooms were native to the Peten. None were found. This kind of mushroom is native in other parts of Guatemala and areas of Mexico.

**LOWY, B.**

1977 Hallucinogenic Mushrooms in Guatemala. *Journal of Psychedelic Drugs*, 9, 123-125.

**LOUGHMILLER-Cardinal, Jennifer**

2018 Mayan Ritual Beverage Production Considering the Ceramics. Chapter 8, pp. 198-233 in: *Ancient Psychoactive Substances*, Scott M. Fitzpatrick, editor. University Press of Florida.

Uses basic Kerr rollout photos. Page 212, Figure 8,4, helpful view of different ceramic containers for liquids.

**MacLEOD, Barbara**

2022 A Shrine to the God of Hellish Drunkenness. Vol. 50, Issue 8, August 2022. Institute of Maya Studies, IMS.

Mentions and shows (in her Fig. 4) vomiting God A' with an enema syringe. This is a perfect rendition of an enema syringe, drawn by Nicolai Grube. The tube part sticks out diagonally; the open area of the gourd or whatever contains the liquid is quite large.

**MARGIL DE JESUS, Antonio**

1984 A Spanish manuscript letter on the Lacandonnes in the Archives of the Indies at Seville by Antonio Margil de Jesús. Frank Comparato, editor. Revised edition of Tozzer (1913). Labyrinthos, Culver City, CA.

**MAYER, Karl Herbert**

1984 Maya Monuments: Sculpture of Unknown Provenance in Middle America. Verlag Karl-Friedrich von Flemming, Berlin.

Photos of sculptures of San Diego (Yucatan) by Marcia Lewandowski from this field work by Mayer are used by Barrera and Taube 1987 (and cited to both Lewandowski and Mayer).

**MAYER, Karl Herbert**

2003 Ancient Maya Vessel representing an Enema Scene. *mexicon*, Vol. XXV, August 203, pages 97-98.

Photo and drawing of bowl showing an enema syringe being administered (by the person himself). Photographed in the museum in Uaxactun, Peten, Guatemala.

It is very helpful to have scholars document enema scenes that are not in any database; otherwise we all just use the convenient databases (and miss the scenes such as Karl Herbert Mayer shows here).

Available on-line as download.

**NORDENSKIÖLD, Nils Erland Herbert von**

1930 The Use of Enema Tubes and Enema Syringes among the Indians. In Nordenskiöld, *Modifications in Indian Culture through Inventions and Loans*, 184–195. Comparative Ethnographical Studies 8. Gothenburg, Sweden: Erlanders Boktryckeri.

**RÄTSCH, Christian**

2005 The encyclopedia of psychoactive plants: ethnopharmacology and its applications. Park Street Press. 942 pages.

2,688 pages in the electronic version available on-line.

Enemas frequently mentioned but almost solely for South America, or if for Mesoamerica primarily for the Huichol. You must read through 2,150 pages (that's right, over TWO THOUSAND PAGES) to find a scene of a Maya enema ritual. No citation whatsoever for where he got the scene but rather obviously it is his drawing from same Tzakol bowl of Hellmuth photograph Plate 1b (or someone's later rollout of this scene since Ratsch shows the feet).

If you have the hardcopy book, just look in the Index and you find where enemas are mentioned. Maya enemas are on pages 743-744 and here De Smet 1981, De Smet 1983, de Smet 1985 and De Smet and Hellmuth 1986 are mentioned.

The original edition was published in German in 1998 under the title *Enzyklopädie der psychoaktiven Pflanzen*. First U.S. edition published in 2005 by Park Street Press.

The electronic version has no pagination; but the PDF is 2,668 pages!

A web page copies-and-pastes the enema aspect.

<https://doctorlib.info/herbal/encyclopedia-psychoactive-plants-ethnopharmacology/143.html>

**RICE, Prudence M. and SOUTH, Katherine E.**

2015 Revisiting monkeys on pots: A contextual consideration of primate imagery on Classic Lowland Maya pottery. *Ancient Mesoamerica*, Vol. 26. Pages: 275-294.

This article by Rice and South is a great example of how the background of each individual Mayanist enables them to recognize features that other scholar missed. These authors were able to recognize the presence of an enema clyster on a vase that I published back in 1978. I (Hellmuth) totally missed noticing this enema accessory even though on other pages in the same 1978 book I show and discuss enema iconography.

I estimate this vase is missing from 99% of discussions of enema clysters.

The photos of this vase we have been trying to find for many years.

Available online:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ancient-mesoamerica/article/abs/revisiting-monkeys-on-pots-a-contextual-consideration-of-primate-imagery-on-classic-lowland-maya-pottery/3BC98B1D89986CAF1417C9DDE0AE6D19>

**ROBICSEK, Francis**

1978 The Smoking Gods, Tobacco in Maya Art, History, and Religion. University of Oklahoma Press. 233 pages.

Enema is not in the index. Furst and Coe 1977 on enemas not in bibliography (but lots of Furst publications on other drug use in Mesoamerica).

Shows Vase of the 31 Gods but does not notice the enema syringes  
Plate 146, does not accept Hellmuth recognition of enema bib but does mention "enema tray" page 130 (should be enema clyster)  
Plate 139, Shows another enema scene but does not recognize that aspect (Plate 141).

Ironic that although Robicsek was a medical doctor (who thus obviously new of enemas as medical cleansing treatment) and although he writes on tobacco use, he does not focus on enemas whatsoever. But his book does help provide a good corpus of scenes in Classic Maya art that show smoking.

**ROBICSEK, Francis and Donald M. HALES**

1981 The Maya Book of the Dead, the Ceramic Codex. Yale University.

This is the largest collection of previously unpublished vases, bowls, and plates in the world up to this date (1981). The photographs include vases, plates, and bowls nowhere else published (because they are not in any major photo archive). Many may have been in Robicsek's own private collection. The focus of the iconography was diverse, but so far, I have not found discussion of enema nor mention in captions when enema jugs or clysters are indeed in the scenes.

**RODRIGUEZ, María and LOPEZ, Miriam**

2011 Las mujeres mayas en la antigüedad. Centro de estudios de antropología de la mujer. 259 pages.

Available online:

[https://ceam.mx/images/stories/mujeres\\_mayas.pdf](https://ceam.mx/images/stories/mujeres_mayas.pdf)

**SHARER, Robert J.**

2007 From the Olmec to Columbus. Pages 1-53 in: *The Jay I. Kislak Collection at the Library of Congress*, Arthur Dunkelman, editor. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

This collection of top quality Classic Maya art (and several items from elsewhere in America) has some of the absolutely rarest scenes available to study. The iconography is amazing, but the illustrations are so tiny that you can't see any detail. Therefore we at FLAAR publish all flora, fauna, ecosystems, art, architecture in our own format so we can show everything at a size to help scholars. Our rollout drawings of 1976 were published at double page size.

Most of the iconographic documentation is by John Carlson, so he deserves the enema aspects under his own name, which I do by adding Carlson 2007 in the present bibliography.

**SCHWARTZKOPF, Stacey**

2022 Ancient American civilizations, states, and drugs. Chapter 4. In Gootenberg, Paul. *The Oxford Handbook of Global Drug History*. Oxford University Press.

Available online:

<https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=yCNeEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA73&dq=enemas+mayas&ots=toF11vhNkT&sig=Q1ObFYaXI5WAwlyMWAgG0prRrgU#v=onepage&q=enemas%20mayas&f=false>

**SEINFELD, Daniel M.**

2018 Intoxication Rituals and Gender among the Ancient Maya. Chapter 7, Pp. 176-197 in: *Ancient Psychoactive Substances*, Scott M. Fitzpatrick, editor. University Press of Florida.

Uses basic Kerr rollout photos. Nice discussion of gender differences in participants in enema rituals.

**SEKI, Tadahiko and FUKUSHIMA, Hidetada**

2019 Self-administered alcohol enema causing chemical proctocolitis. *Open Access Emergency Medicine*. Pages 129-132.  
doi: [10.2147/OAEM.S208214](https://doi.org/10.2147/OAEM.S208214)

Available online:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6572673/>

**STONE, Andrea**

2002 Spirals, ropes, and feathers: The iconography of rubber balls in Mesoamerican art. *Ancient Mesoamerica*, Vol. 13. Pages 21-39. DOI: 10.1017/S0956536102131026

Andrea Stone has produced lots of material that assist iconographers.

Preview online:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26308041>

**STROSS, Brian and KERR, Justin**

1990 Notes on the Maya vision quest through enema. *The Maya vase book*, No. 2. Pages: 348-361.

Available on-line but with no illustrations included.

**TAUBE, Karl A.**

1989 Ritual Humor in Classic Maya Religion. Pages 351-382, Chapter 24 in: *Word and Image in Maya Culture, Explorations in Language, Writing, and Representation*, Edited by William F. Hanks and Don S. Rice. University of Utah Press.

Reprinted 2018 in: *Studies in Ancient Mesoamerican Art and Architecture: Selected Works by Karl Andreas Taube*, pp. 118–149. Precolumbia Mesoweb Press, San Francisco.

This article is focused on clowns and other comparable characters in Maya scenes, especially pictured on ceramics and the incised bone of Copan (Taube Figure 24.9,c). But since some of these clowns are part of enema

ceremonies, Taube Figure 24.9 shows several personages with enema bibs (and clyster on the Copan incised scene). When seated, a person with this kind of a bib is usually in an enema ritual.

Taube cites FLAAR photos as sources and of course Kerr database for others.

### **TAUBE, Karl**

- 1998 Enemas rituals en Mesoamérica. Curación, purificación e intoxicación. In *Ritos Prehispánicos, arqueología*, Vol. VI, Num. 34, Mexico. 6 pages.

Lots of helpful illustrations and discussions.

Starts with two-level enema scene published by Coe, but then shows helpful to see enema syringes from different parts of Mesoamerica. Then shows original 1977 rollout from Furst and Coe. Then drunken scene from Kerr rollout where Taube shows pulque hieroglyph chi(a); then Copan enema clyster also pictured by Barbara Fash (very good rendition of the enema clyster not often pictured in general discussions of enemas). Then shows clyster injection and hallucinogenic dancers from San Diego, Yucatan (a scene not often pictured elsewhere). The last page illustration is even more helpful, showing a carved door jamb from Campeche with mid-sized enema jug (the kind you carry in your hand) with an enema syringe above.

Available online:

<https://es.scribd.com/document/346104160/Arq-Mex-34-Ritos-Prehispanicos>

### **TIESLER, Vera, CUCINA, Andrea, STANTON, Travis W. and David A. FREIDEL, editors**

- 2017 *Eternal Performance: The Royal Tombs. Chapter 7, pp. 185-217 in: Before Kukulcán: bioarchaeology of Maya Life, Death, and Identity at Classic Period Yaxuná.* Vera Tiesler, Andrea Cucina, Travis W. Stanton, and David A. Freidel, editors. University of Arizona Press.

Page 191 deserves to be in the history of enemas no matter how untraditional it is for ceramicists to be speaking of sphincters:

...Next to this assemblage and set on edge we found a basal-flange bowl with what Michael Coe (1978:78, Plate 11) identifies as the “anus” glyph around the outer wall and a depiction of a person in ecstatic trance transforming into a flying creature. The glyph in question (T61.77.585a) occurs in the text and is painted on the vessel discussed by Coe as a series of red-centered circles separated by crossed-bands. On a picture of a vessel published by Kerr (K1890), a similar band of circles separates two

scenes of enema users in the characteristic pose of self-administration. But in this case the circles are clearly variants of the anus glyph with fine black swirling lines depicting the sphincter muscles within the circles. On the outer surfaces of the basal-flange bowls in Burial 23, the sphincter muscles are depicted as fine undulating black lines on beige backgrounds (see Stanton et al. 2010:figure 5.189). The rims of the vessels are decorated with circles like those forming bands on the vessels depicting enema rituals described above. Returning to the vessel in question at the western end of Burial 23, this person is in the pose of self-administered enema (Barrera Rubio and Taube 1987; Furst and Coe 1977; Stross and Kerr 1990) with the clyster evolved into a scorpion tail.

A simple round circle with a home in the middle is not entirely convincing to be a sphincter entrance to your tail pipe. I say this because in September 2022, while preparing a report on enema scenes previously not published, I found an anatomical design between two individuals (each of whom are administering their own enema clyster). This anatomical design is a rather obvious sketch of the entrance to your tail pipe, a discovery I had not expected to make, and an icon I definitely was not looking for. I was focused on the enema jugs, the clysters, the scarves, the smaller jugs either carried by a rope or cord, or the bibs. I am not focused on the anatomy nor interior chemical aspects. Peter De Smet handles the interior chemical aspects with abundant knowledge and experience. But now epigraphers have available a sphincter image to study; it's not a hieroglyph, it's an anatomical symbol that is embarrassingly realistic.

**VELANDIA Jagua, César Augusto**

2014 Variaciones Irreverentes Sobre el Arte de FUMAR Alucinógenos y cultura en el Noroeste de Argentina y el Suroeste de Colombia.

Although the title is not on the Classic Maya, some of the discussion and several of the illustrations show Classic Maya enema rituals, including enema clysters. The focus is on Argentina and Colombia.

One caption should be improved: "Man taking an enema using a conch shell syringe" should be rewritten as: "Man taking an enema using a gourd or flexible enema clyster." Sorry, highly unlikely that the Maya used heavy conch shells as an enema syringe.

Author suggests K6184 is an enema accessory (probably he is suggesting it's a clyster). But it is ceramic. However, since deer appear in many rituals, nothing would surprise me. But the normal tube to stick up your tail end is wood or bone, not ceramic. That said, ceramic clysters do exist elsewhere in Mesoamerica.

**WILBERT, Johannes**

1987 Tobacco and Shamanism in South America. Yale University Press.

## **Books on Maya Civilization that do, or do not, mention enemas**

Obviously, all early books on Maya Civilization by Spinden, Morley, etc. do not mention enema rituals. But it is crucial to check all books after the 1977 recognition of the enema by Coe and Furst. It is also helpful to see which major publications do not include discussion of enema rituals (though most discuss penis perforation).

The following list is just a start, but the point is, should a book on “The Classic Maya” just show beautiful temples, palaces, ballcourts, artistic stelae, and attractive artifacts. Or should a book include the reality of human sacrifice (and sacrificing babies, especially in caves), the reality of enemas, the reality of constant warfare?

Lots more books can be added in future editions, but I wanted at least to introduce this topic (some books totally don't mention drugs and enemas; other mention then only in passing). I do not recommend focusing just on these aspects; my iconography is more on the size, shape of the clysters and associated jugs; on the presence of jaguars, monkeys and deer (often actors in perfectly designed costumes), etc. I am also studying the bibs, scarves, and hand-held jugs (which are either carried by a rope or textile handle, or are hung upside down from the necklace of the celebrant).

The books below are just a sample.

### **FOSTER, Lynn V.**

2002 Handbook to Life in the Ancient Maya World. Facts on File, Inc. 402 pages.

Index lists enemas on page 341. “....some painted scenes on vases suggest that there were parties devoted to inebriation through enema (enemas, because they bypass the digestive tract, have a more immediate impact than drinking).”

Furst and Coe 1977 is listed in her bibliography (p. 353). But De Smet is missing.

Download online:

<https://docplayer.org/80117823-Handbook-to-life-in-the-ancient-maya-world.html>

### **HELLMUTH, Nicholas M.**

1978b Tikal, Copan Travel Guide. A General Introduction to Maya Art, Architecture & Archaeology. FLAAR.

This may be the first general popular book on the Maya that added ritual enema scenes to the portfolio of topics to show the world about the Classic Maya (since enemas had only been recognized a few months before, in 1977, by Furst and Coe).

**SCHELE, Linda and David FREIDEL**

1990 A Forest of Kings, The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya.

Enema is not in the Index. 542 pages of information and documentation on rulership and the hieroglyphic inscriptions that document rulership. No focus on enemas (understandably, as this is the academic tradition for a popular book by capable scholars).

**Books on Maya Art  
and Art Exhibit Catalogs that do, or do not, mention enemas**

**COE, Michael D.**

1973 The Maya Scribe and his World. Grolier Club.

All books prior to Furst and Coe 1977 understandably do not mention enemas in the amazing scene on page 82 (rollout drawing of Vase of the 31 Gods). Every aspect of enema accessories are pictured (lots of clysters). But no one is inserting one into their tail end so none of us recognized the objects being showcased as enema syringes. Several other drawings show possible enema jugs in palace scenes (page 104) but no clysters and no pulque glyph on the jug, so not a complete "enema scene." Jugs can hold other liquids beside just for enema ceremonies.

**COE, Michael D. and Justin KERR**

1998 The Art of the Maya Scribe, Harry N. Abrams. 240 pages.

One of the best designed coffee-table books on the Maya. The photos of stone sculptures are the best I have ever seen. One aerial photo is by Nicholas Hellmuth. Altogether an impressive book, visually and intellectually. Enemas are not pictured or discussed; this book is on epigraphy (hieroglyphic inscriptions).

First published in 1997 in the UK; then in 1998 in the USA.

**HOUSTON, Stephen, STUART, David and Karl TAUBE**

2006 The Memory of Bones: Body, Being, and Experience among the Classic Maya. University of Texas Press. 324 pages.

Super helpful when a 324-page monograph on Maya art, epigraphy and iconography is available on-line without having to give your personal information or subscribe by paying money to an on-line source claiming to be "for scholars."

Houston, Stuart and Taube provide a realistic aspect of the Classic Maya by having in their Index the coverage that enemas have rarely had in other large monographs. Here is their Index listing for enemas:

**Enemas: administration of,** 105–106, 117, 118, 118, 121, 122, 132; and drunkenness, 127, 191; and sex, 117, 122, 125.

These dozen pages are filled with crucial information on enema clysters, jugs, and the chemical ingredients. I would list this Houston, Stuart and Taube book as essential reading for learning the reality of enema ceremonies among the Classic Maya.

### **REENTS-Budet, Dorie**

1994 *Painting the Maya Universe: Royal Ceramics of the Classic period.* Duke University Press. 381 pages.

The word enema is not in the Index but a few other sad human reality aspects are indeed pictured: Fig. 3.14, c shows drunken rituals; Fig. 3.9, c shows a baby with its chest hacked open to take out its heart; the baby is being “served” in a basket or plate.

Hundreds of photos show an impressive range of primarily polychrome art and primarily of the Late Classic, Peten and Belize. Lots of Altun Ha style are nicely shown. It helps to identify individual painters and “schools” (such as Altun Ha style). This is an essential publication for style, colors, and subject matter of Classic Maya ceramic art.

### **ROBICSEK, Francis**

1978 *The Smoking Gods Tobacco in Maya Art, History and Religion.* University of Oklahoma Press. 232 pages.

Enema scenes are shown and the enema aspect mentioned. Page 21 shows four enema scenes, all labeled as enema scenes.

Clyster held by monkey in Fig. 146 not mentioned.

The clyster on the Vase of the 31 Gods (Fig. 170) is not mentioned.

However, nothing in the bibliography lists any enema publications (not even Coe and Furst 1977). But Coe wrote the Foreward.

Robicsek nicely acknowledges the access to the documentation of Nicholas Hellmuth (page XIII). He also cites Hellmuth 1978 as *Classic Maya art*

*showing dances after decapitation sacrifice.* Curious whether this is the same document that I provided to Peter De Smet earlier.

So far, I can't find any page in the book that cites who provided each photograph, but I estimate that dozens of the photos are possibly from FLAAR. However, on the front cover he says, in effect, all photos by Francis Robicsek.

**SCHELE, Linda and Mary Ellen MILLER**

1986 The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art. George Braziller and Kimbell Art Museum. 335 pages.

Enema is in the Index, pages 145, 152, 192. But so far I have not found any actual enema scenes on any ceramic in the exhibit. Notable, because the exhibit features penis perforation quite often (since this was a major ritual for rulers of the Late Classic Maya). But since the focus was "Blood" of Kings, the penis perforation ritual is understandably featured.

Photographs (by Justin Kerr) are excellent quality; line drawings are outstanding.

**Archaeology Reports, Site Reports,  
that show artifacts that may have been associated with enemas  
(enema jugs, bone tubes possibly of the enema clysters, etc.)**

Lots more should be added, but here are three to start with:

**ORREGO, Miguel and Carlos Rudy LARIOS**

1983 Reporte de las investigaciones arqueologicas en el grupo 5E-11 Tikal. Instituto de Antropologia e Historia de Guatemala, Parque Nacional Tikal, Guatemala.

Cited by Hellmuth 1978b.

**RICH, Michelle**

2017 Archaeology at El Perú-Waka': A Maya Ritual Resurrection Scene in Broader Perspective.

Mentions that one of the figurines is presenting an enema syringe.

<https://unframed.lacma.org/2017/09/21/archaeology-el-%C3%BA-waka%E2%80%99-maya-ritual-resurrection-scene-broader-perspective>

**TAUBE, Karl Andreas**

[1989]2018 Ritual Humor in Classic Maya Religion. Chapter 4 In *Studies in Ancient Mesoamerican Art and Architecture: Selected Works by Karl Andreas Taube*, pp. 118–149. Pre-Columbian Mesoweb Press, San Francisco.

**WILLEY, Gordon**

1978 Artifacts. No. 1 of Excavations at Seibal, Department of Petén. Peabody Museum, Memoirs, Vol. 14, No. 1. Harvard University, Cited by Hellmuth 1978b.

**Suggested web pages that mention Maya Enemas**

<https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/artemis-gallery/maya-polychrome-vessel-w-enema-ritual-scene-1261336>

Assumed to be authentic but what he is sticking in his tail end is not a clyster.

<https://themazatlanpost.com/2018/09/05/intoxicating-liquor-enemas-the-extravagant-ritual-performed-by-the-mayans/>

Intoxicating liquor enemas: the extravagant ritual performed by the Mayans

<https://doctorlib.info/herbal/encyclopedia-psychoactive-plants-ethnopharmacology/143.html>

The Encyclopedia of Psychoactive Plants: Ethnopharmacology and Its Applications: Enemas

<https://www.enemabag.com/enema-history-mayan-culture/>

Return to Enema History Overview: Enema History in the Mayan Culture.