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## From the Director

The Early Copán Acropolis Program (ECAP) of the University of Pennsylvania Museum has been an extraordinarily successful research endeavor. Under the able leadership of Dr. Robert Sharer, the Shoemaker Professor and Curator-in-charge of the American Section, and David Sedat, the Project's field director, the research effort at this great ancient city in Honduras has already produced significant contributions to the scholarly understanding of Classic Maya civilization. Through meticulous conservation of the excavated objects, ECAP will also help to bolster the magnificence of Copán's new museum and thus support the general goal of increasing tourism and economic development at Copán.

I have had the privilege of visiting Copán twice in recent years. Walking through the several kilometers of tunnels that have been excavated under the Acropolis is a breathtaking experience. The decorations on the walls of earlier structures are often so well preserved that they appear to have just been painted, and the tombs were filled with eye-catching objects of pottery and stone. I should emphasize, however, that ECAP has not only uncovered beautiful buildings and objects, but has also shed important new light on the changing nature of rulership at the beginning of the royal dynasty at Copán in the 5th century AD. The project has gleaned new understandings of the size, orientation, and groupings of the public constructions and residences of the early rulers of Copán. ECAP's findings will also illuminate the key question of the origin of the royal dynasty and its possible connections with Central Mexico.

The research at Copán carries on the proud tradition of Maya studies at the Museum throughout this century. As the analyses of the data collected at Copán continue in the next few years, we certainly can expect to see a number of exciting new insights into ancient Maya civilization emerging from the work of Dr. Sharer and his many ECAP colleagues.

*Jeremy A. Sabloff*

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*The Williams Director*

Be sure to visit the Museum's Web site: [www.upenn.edu/museum](http://www.upenn.edu/museum)