The Glencairn Museum

The Glencairn Museum is located to the northeast of Philadelphia in the picturesque hamlet of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. The Museum's holdings represent the amalgamated collections of Raymond Pitcairn (1885–1966) and of the Academy of the New Church, an academic institution founded in Philadelphia in 1876 by followers of the Swedenborgian faith and moved to Bryn Athyn in 1897.

The Romanesque castle of Glencairn was built by Raymond Pitcairn (Fig. 13), a charismatic lawyer/businessman-turned-architect, master-builder of the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, and patron of the Swedenborgian Church. He planned it as a home for his family of eight children and as a "little castle for the collection," as he himself described it in 1926 letter. The collection is that which Pitcairn amassed in the 1920s and 1930s of medieval stained glass, architectural fragments and sculpture, tapestries, treasury art, manuscripts, and weaponry—a collection said to be unique and among the finest in the world (Fig. 14). He focused his collecting interests on French 12th and 13th century material and chose pieces whose Old Testament themes or style might serve as inspiration for the artists working under his direction on the Cathedral and on his home (Fig. 15). Although his medieval collection forms the core of the Glencairn Museum's holdings, Raymond Pitcairn also made important purchases of Greek, Roman, and Cypriot artifacts, including over 250 pieces of Classical jewelry, and Near Eastern, Egyptian, and Asian art. Glencairn was bequeathed in 1979 to the Academy of the New Church by Raymond Pitcairn's widow and opened to the public as the Glencairn Museum in 1982.

Eggi's Village
Reconsidering the Meaning of Matriarchy

Peggy Reeves Sanday

There are many living societies in the world today in which women hold positions of significant power and authority in the public domain, positions that are quite different from what we know in contemporary Western society. Knowledge of such societies goes as far back as reports on the ancient Lyceans of Asia Minor. Early Greek philosophers and historians considered them remarkable because they showed "women more honor than the men...[they] took their names from their mothers and [left] their estates to their daughters, not to their sons" (Nicolas of Damascopolis, quoted in Bachelin 1967 [1897]: 122). The contention that such societies represented a middle stage in a presumed universal cultural evolution from "primitive promiscuity" to civilized patriarchy was an important aspect of 19th century Western social theorizing.

Western anthropology gave up on the idea of a matriarchal stage early in the 20th century. Today, most...
anthropologists would agree with the statement that there has never been a society where women ruled. Many would also concur with the notion that females do not exercise economic or political authority in matrilineal societies, even though names and property are inherited through the female line. In my view, the latter conclusion lacks scientific validity. There are some matrilineal societies in which women share power equally with men.

I carried out ethnographic field research in such a society over a sixteen-year period, from 1981 to 1997. The Minangkabau of West Sumatra, Indonesia, are known to anthropologists as the largest and most modern matrilineal society in the world today (Figs. 1, 2). The Minangkabau themselves label their social system a matriarchy or "matriarchate," using a term borrowed from their Dutch colonizers. By this term, the Minangkabau mean that women have more rights than men in the daily affairs of village life.

In this photo essay I try to convey through the eyes of a cultural anthropologist aspects of daily life as I experienced it in a Minangkabau village. Spending in all more than two years in Balabuh, I developed a relationship of unusual intimacy with one family that included four generations of women. These women chose to name one of their children after me, a girl who was born on my birthday while I was in the village. This essay, and the exhibition on which it is based, focuses on my namesake, Eggi, and her village. I took pictures of Eggi from the time she was born until she was nine years old. The result is a unique photographic record of a young girl growing up in a matrilineal "matriarchate." For this essay, I include pictures of typical activities and life-cycle ceremonies in order to approach the subject of "matriarchy" through the reality of life as it is lived on a daily basis.

THE FOUNDATION OF VILLAGE LIFE

Daily life in Eggi’s village is guided by the demands of the agricultural cycle, particularly production of the all-important staple of rice, as well as garden produce such as peppers, corn, bananas, and coconuts. The Minangkabau consider rice the only food that fills the stomach and makes one strong. Without rice people feel weak: their stomachs are empty and their souls vacant. For some, like Pak Edi, Eggi’s father, daily life revolves around the family’s rice fields. The rice cycle begins with tilling the soil, which Pak Edi does with the family’s buffalo. While this is being done unshelled rice seeds are germinated in water. When the seedlings begin to sprout they are sown in the “rice nursery,” then moved to the rice fields where they are eventually harvested (Figs. 3-5).

During the year, daily work is punctuated by life-cycle ceremonies—marking birth, marriage, and death—and Islamic religious observances. Women play a central role in both agricultural and ceremonial activities, but are less important in the Islamic religious institutions. Although the women pray faithfully, many of them five times a day following Islamic dictates, these institutions are coordinated by men. Looking at religion alone, one might well conclude that the Minangkabau are patriarchal. Seeing village life more completely leads to a different conclusion.

The Minangkabau live by the rule of both Islamic law and their customary law (called adat), which preceded the entrance of Islam into the area. Matrilineal customs stem from adat, not religious law. Adat is based on a philosophy which dictates that nature must be taken as a teachable host. "Because nature surrounds us in all the events of our lives, the rules of adat must be based on nature," people say. The most important natural law is growth nurtured by the sun, rain, the mother, or by other physical forces. This means that the mother must be dominant because she is closest to her children and establishes the character of the generations.

The Minangkabau orientation to nature is reflected in many ways in proverbs filled with allusions to nature, as well as in the rich carving and textile traditions that incorporate motifs derived from the local flora. The orientation to nature is most evident in the reverence shown for Mt. Merapi, the volcanic mountain that dominates the landscape throughout West Sumatra.

The Minangkabau see no contradiction between their matrilineal custom and the patrilineal emphasis of Islam. The first applies to ancestral property, while the second applies to property acquired in an individual's lifetime. Although ancestral property must be inherited equally by matrilineal descendants, there is more flexibility in the disposal of the "house" type of property.

A sojourner in any Minangkabau village quickly makes apparent the central role women play in village and household affairs. Since these activities occupy the physical and social energy of daily life, there is some truth to the contention that women are at the center of Minangkabau society. For example, after marriage a husband moves into the household of his wife and contributes his labor and income there. Women inherit the ancestral rice and farm lands, along with the houses of the older women (Figs. 6, 7). Women manage the proceeds of the land, with the cooperation of their brothers and the senior male members of their matrilineal clan. Women are the prime movers in all non-Islamic ceremonial activity. Without women, village life would literally grind to a halt.

Each matrilineage has a small number of titles which are conferred on carefully selected men. Eggi’s great-uncle, Datuk Llan, is the titled male leader of her matrilineage (Fig. 6). There are strict criteria specifying a man’s eligibility for a title (Fig. 8). Most importantly, he must be a direct matrilineal descendant of the man from whom he inherits the title. The title confers considerable responsibility in the management of internal clan affairs with respect to the ancestral land inherited by women. These affairs are conducted by a man only with the agreement of his close female relatives. Because men in this position could potentially abuse clan interests for their own profit, the man chosen to receive the title must be honest, honest, true, truthful, straightforward, and able to uphold the rules of adat. A man who fails in his role can be divested of his title. If he commits some egregious offense, such as selling clan property for private gain, he can be struck dead by malefactors of the same clan. In one case in which people said that a man on whom the title Datuk had been conferred met with sudden, unexpected death because he violated the oath of the ancestors.

THE ROLE OF CEREMONY

The food prepared and exchanged by women frames and structures a ceremony, gives it its house, so to speak, while the ritual speeches made by men during the ceremony anchor the activity in customary law (adat). No ceremony would be complete without the work and displays of both sexes. However, in terms of sheer energy and hard work as well as their much greater numbers at a ceremony, women play the dominant role. It would be quite possible to hold a ceremony with a few men, but no ceremony would be complete without the input and attendance of many women. Men, on the other hand, play an important role in settling interclan disputes. Together, the activities of men and women preserve and reproduce Minangkabau culture.

"The unfurling, blooming, expansion of nature is our teacher."

Minangkabau proverb

FIG. 2. MAP OF INDONESIA. The province of West Sumatra, the traditional homeland of the Minangkabau people, is one of eight provinces in Sumatra. The fourth largest of Indonesia’s three hundred ethnic groups, the Minangkabau constitute three percent of the entire Indonesian population and twenty-five percent of the Sumatran population. About 4 million Minangkabau live in West Sumatra. They speak a dialect of Malay which formed the basis for the national language of Indonesia and which some linguists argue is the parent language of modern Malay. The Minangkabau are famous in Indonesia and Malaysia for their matrilineal social system in which all ancestral property is inherited by women. They have also earned the reputation of being one of the most Islamized peoples in Indonesia.

Map by Arief Abidin
FIG. 3. SOWING, 1996. Pak Edi, Egg's father, is sowing rice seeds in the nursery beside one of Wick's rice fields. Once sown, the seeds are protected from wind, rain, and animals with a cover of banana leaves. The rare people take in protecting the delicate seedlings from germination to final harvesting reminds me of the importance the Minangkabau attach to the idea that from weakness comes strength.

FIG. 4. THE RICE NURSERY, 1996. Men and women labor equally in the rice fields. Though men plough, both sexes prepare a field for irrigation, clear it of weeds, and sow the seeds. Generally, it is women's job to plant the seedlings. Here Egg's mother Wick removes the protective covering from the germinated rice seedlings in preparation for the planting, which will take place in a few more days.

FIG. 5. PLANTING, 1996. Two women helpers plant the seedlings in neat rows, following a string marker to make the rows evenly spaced and parallel. Pak Edi is in the background pulling weeds from the irrigated plot. After the seedlings have sprouted and grown strong, men and women will dig trenches to siphon off the water and the plants will continue to grow in a dry field. Weeding is an important part of the process until harvest time. Usually, women weed in teams. Although the work of weeding is backbreaking, it is a time when groups of men and women are together in the fields. They shout out at each other, singing, joking, and indulging in gossip.

The Minangkabau seem to be the happiest when they are working in their fields. The most joyful time is the harvest when teams of men cut the rice plants while women separate the plants from the stalk to take to the rice mill for hulling. After the field is cut, boys and young men come out to fly their newly made kites (see front cover).

FIG. 6. EGG'S MATRILINEAL HOUSEHOLD, 1985. Women are much more prevalent than men in daily village activities because many men leave the village to trade or work in other areas. The predominance of women is strikingly evident in this family photo of Egg's matrilineal clan taken two years before Egg was born. It was taken at a house erection ceremony held when Egg's aunt (to my right) built her first house with the help of members of the village. On the other side of me is Ibu Lad, the senior female leader of Egg's matrilineage. I lived in her house, and Egg was born in it. The one man in this picture is Ibu Lad's brother, Egg's great-uncle, Doruk Liano, the titled male leader of Egg's matrilineage.

Doruk Liano and his wife live far away from Egg's village in a coastal Sumatran city. He helps his sisters coordinate the economic and agricultural affairs of the family from afar. In his absence they perform most of the work and make the main decisions. Their mother, Umi, the older woman shown at the far right, was at the stage in life when a woman is more cared for than consulted. She died in 1989 while I was in the village.

The Victorious Buffalo

Minangkabau means “victorious buffalo,” and the image of buffalo horns is deeply symbolic in Minangkabau culture. The reference is to a well-known tale about a legendary fight between a Minangkabau and a Javanese buffalo for sovereignty in the area—a fight which the Minangkabau claim to have won (hence the name). The struggle pitted a baby buffalo (the Minangkabau combatant) against a powerful bull buffalo (the Javanese combatant). The baby buffalo was killed in a fierce battle, and the Javanese buffalo ran out on the battlefield with a knife stuck in its head. Looking for milk, he went straight for the underside of the surprised bull buffalo and gored him to death. The metaphors at work in this tale are all too obvious—the powerful, patrilinearily oriented Javanese social system tricked by the weaker, matrilineally oriented Minangkabau. It is interesting how the theme of nurture is turned through this story into superior strength in political conflict.

According to local explanations of this story, the fight between the Javanese and the Minangkabau buffalo was in part a struggle over who would inherit the land and the ancestral titles when the area was colonized by a Javanese prince in the 13th century—his male descendants or those of the local women he married. Whether or not this story is true, and no one knows for sure, the symbolism of buffalo horns is clearly associated with matrilineality and women.

EGGI IN HEADDRESS, 1996. Not only the roofs of traditional houses but also women's headdresses are shaped like buffalo horns. Here Egg (age nine), dressed for a wedding ceremony in the village, wears the horn-shaped headdress. This headdress must be worn by at least some young girls or women for all ceremonial occasions. Without such distinctive clothing worn by women or the special foods prepared by them (to be eaten by guests or exchanged with other women), no ceremony would be complete according to Minangkabau custom.
FIG. 7. **Eggi’s ancestral home, 1985.** The most visible representation of the female centeredness of Minangkabau daily life is the matrilineal house where several generations of women of the same matrilineal line live with their families. The house shown in this picture was built by Eggi’s great-grandmother in the 1920s. It was built according to the traditional style of the rumah gadang or “big house.” The distinctive upturned of the roof is said to represent the horns of a buffalo (see box on The Victorious Buffalo). This house is the major symbol of Minangkabau ethnic identity.

FIG. 8. **Conferring the matrilineal title, 1996.** Titles are usually conferred on male leaders in individual ceremonies. However, recently the Indonesian government has instituted a policy in which many titles are conferred in a state-sponsored ceremony. This picture depicts the immediate aftermath of the formal ceremony held in a nearby village to invest a number of men with matrilineal titles that have lain dormant for a number of years. Women from the clan of those men honored play a prominent role in the ceremony by their presence in ceremonial dress, illustrating the complementary nature of the sexes. Once again one can see the importance of the buffalo-horned headdress.

FIG. 9. **Eggi’s first feeding, 1987.** A child’s naming ceremony is held in conjunction with the first feeding ceremony. In this picture Eggi was held by Wik as she was fed mashed rice and banana by an influential male healer in the village. Then a little coconut was dripped into her mouth, with red pepper lying on top of the coconut. Only after Eggi ate these foods, staples of the Minangkabau diet, was she considered fully Minangkabau. To eat Minangkabau food is an integral part of being Minangkabau. My longtime field assistant, Endi, is on the right in this picture.

FIG. 10. **Choosing a name, 1987.** After Eggi’s first feeding of mashed rice, her lips were touched with gold to make her a person whose words are rich and carefully chosen. The leftover rice was then given to her father to eat, a sign that a husband is fed and honored in his wife’s household. The giving of rice to the husband also reflects the role he plays as laborer in the family’s rice fields. In Eggi’s case, her father performs almost all of the heavy labor in Wik’s fields.

After the shared meal everyone present wrote on a piece of paper the name they had chosen for the newborn child. I wrote the name “Linda.” My son, Erij, who was with me at the time, wrote the name “Julie,” his sister’s name. Little did I know when this picture was taken that Eggi would end up with my name.

FIG. 11. **Clothing the bride at her father’s house, 1995.** It is mid-morning and Erij is emerging from the matrilineal household of her father where she has been dressed in a rented wedding outfit. Her father’s matrilineal relatives and their spouses accompany her back to her mother’s household. Atop their heads they carry prescribed foods and sweets, some of which will be presented to the members of Erij’s household, while others will be taken in another procession to the members of Edison’s household. Erij’s wedding outfit is colorful tais is trademark Minangkabau. Red is the preferred color for the clothes of the bride and groom, but other colors can be substituted.

FIG. 12. **Eating together at the bride’s house, 1995.** Upon arrival at Erij’s household, Erij sits on the wedding couch while the women who have accompanied her eat. Also present at this celebratory meal are many of Erij’s friends from the village and the city, where Erij worked as a seamstress. At the end of this meal, Erij embraces each of them, wishing them a tearful farewell. After her friends leave Erij proceeds to the next stage in the three-day-long ceremony.

FIG. 13. **Eating and ritual speech at the bride’s house, 1995.** While Erij receives her friends in the front of the house, senior male leaders representing the clan of Erij’s father and mother share food in another room. Here they will speak indirectly about the proceedings through litany of proverbs. These proverbs mark the occasion and communicate common expectations regarding marriage.
The Naming Ceremony

Eggi was born in July of 1987 in the house of the senior female leader of her matrilineage, Ibu Idar. Eggi's mother is Wik, Ibu's niece. Although born while I was in the village, Eggi was not named until after I left to return to the United States. Her name was selected by Ibu Idar in discussion with Wik and the rest of the family. They chose my name as a way of keeping me in the village. “We are always sad when you leave,” Wik told me when I returned the following year. “This way even after you leave someone will always answer when we call your name.”

The importance attached to my name not only by Eggi's family but in the village more generally illustrates the social relevance of names for the Minangkabau. Clan names, place names, and those of titled male leaders provide a gloss on historical contacts. I have been able to trace clan names to historical places in ancient Sumatra and as far away as Java, Malaysia, and Thailand. Even the early kingdom of Champa in the area now known as Vietnam appears in Minangkabau lore. It is not surprising, then, that the highlight of the ceremonies honoring the newly born is the naming ceremony. The whole family attends this ceremony and each member writes a name on a piece of paper. The names are then read out and there is much discussion about each one. Often the names have historical, religious, or popular significance (Figs. 9, 10).

The Marriage Ceremony

The celebration of a marriage breaks the routine of everyday life with a crescendo of color, costume, ritual eating, and exchanges involving men and women of many matrilineal clans. The bride and groom occupy center stage for the days of the ceremony. During this time they hold court on wedding couches in the matrilineal households of both bride and groom, receiving well-wishers bearing gifts. The couches with their backdrops of colorfully embroidered red and gold brocade, the colors of royalty, are built like thrones, and the couple is treated literally like a queen and king. They move back and forth between the households accompanied by a colorful procession of women bearing food offerings for the women of the other household.

Most marriages are arranged by close family members. Clan affiliation is one of the prime factors in choosing a mate, with some clans being preferred more than others. Romantic love may or may not play a role. The wedding depicted in these pictures is fairly typical. Edison declared his love for Et by letter, asking her to “walk out” with him. Walking out means appearing together on the roads and paths of the village and taking little trips. This went on for three years before there was any formal talk of marriage.

Marriage proposals are never made outright. Everyone involved proceeds gingerly, testing the waters each step of the way. In this case Edison’s family took the first step by sending one of their in-marrying relatives to ask Et’s mother if Et was ready to get married. Her mother talked it over with Et’s father and the parents agreed that it was up to Et, which was an indirect way of showing their approval. The next step was to ask Et what she thought. When she said it was up to her parents, this was a sign that she agreed.

Once all close relatives are informed of the agreement to marry, a meeting is held to arrange the wedding. The negotiation begins with an official exchange between the male leaders of Et’s and Edison’s matrilineal clans as a sign that the two clans are now married. For the duration of the engagement period, Edison’s family gives their ancestral dagger, the premier symbol of male leadership, into the keeping of the bride’s family. Et’s family in turn gives gold, the symbol of female ancestral wealth, to the groom’s family. This exchange binds the clans so that neither Et nor Edison can withdraw without great cost to both families.

The negotiations which ensue concern wedding costs. Customarily, the clothes for bride and groom are provided by the maternal relatives of their respective fathers. The husband’s family usually buys the bedroom furniture. The families of in-marrying spouses also help out. The end result of wedding negotiations is that all sides share in the costs with one exception. A token groom price is also decided upon. This is understandable given that the Minangkabau husband moves into his wife’s household and provides his labor.

The ceremony proper begins with a procession from the bride’s father’s house, where she has been dressed, back to her own (her mother’s) house (Fig. 11). (A similar parade accompanies the newly dressed groom back to his mother’s house from the house of his father’s maternal relatives.) Following the bride’s ceremonial progress (Figs. 12, 13), Et receives friends at her mother’s house. Then a new procession forms to accompany her to fetch Edison from his house (Fig. 14). The group includes some of the women who came from Et’s father’s matrilinage household, along with close family members from Et’s matrilineage. The gifts carried by the women are rich with gender meanings associated with the physical and social perpetuation of the generations.

For example, a live cock, rice seeds for germination, and sprouted cocorns for planting are given by the groom’s family. References to the groom as the “cock” symbolize his role as semenator. Gifts of cooked...
CONCLUSION

Conceived in Western terms, the Minangkabau "matrilineage" is best thought of as "mother-right," not female rule. Neither male nor female rule is possible, according to Minangkabau social philosophy, because of their belief that decision-making should be by consensus. Although differences of opinion are regarded as normal, consensus is the goal of all deliberations. About differences of opinion the Minangkabau have a proverb: "Crossing wood in the heighth makes the fire glow." This notion of crossing wood is repeated in the idea that males and females complement one another—like the skin and nail of the fingertip—an apt metaphor. The consequence is a peaceful, nearly violence-free society with a remarkable egalitarian philosophy underlying the activities of everyday life.

Although they do not fulfill the promise of matrilinearity as we in the West have traditionally defined this term, the Minangkabau social philosophy deserves our attention for the emphasis it places on achieving balance with nature and resolving differences among humans. I find this philosophy the meaning of matriliny in a living society. Women are given privileges and power because of the belief that humans must follow the rhythms of nature to nurture society.

My own experience of living in Egg's village taught me that matriline, Minangkabau-style, means grounding family ties in the land and in life-cycle ceremonies. Matriliney creates a permanent sense of mother-place for family members, providing an unusual sense of psychological stability. One might say that family values are at the apex of Minangkabau culture and that in these values one finds the primary meaning of the Minangkabau "matrilineage."

Every year when my plane lowers over the main airport in West Sumatra and I see the upping of the buffalo-horned rooftops of the matrilineal households, I feel as if I am returning not just to my village but to a rootedness in the past and family memories. This sense makes me feel both uniquely human and permanently tied to a community defined by people and place. Whenever I enter Egg's village I feel as if I have come home, that there is nowhere else in the world quite like this place which will always receive me with open arms.

The story of my involvement with Egg's family—a story that links up two lines of women and their descendants—is not uncommon in Minangkabau social life. Women can take up residence in a village and, after undergoing the proper ceremonies and payments, become formally incorporated into one of the matrilineal clans. They can then embrace the rights, duties, and responsibilities of clan membership. In a sense this happened to me when Egg was named after me. Through our shared name I am part of Egg's matrilineal line, which means that I and my descendants will always be welcomed in her matrilineal household.

The meaning of the Minangkabau matrilineage is to be found not so much in issues of male or female social power but in the social loyalty and transgenerational economic ties connecting matrilineally related families, whether related by biological or adoptive ties.

Viewed in this way matriliney must be entertained not as a long-lost evolutionary stage, but as a world view that still lives in the world today and has relevance for shaping the public interest of modern societies.

Egg's Village: Life Among the Minangkabau of Indonesia

An exhibition of 45 ethnographic photographs is now on display at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, September 13–December 7, 1997. A virtual exhibit of the same material can be found at http://www.uas.upenn.edu/~psunday/egg2.html.

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The Ritual on the Ratlinxil Vase

Pots and Politics in Highland Guatemala

Elin Danien

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ne of the ironies of archaeology is that as it has matured and changed from what was called "antiquarianism" to a more scientific discipline, its practitioners have tended to ignore early museum collections gathered on an indiscriminate basis and to concentrate their efforts instead on new excavations designed to test hypotheses and methodologies. Certainly, modern field projects designed to answer carefully structured research questions can supply precise and accurate data. However, older museum collections obtained under less than ideal circumstances can yield new and important information when subjected to careful analysis using all the facilities available today.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the area of Maya studies, where recent advances in field archaeology, epigraphy, ethnography, and ethnology have all been extraordinarily productive and rewarding. These advances enable those of us working with previously excavated artifacts to bring new insights to the examination of pottery and sculpture in museum galleries and storerooms (Fig. 1). My own research into a collection of highland Guatemalan Maya pottery at the University of Pennsylvania Museum is only possible because I can draw upon the discoveries and interpretations of dozens of other contemporary scholars; they in turn are indebted to those earlier investigators—"adventurers" and "explorers"—whose names may no longer resonate in academic halls.

The Maya, whose ancient civilization flourished more than a thousand years ago, are still to be found in what is now southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and part of El Salvador (Fig. 2). They created a unique artistic tradition, manifested in carved jade, stelae, architectural sculpture, stucco reliefs, mural paintings, figurines, and ceramic vase painting. Here I look at vases decorated in one particular style of that tradition to show how the study of early collections can give rise to new interpretations with important implications for an understanding of Maya history.

THE COLORFUL VASES OF CHAMÁ

The ceramic cylinders made by the Maya during the Late Classic (AD 600–800) form a special category highly appreciated by archaeologists, artists, and connoisseurs alike (Fig. 3). They are recognized as among the finest expressions of Maya artistic genius. These polychrome masterpieces have been excavated from the tombs and palaces of the elite in the great Maya cities of the central Petén in lowland Guatemala. They have been photographed and widely published, and most have been subjected to iconographic, epigraphic, and artistic analysis.

There is a particular and distinctive corpus of such vessels, made during the same period, that is equally admired but rather more esoteric. These vases are known as "Chamá polychromes," for the site where they were first found in the southern Guatemalan highlands. The potters painted their distinctive motifs on a cylinder form, using a palette of red and black on a yellow to yellow-orange background. A chevron border of black and white usually frames the top and bottom of the scene. The preferred decorative template was either a repetition on each half of the vessel of a static scene or individual, or a continuous scene that wrapped around the vessel. Chamá polychromes were made for only a brief period of time: Dario Reents Buxit (1994) estimates no more than two or three generations of potters working in an extremely circumscribed area of Guate- mala, far from the lowland centers of Classic Maya culture, were responsible for all this pottery. There is a sudden emergence, a brief flowering, and an equally