



# Illuminating Izapa



by Cheryl Norman (*The legacy of V. Garth Norman lives on.*)

Izapa, Mexico's ancient Temple Observatory has more than 100 carved stone monuments. The most famous is Stela 5, the "Tree of Life" monument. Many photos have been displayed of this stone (See RESOURCE Article: "The Rosetta Stone of Mesoamerica".)

The video – "Illuminating Izapa" shows photos and a new technology "RTI" photography by Dr. Jason Jones (See Fig. 2-4) that supports previous photos by NWAFA Archaeologist V. Garth Norman.

Some artists have made "artistic" renderings of this Izapa "Tree of Life" Stela 5. They have put glyphs from other Izapa stelae in place of the glyphs and figures that are shown in photos from Matthew Stirling's Smithsonian/National Geographic expedition in 1941 and V. Garth Norman's 1965 and 1973 photos.

The video shows that the "artistic" renditions by others do not display what the years of photos and the new RTI photos show.



Fig. 1 - 2012 RTI Photo of Izapa, Mexico's Stela 5 "Tree of Life".

VIDEO - Illuminating Izapa:  
<https://youtu.be/5RPL7reEilc>

RTI photos of segments of Stela 5 with moving light.



Fig. 2 - Stela 5 -Upper Left



Fig. 3 - Stela 5 Middle of Tree with the God figure on the right.



Fig. 4 - Stela 5 Lower Left: ancestral Izapa Family members.



Fig. 5 - Izapa Stela 5 Tree of Life Monument photographed Aug. 14, 2012. Stela 5 is 5 feet tall but looks smaller in the background. Left to right: Rigoberto Perez (Izapa Caretaker), Dr. Jason B. Jones: RTI Photographer (from the University of Warwick, England), Silvano Perez (Izapa Caretaker) Archaeologist V. Garth Norman. RTI Photos presented August 17, 2012 to the National Museum of Anthropology & Archaeology, Mexico City.



Fig. 5 - Izapa Stela 5 color coded to show the blue "cycle of life" from heaven to earth (right), life on earth (bottom blue), then after death = evaporation/resurrection back to heaven again (upper left). Twelve tribal roots are at the base of the tree. Red "God-Quetzalcoatl" is on the right, & Red "Goddess" on the left. Ancestral family is seated at the base of the tree. Fruit is on the branches at the top of the tree.