



17th European Maya Conference

On Methods: How we know what we think we know about the Maya

9 - 15 December 2012
Helsinki, Finland

The 17th European Maya Conference is co-organized by the University of Helsinki (Department of World Cultures) and Wayeb (European Association of Mayanists), and will be held from December 9th to 15th, 2012 in Helsinki, Finland. The conference is initiated by workshops (December 9th-12th), followed by a day off between the workshops and the symposium (December 13th, with extracurricular activities including a visit to the *Maya III: Life, Death, Time* exhibition at the Didrichsen Art Museum in Helsinki), and finally a two-day long symposium on the 14th and 15th of December.

SYMPOSIUM

The topic of this year's conference is: *On Methods: How we know what we think we know about the Maya*. The theme of the conference differs from the customary, concentrating on the *processes* of scientific investigation, rather than on the end results of research. Consequently, the conference deals with methodological issues, challenges in interdisciplinary research, questions that rise in the liminal area between disciplines, as well as experimental and cutting-edge disciplinary research.

The conference is *not* intended to be a showcase of different sub-disciplines (and their methods) in Maya Studies but, rather, a platform where scholars from different branches of learning will discuss the premises of scientific knowledge and expose the processes and methods of their work – rather than merely the outcome of research. We think this would be beneficial for students and scholars alike (and even for people coming from totally different fields altogether). We rarely question the basic premises and foundations in our fields – and we do not talk about methods and their importance often enough – but when we do, we also get significant results. Not too long ago the ancient Maya lived in “peaceful theocratic society, not engaging themselves in wars and not writing about earthly affairs”. However, few questioned these premises at the time.

Also, although multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research seem to predominate in the modern academic world today, we rarely question and examine the processes used in these studies. For example, do we really know how to combine different fields so that we do not fall into a methodological trap by using the methods and research results of the fields that best suit our analyses each time – without checking what the internal logic of each (sub)field is – and what its methodological assumptions are? Consequently, the idea of the conference is that people from different disciplines discuss the processes involved in their studies (whether they are disciplinary or interdisciplinary) and expose these to the audience for further discussion.

The invited speakers of the conference include Michael Coe (keynote speaker and the recipient of the *Wayeb Award for Lifetime Achievement*), Arthur Demarest, Elizabeth Graham, Nikolai Grube, John Hoopes, Kerry Hull, Alfonso Lacadena, Simon Martin, Peter Mathews, David Stuart, Gabriel Wrobel, and Marc Zender. Besides invited speakers, we will be soliciting eleven additional presentations via a call for papers.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Wayeb Conference Board invites the submission of abstracts concerning the conference topic. Papers will be selected from all sub-disciplines of Mesoamerican studies to cover the conference topic in all dimensions and from various perspectives. Presentations will be accepted in English and Spanish. Abstracts may not exceed 250 words. Contributions of authors who submit more than one abstract (including co-authored papers) will not be considered. Co-authorship needs to be indicated upon submission. It will not be possible to add co-authors on a presentation unless these have been explicitly included in the submitted abstract and approved as such.

As part of this conference the organizers have created four thematic categories (these correspond to the morning and afternoon sessions of the two-day symposium) with the following headings: (1) archaeology and history; (2) epigraphy; (3) ethnology and linguistics; and (4) theoretical and interdisciplinary topics.

Keynote papers will serve as anchors for the other papers within the respective sessions, solicited from the call for papers. Consequently, we will prioritize presentations from the call for papers that most adequately complement those of the keynote speakers. In order to present the panels in a balanced manner we will ideally select two to three papers from the call for papers to match each of the four topical panels.

Regarding the topic of the papers, the organizers are particularly interested in presentations that are problem-based and that deal with methodological issues, challenges of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research, and questions that emerge in the liminal area between disciplines. The main objective is that all presentations discuss *how we know what we think we know about the Maya* by exposing methods and bringing into light different perspectives in the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field of Maya studies. Although the focus of the conference is on the ancient Maya, we are welcoming topics that cover all time periods, including the present, as there is, naturally, a link between the modern and the ancient Maya.

Please submit in electronic format (attached Word document) in the following order:

1. Author's name and affiliation
2. Address, phone number and email address
3. Title of the paper
4. Abstract

The abstracts will be forwarded without the author's particulars to an anonymous Review Committee that will be selected by the Wayeb Conference Board.

Please submit your application to callforpapers@wayeb.org

(Only abstracts sent to this address will be accepted. Please do not send your abstract to the organizers or the Conference Board! If you send your abstract to another email address than the above your abstract will be immediately disqualified from further consideration.)

The call for papers will close on the **31 May 2012!** All abstracts have to be sent in and confirmation of receipt received prior to this date.

WORKSHOPS

Opening Lecture (Sunday, 9 December, evening)

The workshop includes an opening lecture by Simon Martin (University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) that serves as an introduction to Maya hieroglyphic writing and provides participants with a general overview of the history of the decipherment.

Workshops (Monday–Wednesday, 10–12 December)

All workshop groups will be taught and supervised by experienced tutors. Participants will be tutored in English. Spanish explanations can be provided by tutors, on an individual basis, for workshops of all levels.

Introduction to Ancient Maya Writing

Introductory level workshop on Maya hieroglyphs

(Admittance: Max. 45 participants)

Tutored by: Christophe Helmke, Ramzy Barrois, Sven Gronemeyer, and Rosa Worm Danbo

Fractured Skulls & Broken Bones

Introductory to intermediate level workshop on bioarchaeology

(Admittance: Max. 20 participants)

Tutored by: Gabriel Wrobel

River Cities

Intermediate level workshop on the epigraphy and archaeology of the Middle Usumacinta region

(Admittance: Max. 25 participants)

Tutored by: Marc Zender & Peter Mathews

WORKSHOPS (Continued)

Classic Maya Mythology in Text and Image

Intermediate level workshop on Maya cosmology and mythology

(Admittance: Max. 25 participants)

Tutored by: Erik Boot & Christian Prager

G2 Summit

Advanced Research Workshop on Maya epigraphy

(Admittance: Max. 20 participants)

Tutored by: Alfonso Lacadena & David Stuart

Spice it up! (Special workshop)

Maya and Mexican Cooking: Culinary Methods in Mesoamerica

(Admittance: Max. 20 participants)

Tutored by: Claudia Alarcón Cacheux & Verónica Amellali Vázquez López

More information regarding the workshops will be posted before the registration of the conference opens.

There will be separate registration available for both events (workshops and the symposium).

For more information, please contact the ConferenceBoard@wayeb.org or the local organizer Dr. Harri Kettunen of the University of Helsinki at emc2012@wayeb.org.