



Malmö Högskola  
December 11 – 16 2017



# Maya Religion and History



## **The 22<sup>nd</sup> European Maya Conference, December 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> in 2017 at Malmö University**

### **Conference Organisers:**

WAYEB The European Association of Mayanists

**Local organiser:** Bodil Liljefors Persson (main organiser), Axel Flodfält (student) and Arlinda Sokoli (student), Department of Individual and Society, Faculty of Education and Society at Malmö University and Rita Sanguineti and Marie Nydahl, Conference Service, Malmö University.

**Financial support:** WAYEB, Vetenskapsrådet/The Swedish Scientific Council, Malmö Stad/The City of Malmö, Malmö University.

## **The 22<sup>nd</sup> European Maya Conference, December 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 at Malmö University in Sweden**

The conference will begin with an introductory lecture to the workshops on Monday December 11<sup>th</sup>, followed by three-day workshops and concludes with a two-day symposium held from Friday December 15<sup>th</sup> to Saturday December 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 in the building Orkanen, 'The Hurricane', at Malmö University.

The Conference theme for EMC22 at Malmö University is MAYA RELIGION AND HISTORY. The theme connects to J. Eric S. Thompson's book *Maya History and Religion*, a well-known example synthesising the state of the art of the known research of both Maya history and religion at the time. Since Thompson's book was published the first time, much has happened and later research has changed and revised the knowledge from various academic disciplines regarding Maya history and religion. Since Maya Studies is a dynamic field, it seems timely and urgent to make a new effort to once more collect interesting research on Maya Religion and History in broad and general strokes.

The main topic is broken down to the following subthemes:

- Cosmology, gods, and rituals
- Gender, identity, and sexuality
- Place, space, and landscape
- History, memory, and conceptions of time
- (Inter-)cultural encounters between the Maya and their neighbours

These themes can all relate to research that is based on glyphic texts, ethnohistorical sources, iconography, as well as on extensive archaeological and anthropological fieldwork. All the subthemes also apply to a diachronic perspective and in terms of continuity and change in the field. Furthermore, the subthemes connect to the contemporary aspects of life among the Maya and Mesoamerican cultures as a broader cultural area.

## 22nd EUROPEAN MAYA CONFERENCE, Malmö 2017

### WORKSHOPS – PROGRAM

Malmö University, Building Orkanen (The Hurricane), Nordenskiöldsgatan 10, Aula D131

#### Monday, December 11th

**14.00-15.00** – Registration in the Entrance hall, building Orkanen (The Hurricane).

**15.00-15.15** – Welcome address – Harri Kettunen, Wayeb President, (University of Helsinki) and Bodil Liljefors Persson, Wayeb Local Organiser, (Malmö University).

**15.15-17.15** – Introductory lecture – Marc Zender, (Tulane University) and Peter Mathews, (La Trobe University, Melbourne).

#### Tuesday, December 12th

**9.00-17.30** – Workshops in rooms C233, C402, C477, E239, and F416, in building Orkanen.

**17.30-19.00** – Evening event: *Tradition and Change in a Modern Maya City*. Film and discussion with Andrew Weeks (Independent Researcher and Film maker).

In Aula D131 Entrance hall, building Orkanen.

#### Wednesday, December 13th

**9.00-18.00** – Workshops in rooms B404, C232, C402, E477, and F409 in building Orkanen.

#### Thursday, December 14th

**9.00-16.00** – Workshops in rooms B422, E477, F409, F410 and F413 in building Orkanen.

**16.00-17.30** – Wayeb General Assembly in Aula D131 Entrance hall, building Orkanen.

**17.30-18.30** – Registration and “Workshop Farewell and Speakers Welcome” – Entrance hall, building Orkanen.

**18.30-19.00** – Thomas Småberg, (Head of Department Individual and Society, Malmö University). Special lecture: *UPPÅKRA – from Woden to White Christ – a Tale of Ritual Space and Place in the Viking Age*.

**19.00-19.15** – *Restless Blood: Frans Blom, Explorer and Maya Archaeologist* – (Jesper Nielsen, University of Copenhagen).

**Workshop 1.** *Introduction to Maya Writing* (Beginners), Tutor: Ramzy Barrois (Independent Scholar).

**Workshop 2.** *Ritual Action in Maya Inscriptions* (Intermediate), Tutors: Felix Kupprat (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico) and Christian Prager (Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität, Bonn).

**Workshop 3.** *Myths of the Ancient Maya* (Intermediate), Tutors: Oswaldo Chinchilla (Yale University) and Marc Zender (Tulane University).

**Workshop 4.** *Paleography of Maya Hieroglyphic Writing* (Advanced), Tutors: Albert Davletshin (Russian State University) and Philipp Galeev (Russian State University) with Alfonso Lacadena (Universidad Complutense, Madrid).

**Workshop 5.** *Paleography of Colonial Documents. Working with Spanish and Maya Language Colonial Documentation* (Special Workshop), Tutor: John Chuchiak (Missouri State University).

**22nd EMC Malmö 2017**

## **MAYA RELIGION AND HISTORY**

### **SYMPOSIUM - PROGRAM**

**Malmö University, Building Orkanen (The Hurricane), Nordenskiöldsgatan 10, Aula D138**

**Friday, December 15th**

**Chair: Bodil Liljefors Persson (Malmö University)**

**8.30-9.00** *Welcome address*

Kerstin Tham, Vice Chancellor, Malmö University

Audrey Rivera Gómez, Chargée d'Affaires, Embassy of Mexico, Stockholm

Thomas Småberg, Head of Department, Malmö University

Harri Kettunen, Wayeb President, University of Helsinki

Bodil Liljefors Persson, Wayeb Local Organiser, Malmö University

**9.00-9.45** Peter Mathews (La Trobe University, Melbourne) – *Maya Anthropologist: J. Eric S. Thompson and the Maya*

**9.45-10.15** Elizabeth Graham (University College of London) – *What is Wrong with 'Human Sacrifice'?*

**10.15-10.45** Coffee break

**Chair: Ramzy Barrois (Independent scholar)**

**10.45-11.15** Stephen Houston (Brown University) – *To Cradle a God: Sacred Effigies and Kingship among the Classic Maya*

**11.15-11.45** Albert Davletshin (Russian State University) and Sergei Vepretskij (Lomonosov Moscow State University) – *Ritual Seclusion of Princes in Classic Maya Texts*

**11.45-12.15** Felix Kupprat (Universidad Autónoma de Mexico) – *In Memory of Bahlam Nebn: Stela E at Copan and the Tomb of Ruler 7*

**12.15-13.45** Lunch break

**Chair: Harri Kettunen (University of Helsinki)**

**13.45-14.15** John Chuchiak (Missouri State University) – *In the Image of God: An Ethnohistorical Examination of the Production, Imagery, and Functions of Colonial Yucatec Maya "Idols" and Effigy Censers, 1540-1750*

**14.15-14.45** Frauke Sachse (Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität Bonn) – *Of Gods and Souls: Ontological Categories in the Missionary Sources from Highland Guatemala*

**14.45-15.15** Bodil Liljefors Persson (Malmö University) – *Sacred Place and Ritual in Yucatec Maya Religion – Perspectives from Ethnohistorical Sources and from Prince Wilhelm's Expedition 1920.*

**15.15-15.45** Coffee break

**Chair: Jesper Nielsen (University of Copenhagen)**

**15.45-16.15** Daniel Grana-Behrens, (Bonn University and Frobenius Institut Frankfurt am Main) – *What About Living Objects? The Relationship between Nonhuman Objects and Humans among the Classic Maya*

**16.15-16.45** Verónica Vázquez López (Yaxnohcah Archaeological Project), Kathryn Reese-Taylor (University of Calgary), Debra S. Walker (University of Florida) Mikaela Radford (University of Calgary) and Armando Anaya Hernández (Universidad Autónoma de Campeche) – *Preclassic Fire Ritual at the Grazia Complex, Yaxnohcah, Campeche, Mexico.*

**16.45-17.15** Lorraine Williams-Beck (Universidad de Campeche, Mexico) – *Flower Houses/Flower Mountains in Campeche and in the Northern Maya Lowlands through Time*

**19.00 - ca. 22.00** *Conference dinner on invitation by The City of Malmö, Malmö City Hall.*

## Saturday December 16th

### Chair: Ramzy Barrois (Independent scholar)

**9.00-9.30** Marc Zender (Tulane University) – *The Maize God and The Deer Lord's Wife*

**9.30-10.00** Edwin Braakhuis, (Utrecht University) – *God H in the Classic Period: A Revision*

**10.00-10.30** Charles M. Pigott (University of Cambridge) – *Re-Inventing History in Contemporary Mayan Literature*

**10.30-11.00** Coffee break

### Chair: Ramzy Barrois (Independent scholar)

**11.00-11.30** Wiesław Koszkuł and Jarosław Żrałka, (Jagiellonian University) – *The Bedrock Precinct at Nakum and the Rituals of the Earliest Maya*

**11.30-12.00** Alexander Tokovinine (University of Alabama) – *Travelling to See: Defining Classic Maya Pilgrimage*

**12.00-12.30** Ulrich Wölfel (Bonn University) and Byron Hernández (Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala) – *Visitando espacios sagrados – una mirada desde las cuevas de Quen Santo, Huebuetenango, Guatemala*

**12.30-14.00** Lunch break

### Chair: Jarosław Żrałka (Jagiellonian University)

**14.00-14.30** Harald Thomaß (University of Hamburg) – *La cosmología de los mayas de Yucatán*

**14.30-15.00** Allen Christenson (Brigham Young University) – *“These are our Jaguars”: Fruit and Sacrifice During Holy Week Observances in Santiago Atitlán*

**15.00-15.30** Nikolai Grube (Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität, Bonn) – *The defeat of the Jaguar God of the Underworld*

**15.30-16.00** Coffee break

### Chair: Bodil Liljefors-Persson (Malmö University)

**16.00-16.30** Meaghan Peuramäki-Brown (Athabaska University) – *People, Places, and Things in East-Central Belize: 40+ Years of Archaeology in the Stann Creek District (1975–2017)*

**16.30-17.00** Romelia Isem Mo (Ministry of Education, Guatemala) – *Mayas, identidad, religión y el sistema educativo guatemalteco*

**17.00-17.30** Conference closing and Flag Ceremony – Harri Kettunen (University of Helsinki) and Bodil Liljefors Persson (Malmö University)

## 22nd European Maya Conference

### MAYA RELIGION AND HISTORY

Malmö University, December 11-16, 2017

#### ABSTRACTS

**H.E.M. Braakhuis (Utrecht University)**

*God H in the Classic Period: A Revision*

The identification of the codical God H as a late form of a Classic flower deity intimately associated with wind and breath has been widely accepted. However, my examination of the original argument casts doubt upon this identification. An alternative route to the Classic period is therefore explored, leading from Andrea Stone's interpretation of God H as a flower lord akin to Xochipilli ('Flower Prince') to the Post-Classic 'flower lord' (nicte ahau) of the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, and thence to the Classic Tonsured Maize God. A comparison of portrait glyphs, iconographic features, and scenes shows the Tonsured Maize God to be the likely prototype of both the 'flower lord' of the Chumayel manuscript and God H. Finally, it is argued that the mythological associations of the Tonsured Maize God, viewed as a culture hero, can explain several scenes in which God H or his semblances play a role.

**Allen J. Christenson (Brigham Young University)**

*"These are our Jaguars": Fruit and Sacrifice During Holy Week Observances in Santiago Atitlán*

In Santiago Atitlán, a Tz'utujil-speaking Maya community in the Guatemalan highlands, the most elaborate traditional ceremonies of world renewal take place during Holy Week, the days preceding Easter on the Christian calendar. Significant elements of these world-renewing ceremonies echo those once carried out by their Pre-Columbian ancestors during the Wayeb' period. In the Guatemalan highlands, Holy Week marks the end of the dry season, followed by the first rains and the planting of maize. These seasonal changes reflect the belief that the death and resurrection of Christ parallels the dissolution and sterility of the world during the dry season and its rebirth with the coming of the rainy season and the regeneration of life-sustaining crops, particularly maize. In preparation, a group of young men embark on a journey by foot to the coastal plain to obtain large quantities of tropical fruit to be used in several important ceremonies during the course of the week. These young men are considered to be warriors, "jaguars" who defend ancient traditions. Traditionalists consider the fruit to be the modern substitute for captives taken in battle and thus the fruit is obtained, at least conceptually, by force. On Wednesday afternoon of Holy Week, the fruit is processed through the streets of the city and hung on a large scaffold called the Monumento, much as the ancient Maya once hung the severed heads of their sacrifices on a skull rack. These "sacrifices" ensure that life is renewed and the rains come in due season.

**John Chuchiak (Missouri State University)**

*In the Image of God: An Ethnohistorical Examination of the Production, Imagery, and Functions of Colonial Yucatec Maya "Idols" and Effigy Censers, 1540–1750*

This paper attempts to analyze the ethnohistorical and colonial documents relating to the production, imagery, and uses of Yucatec Maya idols and effigy censers. By means of using previously unknown documentary sources, the paper will attempt to shed light on the nature of the fabrication, the religious imagery, and the ceremonial uses of terracotta or clay effigy censers from the Yucatán Peninsula. The paper hopes to offer archaeologists and historians alike with new insight into these little studied yet important artifacts of Post-Classic and colonial Maya culture.

**Albert Davletshin (Russian State University and Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn) and Sergei Vepretskij (Lomonosov Moscow State University)**

*Ritual Seclusion of Princes in Classic Maya Texts*

The inscriptions of the Cross Group from Palenque mention a ritual held by a six years old prince, the future B'akal king K'ihnich Kan B'ahlam II. The ritual starts with the movement to a "place protected by wooden walls", 532 days later the prince "goes down accompanied by two youths" and receives a title of unclear meaning. Another Palenque ruler K'an Joy Chitam is mentioned to hold the same kind of ritual at the same age.

An intriguing and revealing parallel to the ritual events in Palenque is attested in inscriptions of La Corona. The Kanul prince Yuhkno'm Yihch'aak K'ahk' and his younger brother Kalo'm Wahyis leave a place 520 days after something has been made there "by the hands of seven youths". In this case the prince is 24 years old while the age of his brother remains unknown. This ritual is mentioned by the Kanul subordinate K'ihnich ? Yook who takes part in the event as one of the seven youths and 5 months later ascends the throne in La Corona.

The events in Palenque and La Corona refer to the same kind of ritual. In both cases princes move somewhere accompanied by youths and return a year and a half later. Examples of similar seclusion practices are attested the world over as part of rites de passage. At the end we will discuss the role which different kinds of rituals held by princes played in royal ideology of the Classic Maya.

**Elizabeth Graham (University College London)**

*What is wrong with 'human sacrifice'?*

That the Maya and Aztecs killed people for their gods is generally accepted among Mesoamericanists. Many of those who attend the EMCs are well aware that I have been building arguments that question the existence of 'human sacrifice' for many years. These arguments rely on re-evaluating a range of assumptions concerning: rules of engagement in warfare; the way societies sanction killing; what we know – or don't – about how 'winning' in war is determined among the Maya; how we visualise the mechanics of wealth appropriation; and how decisions are made about life, death, and the spirit by people with no word for 'religion' or 'sacrifice'. I will also examine the roots of the concept of 'sacrifice' and what we have assumed the word to mean.

**Daniel Grana-Behrens (Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität, Bonn)**

*What about living objects? The relationship between nonhuman objects and humans among the Classic Maya*

Not only contemporary Mesoamerican people but also the pre-Hispanic Maya consider certain objects as a living being for instance by giving them a zoomorphic or anthropomorphic appearance or allowing them to speak in hieroglyphic texts. However, it remains still an open issue what kind of objects were treated as a living being, how these objects were thought as being alive and what kind of relationship emerged out of this conception.

This presentation will analyse the concept of living objects among the pre-Hispanic Maya by virtue of hieroglyphic texts and iconography from the perspective of the Anthropology of Ontology as this approach more recently opened particular insights into the ontology of objects and the relation between humans and nonhumans among different cultures and regions. By this means, the presentation will deepen our understanding of Maya religious practice and worldview from a different perspective.

**Nikolai Grube (Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität, Bonn)**

*The defeat of the Jaguar God of the Underworld*

The Jaguar God of the Underworld is one of the only poorly understood characters in the large family of Maya supernaturals. Since Thompson's times he has been identified as the god of number seven and of the day Ak'bal. He is also one of the patron deities of a six-lunation cycle in the Lunar Series. In my presentation I will address his role as a god of war, fire and enemy of the day sun. In a narrative recounted on ceramics and on monuments, the Jaguar God of the Underworld is burnt and killed with big stones by the chan te' xib, or four young lords, who are the Year Bearers. The myth of the burning and killing of the Jaguar God of the Underworld by the Year Bearers, who are assistants of the Sun God, is a rationale for the killing of sacrificial victims. In the presentation I will explore the multiple levels of meaning of this mythical narrative.

**Stephen Houston (Brown University)**

*To Cradle a God: Sacred Effigies and Kingship among the Classic Maya*

According to texts and imagery, the Classic Maya infused materials with spirit and concretized spirit in matter. What we take to be givens--unseen energies divorced from inert things in the world--must have seemed foreign to them. This paper explores the merger of matter and spirit in evidence from various royal courts. It probes how kings and nobles commissioned and used sacred effigies, especially those of *K'awiil* and *Chabk*, and moved and manipulated "fetishes" (objects of innate vitality), all in the service of dynastic foundation and regal legitimation.

**Kathryn Marie Hudson (Buffalo University) and John S. Henderson (Cornell University)**

*Mirroring, Reflection, and Complementarity in Maya Thought and Practice*

This paper draws on archaeological, epigraphic, and historical data to develop a new and more robust perspective on the role of mirroring and reflection in Maya thought and practice.

Particular attention is given to the semantics of mirrors, to modes of reflection in imagery and linguistic practice, to the ways in which these patterns relate to underlying notions of complementarity, and to how the Maya fit within the varied array of Mesoamerican mirror practice. Mirrors had ritual roles (e.g. divination) and symbolic functions (e.g. in relation to concepts of kingship and the supernatural) as well as utilitarian uses dependent on the physical property of reflectivity (e.g. self contemplation, personal adornment). Variations on these themes are well attested in Maya iconography. In addition to portrayals of mirrors as distinct physical objects, mirror functions in imagery take the form of structural patterns such as reduplication, mirror imaging, and twinning. These modes of reflection must be understood in terms of the broader notions of complementarity that permeate Maya cosmological thought and also underlie linguistic and literary productions, most notably couplets and chiasmic structures. This allows for the recognition of semantic nuances that crosscut traditional analytical boundaries and facilitates a critical examination of the ways in which they motivate connections among Maya cosmology, material production – especially in iconographic representations – and linguistic composition. The degree to which Maya forms of these patterns are distinctive provides useful new perspectives on Maya relationships with other Mesoamerican societies and on the nature of Mesoamerican cultural commonality.

**Wieslaw Koszkul and Jaroslaw Zralka (Jagiellonian University)**

*The bedrock precinct from Nakum and the rituals of the earliest Maya*

Recent excavations at the Maya site of Nakum located in north-eastern part of Guatemala brought about the discovery of a rare precinct carved entirely in the limestone bedrock below one of the largest plazas. The precinct is unique in its size and proportions and it may represent one of the oldest constructions of the Lowland Maya dating to the Middle Preclassic period. Here we report results of research of this construction carried out between 2014 and 2017, presenting detailed description of this rare find and looking for comparable examples from other parts of Maya area. Based on the whole archaeological context, as well as shape and form of the discussed feature we argue it might have been a steam bath and also an artificial cave that played an important role in the ritual life of Preclassic Maya, symbolizing Underworld and possibly also having other important cosmological meaning. The discovery of Nakum construction sheds new light on the ritual activities of the earliest Lowland Maya.

**Felix Kupprat (Universidad Autónoma de Mexico)**

*In memory of Bahlam Nebn: Stela E at Copan and the tomb of Ruler 7*

The hieroglyphic inscription on Stela E at Copan has been debated for several decades and we are still not able to fully understand its message. A recent reexamination of the text, imagery and formal aspects of this stela now allow us to date it to the mid-7th century. Although it may never be possible to solve all the puzzles the inscription has saved for us, it becomes clear that its final section refers to post-funerary rituals conducted for Ruler 7 of the Copan dynasty, several years after his death and more than a century prior to the dedication of the monument. Certain textual details lead me to believe that this king was buried in one of the royal tombs that were excavated by the Early Copan Acropolis Program more than twenty years ago. The tomb in question (Burial 92-2) has received some attention over the years, for it was deliberately destroyed in the 6th century. This action raises new questions about the status of Ruler 7 and the manipulation of his memory, which seems to have been reinstated by Ruler 12 who commissioned Stela E.

## **Bodil Liljefors Persson (Malmö University)**

### *Sacred Place and Ritual in Yucatec Maya Religion – Perspectives from Ethnohistorical Sources and from Prince Wilhelm's Expedition in 1920*

Many Ritual practices are often connected to certain natural and cultural places in Yucatec Maya (Con-)Texts, and in this paper the main goal is to focus on certain sacred places and spirituality in various Maya (Con-)Texts. Some central ethno-historical texts will be highlighted with a focus on some ritual practices and notions of meaning and belief in connection to certain sacred places. Various (con-)texts will be commented on as well as ritual practices and notions of meaning/belief.

Aided by a combination of a (con-)textual approach and a close reading, and connecting to ideas and concepts within Postcolonial theory-building the aim is to outline some examples of how sacred place and ritual is expressed in (con-)texts from Yucatec Maya sources and Colonial administration sources.

In addition to the ethno-historical and historical sources, a study of some of the sources as well as the material goods from the Swedish Prince Wilhelm's expedition to Yucatan, British Honduras/Belize, and Guatemala in 1920 will be presented and will give some new ethnographic information about sacred places and rituals from 1920.

## **Peter Mathews (La Trobe University, Melbourne)**

### *Maya Anthropologist: J. Eric S. Thompson and the Maya*

J. Eric S. Thompson (1898 – 1975) was a towering figure in Maya studies. He is most famous for his work on Maya hieroglyphic writing and the Maya calendar (and its correlation with the European calendar). Unfortunately he was not correct in his views on the nature and the content of the Maya script, but even so he made enormous contributions to our understanding of Maya writing. Thompson is perhaps less known for his other work, but he was an accomplished archaeologist and he published widely on various anthropological subjects. In this talk I concentrate on Thompson's contributions to Maya anthropology: what he called "ethnology", linguistics, ethnohistory, and art and art history.

## **Romelia Mó Isém (Ministry of Education, Guatemala)**

### *Mayas, identidad, religión y el sistema educativo Guatemalteco*

Eric S. Thompson afirma que la cultura maya sigue viva a través de los diversos idiomas que se hablan actualmente, el uso del calendario de 260 días, el nombre de los diversos lugares y otras costumbres que regulan su vida; pero también fue consciente de confirmar que nunca fue una cultura estática. Por lo que es prudente preguntarse hoy en día ¿Quiénes son los mayas o quiénes se identifican como mayas después de mucho tiempo de la invasión española y conflicto armado? La presente ponencia tiene como objetivo brindar información general acerca de la construcción y deconstrucción de la identidad de los niños y jóvenes mayas que atiende el sistema educativo guatemalteco. ¿Qué hacen, quiénes son y cómo se autoidentifican?"

El tema se abordará desde cuatro perspectivas:

- 1) Avances de la educación bilingüe en el sistema educativo a partir de los Acuerdos de Paz;
- 2) Brechas en los niveles de logro de estudiantes bilingües y no bilingües en los resultados de las evaluaciones nacionales actuales de Guatemala.
- 3) Identidad, número de estudiantes que se auto-identifican como mayas y reportan hablar idiomas mayas.
- 4) La educación y la religión en el abordaje de la educación sexual, educación inclusiva y aprendizaje de idiomas.

Los datos provienen de los resultados de las evaluaciones nacionales desde el 2006 hasta el 2016 y del resultado de dos investigaciones sobre el abordaje de la educación sexual entre hombres y mujeres de tres generaciones y de los mitos y ritos que giran en su entorno para abordarlo.

### **Meaghan M. Peuramäki-Brown (Athabaskan University)**

*People, Places, and Things in East-Central Belize: 40+ Years of Archaeology in the Stann Creek District (1975-2017)*

A significant portion of Thompson's (1970) *Maya History and Religion* is dedicated to a multi-faceted discussion regarding the movement of people and things between the many 'places' of the Maya world. Although heavily focused on the Contact period and associated ethnohistoric documents, Thompson attempts to push many elements of the observed patterns back into the more distant past. At the time, archaeological knowledge of many regions of the eastern periphery of the Maya world was lacking. Since the first edition of this work, subsequently reprinted with a forward by Pendergast and Graham in 1990, significant investigations have been undertaken in the material culture subregion of East-Central Belize, or what is modern-day Stann Creek District; a region acknowledged by Thompson as being part of a unique highland zone within the lowlands of the eastern reaches of the Maya world. The region has become an important focus for the study of resource acquisition and the movement of goods between identified highland and lowland zones along coastal and inland trade routes and communication corridors, but also in the revisiting of the topic of population movements and displacements, particularly during the Late to Terminal Classic periods. In this presentation, I summarize the 40+ years of archaeological research that have been conducted in the region since the writing of *Maya History and Religion*, picking up on key topics addressed in Thompson's volume and expanded upon by various scholars in different parts of this eastern 'periphery' or 'frontier' zone.

### **Charles M. Pigott, (University of Cambridge)**

*Re-Inventing History in Contemporary Mayan Literature*

Since the 1980s, there has been a literary renaissance in the Yucatec Mayan language. Contemporary Mayan literature is often inspired by oral traditions, particularly folktales, but cuts across all genres, including short stories, poetry, novels, prophecies and theatre. A major theme in this literary movement is a re-engagement with history, as part of an effort to resurrect Maya culture in an era of cultural and linguistic change. Ironically, as the literary movement gains ever-greater traction, the decline of the Mayan language and the loss of ancestral traditions also accelerate. In this presentation, I shall show how the literary re-engagement with Maya history is also a re-engagement with Maya concepts of historicity, particularly the notion of time as cyclical and regenerative. This process involves extensive reference, in the texts, to traditional rituals and to the nonhuman world with which such rituals are inextricably connected. During the presentation, I shall compare extracts from three works: a poem by Wildernain Villegas Carrillo

(First Fire), a novel by Jorge Miguel Cocom Pech (Grandfather Gregorio), and a short story by José Manuel Tec Tun (Old Mother Corn). All of these works depict the lifecycle of maize as an allegory for the human lifecycle, and for the rejuvenation of Maya culture. In all, ritual plays a central role in terms of its transformational potential. Through linguistic, literary and anthropological analysis, I shall show how the authors present their project of rejuvenating Maya culture and language as part of a natural cosmic cycle.

### **Frauke Sachse (Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität, Bonn)**

#### *Of Gods and Souls: Ontological Categories in the Missionary Sources from Highland Guatemala*

The corpus of colonial missionary literature from Highland Guatemala is particularly rich. K'iche' and Kaqchikel were among the first Amerindian languages to be used in the conversion of the native populations to Christianity and missionary authors produced extensive lexical compilations and plenty of different doctrinal texts. The text which likely had the strongest impact on the conversion of the Highland Maya was Domingo de Vico's *Theologia Indorum*. Written entirely in K'iche' the extensive two-volume treatise explains the principles of the Christian faith to the Highland Maya in their own language. Vico draws analogies to Highland Maya religious concepts and explicitly redefines terminology from K'iche' ritual discourse within a Christian framework. Vico's text does not only provide valuable insights into the creation of Christian discourse in K'iche', it furthermore can serve as a source for the reconstruction of native religion. This paper will analyse Highland Maya ontological categories including concepts of divinity, souls and their transformative aspects based on textual evidence from missionary dictionaries and the *Theologia Indorum*.

### **Karl Taube (University of California, Riverside)**

#### *The Birth of Ehecatl and the Initial Series Group at Chichen Itza*

One of the most striking and curious deities of the Aztec pantheon is Ehecatl, a duck-billed deity embodying such ethereal concepts as rain-bringing wind and the breath of life. This being is in jarring contrast to Quetzalcoatl, who although embodying the same concepts of wind, is a quetzal-plumed rattlesnake in Aztec thought. This study argues that in contrast to the plumed serpent, Ehecatl-Quetzalcoatl constitutes a relatively recent introduction of an avian wind deity from eastern Mesoamerica into Central Mexico during the Postclassic period. Similar duck-billed human figures appear as early as the Early Formative in coastal Chiapas, and continue in Middle Formative Olmec and Late Formative Isthmian and Maya iconography, including the Tuxtla Statuette and the West Wall mural at San Bartolo. For the Late Classic Maya, there is explicit epigraphic and iconographic evidence of a duck-billed wind deity, and in striking contrast, such a being is completely unknown in the rich corpus of documented imagery from Teotihuacan, Cacaxtla, Xochicalco and other sites of Classic Central Mexico. I will note that the Initial Series Group at Chichen Itza provides a remarkably detailed corpus pertaining to this wind deity during the Early Postclassic, quite probably the period in which this being was introduced into highland Mexico.

**Harald Thomaß, (University of Hamburg)**

*La Cosmología de los Mayas de Yucatán*

En la ponencia presentaré la traducción, el análisis y la interpretación del lenguaje ritual que usan los especialistas rituales yucatecos, llamados J-meno'ob en sus ritos agrarios como el ch'a cháak o el waaji ch'e'en. Analizo los rezos estructuralmente, para demostrar la relación de forma, contenido y finalidad. Analizo los rezos semióticamente para indicar los significados de los términos usados y analizo los rezos pragmáticamente para llegar al significado de los actos del habla. Tomando en cuenta la teoría hermenéutica de Gadamer (1960) la traducción es el acabado de la interpretación. Por esta razón explicaré el proceso de traducir con todas sus decisiones, que hay que tomar. En el trabajo de campo en Yucatán, que abarcó 15 años de 1995 – 2010, documenté el desarrollo y los cambios en los rezos rituales de un J-men y comparo su lenguaje ritual con el de una especialista ritual (X-men) y otro especialista ritual para tratar el tema de género y entender las diferencias entre el lenguaje ritual de hombres y mujeres. Luego comparo el diseño cosmológico que está expresado en los rezos con las publicaciones<sup>1</sup> sobre cosmología.

Arzápalo (2009) La traducción de textos mayas desde una perspectiva semiótica; Bartolomé (1988) La dinámica social de los mayas de Yucatán; Edmonson (1970) Metáfora Maya en Literatura y en Arte; Hanks (1990) Referential Practice; Montemayor (2001) Arte y plegaria en las lenguas indígenas de México; Sosa (1985) The Maya Sky, the Maya World; Vapnarsky (2008) Paralelismo, Ciclicidad y Creatividad en el Arte Verbal Maya Yucateco.

**Alexandre Tokovinine (University of Alabama)**

*Travelling to See: Defining Classic Maya Pilgrimage*

This paper addresses the challenges in applying Turner's classical treatment of pilgrimage to the ancient Maya textual and material data. Too often scholars use the term without trying to define this behavior in the Maya culture or in a wider Mesoamerican context. The present study attempts to isolate the cases of pilgrimage from other travel references by looking at cave visits, particularly the cave of Naj Tunich in Petén, Guatemala, that was a major center of ritual activities during the Late Classic period (600-850 CE). A comparatively large body of inscriptions and images painted by the visitors on the walls of the cave makes it possible to define the genre of pilgrimage narratives and its specific features, which in turn, enable the identification of pilgrimage references in less straightforward contexts. This paper also considers the geographical distribution of Naj Tunich visitors and tentatively outlines the socio-political network associated with the pilgrimage center and its historical context.

**Verónica A. Vázquez López, Yaxnohcah Archaeological Project  
Kathryn Reese-Taylor, University of Calgary, Debra S. Walker, University of Florida,  
Mikaela Radford, University of Calgary and Armando Anaya Hernández  
Universidad Autónoma de Campeche**

*Ritual activity at the Grazia Complex, Yaxnohcah*

In this paper, we explore the transformation of household rituals involving burning, cooking, and eating to state sponsored ceremony associated with creation and rebirth during the Preclassic (900 b.c.e. – 150 c.e.) at the site of Yaxnohcah, southern Campeche, Mexico. During the Middle and Late Preclassic, Yaxnohcah was an extensive settlement containing thirteen civic-ceremonial complexes spread over 25km<sup>2</sup>. We focus on the Grazia complex, located about 2km southwest of the main civic precinct and consisting of two conjoined, monumental platforms featuring a triadic group and a ball court.

Excavations in 2016 revealed the presence of several constructive phases, including an earlier platform built with massive stone blocks, as well as the remains of ritual activities. A hearth and a cache deposit with a triadic layout—a vessel surrounded by three stones—was uncovered in the platform in front of the triadic group, along the centerline axis. This deposit and its location represents one of the earliest and clearest examples of the conceptual equivalence of household hearths and three stone places in the Maya lowlands and provides explicit evidence of the integration of household rituals associated with cooking hearths and feeding the gods into public displays of religious ideology intimately related with the emergence of kings.

**Lorraine A. Williams-Beck (Universidad Autónoma de Campeche)**

*Flower Houses/Flower Mountains in Campeche and in the Northern Maya Lowlands through Time*

Defining formal and functional attributes for pre-Hispanic and Early Colonial structures within their urban contexts is an ongoing research objective in Maya studies. However, parameters for one particular ritual religious built element still require more precise identification: the Flower House/Flower Mountain. These singular structures tend to be found in certain sites within larger geographical regions, and display other characteristic elements that clearly identify them. While Flower Houses and Flower Mountains appear to play integral parts in Maya built environments from at least the Classic period to Early Colonial settlements in Campeche, and perhaps in even earlier temporal frames within the greater Northern Maya Lowlands, their historical and socio religious roles are yet to be more completely defined. By using a multiple-evidence analytical methodology, this paper will describe urban contextual parameters, chromatic, iconographic, spatial, structural, and time-keeping associated attributes, and from these numerous sources offer some pertinent hypotheses regarding Flower House/Mountain functional responsibilities through time.

**Ulrich Wölfel, (Universidad de Bonn) and Byron Hernández, (Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala)**

*Visitando espacios sagrados – una mirada desde las cuevas de Quen Santo, Huehuetenango, Guatemala*

Visitas a lugares sagrados constituyen una actividad ritual de gran importancia en todo el área maya (véase Palka 2014, por una síntesis del tema). Dentro de estas prácticas se encuentra frecuentemente la utilización de las cuevas, consideradas como accesos al inframundo. El presente estudio expone el caso del sitio Quen Santo, ubicado en la región de Chaculá, Huehuetenango, Guatemala. Las cuevas de Quen Santo han recibido visitas desde el principio de la época clásica y con el tiempo se ha desarrollado un centro ceremonial importante, con modificaciones arquitectónicas dentro de las cuevas, así como un asentamiento en su cercanía. Después del abandono de este sitio, al principio del Postclásico temprano, los lugares sagrados siguieron siendo visitados hasta por lo menos el Postclásico tardío. En la actualidad, las cuevas de Quen Santo son visitadas por Mayas de toda Guatemala, como ha sido reportado por ejemplo por Brady et al (2009). Durante las investigaciones arqueológicas efectuadas en diferentes momentos desde inicios del siglo veinte, se han proporcionados datos sobre este sitio arqueológico, los cuales se han podido ampliar con los trabajos realizados por parte del Proyecto Arqueológico de la Región de Chaculá (PARCHA) entre 2013 y 2016. Estos nuevos resultados proporcionan datos relevantes sobre prácticas culturales y uso de las cuevas, específicamente peregrinaciones y reutilización de espacios sagrados ancestrales.

**Marc Zender, Tulane University**

*The Maize God & the Deer Lord's Wife*

Underlying Maya cosmology, history, and religion are several key mythological narratives explaining the origins of the world, and providing sacred charters for moral behavior. Key elements from these narratives—including shared mythemes, characters, and toponyms—have long been known to recur in various regions of Southeastern Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize, in the oral traditions of several groups speaking distinct but related Mayan languages. One such is a widespread narrative concerning an aged god of the mountains whose wife runs away with a young culture hero. Naturally enough, the contexts of these modern myths have occasioned some concern that they may be little more than thinly disguised retellings of Biblical stories of unfaithful wives, such as Hosea and Gomer. Yet several Late Classic Maya vases and monuments from the 8th century AD apparently reference episodes from this same story, here explicitly involving Huk Xib (later Hik Sip), the aged Lord of the Deer, whose wife is spirited away by Juun Ixiim, the youthful Maize God, in a union that may well have produced the famed Hero Twins. Epigraphic and iconographic analysis of the texts and imagery reflecting this lost myth, coupled with cautious comparison with potentially related modern Maya myths, allow us to reconstruct many of the basic events of this ancient tale.

