



Copenhagen, October 9-10, 1999

**James E. Brady (California State University) and Jesper Nielsen (Kobenhavns Universitet):**

**The Couple in the Cave: Origin Iconography on a Ceramic Vessel from Los Naranjos, Honduras**

A vessel recovered by Jens Yde of Los Naranjos bears a naturalistic rendering of a couple seated in a cave. We propose that this relates to important Mesoamerican myths surrounding the creation of the world and the origin of the first people. Our interpretation is supported by the presence of a crocodilian figure flanking the cave who is shown to represent the southeastern periphery equivalent of Tonacatecuhtli/Itzamna. We propose that the prevalence of the origin theme in the ceramics of this region reflects the fact that this event was seen to have occurred at Lake Yojoa. This firmly connects the Lake Yojoa region to the growing appreciation of the importance of landscape in Pre-Columbian cosmology and to the growing body of literature that suggests that sacred landscape played an active role in determining settlement patterns. Finally, we suggest that the cave depicted on the ceramics may have been understood to be the Cave of Taulevé.

**Nikolai Grube (University of Texas, Austin):**

**The Caretakers of the Hu'n: The Temple XIX Inscriptions from Palenque and what they say about Subordinate Lords**

The new inscriptions recently discovered in association with Temple XIX at Palenque throw new light on a critical period of Palenque's history: the time after K'inich K'an Joy Chitam's capture by Tonina and the accession to power by K'inich Ahkal Mo' Naab II. During this ten year interregnum, the power was in hands of subordinate lords. These lords took care of the most sacred icons in the possession of the site, the „hu'n“ of the three patron gods of Palenque. These powerful icons were kept in shrines constructed for them. They were regarded as living beings that needed to be maintained and fed. In critical time of dynastic disturbance, subordinate lords were in charge of these activities. The widely discussed „ah k'uhul hu'n“ title may describe these subordinates as a powerful subgroup of the Maya nobility.

**Bodil Liljefors (Lunds Universitet):**

**The Books of Chilam Balam: a Continuing Link between Past and Future**

This paper presents an overview of the content in the different Books of Chilam Balam. Written as they are in the Yucatec Maya language, but with latin script, these books give voice to the Yucatec Maya and their history and culture from Early Colonial times and onwards to modern time. Even today the Books of Chilam Balam hold an important position as a nourishing cultural legacy from the specific tradition of the Yucatec Maya. One intention of this paper is to give examples of voices that speak to us through the texts in these books. Another intention is to suggest a new reading, or interpretation, of part of the text from the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, traditionally referred to as the myth of creation. The Books of Chilam Balam are interesting and must be considered important to researchers for several reasons, not the least that they present to us the voice of the Other. Through these texts it is possible to outline the Yucatec Maya perspective on the conquest and colonization, as well as they tell the reader about Yucatec Maya cosmivision, mythology, rituals, prophecies and historiography. The Books of Chilam

Balam form an important part of the Yucatec Maya traditional legacy and it is the aim of this paper to emphasize their value as source for our knowledge about the Yucatec Maya religion and history. The Books of Chilam Balam echo voices from the distant past, and they inspire Maya readers today to give voice to thoughts, beliefs and expectations of the future as well, since they also hold an important position in the contemporary pan-mayanistic discourse.

### **Peter Mathews (La Trobe University):**

#### **A History of the Inscriptions of Palenque**

The site of Palenque has been crucial for the decipherment of Maya writing. This presentation looks at the history of the decipherment of the inscriptions of Palenque, and also at the implications of those decipherments for our broader understanding of Maya texts and Classic Maya culture.

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

#### **Teotihuacan and the Classic Maya: Recent Investigations of Temple 16 at Copan, Honduras**

It is becoming increasingly apparent that during the Early Classic period, contact between Teotihuacan and the Classic Maya was both direct and sustained. Not only is there evidence of strong Teotihuacan influence in the Maya area, but also a Maya presence at Teotihuacan, including local copies of Maya ceramics and even phonetically written Maya texts in Teotihuacan murals. Although this contact was primarily an Early Classic phenomenon, the Late Classic Maya continued to evoke and celebrate the ancient art and symbolism of Teotihuacan. This paper focuses upon one Late Classic structure, Copan Temple 16, which is filled with references to Teotihuacan and the founder of the Copan dynasty, K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo'. It will be noted that Temple 16 is but the culmination of a long series of superimposed buildings which also refer to the founder, fire ritual, and the Early Classic origins of the Copan dynasty.

### **Elisabeth Wagner (Universität Bonn):**

#### **Knots, Burial Bundles and the Lord of the Dead**

The present paper discusses a titular phrase read *bolon tz'ak(bu) ahaw* (apart from dynastic counts) as a title for deceased and buried individuals. This proposal is based on the following observations: 1) A depiction on an Early Classic incised tripod vessel shows a deceased lord laid out in state and wrapped in nine knotted bands. 2) Further meanings of the root *tz'ak* are „knot“, „to embalm“, etc. 3) On Naranjo Alar 1, the Death God (God A) bears the title *yax bolon tz'ak ahaw*. Thus God A, the Death God, appears to be the prototype and mythical figure of the FIRST dead and buried individual. *Bolon tz'ak* appears to be a symbolic reference for the bundle the corpse is wrapped into. If the possessor of an object in the Primary Standard Sequence text is mentioned as *bolon tz'ak ahaw* it seems that the particular object was specifically made as a grave-gift to accompany its owner in the burial.

### **Søren Wichmann (Københavns Universitet) and Alfonso Lacadena (Universidad Complutense, Madrid):**

#### **More Evidence for the Distribution of Ch'olan Dialects in the Classic Period**

During a series of presentations throughout 1998-1999 culminating in a summary presentation at the Third Palenque Round Table, July 1999, we have argued for a new distributional map of linguistic features indicative of the vernaculars spoken by the various literate Maya groups during the Classic. In our view, Yucatan is mixed Ch'olan/Yucatecan and the south is Ch'olan, but divided linguistically into a western (the greater Usumacinta area) and an eastern region (Petexbatun, Eastern Peten, Belize, Motagua). In this talk we shall briefly summarize our results and suggest three additional linguistic traits that serve to identify the presence of the Eastern vs. Western Ch'olan dialects. The conclusion will furthermore touch upon findings that suggest that also Yucatecan texts have traces of dialect variation

and that Ch'olan dialect variation extended into Yucatan. As a suggestion for future studies we point out that correlations of linguistic, paleographic, stylistic, architectural, ceramical, and historical data hold the promise of giving us interesting new insights into the dynamics of interaction among Maya ethnic and political groups.