



Bonn, December 9-10, 2000

**Dmitri Beliaev** (Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russia):  
*Wayib/Waya:b* Title in the Classic Maya Inscriptions

A wide set of elite titles was employed in the Classic Maya texts. One poorly understood is *wayib/waya:b* (WAY-bi). We know about twenty examples of this epithet among the personal titles between 500 and 800 AD.

The precise meaning of *wayib/waya:b* is unknown. The hieroglyphic spelling WAY-bi is the same as in the case of *wayib* ("the dreaming place") – lineage shrines and other structures of ancestor's worship in the Classic Maya Lowlands. The use of the logograph T539 WAY1 and not of the homophonous T590 WAY2 makes us think that, etymologically, *wayib/waya:b* is connected to *way* "to dream". There are two possible translations: "the dreaming place" (by the instrumental suffix *-ib*), and "a dreamer" (possible by the suffix *-a:b*). The latter can be compared to the better known title a-na-bi, *ana:b*. In both cases, it seems possible that the functions of these people included contacts with the otherworld, the ancestors and the gods.

As a social category, *wayib/waya:b* is similar to other designations of offices and occupations such as *ajaw*, *sajal* or *uxul*. Two subtypes, *-ba'* ("head") and *ch'ok* ("young"), were mentioned in the Late Classic. There is only one example of woman bearing the *wayib/waya:b* title. Although the role of *wayib/waya:b* in the Classic Maya society is unknown, it is clear that the persons bearing this title performed different functions. It is very popular among the secondary rulers in the Usumacinta region and in the Naranjo realm. They also acted as military chiefs and sculptors.

I suggest that *wayib/waya:b* was a designation for the persons who performed some religious activities with ancestor's worship and communication with the otherworld. Its strong association with the secondary rulers raises the question of the existence of religious specialists in the Classic Maya society.

**Kerry Hull** (Department of Art and Art History, University of Texas, Austin, USA)  
and **Michael Carrasco** (Department of Anthropology, University of Texas):

*Mak-Portal Rituals Uncovered: An Approach to Interpreting Symbolic Architecture and the Creation of Sacred Space among the Maya*

In recent years epigraphers have turned their attention to descriptions of rituals recorded in glyphic inscriptions, colonial documents, and ethnographic data. We add to this growing body of literature an analysis of a variety of mak-"portal" (closing) events. Mak-"portal" rituals are found in a number of contexts. At the sites of Copan and Machaquila mak-"portal" ceremonies seem to be connected to rituals relating to cache offerings and plaza events. Additional examples are recorded in the dedicatory passages on Puuk and Ch'enes style capstones. An examination of the texts and iconography of these allow us to tie mak-"portal" rites to the narrative of rebirth of the Maize God. We will argue, therefore, based on the texts of recently discovered capstones at Ek' Balam, that the space between the vaults of the corbelled arch was a portal through which the Maize God sprouts and functioned as an axis mundi connecting the three cosmic realms. Iconographically this mythic cycle is well known from the ceramic corpus. We, however, show that the rebirth of the Maize God myth informs architectural symbolism and certain styles of monumental sculpture. Moreover, the ceremonies of some modern-day groups, such as the Tzotzil, Ch'orti', and Yucatec Maya, will also be queried to demonstrate the pervasive notion that it is

essential to measure and define sacred space through the establishment of the center. Through these modern-day and Classic period examples we will show that the *imago mundi*, as diagrammed on the so-called Cosmic Plate, informs architecture and monumental sculpture at many Maya sites. The capstones clearly connect *mak*-“portal” rituals to this mythic narrative and allow us to understand other examples of *mak*-“portal” rites in greater detail and to establish that these rituals were an important component of Classic period ceremonialism.

### **John F. Chuchiak IV** (Assumption College, Worcester, USA):

#### **The Images Speak: The Survival and Production of Hieroglyphic Codices and Their Use in Post-Conquest Maya Religion, 1580-1720**

Based on new evidence from colonial period ecclesiastical sources, this paper will show that the Maya hieroglyphic script did not perish in the flames of Fr. Diego de Landa's 1562 “*auto de fe*” as previously thought. Moreover, Landa did not destroy the last of the Maya codices as is commonly believed, nor did his efforts hamper their continued use. Instead, Maya hieroglyphic writing survived through the persistent and continued ritual use of Maya codices. Evidence and testimony from colonial ecclesiastical idolatry trials show that hieroglyphic codices were produced and used as ritual almanacs throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As the results of this paper imply, evidence also exists to suggest that along with the hybrid Books of Chilam Balam, a few Maya codices continued to exist into the eighteenth century and beyond.

### **Markus Eberl** (Tulane University, New Orleans, USA) and **Daniel Graña-Behrens** (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, Bonn, Germany):

#### **Change of Names, Change of Titles: The Accession Ritual of Classic Maya Rulers**

The accession of rulers rank among the most lavish rituals that are documented for the Classic Maya society (250-900 AD). The monumental art provides numerous examples for the act of accession, the glyphic inscriptions memorialize the accession, and last but not least, echoes the accession in archaeological paraphernalia (e.g. scepters, headbands) and the architectural setting (especially palaces with thrones). Since the accession of Maya rulers is thus amply documented, even subtler aspects of the accession are discernable. Focusing on the ritualistic and religious aspect, the present investigation proposes that the accession to the throne involved a change of names and a change of titles for Maya rulers.

The accession of Maya rulers exemplifies a rite of passage that bears traits characteristic for the Classic Maya society and yet is comparable to a wide variety of ancient and even modern societies. The rite of passage-model (originally published by Arnold van Gennep in 1909) perceives the biography of individuals as a sequence of different phases with birth, marriage and death being the most poignant. The transition between two phases is safeguarded by culturally specific rituals and ceremonies that have been subsumed as “rite of passage”.

With the “rite of passage”-model being the anchor for our investigation into the accession ritual of Classic Maya rulers, we selected various Maya rulers with an amply documented biography. Several changes in the glyphic record of (among others) K'an Hok'/Hoy Chitam (Palenque), Yonal Ak (Piedras Negras), and Tum Ol K'inich (Caracol) can be attributed to their accession. Most notable is the existence of pre-accession names (which is exchanged for his ruler name during the accession) and a change among the titles carried by the individual (this is especially prominent for K'inich “sun-eyed”).

Especially the glyphic inscriptions mirror the accession of Maya rulers in a formulaic way. While the individual seems overcast by the ritual, a closer look reveals significant changes on the part of the individual involved. The change of (personal) names and titles during accession may have been a widespread phenomenon among Classic Maya rulers. The proposed differentiation between pre-accession names and ruler names put the Classic Maya dynasties in line with other ruling dynasties worldwide (e.g., the Egyptian). The concept of an acquired “ruler name” challenges the traditional notion that the names of Maya rulers are true personal names (and may e.g. indicate matri- or

patrilineal descent). The names and titles of Maya rulers presumably reflect changing social positions, varying ritualistic contexts and adapting personal intentions.

### **Marianne Gabriel** (Eberhard Karls-Universität, Tübingen, Germany):

#### **Elements, Action Sequences and Structure: A Typology of Agrarian Ceremonies as carried out by the Maya Peasants of Eastern Yucatán**

The actors of the ceremonies (Maya priests and peasants) look for orientation in space and time. By constructing the altar or defining the outer limits, the ceremonial site is created. Depending on the objective of the ceremony, the choice of time of day and the day of the week is important. Ceremonies can last anything from a few hours up to twenty-four.

The sequence of rites is predetermined by the position of the altar and the site facing east. All action sequences such as presenting the offerings, incense burning, scattering and handing over offerings proceed counterclockwise, while the defeat of negative powers is carried out clockwise. The number of elements and paraphernalia is defined by the context of the ceremony. The use of certain plants and products marks these as structuring elements of the ceremonies. Special attention is paid to the iconographic signs of the ceremonial breads which help to enlighten some points in the syncretism of Maya and Spanish Catholic beliefs.

The basic structure of a ceremony (*holche'*) is as follows: a phase of libations on the altar and the recitation of prayers precedes a pause. Final prayers and the scattering conclude the offering. The next type of ceremony, using a table as altar (*káanche'*), combines three phases of libations with ceremonial foodstuff included in the last phase. Both types of ceremony can be specified and enhanced with further offerings, rites of benediction and purification, prophecies, and special dedications. They culminate in an extension towards the "cosmic ideogram" with the altar as the center and the four corners of the ceremonial site (inter-cardinal points).

This is the basic structure of the next type of ceremony (*loh*), which in its simplest form consists of one libation phase. In larger ceremonies an altar table is the center. Here also, specification is carried out by rites of protection and the dedication to certain supernatural powers.

These elements, structures and types of these agrarian ceremonies illustrate the significance of the cosmic order: the fourfold structure of the world with its center, the relevance of numbers and the order of the Maya pantheon.

### **Nikolai Grube** (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, Bonn, Germany and University of Texas, Austin, USA):

#### **A Maya Bacchus**

God A' was identified as a distinct entity by Günter Zimmermann. Zimmermann discovered the characteristic attributes of God A' – the so-called "percentage sign" on his cheek, black markings around his eyes and "Ak'bal" or darkness signs on his forehead. In addition, he also identified the name glyph of God A' and thus was able to prove that God A' had to be distinguished from the Death God, with whom he had been lumped together in Schellhas' list of Maya Gods in the codices.

Images of God A' have since been located in Early Classic, Late Classic and Postclassic contexts. They show that God A' must have been an important deity. Classic Maya pictorial ceramics show God A' in association with drinking bouts, scenes of *way* transformation, autosacrifice and ecstatic dance. In some scenes he is shown with an enema syringe, in others he appears vomiting. All of these contexts leave no doubt that God A' is an important character associated with the consumption of alcohol.

The name of God A' can now be deciphered as Akan, a name that has survived into the Motul dictionary of Yucatec Maya, translated by its Spanish authors as "el dios del vino que es baco". His name is also part of the ancient Yucatec toponym Acanceh. Although the word *akan* has no related meaning in Yucatec, cognate forms in Ch'olan and Tzeltalan languages translate as "getting drunk". The god Akan shows up in many hieroglyphic inscriptions in contexts referring to the consumption of *chih* (Pulque). He

also overlaps with the bee god and other gods associated with alcohol, hallucinogenic substances and vision quest.

**Thomas H. Guderjan (Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, USA):**  
**Recreating the Cosmos: Early Classic Dedicatory Caches at Blue Creek**

In recent years, we have begun to understand that the meaning of dedicatory caches associated with Maya public and residential architecture has to do with embedding sacredness and life into the building and place. At the Maya site of Blue Creek in Belize, large-scale excavations have yielded a large database of dedicatory caches in several contexts. Further, our success in analyzing the biosilicate contents of these caches has opened the opportunity to know what was previously unknowable, the plants and other materials incorporated into the caching event.

This paper summarizes the caches from Blue Creek and shows that a common theme is present in all caches regardless of whether they are public, royal, elite or non-elite residential in their nature. In each case, the Maya have intentionally recreated the cosmos in these offerings and incorporated the building into their world. The discovery that most if not all of these include large quantities of imported sponges into the act reinforces the association with the primordial sea in the past it was not known.

We have long recognized that dedicatory caches reflected cultural commonalities among the Maya. However, the incorporation of new biosilicate data make it clear that this shared worldview bound the Maya together, regardless of status and context.

**Stanley P. Guenter (University of Calgary, Canada) and Armando Anaya Hernández (La Trobe University, Australia):**  
**Politics and Patron Gods**

The study of ancient Maya civilization has often revolved around two great themes, politics and religion. However, most of these studies have looked at one or the other of these themes; only rarely both. It has long been noted that for the ancient Maya religion and politics were not seen as separable and this paper will develop this idea of their inextricability of and how each can be used as a mirror into the other.

The clearest area from which to examine this relationship is that of the patron gods of various cities. Though it is clear that these gods play a political role by their restriction to certain sites the relationship goes much further than that. At Copan, for example, a carved bench depicting the many local patron gods includes a number of the site's greatest rulers. Likewise, at Palenque, the lists of gods are known to include the name of K'inich Pakal I, the site's greatest king.

The reverse relationship is also present as well, where local deities appear as directly influencing the politics of their respective sites. At Palenque, instead of directly telling us that Lady Sak K'uk' was ruling in the early seventh century, we are told that the great mother goddess carried out these rituals of office.

With this connection between religion and politics established we can use this information as a guide where seemingly only one of these topics is being addressed. Thus the famous Wayob vases, depicting many patron deities from various sites, may give us clues as to the alliance patterns of the different Classic Maya political landscape. By comparing the list of sites mentioned on certain vases with the political history we have reconstructed from the glyphic monuments we can demonstrate that even the wayob were grouped into political alliances.

**Alfonso Lacadena (Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain):**  
**On the Reading of two Classic Appellatives of the Rain God**

This paper discusses the Classic appellatives of Chaak composed by a color plus HA'-la. Such sequence has been interpreted in several ways, as inchoatives (thus "becoming green" or "becoming red") or as

derived attributes (thus “green watery” or “red watery”). I suggest that HA'-la is neither inchoative –(a)j-al (“become...”) nor attributive –VII (ha'-al, “watery”), but a noun derivation through –al. HA'-al, ha'al, means “rain” in both Ch'olan and Yucatecan languages, so those appellatives are better understood as “Chaak is the red/great rain” and “Chaak is the green/first rain”. HA'-la as ha'al “rain” is not in contradiction with the double \_a\_ that sometimes appears in the Colonial examples (like Yaxaal Chac), as Colonial orthography uses to represent V'V as VV. In the paper I would present the epigraphic analysis of the concerned expressions (including a suggestion about the reading of the rare T143 and its codical version as logographic HA'AL “rain”, which substitutes the HA'-la compound), along with the linguistic support for the interpretation of the –al (very probably –aal) noun-to-noun derivation suffix (well attested in other texts, such as in tz'I-bi, tz'I[h]b “painting”, but tz'I-ba-li, tz'I[h]baal “color, drawing”).

### **Holley Moyes (State University of New York at Buffalo, USA):**

#### **Renewal at the Center of the Underworld: Contextual Analysis of Artifacts from Actun Tunichil Muknal Using GIS**

A spatial analysis using a Geographic Information System (GIS) has been conducted on the Main Chamber of Actun Tunichil Muknal, a Late Classic Maya cave site investigated by the Western Belize Regional Cave Project. Ethnographic models were incorporated into the contextual analysis of point-plotted artifact placement. It was determined that a qincuncial Maya spatial layout was used in delineating ritual space in the cave. Four artifact pathways, or ritual routes, corresponding to the four directions were noted with a Three-Stone-Hearth feature marking the center. An analysis of both artifactual and human remains located at the center of the cave suggests that elements of the Maya creation myth as related in the Popol Vuh were being ritually reenacted as part of a calendrical renewal rite.

### **Vera Tiesler (Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, Mérida, Mexico):**

#### **Prácticas funerarias y tratamientos mortuarios del cuerpo humano entre dirigentes mayas del Clásico: una mirada osteo-tafonómica**

Una breve caracterización de los tratamientos mortuarios del cuerpo humano, observados en el registro maya prehispánico, introduce al tema de la presente charla. Al efecto se proporcionan primero datos derivados de la arqueología, iconografía e epigrafía e historia. Estos se contrastan con la información osteológica / tafonómica, que ha sido relativamente desaprovechada hasta el momento a pesar de su importancia en la reconstrucción de las manifestaciones rituales del culto a la muerte entre los antiguos mayas.

Seguidamente se definen las bases conceptuales y metodológicas empleadas en la investigación osteoarqueológica. Se señalan algunos procedimientos técnicos y prácticos en el estudio esquelético y tafonómico de restos humanos provenientes de contextos mortuarios en el área maya. Se demarcan alcances y limitantes de esta línea de trabajo y se enfatiza sobre la importancia de una comunicación interdisciplinaria, no solo para la reconstrucción de las manifestaciones escatológicas encontradas en el registro material, sino también para la obtención de datos biográficos de los difuntos depositados.

Con base en los aspectos señalados, la última parte de la conferencia presenta nuevos datos sobre dirigentes mayas del Clásico y los tratamientos funerarios que recibieron. En particular, se hace referencia a los personajes depositados en la Cámara Funeraria II-4 (1997) de Calakmul, Campeche, el núcleo del Templo de las Inscripciones de Palenque, Chiapas, y el Grupo Ah Canul de Oxkintok, Yucatán.

**Alexander W. Voss** (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, Bonn, Germany):  
Priests and Consorts at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, México: Specialization in Terminal Classic Maya Society

Priests are attested for the northern Maya Lowlands in Postclassic times. They built a firmly established institution within Mayan society by that time. According to the ethnohistorical sources there existed different types of priests, they were hierarchically organized, were trained and ordained, and were responsible for the service in the temples, reading the books, make prognostications, etc. According to these observations priesthood can be defined as an institution whose exclusive role within society is characterized by restricted and controlled access to specialized religious knowledge and performance of religious duties in the respective public buildings. The esteem for each individual within priesthood was not longer based on his personal charisma but explicitly derived from social position that went with this office.

A comparison with classic period Maya some 600 years earlier reveals a completely different picture. Although the inscriptions report the performance of religious duties which obviously required specialized an, therefore, exclusive knowledge, none of these activities is solely restricted to an institutionalized office. According to the inscriptions religious practices could be performed by almost any member of Maya nobility which held additional positions within society. The most outstanding character in this respect is the k'ul ajaw. As leader of his lineage and highest representative of the city state his kin-group controlled, he held the highest political or secular power as well as represented the highest religious authority.

The question to be asked in this occasion is where and when did institutionalized religious offices appear for the first time within Maya society. A thorough revision of the pertinent data reveals that the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD contain the earliest and up to now the only autochthonous material with indication for the rise of an institutionalized priesthood. In the present article the author discusses two examples from the texts of Chichén Itzá which can be interpreted as indications for the possible rise of an institutionalized priesthood in terminal classic Maya society in the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. The basis for the presented readings are present notions and definitions derived from studies in Comparative religion.

**Søren Wichmann** (University of Copenhagen, Denmark):  
The Names of Some Major Classic Maya Gods

The linguistic identification of Classic Maya texts of the southern lowlands as exclusively Ch'olan provides a methodological guideline for the morphological and semantic interpretation of glyphic expressions. As a consequence of the requirement that Ch'olan texts should normally make sense in Ch'olan, certain glyphic expressions must be reinterpreted. This will be demonstrated using the onomastics of some Maya gods as examples. The reinterpretations, it is hoped, will shed new light on Classic Maya religion, specifically as concerns the characteristics of religious specialists, the use of the calendar, and creation mythology.

Stuart (1986) argues that substitution patterns for the title read Mah-K'ina by Lounsbury (1985:47-50) points to a reading k'inich, which is a title and a name for the Sun God known from ethnohistorical sources. Stuart follows Roys, Thompson and Barrera Vásquez in giving the etymology "sun-eyed" for k'inich, k'in meaning "sun" and ich meaning "eye" in Yucatec Maya. I shall demonstrate the inadequacy of this etymology, and instead propose the Ch'olan reading k'ihn-ich, which is composed of the verb k'ihn "to be warm" and the adjectivising suffix -Vlch, which occurs in Ch'orti and has a proto-Mayan origin. The proper meaning of k'ihn-ich, then, is "hot". There is a rare glyphic spelling K'IN-hi-ni-chi to support this new interpretation, as well as ethnographic data showing that among at least some Maya groups "heat" is associated with powerful people, including religious specialist.

It has often been noticed that, apart from some terminal Classic instances, the Mayas of the Classic period did not make use of calendar names in the inscriptions. The Maya gods, however, may carry calendar names. A case in point is a god who appears to be named 7 Flint, spelled 7-ye-to-k'a. I propose

that to-k'a, tok' "flint" is a rare phonetic spelling of a Ch'olan day name which would seem to correspond to the Yucatecan day name Etz'nab. If I am correct, the birth date of the god does not coincide with his calendar name, suggesting that the birth statement refers to a resurrection. Another case in point is the god "First Father", who appears to be the Classic Maya version of Quetzalcoatl. It is quite likely that his name, spelled 1-ye-NAL, is also a calendar name. The calendar name Ce Acatl for the corresponding entity in Central Mexico suggests that nal is the proper Ch'olan version of the Yucatecan day name "Been". The various implications of these suggestions will be discussed. Finally, while a complete reading of the name of the "Paddler God" is still pending, I shall present suggestive evidence to the effect that they must represent the paired opposition of light and darkness and that the paddler expression is a metaphor for the creation of light.