



Hamburg, December 8-9, 2001

**Marc Zender (University of Calgary):**

**Lords of La Corona: Reconstructing the Historical Documents of 'Site Q'**

Epigraphers regularly deal with an eroded or abraded, shattered and sometimes scattered corpus of documents; documents which require a good deal of labour-intensive reconstruction before the work of historiography can even begin. It is therefore surprising that little of this work is made explicit in print, and the field as a whole is often left in the dark about the exact process and methodology followed in epigraphic reconstruction.

This paper aims to redress this unfortunate imbalance with a case study of the largely unprovenanced, battered and eroded "Site Q" panels. Their careful reconstruction proceeds from the patterned repetitions common to Mayan monumental rhetoric, bound by the limitations of monument size and preserved glyph-outlines. Further, the network of toponyms and anthroponyms, combined with a measured appreciation of script palaeography, is shown to securely tie these documents into the recently-discovered site of La Corona, Guatemala, whose own monuments confirm and amplify the reconstructions proposed herein.

**Thomas H. Guderjan (Texas Christian University) & C. Colleen Hanratty (Southern Methodist University):**

**A Thriving Non-Royal Lineage at Blue Creek: Evidence from a sequence of burials, caches and architecture**

No abstract available.

**Erik Boot (Leiden University):**

***Mul tepal* - 'Joint Rule or Government' at Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico: Historic Reality, or not?**

When one wants to capture "Mayan memories", it is of the utmost importance that the basic groundwork is done satisfactorily. This is specifically the case in epigraphic and iconographic studies. If a set of inscriptions and images provides the historical representation of such "Mayan memories", especially when it is recorded once and thus only represents a single indigenous perspective, a change in decipherment and/or analysis of accompanying images may alter the basic meaning drastically.

In this paper I will discuss the validity of the 16th century Yucatec Maya word *mul tepal* as found in the Books of Chilam Balam, commonly translated as "joint rule or government", and used to describe Late Classic to Terminal Classic political organization at Chichen Itza in the 9th century. Through a step-by-step analysis of the pivotal elements that constitute the original and adapted proposal of *mul tepal* as Chichen Itza, I will show that *mul tepal* as defined originally can no longer be applied to the case of Chichen Itza.

*Mul tepal* can only be found in three short passages in the Books of Chilam Balam, written predominantly in Yucatec Maya, which describe the circumstances of the fall of Mayapan in a *k'atun 8 Ahaw* at circa AD 1441-1461. In other sources, mostly written in Spanish (with the aid of native informants) and never using the word *mul tepal*, the fall of Mayapan is associated with the opposition between the families named Cocom and Xiu, who contest each other for the domination and supreme

lordship of the city. None of the sources ever states that lordship at Mayapan was shared as the most common translation of *mul tepal* as "joint rule or government" would suggest. Based on dictionary sources and ethnohistoric accounts I arrive at an alternative definition of *mul tepal* as "unification, incorporation, or congregation of lordships" which would imply singular paramount lordship.

The inscriptions at Chichen Itza cover a short span of AD 932-998, with most inscriptions dated to the period of circa AD 870-890. None of the inscriptions records birth, accession, or death events and according to Schele and Freidel (1990) the hieroglyphic texts seem to record dedicatory ceremonies performed by groups of related actors. The relationship between these actors in many cases is described as *y-itah*, first interpreted as "his sibling", but later as "his companion" (Schele and Mathews 1998). While none of the events recorded involved events of direct political importance, Schele and Freidel proposed a *mul tepal* "joint rule or government" model, simply because the actors were "related". Recent epigraphic research by the present author further indicates that several of the suggested "siblings" or "companions" are actually gods and not human beings. Research by other epigraphers indicates that the *yi-ta-hi* collocation, originally leading to *y-itah*, actually contains the root *il(t)a*, a disyllabic (secondary) transitive verb with the possible meaning "to observe" or "to look at".

These results provide the first tangible indications that the proposed model of *mul tepal* at Chichen Itza may be non-existent. An analysis of titles, generally accepted among epigraphers as indications of position and rank, further indicates that the paramount position among the Late Classic Maya called *k'uhul ahaw* "god-ly or god-like lord" was also used to refer to *K'ak'upakal*, the most mentioned individual between circa AD 870-890.

While *mul tepal* as applied to Chichen Itza may once have described the "correct" historical representation of a "Mayan memory", more recent ethnohistoric and epigraphic research provides sufficient grounds to alter this conception and to adjust the theoretical framework accordingly.

### **Lorraine Williams-Beck (Universidad de Campeche):**

**Toward resolving historical document conundrums: An archaeological interpretation of the Calkiní title**

No abstract available.

### **Inés de Castro (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn):**

**Eugenio Arana, Comandante General of the Pacificos del Sur, 1868-1905**

During the Caste War of Yucatán (1847-1901) a group of Maya decided to give up the war by separating from the main indian party of the Cruzoob and signing a peace treaty with the yucatecan administration in 1853. This group, that was called *Pacificos del Sur* because of their "peaceful" behaviour, settled in the southern parts of the modern state of Campeche around the main centers of Mesapich, Lochhá, Noh-Ayin, Xkanhá and Chichanhá/Icaiché.

As a result of the peace arrangements the *Pacificos del Sur* became a de facto independent buffer-zone between the two spheres of control. Considered as enemies by the Cruzoob because of their subordination under the yucatecan rule and still seen as a threat to yucatecan authorities despite the peace agreements, they were forced to adopt interesting strategies of survival.

Based on archival documentation from Campeche and Mérida state and church archives this talk would like to concentrate on one of the main leaders of the *Pacificos del Sur*, the "*comandante general*" Eugenio Arana, head of the group from 1868 to his death in 1905. His life and actions not only exemplify important aspects of the political organization of the *Pacificos del Sur*. It also shows the juggling strategies between the different parties involved in the Caste War underlying a pragmatic behaviour outside ethnic or ideological aspects.

**Guillermo Velázquez Ramírez (Universidad de Quintana Roo):**  
Restauración arqueológica y reconstrucción de la memoria

No abstract available.

**Marcus Kuhnert (Universität Hamburg):**  
The Representation of Mythology and History in Late Preclassic and Early Classic Architecture

The architecture of the ancient Maya is one of the major sources for the reconstruction of Mayan history but it is also a very difficult one. The main problem is to find out “why” and “what for” these buildings have been constructed. Apparently they have been erected with a special intention or purpose, e.g. they functioned as profane and/or sacred buildings and they were used by the nobility, the priests and the kings in various aspects and religious ideology (as well as political) was (re-) presented on them and through them. Sometimes the written texts on lintels or stelae that are associated with a building can give evidence about the use and intention of this special building. But often there are no texts or other related items like cache offerings or burials and then the building or its architecture has to speak for itself.

The buildings that have been constructed during the Preclassic Period in the lowlands lack glyphic texts that could help interpreting them but some bear very special features that could give hints to one very important role architecture might have had during that time.

Recent research in the northern Peten has brought to light that during the Late Preclassic in a relatively short period of time massive constructions with elaborate facade decorations have been constructed at several sites. These monuments are very similar or even uniform in style and shape and it will be shown by the author that this type can be found spread all over the Maya lowland. These special buildings were decorated with stucco masks or panels flanking the stairways and were often arranged in a triadic style and it can be argued that these motifs refer to a mythological history. The masks show deities and other religious motifs and the ideology behind it must have been common to nearly all the ancient community because a great labour was needed to realise these massive and elaborate buildings.

With examples from different sites from the Maya lowlands this talk would like to show that this tradition underwent slightly changes over the time so that at the end of it in the Classic Period stands a mixture of religious and profane motifs. The formerly pure religious motifs were transformed by exchanging the representations of deities through portraits of rulers. So myth history and real history were combined and a mythological history was created which could be used by the elite to legitimise their own authority and power to rule.

**Megan O’Neil (Yale University):**  
Lacanja Stela 7: The Juxtaposition of Past and Present for an Image of the Future

Although cut into pieces and scattered across the globe by looters in the late 1950s, a Maya stela from the acropolis of Lacanja in the Lacandon Jungle of Chiapas once stood 2.5 meters high. Lacanja Stela 7 comprises a significant moment in the history of art of the ancient Maya, a history of art that is not only based on our external perspective, but also one that is internal to the ancient Maya, with artists and monuments essentially in interaction in the ancient past.

One of the first dated monuments of the Late Classic period, Lacanja Stela 7 of AD593 is a sculpture that bridges the transition from Early to Late Classic sculptural representation. Furthermore, through its use of artistic archaism in dialectical opposition to artistic innovation, embodied in the represented images of each of its two male figures, this monument provides a rich opportunity for exploration of Maya conceptualizations of the past and exploration of what the recording and use of history may have meant in ancient Mayan art.

Its composition consists of a robust ruler in movement whose sculptural articulation breaks traditional art-making paradigms established in the Early Classic. This primary figure contrasts dramatically with the static figure on the rectangular shield he holds to his chest. This second image depicts a warrior

whose costume and accoutrements allude to a Teotihuacan or "foreign" style. Simultaneously, this figure is sculpted in an archaic style and body position clearly quoted from Early Classic Maya sculpture of the central Peten. With this juxtaposition of past and present in which the manner of sculptural depiction carries a series of connotations and commentary of cultural and temporal difference, this monument—both intellectually and materially—claims to exist in a present that is distinct from its past. Through this juxtaposition and the violations of earlier artistic paradigms, Lacanja Stela 7 and its creators challenged the art of the past and offered alternatives for art-making of the present. Subsequently, these new paradigms became the future of Late Classic Maya sculpture of the western realm at sites such as Piedras Negras.

With this investigation, as opposed to debating whether or not what the Maya recorded in their images and texts is real "history" in our current definition of the term, I want to examine how the Maya USED the recording of the past for their present purposes. The process of history-making is the manipulation of historical facts and figures in a context of reference to the present, and any object is the material, viable manifestation of this procedure. By focusing on detailed analyses of particular works of ancient Maya art and probing beyond their clean, smooth surfaces, we may begin to crack them open and tease out various ways that, for example, the Maya conceptualized and represented their past in a discourse related to their past, present, and future.

### **Carlos Flores (London):**

#### **From Stone to Video: Postwar Inscriptions of *La Violencia* among Q'eqchi' Mayas of Guatemala**

This paper examines the cultural effects of social change, political violence and militarisation, and the process of identity reconstruction among Maya-Q'eqchi' communities in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, following an extended period of armed conflict. The main aim is to explore the role that monuments and collaborative video production played in this process. Analysis focuses on the construction of a memorial in the community of Sahakok to commemorate 916 victims of the violence. I argue that the construction of the memorial was part of a larger process whereby the experience of the 'great suffering' or 'la violencia' of the 1980s was reframed within community traditions. This reframing both contested official histories and repaired fractured local narratives, strengthening in turn the reconstruction of local identities. The collaborative production of a film (*Rub'el Kurus/Beneath the Cross*) about the event was another extension of this historical process of memory recovery and social healing, which articulated a narrative of self-representation saturated with cultural and historical significance.

### **Albert Davletshin (Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow):**

#### **The Becoming of the Maya Writing Historical Tradition**

The first inscribed monuments appear throughout Mesoamerica by the beginning of the Common Era. Most texts reveal a well-developed writing system. The fact that it occurs independently and at different sites suggests that the appearance of these monuments does not reflect the emergence of the writing itself, rather it marks the becoming of the Pan-Mesoamerican tradition to use the inscriptions on the sculptured monuments as a vehicle for 'political propaganda'. The earliest inscriptions are likely to be historical in content, as there are only unround dates up to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and some of the texts use small distance numbers (LMJ:St.1; KJU:St.10; CLC:Mon.1). A bad state of preservation and scarcity of early inscriptions do not allow us to interpret them and to understand the core of their 'historicity'. However, epigraphic and iconographic evidences point that the Stela 5 from Abaj Takalik, dated the 6<sup>th</sup> July of 125 AD, is dedicated to the enthronement of a successor in the presence of secondary dignitaries supervised by his deified ancestor depicted above. One can recognize this text as 'historical' in nature because it refers to a particular moment in time when a specified historical person participates in a socially important action. The spellings **?AJAW-(wa)** and **HUN-(na)** suggest that the language of the inscription is Cholan.

## **Stanley Guenter (LaTrobe University, Melbourne):**

### **Foliated Ajaw and the Fall of El Mirador**

El Mirador, in the heart of the Mirador Basin of northern Peten, Guatemala, was the largest city the Maya ever built. However, due to the fact that it has seen little investigation to date and was in ruins before the Classic period even began, little is known of its history, which must have been of the utmost importance to later kings and scribes of the Maya lowlands. What was surely one of the most important events to the course of Maya civilization, the fall of El Mirador, is still almost completely unknown.

The Codex-style vases produced in the Mirador Basin in the seventh and eighth centuries have long been known to make reference to great mythological events involving the gods of the Classic Maya. However, recent re-analyses of these vases indicates that a number of them refer to great historical figures of the most remote period of Maya history. This study examines one of these figures, Foliated Ajaw, known presently only from Late Classic inscriptions at the southeastern sites of Copan and Pusilja, and associated with events in the southern Maya region in AD 159-160. To date his importance to the course of Maya history and his connection to the Mirador Basin has not been noted, even though he is the first historical individual known from Maya texts to be mentioned at more than one site.

Three Codex-style vessels looted from unknown sites in the Mirador Basin provide new evidence concerning Foliated Ajaw as they mention this lord in connection with the northern Peten. Often described as the first king of Copan, it will be shown that he was, in fact, one of the first great Maya warlords and whose exploits led to his commemoration from the southern highlands of Guatemala to the lowlands of southern Quintana Roo. In addition to the Late Classic references to this king, much earlier sources such as the Hauberg Stela, Stela 65 of Kaminaljuyu and the Leiden Plaque will be examined to elucidate both the life and death of Foliated Ajaw. In the process, a possible toponym for Kaminaljuyu will be advanced and it will be proposed that, coming from this site on 1 February, 164, Foliated Ajaw overthrew the last king of El Mirador, an event which culminated in the destruction and abandonment of this great metropolis.

## **Matthias Gorissen (Universität Hamburg):**

### **Apocalypticism and Maya History in the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel: Re-thinking Time, History and Cosmology among the Maya of Yucatan**

Many historical sections in the Books of Chilam Balam are often seen as mere transcriptions of late prehispanic hieroglyphic texts. According to a major model of the relationship of Yucatec Maya religion and historiography after the Conquest - developed by Nancy M. Farriss in the mid-1980s - the early Colonial "cosmopolitan" (or culturally hybrid) elite of Maya society experimented with central ideas of Christian cosmology in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. These ideas included some basic tenets of medieval Christian historiography such as apocalypticism and "salvational history", whose inherent theodicy is often seen as the root of Western "linear time". However, although at least some parts of Maya society understood Christian cosmology "as a system", this system was ultimately rejected due to its outright contradiction of late prehispanic Maya beliefs preserved in the Books of Chilam Balam.

Contrary to this model, and by comparing a number of historical texts in the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel with their respective parallel versions in the Books from Maní and Tizimin, it will be shown that the Chumayel systematically develops an apocalyptic vision of history: Maya history after the Conquest is described as an ever-worsening time of crisis, culminating in Last Judgement, and to be followed by a new, eternal age of salvation. In its more elaborate versions, this scenario also includes a number of other European eschatological motives, such as the reign of Antichrist, an all-encompassing expansion of Christianity, and the resurrection of the dead prior to Last Judgement.

By manipulating metatextual passages (especially introductions) that guide the reception of a given text, one or several successive scribes involved in the compilation of the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel cleverly adapted ancient texts to a new intellectual environment, without making substantial changes at the main body of these texts. A relatively new vision of history was thus backed up by traditional texts in distinctively indigenous genres. Yucatec Maya historiography in the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel,

then, remains a typically Colonial “derivative discourse”, as it is ultimately based on a European mode of the production of historical meaning.

Together, these findings suggest that (1) Christian universal eschatology had a much greater impact on Colonial Maya culture than previously suggested, (2) that a rigid distinction between (late prehispanic or early Colonial) “authors” and late Colonial “copyists” of texts in the Books of Chilam Balam cannot be maintained, (3) that students of the Books of Chilam Balam should learn to make greater use of the variation between different versions of synoptic texts (rather than eliminating variation by reconstructing a hypothetical common original), and (4) that Maya and European visions of historical time were, after all, neither inherently different nor entirely incompatible, so that Maya historiography in the Colonial period could produce more than a series of disconnected “chronicles of the impossible”.

### **Antje Gunsenheimer (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn):** What happens after deconstruction? Post-modern approaches to Yucatecan Ethnohistory

Postmodern perspectives on history tend to reduce our understanding of the past. Because postmodernists consider the representation of historical events as a selective process, leading to differentiation and fragmentation of what is represented and by thus memorized. As one result it turns out that, what was formerly considered as collective memory, has now to be understood as mere local or personal history, made by minorities, following their own “politics of memory” (following J. Rappaport 1998).

As a case study the author will present the varying perceptions of the *Ah Itzaob* in colonial documents on yucatecan history (16th to 18th century). According to these the historical meaning of the *Ah Itzaob* changed from being one of several ruling yucatecan groups in pre-colonial periods to represent the “one” leading elite. These differences are due to the time and place of and the personal intentions in the documentation of historical events.

Studied as a phenomenon per se, they do reveal dynamics in colonial yucatecan self-reflection and they present a wonderful example of transmission processes. But they do also pose a severe problem to 20th century efforts in reconstructing yucatecan pre-colonial history. Because many studies have been based on late colonial ethnohistorical sources (mainly the Books of Chilam Balam).

Accepting that colonial ideas have been copied to pre-columbian periods, leads to a painful deconstruction of what we thought the *Ah Itzaob* might have been. We are left with a rather poor corps of data and more questions arise. Since deconstruction leads to nowhere, how do we get out of this trap? Still intending to reconstruct the pre-colonial past and to search for the “real” *Ah Itza*, we are in need for more information. Without complete ethnohistorical records and further epigraphic enlightments to this matter, there may be only methodological approaches to solve this question, which will be discussed by the author.

### **Geneviève Le Fort (Bern):** Sacred versus Divine: Comments on Classic Maya Kingship

The classic Maya king was re-born to history and revealed to the academic world when scholars established, not so long ago, the historical nature of the hieroglyphic inscriptions. It soon appeared that the politic and religious spheres were intimately connected, and the ruler, surrounded as he is so often with sacred symbols, was regarded as divine. This interpretation, refined as the advancement in epigraphic and iconographic studies allowed in recent years, still prevails today.

Sacred kingship became a major issue since Frazer isolated in the late 19th century the phenomenon of the king-magician, and has proven to be, in the studies dealing mainly so far with Africa, Asia or Europe, a very complex matter showing various aspects. De Heusch for example, distinguishes three types of kings: the magician, the priest, and the god.

Which one of those was the Maya ruler? Was he indeed divine, or rather sacred? It is of course too early to offer a complete understanding of classic Maya kingship but it is time to address these fundamental

questions. This paper takes up the important issue of the nature of classic Maya rulership by looking at how the king, historical person par excellence, is represented in texts, images and rituals.

**Ann C. Wright (University of Texas at Austin):**

**Signs of Life: Performance of Memory and Political Agency in Ancient Mesoamerican Representations of Authenticity, Identity, and Experience**

Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican artistic and literary endeavor was bound not so much in how it reflected the people, as in how its performance produced them – how it created and constructed authenticity, identity, and experience. This paper investigates the manner in which the classical Maya viewed the concept of *art as experience*, positing the use of contemporary performance theory as a lens for witnessing the (re)making of meaning, and (re)defining the “inanimate’s” role as an active participant in the theatricality of Maya consciousness and cultural expression of memory and political agency.

Exploring the *temporal* of the performing arts within the conventionally considered *spatial* of the fine arts, I interrogate issues of signification and structure by (re)defining the art *object* as a *process* encompassing the social and the aesthetic – defining the quality of an *experience* rather than that of an *object*. Recent scholarship suggests the ancients may have attempted to perpetuate activity and approach a revivification of the past through iconographic narrative. I speculate, however, (focusing on issues of kinesthetic imagination, the influences of time on spatial representation, and the impact of surrogacy and restored behavior) that universally understood ideology, expressed through symbolic movement and gesture, allowed ancient cultural performances of constructed memory to also serve as the rehearsal for political change.

Alien to traditional Western thought and ideology, the manner in which the Maya defined their existence in the cosmos is captured in their recorded beliefs regarding the sacred nature of writing and its performative nature. Evidence shows that the medium intentionally calls attention to itself as a speaker – mimicking the teller of tales. The narrative erupts performatively from the ancient scribe’s chosen mediums – whether on painted murals, sculpted documentation on stone stelae, incision on ceramics, graffiti, or in screen-fold codices – and continues to perform its story today.

Ancient Mesoamerican historiography, therefore, represents the scripted theatricality of a culture, cyclically performing its unique worldview, with the aim of achieving deeper understandings of its position within the universe, while creating constructed memory capable of initiating and communicating cultural change. Artistic efforts redefined the “real,” and promoted cultural evolution through performances heretofore forgotten in official discourses of theatre/performance history or Mesoamerican studies. The phenomenon of writing and painting as gesture – text “doing”, rather than simply “relating,” as defined in contemporary performance theory – allows us to posit alternative ways of viewing performance, defining theatre as cultural evolution, and creating methodologies for practicing the historian’s craft as it pertains to the unique performance traditions of the indigenous Maya.

**John F. Chuchiak (Assumption College, Boston):**

**Remembering the Forbidden: Colonial Yucatec Maya Perceptions and Historical Recollections of Traditional Religion and Ritual, 1570-1700**

No abstract available.

**Wolfgang Gabbert (Freie Universität Berlin):**

**The Vicissitudes of Nation-Building: The Past of Yucatán in Nineteenth-Century Elite discourse**

Two topics were of special importance for Yucatán's elite in the nineteenth century. First, elite members wondered about how economic and social “progress”, that is, among other things, a market economy, education, and republican institutions, could be installed in a society freed from colonial rule only in 1821. Second, they were faced with the problem of building a nation from a socially, culturally, and

phenotypically heterogenous population. Both problems were intimately related to the past of the Yucatán Peninsula and that part of the population considered Indian (*indios* or *indígenas*). The paper discusses how the region's history was constructed in elite discourse and how this was related to the contemporary indigenous population.