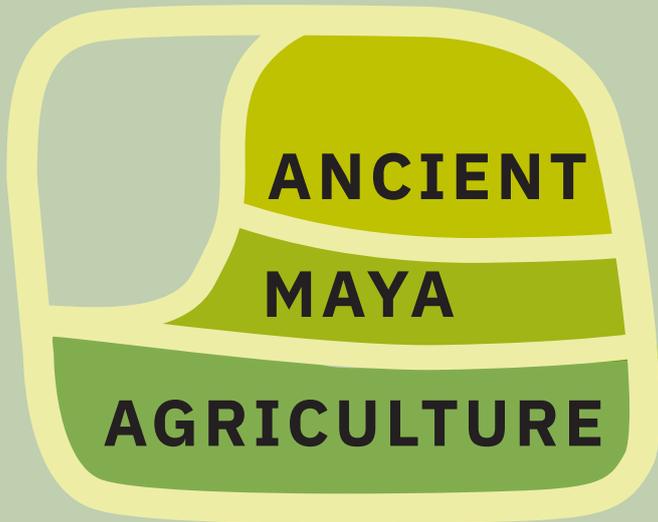


BRATISLAVA

7 - 11

DECEMBER  
2021



FROM PRACTICE  
TO MYTHOLOGY



26th  
European  
Maya  
Conference



**B O O K O F  
A B S T R A C T S**

## Organizers



WAYEB



CENTER FOR MESOAMERICAN STUDIES



PROMAYA



COMENIUS  
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## Financial support



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## ***Beginners' workshop***

*Tutors:*

Dorota Bojkowska (Jagiellonian University of Krakow), Maria Felicia Rega (Sapienza University of Rome & Comenius University in Bratislava), Boguchwała Tuszyńska (Independent Scholar)

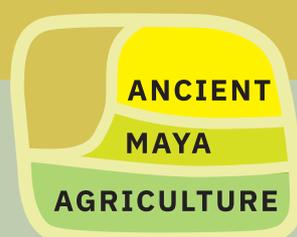
*Title:*

**From sowing to crops:  
The chok ritual in the Maya inscriptions**

*Abstract:*

During the workshop, attendees will be provided with basic information on the Maya writing system, calendar, and linguistics, in order to develop their ability to read Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions. Therefore, the workshop is open to participants with little or no prior knowledge of Maya epigraphy; however, anyone interested in the topic is welcome. This workshop will focus on the Classic Maya texts related to the scattering ritual (chok) which may have symbolized the act of sowing maize seeds – one of the most important grains in the whole Mesoamerica. In addition, this ritual was performed more often during times of drought, in order to invoke the rain, so the rite was closely associated with the agrarian cycles. Later in the workshop, the participants will examine texts from ceramic vessels referring to their contents – i.e., the beverages made from crops. Different flavours of atole and cacao drinks were often named in the so-called “Dedicatory Formula” or “The Primary Standard Sequence” which will also be discussed during the workshop.

The workshop will be conducted in English but, on an individual basis, explanations can be also provided in Polish, Italian and Spanish. Furthermore, the workshop will be conducted in a hybrid manner: tutors will be divided and will work separately – with on-line and on-site groups at the same time, and every presentation will be streamed online.



## ***Intermediate workshop***

### *Tutors:*

Albert Davletshin (Universidad Veracruzana), Daria Sekacheva (Russian State University for the Humanities), Harri Kettunen (University of Helsinki)

### *Title:*

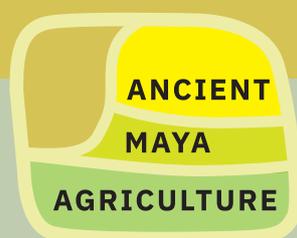
#### **Eating and Drinking in Mesoamerican Scripts**

### *Abstract:*

Eating and drinking are physiologically important and cover a significant part of human life – regardless of people’s cultural and linguistic affiliations. The primary source of food in Mesoamerica was agriculture. Nowadays, a number of Mesoamerican crops are consumed all over the world on a daily basis. Being an important part of life, foods and drinks are also present in Mesoamerican scripts.

During our workshop we are going to discuss foods, drinks, their social functions, and known recipes found in Mesoamerican hieroglyphic texts. The participants will work with the inscriptions, looking for the records of foods, drinks and related contexts. They will discover the wonders of Mesoamerican cuisine and the role it played in the society. We will start with the main agricultural products, their nutritional values and modes of production. We will proceed with drinks and supplementary foods including insects and inebriants. Finally, we will dig into the social functions of drinking and eating in Mesoamerica, among them, gender and ethnic identities, ritual activities, exchange of goods and market economy. We will focus mainly on Maya texts on ceramic vessels and Aztec tribute lists, with some examples drawn from other Mesoamerican scripts and modern ethnographic records.

The participants are going to work with hieroglyphic texts in small groups. Basic knowledge of Maya epigraphy is required to attend the workshop. Tuition is in English (with explanations in Spanish, Russian, and German available).



## ***Advanced workshop***

*Tutors:*

Sergei Vepretskii (Russian State University for the Humanities & Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography, Moscow), Ivan Savchenko (Independent Researcher), Sandra Viskanta Khokhriakova (Russian State University for the Humanities)

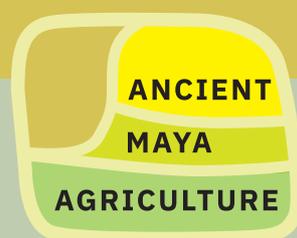
*Title:*

**The Force Awakens: History and Politics of Early Kanu'l**

*Abstract:*

Kanu'l was one of the most powerful kingdoms of the ancient Maya and this is why it keeps drawing considerable attention from scholars. Through several important finds and discoveries of recent years, we have learned more about the early history of this kingdom. It refers to the period when the royal court of Kanu'l was located in Dzibanche (Quintana Roo, Mexico). The rise of power started by the vast military campaign of Yukno'm Ch'ee'n I and reached its peak during the reign of K'ahk' Ti' Ch'ich', the king who was completely unknown some five years ago, but at the moment can be considered as the most powerful ruler of the ancient Maya in the 6th century. During this workshop, we will examine all the most important hieroglyphic texts related to Early Kanu'l from the problematic King List on the codex style ceramic vessels to the Caracol monuments describing the intra-dynastic conflict preceding the reign of Yukno'm Ch'ee'n the Great.

Good command of both Maya writing and calendar are required. The workshop will be tutored in English, with explanations in Spanish and Russian available upon request. We look forward to your participation, so that we together may try to solve the puzzles related to the amazing history of the Kanu'l kingdom.



## **Special workshop**

### *Tutors:*

Dora Maritza García Patzán (Comenius University in Bratislava),  
Maurício Díaz García (City University of New York)

### *Title:*

**Comiendo como dioses, viviendo como reyes: aportes de la agricultura mesoamericana al mundo**

### *Abstract:*

En este taller se abordarán diferentes temas relacionados con la agricultura en Mesoamérica, los principales cultivos e ingredientes esenciales para la preparación de alimentos y que han aportado también a la gastronomía mundial. Se enfocará en preparaciones y productos de las Tierras Altas Mayas, especialmente del Altiplano Central de Guatemala. Esta actividad se abordará con información arqueológica, iconográfica, de textos e información etnográfica del Área Maya. Ambos instructores han heredado la elaboración de estas recetas por generaciones, por lo que la utilización de ingredientes y su preparación tendrá un toque más cercano, personal y anecdótico. Debido a la pandemia del COVID, ha sido necesario reformular el taller, se realizará la preparación de los platos en línea y se dará a los participantes los ingredientes y procedimientos de preparación para que puedan conocerlos y realizarlos si así lo quisieran.

El taller será bilingüe: español e inglés.

El horario de conexión en línea será a partir de la 1 de la tarde, hora de Eslovaquia

### **Día 1 Hombres de maíz**

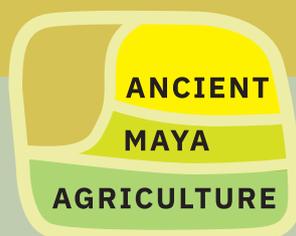
Jueves 9 de diciembre

Hora: 1 p.m.

*Tema introductorio:*

Presentación de los tutores y participantes

- Orígenes de la agricultura en Mesoamérica. La presencia de alimentos en la iconografía maya y sus recipientes (vasijas).



# Special workshop

- Condimentos mesoamericanos: su uso en el Altiplano Maya y en el mundo. Mesoamérica en Europa, la otra colonización: productos Mesoamericanos de uso cotidiano en la cocina Europea.
- Dioses y seres ligados a la agricultura. Representaciones en murales, vasijas y códices.
- Ciclo de los cultivos y ceremonias actuales en el altiplano maya.
- Comida sagrada y sustento diario: alimentos que consumidos en el diario vivir y en días festivos o como ofrendas.
- La Nixtamalización como base de la subsistencia en Mesamérica (material audiovisual).

## **Día 2 Ancestralidades en la mesa**

Viernes 10 de diciembre

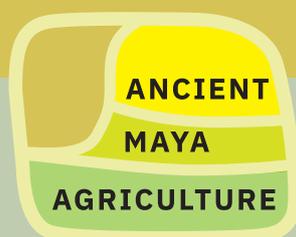
Hora: 1 p.m.

### La molienda del cacao

- Introducción: comercialización del cacao en Eslovaquia (invitada especial).
- Platillo principal: realización del mole guatemalteco, un postre mestizo.
- Realización del pepián guatemalteco.
- ¿Cómo hacer un buen guacamol?

## **Día 3 Ancestralidades en la mesa**

- Elaboración del Pul'ik, un platillo maya-kaqchikel de San Martín Jilotepeque.
- Elaboración de chuchitos, un tipo de tamal guatemalteco.
- ¿Cómo hacer unas buenas tortillas?

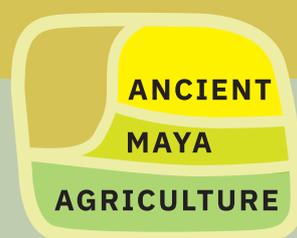


**Lorraine A. Williams-Beck (Universidad Autónoma de Campeche)**

**“Where’s all the corn kept? Cosmological, iconographic, linguistic, archaeological and ethnographic approaches to better understand maize storage”**

### *Abstract:*

As a valued commodity in modern Mexican society, maize reflects a treasured, vital relationship with people through time. The Pleiades supplied the celestial birthplace for people and the Gods. Painted profiles of tamale bowls, set next to K’awiil or the Young Tonsured Maize God, graced Chenes painted capstones. Na Chan Canul stored his canoes there. Ancient corn varieties provided precious food sources linked to ritual consumption as well as to nourish ancestral spirits and deities at precise times throughout the year. Locally harvested cobs carefully stored in perishable corn cribs built to effectively amass and conserve the finest of all maize specimens employ key house lot repositories. Recognized as hinahob and cumcheeob, these two lexes possess ancient roots traced back to Campeche’s traditional heritage recorded in Maya-Spanish vocabularies compiled in Calepino de Motul. Only those varieties of superlative quality would be sown in metaphorical media and sacred strata as the seeds to future. Their persistence among traditional agriculturists survives in the Chenes Region, Campeche today. Their pole and thatch features provide the only viable means to successfully store native corn varieties, rather than a hypothetical functional attribute that certain subterranean features might have played. A precise means to pack and layer dried, husk-covered ears within woven branch containers placed 35 to 50cm above ground level provides a three-year shelf life for such stored ears. While mass-produced hybrid maize varieties fill mechanized fields today, those species never comprise the carefully selected and processed varieties for ritual consumption, nor are they amassed in traditional perishable features that leave few material remains in the archaeological record. To bridge gaps between material, archaeological, and intangible means to perceive that vital relationship between maize and society, this paper weaves together ethnographic, linguistic, cosmological, iconographic, ritual, and symbolic undercurrents engrained in maize as essential, tangible, and intangible knowledge processes linking biocultural heritage, storage, and consumption that persist from pre-Hispanic times until present day. Domestic units studied in the neighboring Puuc region thirty years ago employed an economic paradigm to analyze storage activity. This model inadequately assumes that stockpiled corn had an underlying capitalist financial role or status-based social rationale, rather than a cultural substrate to practice and preserve ritual religious traditions that comprise an ancient honored pact between humans and maize through time.



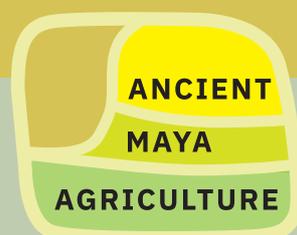
**Edber Dzidz Yam; Harry Thomaß (Open School of Ethnography and Anthropology, Pisté, Yucatán, México; Freie Universität Berlin)**

**“Mayas, Medios y Conocimiento - La producción de una pieza multimedia sobre la apicultura entre los mayas yucatecos basada en entrevistas históricas con un especialista ritual”**

### *Abstract:*

Nuestra ponencia presentamos la producción de una contribución multimedia, que se produce para las redes sociales. El objetivo de esta ponencia es mostrar la posibilidad de preparar conocimiento técnico tradicional de agricultura para las redes sociales. A base de grabaciones históricas de diferentes investigaciones de larga duración se produce una pieza multimedia, para que sea accesibles a un público no académico y para que la población maya-hablante pueda beneficiarse de este conocimiento tradicional.

En concreto, se trata de una contribución multimedia elaborada a partir de las entrevistas históricas realizadas por Nikolai Grube y Ortwin Smailus en la década de 1980 a Santiago Itza, un importante especialista ritual de la Zona Maya del estado mexicano de Quintana Roo. Santiago Itza hablaba de la apicultura y de los cuidados rituales de las colonias de abejas y de su importancia para la agricultura y describía la agricultura como una interacción de personas, animales y plantas. Explica las diferentes especies de abejas autóctonas y las diferencias entre éstas y otras especies de abejas. En nuestra presentación mostramos la contribución multimedia y describimos los canales a través de los cuales publicaremos esta contribución y a qué partes de la población queremos llegar para que este conocimiento sea difundido.



**Nicolaus Seefeld (Department for the Anthropology of the Americas University of Bonn)**

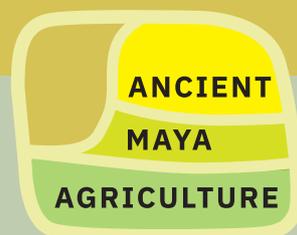
**“Cause and effect – The sociopolitical impacts of agricultural intensification and water management on Classic Maya society”**

*Abstract:*

One of the central issues for our understanding of Classic Maya society is how it managed to flourish despite scarce water resources, and limited access to agriculturally productive soils, which were unevenly distributed in the diverse types of landscape areas. While it has been long established that this dispersed distribution of resources mostly results from the geomorphology and the climate zones of the Maya Area, more recent investigations confirmed that the adaptation strategies, which the pre-Hispanic Maya developed to overcome these obstructions, were also less defined by cultural traditions than by the requirements of the specific local environment.

Consequently, the agricultural and hydraulic features of the Maya Lowlands are remarkably well adjusted to the different geographic regions. These highly customized and carefully constructed installations indicate large amounts of labor input and high levels of experience which – in turn- suggest and a long-standing tradition in the development of these features.

In my lecture, I will provide an overview of the landscape history and the different geological and climatic areas of the Maya Lowlands and explain the development and functionality of the adaptation strategies developed for the respective geographic areas and their interaction with the local settlement landscape. Since the sociopolitical effects of these landscape transformations remain poorly understood, I want to show how and to which extent (intensified) agriculture and water management influenced a process of social stratification and demonstrate the economic and sociopolitical relevance of pre-Hispanic adaptation strategies during the formation, florescence and collapse of Classic Maya society.



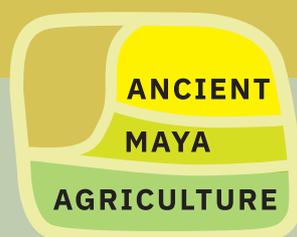
**Evgeniya Korovina (Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences)**

**“The Origin and Development of Maya Agriculture:  
Some Evidence from Historical Linguistics”**

*Abstract:*

History is always reflected in the language. This applies to a variety of cultural practices, including traditional agricultural practices. Some words, such as certain varieties of beans or traditional cotton processing terms, exist only in one language, while others come back to the Proto-Mayan times. This group includes, in particular, the words for corn, its parts and basic techniques of its cultivation, as well as the names of peppers, beans, pumpkins and a number of other plants.

This suggests that a significant part of the key agricultural technologies were already formed by the time of the Proto-Mayan community, which was probably located on the border of the Highland and Lowland zones. Several other agricultural terms were formed at the level of individual language groups and were associated with the settlement of the Maya. The most peculiar in this respect is the vocabulary of the Huastecan subgroup, because this group significantly retired from the main Maya area. This paper will examine how agricultural terminology has changed from Proto-Mayan period to modern languages, with the special attention to its reflection in the languages of the Lowland: Ch’olan, Tzeltalan and Yucatecan.



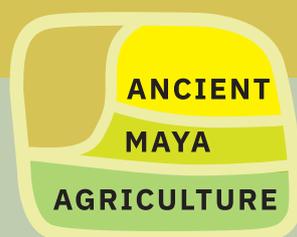
**Bodil Liljefors Persson (Department of Society, Culture, Identity at Malmö university)**

**“Yucatec Maya Cosmology and Agriculture – permanence and change in ritual practices seen through the Books of Chilam Balam and modern fieldwork”**

*Abstract:*

This study focuses on Maya religious discourse based on the Yucatec Maya Books of Chilam Balam, and argues their legacy conveying Yucatec Maya religion into present times, documented in other Colonial sources as well. There is an emphasis on ritual (con-)texts where various ritual specialists, prophets and hmenooob are key actors and where both permanence and religious change are at stake. Yucatec Maya spirituality and certain ritual practices can be traced back in a long-term perspective and a close reading of the mentioned sources suggest that some of these ritual practices have had a lasting impact among the Yucatec Maya.

The aim is to advance the understanding of Yucatec Maya religiosity and its firm connection to the agricultural cycle and relatedness to nature. This is seen through the various Books of Chilam Balam that are historically connected to certain places that still today communicate meaning and spirituality. The result is based on a critical close reading and contextualization of the various Books of Chilam Balam and other Colonial sources such as de Landa, Cogolludo, and the Ritual of the Bacabs, as well as on archival research and contemporary fieldwork in some of the major towns and villages on the Yucatan peninsula.

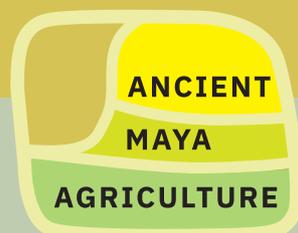


**Joanna Asia Jabłońska; María Rosalía Couoh Chalé;  
Anselma Chalé Euán (Abteilung für Altamerikanistik,  
University of Bonn; Meliponicultoras de la Cooperativa  
Kuchil kaab)**

**“Las señoras de la miel – el manejo de Meliponas, las  
abejas sagradas, como el ejemplo de la recuperación  
de la memoria biocultural”**

### *Abstract:*

La importancia de Meliponicultura en la cultura Maya se destaca desde los tiempos prehispánicos como indican varias evidencias arqueológicas, epigráficas y etnohistóricas. Los Mayas concebían Melipona - abeja nativa de la región, como sagrada y la integraron a su cosmovisión. Como los datos sugieren, los conocimientos tradicionales persisten y los productos de esta especie, como por ejemplo: miel, cera, propoleo, han sido utilizados en ceremonias y rituales, o como remedios médicos. Basándose en entrevistas, el presente trabajo aborda el caso de Kuchil Kaab, cooperativa del gupo de mujeres de Xcunuyá, Yucatán quienes se dedican a fortalecer la ecología y conservación de la Melipona. La integración de las nuevas técnicas sostenibles con las sabidurías ancestrales por parte de las mujeres no solo contribuye al rescate de esta práctica sino que también ayuda tanto en el social y económico empoderamiento femenino. Este trabajo reflexiona sobre exitosas estrategias de esa corporación para mantener el equilibrio entre desarrollo sustentable y desarrollo sostenible en la cultivación de Xunáan kaab, abeja reina. Las mujeres al tratar de mantener un legado sensorial de conocimientos ancestrales sobre Melipona, buscan oportunidades de comercializar sus productos. Por lo tanto, este trabajo también es un buen ejemplo como tradiciones y ritos acerca de Melipona están modificados y reinterpretados a través de generaciones para adaptarlos a diversos factores políticos y sociales. En un nivel más general, intentamos contribuir al mejor entendimiento de visualización de recursos naturales por medio de conjunto de creencias y conocimientos, al rumbo de la larga historia de los Mayas.



**Michal Gilewski; Christa Schieber de Lavarreda; Carlos Espigares; Miguel Medina; Víctor Flores; Aldo Aleman; Kajetan Oglaza (Centre for Andean Studies, University of Warsaw and Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw; Parque Arqueológico Nacional Tak'alik Ab'aj (PANTA), Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes de Guatemala/Viceministerio y Dirección General del Patrimonio Cultural y Natural-Dirección Técnica IDAEH; Faculty of Geology, University of Warsaw)**

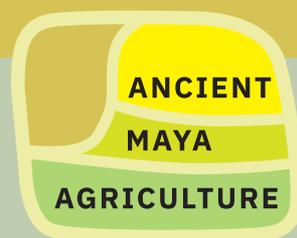
**“The archaeological evidence of prehispanic agriculture at Tak'alik Ab'aj, Retalhuleu, Guatemala / La evidencia arqueológica de la agricultura prehispánica en Tak'alik Ab'aj, Retalhuleu, Guatemala”**

### *Abstract:*

The paper overviews the evidence of ancient agriculture that is known from archaeological research at Tak'alik Ab'aj, important prehispanic site at the piedmont zone of the Guatemalan Pacific coast. The site's location in area of extremely fertile volcanic soils and in proximity to environmentally diverse zones of highlands and the coast clearly relates to agricultural interests of its ancient population. During three decades of archaeological research at the site, and the present cooperative research in geoarchaeology, various lines of evidence have been collected or are available for investigation.

In this presentation, brief discussion regarding collection of paleobotanical remains will be presented, both from legacy materials collected since the beginning of investigations, and recently recovered. Some observations regarding agriculture will be presented as implied from investigations of settlement pattern and landscape modifications of the peripheral zones of the site, as well as observed parallel trends related with evolution of ceramics, obsidian and grinding implements in the prehispanic period. We will also discuss evidence of significant soil organic matter variations suggesting differences in vegetational landscape in various areas of site. In addition, we will explore potential analogies with the ethnohistorical and ethnographic information about indigenous agriculture.

The research presented is based on the results of the Geoarchaeological Research Project in Tak'alik Ab'aj 2019-2021 (Season 2019) of the Institute of Archeology and Center for Pre-Columbian Studies, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw Poland in cooperation with the of the permanent investigation program of settlement patterns and potential agricultural areas of the Tak'alik Ab'aj National Archaeological Park/ General Directorate of Cultural and Natural Heritage, Ministry of Culture and Sports of Guatemala.

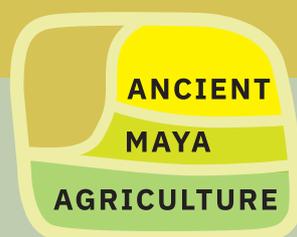


**Jakub Adámek, Milan Kováč, Tibor Lieskovský, Jakub Špoták and Tomáš Drápela (Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovak Technical University in Bratislava)**

**“Ancient Maya Agriculture at Uaxactun: Research Findings of Agricultural Practices from the Preclassic to the Terminal Classic Period and in Contemporary Uaxactun”**

*Abstract:*

This presentation will disseminate results of research of ancient Maya agriculture at the Uaxactún (Petén, Guatemala) archaeological site between the years 2017 and 2021. The research itself was organized in several dimensions, each of them with its own specific methodology: Large-scale GIS approach, archaeological excavation and verification of selected features (agricultural terraces and system of drainage canals) identified in LiDAR dataset, and last but not least anthropological survey of traditional agriculture (milpa) that is still vital in a given region. However, this presentation aims not only to plainly enumerate goals and results of the given research, its point is also to address specific limitations of used approaches arising from micro-environmental (both social and physical) properties of the region in northern Petén.



**Marc Zender (Tulane University)**

### **“Agriculture and Arboriculture in Maya Art and Writing”**

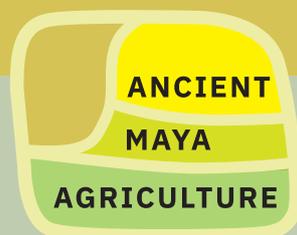
#### *Abstract:*

As the result of decades of work—including the arduous mapping of Maya cities and landscapes, the meticulous cataloging of plant and tree species around settlements, and the truly transformative imagery of ancient fields and towns recently revealed by LiDAR—it is now increasingly clear that Maya agricultural and arboricultural practice comprised a complex, sustainable set of practices often taking place directly within and beside ancient settlements. Old debates arguing for ancient sites as either vacant ceremonial centers or dense urban landscapes have given way to more nuanced views of ‘garden cities’ surrounded by a ‘managed mosaic’ of forest preserves, milpas, and orchards.

Perhaps surprisingly, Maya art and writing have hitherto contributed little to these new insights. In part, this is due to their relatively restricted genres, only rarely featuring overtly agricultural themes. There are no ceramic scenes, murals, or reliefs depicting cornfields, for instance, and no ancient maps of Maya settlements representing the interspersed fields, forests, and orchards which are now thought to have characterized the ancient landscape.

However, a close look at the Maya script reveals numerous signs explicitly derived from the ‘forest gardens,’ and several scholars have already noted the agricultural tropes upon which royal inscriptions often rely. Further, ancient imagery does reveal numerous points of contact with developing views of Maya agriculture and arboriculture, including orchards adjacent to palaces, and forest preserves and game alongside settlements. Some orchards may even have been targeted in warfare.

As will be seen, our appreciation of agricultural and arboricultural references in Maya art and writing is immeasurably deepened by considering them in the light of recent archaeological discoveries.

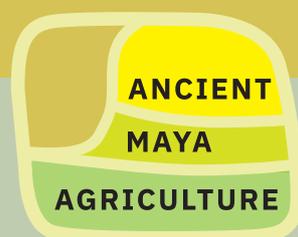


**Edwin Braakhuis (Utrecht University)**

### **“The Maize Queen and the Mountain’s Daughter”**

#### *Abstract:*

It has been noted that during the Late Classic period, Maya queen consorts often wear an adaptation of the dress of the Tonsured Maize God (TMG). Nonetheless, scholarly description has varied, from “Maize God” to “Moon Goddess” to “lunar-associated Maize Goddess,” with the wavering gender ascription influenced in part by a speculative theory concerning “mixed gender.” In agreement with some scholars, it is here assumed that the queen with the netted dress is meant to represent the TMG, and that the rationale of her impersonation is to be sought in her marrying into another kingdom. Specifically, I contend that rather than referring to a particular mythological episode, the Maize Queen replicates the generic role of the TMG vis-a-vis mankind, namely by bringing agricultural abundance to the realm of her husband. I will call attention to various traditional Maya narratives supporting this view. These involve a powerful rain or mountain deity; his marriageable daughter embodying the maize and its power of germination; and a human marriage candidate who is often a foreign war chief. This mythological configuration is analogous to the historical configuration of which the Classic Maize Queen is a part.

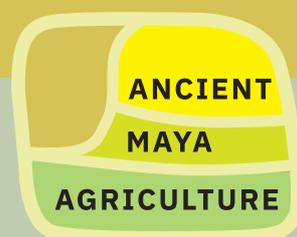


**Dominik Čisárik (Department for Comparative Religion,  
Comenius University in Bratislava)**

**“Maya Utilitarian Plants in the 17th Century Extirpation of Idolatry: Rituals and Practices Related to Plants from the Perspective of the Novohispanic Missionaries – The Case of Informe contra los adoradores de ídolos del Obispado de Yucatán by Pedro Sánchez de Aguilar”**

*Abstract:*

The present study aims to approximate the contemporary 17th century understanding of the rites and practices related to some of the Mesoamerican utilitarian plants from the perspective of the extirpation of idolatries. In the early 17th century, when the Christian Catholic rite had already been firmly in place in continental New Spain, Spanish missionaries continued to write treatises of concern, surveying and refuting the ongoing pre-Columbian practices within the syncretized indigenous Catholicism of both the public and the private sphere. The primary sources of Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón and Jacinto de la Serna offer us a valuable view of the missionary narrative strategies in a descriptive, yet consciously targeted manner. Importantly, we can recognize certain aspects of this specific textual production that indicate the contextual milieu in which the texts were produced, as well as explicit methods of dealing with the collected data predisposed by the expectations of the audience to whom the treatises were directed.



**Daniel Salazar Lama (Archéologie des Amériques,  
Université Paris)**

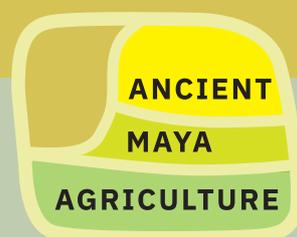
### **“La Subestructura IIC de Calakmul: el lugar del descenso de Chaahk y el surgimiento del maíz”**

#### *Abstract:*

One of the strategies used by the Maya to create meanings in the built environment was to integrate images into the architecture. As a result, the Maya transformed a given space into a place with a specific sense. In such places, the images operate under the principle of intervisuality, not as independent objects but as elements that work interconnected with others, creating a whole tangible and experiential, contextual meaning.

The Calakmul Substructure IIC, built in the 4th century BC, is one of the earliest architectural arrangements and sculptural programs in the Maya world to exploit intervisuality fully. There, images and built forms recreate the events of mythical times: the celestial descent of Chaahk, his entrance into the cave, and the consequent emergence and germination of the maize. Discovering this sequence of episodes required the public's participation, who had to come closer and walk through the built space to connect the different images of the cycle and find the sense of the place.

Due to its early date, the Substructure IIC is the first known example of the maize cycle that is not visually narrated through wall paintings, vases, or free-standing sculptures. Instead, it is tangibly inscribed in the built environment. The study and results presented in this paper will help us understand some specific categories of places used by the Maya in later periods. This analysis will also allow us to know the formulas used to create and connote places in a broader comparative framework.



### **Ana Kondic (Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History)**

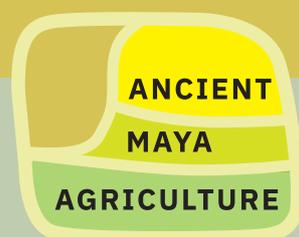
#### **“Thipaak, God of Maize with Contemporary Huastec Maya”**

##### *Abstract:*

Many studies confirmed that the Maya were not simply slash-and-burn agriculturalists, but also engaged in intensive farming methods such as soil improvement, terracing, irrigation canals or raised fields. Maize is seen as a staple Mesoamerican food, and Maya are not an exception.

The Maize god is present to different extent in contemporary Mayan cultures. Various representations and appearances of the Maize god are found in Maya carvings. In my presentation I would like to discuss how the contemporary Huastec Maya perceive this traditional figure.

During my project of documentation of South Eastern Huastec, spoken in la Huasteca, northern Veracruz, I was able to collect several narratives where Thipaak, god of Maize, is mentioned. Contemporary Huastec Maya from this area celebrate a fiesta de Thipaak in the middle of May. I will present their understanding of the maize god Thipaak at the basis of the contemporary narratives and a song that make part of my South Eastern Huastec collection.

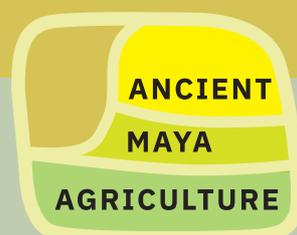


**Mauricio Roberto Díaz García (Department of Anthropology, City University New York) & Dora Maritza García Patzán (Comenius University in Bratislava)**

**“Los canales del sitio arqueológico Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala: un sistema de irrigación para campos de cultivo, nuevos hallazgos del Montículo C-IV-4”**

*Abstract:*

The archaeological site of Kaminaljuyu is located in the heart of today's modern Guatemala City. After decades of excavations and with the growth of the city, there is still much to discover about this Preclassic site, perhaps the most important site on the Central Maya Highlands. Its location around the lake known as Miraflores, allowed an important agricultural development, comparable to those developed centuries later in the city of Mexico-Tenochtitlán. The first evidences of hydraulic canals for the management of intensive agriculture in Kaminaljuyu were found in the San Jorge area, a location where today there is a housing complex. Other canals were identified around the site by various rescue projects, some directly associated with the lake, while other canals functioned as drains. The iconography and ceramics of the site tell us of a city that was strongly linked to the symbolism of water. Recently we found new evidence of hydraulic canals associated to the Mound C-IV-4 on the shores of the extinct Miraflores Lake. The excavated elements not only tell us about the importance of these features for the agriculture and maintenance of the site, but also about other ritual aspects around water at the origin of life in obtaining crops, as the current Mayans see it in their fields.

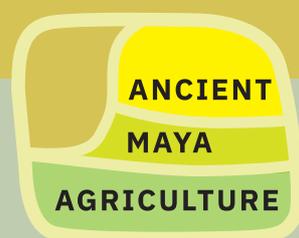


**Anabel Ford (MesoAmerican Research Center,  
University of California)**

**“Cultivated Landscape of the El Pilar  
and the Maya Forest”**

*Abstract:*

The environmental legacy of the ancient Maya is a controversial topic. Since at least the 19th Century, when widely published travelogues began revealing the wondrous monuments of Maya cities to Euro-American audiences, Western popular imagination has been captivated by Maya civilization, and especially tales of its demise. Collapse narratives frequently invoke primitive cultivation techniques, fragile tropical forests, and environmentally destructive lifeways as driving the downfall of Maya kingdoms, but these explanations more often hinge on ecological imperialist prejudices than empirical observations. Our research, conducted in partnership with traditional Maya farmers – the master forest gardeners – suggests these stories miss the mark. Indigenous agricultural practices and ecological knowledge developed over millennia in the Maya Forest of southeastern Mesoamerica, actually increased resilience to climate change while providing all household necessities for ancient populations. A shift in mindsets and willingness to challenge received wisdom are requisite to begin exploring sustainable living solutions from the Maya past that can address our future challenges.

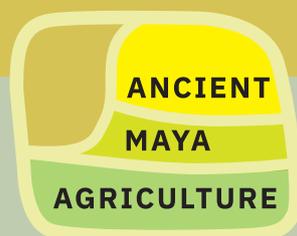


**Philippe Nondédéo, Cyril Castanet, Eva Lemonnier, Louise Purdue, Lydie Dussol, Marc Testé, Julien Hiquet, Antoine Dorison (Archéologie des Amériques, CNRS, Paris; Laboratoire de Géographie Physique, Meudon / Université Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis; Université de Paris 1 / Archéologie des Amériques, CNRS, Paris; Université Côte d'Azur, CNRS, CEPAM, Nice; EHESS / Laboratoire de Géographie Physique, Meudon; LabEx DynamiTe (Université de Paris 1) / ArScAn, CNRS, Paris)**

**“Landscape, Settlement Patterns, and Agrarian Strategies: The Case of Naachtun and its Hinterland During the Preclassic and the Classic Periods”**

*Abstract:*

The Naachtun archaeological project started in 2010 with the aim of understanding the sociopolitical and economic history of one of the few Maya Classic capitals located in Northern Peten. Since 2013 a paleo-environmental team carried out a program of investigation to study the landuse and the management of local resources during the last three millennium, both in the urban area of Naachtun and in the main inundated depression area (bajo), north of the city. In this presentation, using archaeological and environmental data derived from excavations contexts, combined with Lidar data obtained from a coverage of 135km<sup>2</sup> which encompasses the Naachtun hinterland area, we will draw up an overview of the agrarian practices and strategies developed since the Preclassic times until the abandonment of the core zone at the end of the Terminal Classic period (circa. 950/1000 CE). We will show in particular the diversity of the agrarian techniques used according to different geomorphological and pedagogical contexts.



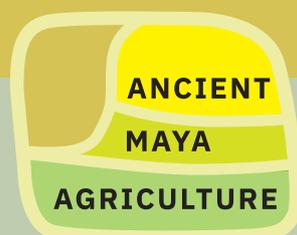
**Richard D. Hansen, Carlos Morales-Aguilar, Gustavo Martinez, Steve Bozarth, Daniel Bair, Richard Terry (Department of Anthropology, Idaho State University; Foundation for Anthropological Research and Environmental Studies; Austin Department of Geography and Environment, University of Texas; Biodiversity Institute, University of Kansas; University of Puerto Rico; Plant and Wildlife Sciences, Brigham Young University; Terra Geo Solutions; Mirador Conservation Fund)**

### **“Ancient Agricultural and Hydraulic Strategies of the Preclassic Maya in the Mirador-Calakmul Karst Basin, Guatemala”**

#### *Abstract:*

Evidence of sophisticated agricultural and hydraulic strategies dating to the Middle and Late Preclassic periods (ca. 1000 BCE- 150CE) in the Mirador-Calakmul Karst Basin (MCKB) of northern Guatemala and southern Campeche have provided clues to the precocious cultural development that occurred in this region and other areas of the Maya Lowlands that gave rise to Maya civilization. LiDAR technologies incorporated in the near entirety of the Mirador Basin system have enhanced further identification of the agricultural strategies that were implemented over large areas of the basin. Elaborate terrace systems, consisting of imported mud from perennial wetlands provided long term agricultural sustainability as opposed to the primitive milpa system used throughout the Maya region today. Phytoliths from these detected ancient fields also revealed the varieties of agricultural products. Raised fields in the lowlands and bajos provided rich sources of agricultural productivity and a complex system of walled enclosures, dubbed “corrals” suggest animal production programs on an industrial scale in the region.

In addition, in a region with no rivers or lakes, complex water collection mechanisms were constructed to provide adequate water resources for the expanding populations in the Preclassic periods. Dams, canals, moats, and reservoirs were constructed and utilized for water collection and provided catalytic impetus for the formation of early administrative activities. These strategies laid the logistic foundations for subsequent complex societies in the Classic and Postclassic Maya Lowlands.

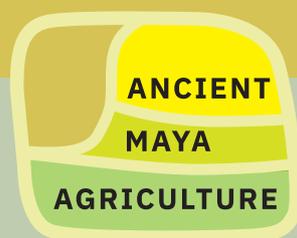


**Milan Kováč (Center for Mesoamerican Studies,  
Comenius University in Bratislava)**

**“Antropogonia de la calabaza. Los mayas lacandonos y  
la mitología del origen de la humanidad”**

*Abstract:*

La ponencia tiene como tema principal la importancia de la calabaza en la mitología de la creación humana: la antropogonía. Este cultivo es uno de los más antiguos en las culturas indígenas, cuya tradición está presente en toda América. Así, nos enfocaremos en un mito lacandón, que el autor registró en la selva de Chiapas, México. El mito combina la cosmología y la antropogonía, con varias versiones de antepasados de la humanidad nacidos de las calabazas, y como los primeros humanos, se originaron a partir de sus semillas. Estas historias lacandonas se pueden comparar con la información existente sobre el papel de la semilla de cierto tipo de calabaza en la iconografía de los mayas del período Preclásico y Clásico. La comparación podría dar algunas respuestas a preguntas que no se han respondido totalmente, sobre el papel de las semillas de este cultivo en la cosmovisión maya.



**John F. Chuchiak IV (Department of History, Missouri State University)**

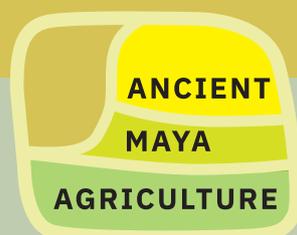
**“Ca numiae, lay u cal caxtlan patan lae’\*: Colonial Tribute and Maya Nutrition, 1542-1812: A Study in the Impact of Conquest and Colonization on Maya Diet and Nutrition” \*Our Suffering, this Harsh Castillian Tribute**

*Abstract:*

This paper will examine the impact that the legal and illegal colonial Spanish tribute system had on the diet and nutrition of the Yucatec Maya. Some scholars, most notably Alfred Crosby, have argued in the past that the diet of the pre-Columbian peoples actually improved after the conquest with the introduction of new grains and domesticated animals (Crosby, 1972: 64-121). Scholars have also argued that the introduction of European domesticated animals caused an increase in the quantity of animal protein available to the Indigenous people of the New World (Crosby, 1972:108). However, this paper will argue that the Spanish colonial system in Yucatan actually caused a dramatic decline in the Yucatec Maya’s diet in the post-Conquest era.

In the Yucatan peninsula even the domesticated animals that the Spaniards brought with them were in many cases only remitted to them once again in the form of legal and illegal tribute. Similarly, the forbidding environment of the Yucatan peninsula itself prevented the Spaniards from planting their own traditional European grains such as wheat and barely. Thus, the Spaniards were forced to rely on the indigenous food supply for their subsistence. Moreover, their parasitical relationship to post-Conquest Mayan communities only added more mouths to feed without actually aiding in agricultural production.

This all further placed the burden of supporting a rapidly increasing European and Mestizo population upon a rapidly decreasing Indigenous agricultural complex that was being exploited not only by direct taxation in kind, money and labor, but also indirectly by coercive price gouging and forced sales of the little maize that the Maya produced in surplus. Likewise, the terrible demographic decline that was initiated with the rapid spread of contagious diseases upon first contact, already took its toll on the Maya before the actual conquest was completed. Thus, the harsh nature of the Yucatecan environment, in combination with the oppressive Spanish system of colonial tribute and personal services, as well as successive waves of epidemics, food shortages and crop blights, turned the conquest and colonial experience of the Yucatec Maya into one of famine, disease, and widespread dietary and nutritional decline.



***Thank  
you***

