Mesoamerican Philosophies

Animate Matter, Metaphysics, and the Natural Environment

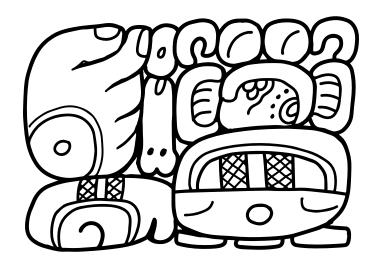


SYMPOSIUM

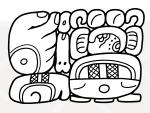
January 12-13, 2018

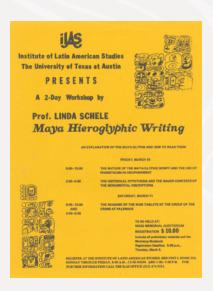
The University of Texas at Austin





WELCOME





orty years ago, The University of Texas at Austin hosted the first formal Maya Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop. This two day gathering-conceived by the late, pioneering Mayanist Linda Schele-brought together experts and novices alike, with an energy and enthusiasm that fundamentally altered the course of Maya studies. Over the years, the "Workshop at Texas" evolved into the annual "Maya Meetings," an open and vibrant gathering of scholars and enthusiasts, advanced students and beginners, all sharing in the newest research in (mostly) Maya art, archaeology, and epigraphy. 2018 brings exciting changes to this tradition, marking not only the completion of two k'atuns of Texas Meetings and Workshops, but also the debut of our new identity as The Mesoamerica Meetings. As we continue to grow the institution founded by Linda Schele and the attendees of the historic 1978 Workshop, we aim to place a fresh emphasis on the interconnectedness of all Mesoamerican cultures, from Olmec to Maya to Aztec. This year, we are thrilled to welcome friends both old and new to Austin as we celebrate this anniversary, and our new direction, with the conference Mesoamerican Philosophies: Animate Matter, Metaphysics, and the Natural Environment.

Ancient Mesoamerican religion and worldview hinged on a special understanding of "matter" as well as a metaphysical expression of the sacred. The world and the things that inhabited it-whether landscapes, buildings, objects, illnesses, even time itself-were considered animate and "living" in a certain sense, creating a dynamic system of interactions and relationships between people, gods, and objects. Though these ideas found a constant expression in ancient Mesoamerican art, imagery, architecture, and ritual deposits, these fundamental notions have yet to be systematically organized into a cohesive philosophy for the region. At the 2018 Mesoamerica Meetings, scholars and students will sharpen the focus on Mesoamerican philosophy and religion, exploring how the ancient Maya, Aztec, and other Mesoamerican cultures-including contemporary communities-communicated these sweeping ideas, and developed many notions of their own. In short, the conference will investigate some of the most foundational but least articulated concepts of a cohesive ancient Mesoamerican worldview.

To pose Mesoamerican views on matter, metaphysics, and the natural environment as potentially cohesive philosophies begets a series of provocative questions. Can we, for example, refine our understanding of this coherent system of thought to the point of, perhaps, positing an ancient Mesoamerican philosophy to be placed alongside other ancient traditions worldwide? How did Mesoamerican peoples represent and interact with "living" things, spaces, materials, and landscapes to express their conception of human action in an already animate world? Can we come up with a more precise and productive notion of "animism" for describing aspects of this Mesoamerican worldview? In what ways do such ideas have direct bearing on archaeological interpretations of material culture and the built environment? These are weighty issues, and we look forward to tackling them together this weekend, whether over coffee or The Codex Borgia, between sessions or at the Closing Reception. The 2018 Mesoamerica Meetings mark the beginning of a new and necessary foray into defining Mesoamerican thought as a set of philosophical traditions, with key repercussions for scholarly research and cultural understanding. Whether this is your first or fortieth Meetings, we are delighted to have you-welcome, and let's get started.



SCHEDULE

THURSDAY — KEYNOTE

6:00 Cities that Say Everything You Must Think: Aztec Cosmovision, the Templo Mayor and the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan Davíd Carrasco

FRIDAY

- 8:30 Opening Remarks:
 A Tribute to Ian Graham
- 9:30 Human and
 Other-Than-Human
 Reciprocal Co-participation
 in the Ongoing Recreation
 of the 5th Age
 James Maffie
- 10:10 The Paper House:
 Amacalli Deities and
 Embodied Architecture in
 the Postclassic Period
 - Elliot López-Finn
- 10:50 **Coffee Break**
- 11:10 The Nature of the Material
 World in Maya Philosophy
 Nicholas Hopkins
- 11:50 **Wisdom, Language**and **Worldview in Nahuatl Philosophy**Osiris Sinuhé González Romero
- 12:30 Lunch Break

- 2:00 The Secret Life of Eccentrics and Other Sacred Stones:
 Going Beyond the 'Use-Life'
 Concept in Understanding the Uses and Lives of Classic Maya Sastuns
 Zachary Hruby
- 2:40 A Mam For All Seasons:
 The Ontological Anchoring of
 Late Classic Maya Alliances in
 Naj Tunich Cave, Guatemala
 Barbara MacLeod
- 3:20 Coffee Break
- 3:40 The Sacred Ecologies of the Mesoamerican Image
 Michael Carrasco
- 4:20 Bringing the Rain: The
 Origin of the Gods of Rain
 and Lightning in Formative
 Mesoamerica
 Karl Taube
- 5:00 **Q&A Session**
- 5:30 The Codex Borgia:
 Private Exhibition
 and Reception

SATURDAY

- 8:30 Conflated Identities:
 Rulership, Reflected Names
 and Multiple States of Being
 in Ancient Mesoamerica
 David Stuart
- 9:10 Luster and Essence:
 One's Fate in Shiny Objects
 Patrick Hajovsky
- 9:50 **Coffee Break**
- 10:10 Touched by Fire:
 Volcanoes in Ancient
 Mesoamerican Belief
 Lucia Henderson
- 10:50 Embedded Identity in
 Maya Philosophy
 Alexus McLeod
- 11:30 Lunch Break

1:00 **Drilling ≠ Killing:**Perforated Plates in Classic
Maya Funerary Contexts
Andrew Finegold

SCHEDULE

- 1:40 Co-essences in the Ceramic Effigies of Far Western Mexico Christopher Beekman
- 2:20 Coffee Break

- 2:40 Pure-Nawal: Communicating
 Objects, Dream Bundles, and
 Contemporary Tz'utujil Maya
 Ritual Practitioners
 Linda Brown
- 3:20 Amore di fratello, amore di coltello: Huitzilopochtli's Myth and the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan
 Leonardo López Luján
- 1:00 Q&A Session
- 4:30 Closing Remarks:
 "Two K'atuns Were Completed"
- 5:30 Closing Reception



PRESENTATIONS

KEYNOTE

Cities that Say Everything You Must Think: Aztec Cosmovision, the Templo Mayor and the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan

DAVÍD CARRASCO

Harvard Divinity School

n the Keynote Address of the 2018 Mesoamerica Meetings, Dr. Davíd Carrasco will present an illustrated lecture on how the Aztec imagination of matter shaped the worldview and spatial organizations of the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlán and the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan. Dr. Carrasco's exploration of Aztec cosmovision builds on the symposium's themes of matter, metaphysics, and the natural environment, and kicksoff a weekend of presentations exploring the intricacies of Mesoamerican philosophies, from the Formative era to contemporary indigenous practice.



David Carrasco is the Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of the Study of Latin America within the Harvard Divinity School, with an additional appointment in the Department of Anthropology. He received his Master of Theology, M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, and was recently named the University of Chicago Alumnus of the Year. Carrasco's work takes on the challenges of postcolonial ethnography and theory, spanning millennia of native Mexican thought and religion. His wide-ranging research interests include Mesoamerican cities as symbols, ritual violence in comparative perspective, the archaeology and interpretation of Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlán, the religious dimensions of Latino experience, and the Mexican-American borderlands. His collaborations with fellow Harvard Divinity School professor Cornel West, including a series of lectures entitled "Whose Eyes on What Prize: A Black and Brown Discussion of Shades of Invisibility," have received wide critical acclaim. Among Carrasco's many published works are a new abridgement of Bernal Díaz del Castillo's memoir of the conquest of Mexico The History of the Conquest of New Spain, the award-winning Cave, City, and Eagle's Nest: An Interpretive Journey Through the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2, and the influential edited volume Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage: From Teotihuacan to the Aztecs. In 2004, Davíd Carrasco was awarded the Order of the Aztec Eagle, the highest honor bestowed by the Mexican government to foreign nationals.



Human and Other-Than-Human Reciprocal Co-participation in the Ongoing Recreation of the 5th Age

JAMES MAFFIE

University of Maryland

uman and other-than-human persons (such as "deities" or creator beings) co-participate in re-creating the 5th Age by enacting interpersonal and ineliminably normative processes of reciprocal indebtedness and obligatedness. The ongoing re-creation of the 5th Age is not only consequent upon but also constituted by these interactions. As such, the 5th Age becomes an interwoven fusion of both human and other-than-human participants: a dual unity and unified duality that is neither human nor other-than-human ("divine"), yet at the same time both human and other-than-human ("divine").



James Maffie is a senior lecturer in the Department of American Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, as well as an affiliate of the Departments of Philosophy & History and Religious & Latin American Studies. He holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Michigan, and is the author of Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion (University of Colorado Press, 2014). His interdisciplinary work spans philosophy, indigenous and religious studies, ethnography, and linguistics, and centers on the notion that the conquest-era Mexica advanced a highly sophisticated and systematic philosophy worthy of consideration alongside other world philosophies. Maffie is currently working on a book devoted to Aztec ethics, tentatively entitled Toltecayotl: An Aztec Understanding of the Well-Ordered Life.



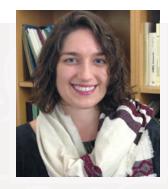
The Paper House: *Amacalli* Deities and Embodied Architecture in the Postclassic Period

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ELLIOT LÓPEZ-FINN

The University of Texas at Austin

hrough chance encounters and purposeful excavations, the peoples of the Postclassic period regularly repurposed and modified found objects. The Mexica especially included references to ancient artifacts through archaizing iconography and form. One such example of these references is the amacalli, a distinctive paper headdress commonly seen in the context of Postclassic goddesses of sustenance, such as Chicomecoatl. While statuettes of amacalli deities appear throughout Mexica-controlled territory, the meaning behind their iconography remains murky. López-Finn argues that the visual program of amacalli deities can be better understood through the lens of archaism. In fact, ceramic braziers of amacalli-wearing goddesses from Tláhuac in the south of Mexico City resonate with the visual programs of Teotihuacan theater-style incensarios from hundreds of years before. The amacalli headdress marks the reemergence of such imagery, rather than a continuity of form. In this work, López-Finn will examine the implications of the rediscovery and visual reinterpretations of Teotihuacan material, arguing that the recovery of these ancient objects influenced Mexica depictions of goddesses of sustenance, and that these goddesses and their form became inextricably linked to the ancient material that Postclassic people encountered.



Elliot López-Finn is a doctoral student in The University of Texas at Austin Department of Art and Art History, focusing on Postclassic Mexican art and archaeology (preferred pronouns: they/them). Their dissertation, entitled "Seeing Far, Looking Back: The Aesthetics of Distance in Postclassic Mexican Art," expands current academic understandings of how Nahua communities outside of Tenochtitlán interacted with ancient and/or foreign material. López-Finn completed their M.A. in Art and Art History at The University of Texas at Austin, and B.A. in Art and Archaeology at Princeton University. López-Finn's M.A. thesis, entitled "Defining the Red-Background Style: The Production of Object and Identity in an Ancient Maya Court", focused on the relationship between distinct painted styles and city-state identity among the Classic Maya of the Petén region.



The Nature of the Material World in Maya Philosophy

NICHOLAS HOPKINS

Independent Scholar

n the organized knowledge of the Maya, the world of material things is comprised of a dozen or more classes that were overtly marked in Classic period Maya art and hieroglyphic writing. In the Classic period these semantic categories (e.g. human, stone, or wood) were marked on depicted objects to identify their nature, but were not read orally, although they frequently occur on hieroglyphic signs. These material categories were represented by silent signs that helped the reader identify the objects depicted as iconography or as hieroglyphics. By historical accident—contact with a language that did verbalize such categories—several Mayan languages developed overt pronominal systems that manifested underlying semantic categories that had long existed. Their inventories of related lexicon provide support for the postulation of the meanings of signs used in the Classic period. However, many suspect signs exist whose meanings have not yet been firmly established. Hopkins will review the history of these semantic categories and their lexification and suggest some additions to the known inventory. Complementary systems of classification—plant and animal classes, numeral classifiers—will be noted. When looked at as a whole, Hopkins argues, these systems suggest an underlying tendency toward quadripartite oppositions in Maya organization of knowledge.



Nicholas Hopkins is an anthropological linguist with some fifty years of fieldwork experience in Mesoamerica, especially in the Maya area, including research on the Tzotzil, Chuj, and Ch'ol languages. He received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Chicago, and has been awarded multiple grants from the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities for his work on the Ch'ol language. Hopkins' research interests include language history, native science, and narrative traditions, and he has published in numerous academic journals. His most recent publications are Chol (Mayan) Folktales (with Kathryn Josserand, 2016), Maya Narrative Arts (with Karen Bassie, 2018) and the forthcoming Chuj (Mayan) Narratives (all through the University Press of Colorado). Since the 1980s, Hopkins has also operated Jaguar Tours, a program of study tours and workshops co-run with Kathryn Josserand.

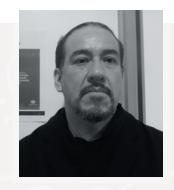


Wisdom, Language and Worldview in Nahuatl Philosophy

OSIRIS SINUHÉ GONZÁLEZ ROMERO

Leiden University

his presentation will focus on the analysis of the following concepts: wisdom (tlamatiliztli), knowledge (tlaixmatiliztli) and truth (neltiliztli), as developed by Nahua people. With regards to the concept of wisdom, González Romero will highlight how the systematic analysis of cognitive structures in the Nahuatl language allows modern scholars to understand some philosophical issues embedded in Nahuatl worldview. One example of these cognitive structures are the "difrasismos" (or parallelisms) that are related to the idea of sacred duality, or the fundamental couple. Other cases of cognitive structures include the ontological metaphors embedded in Nahuatl language. These expressions are considered ontological because in their configuration it is possible to appreciate various parts of the body. Some examples in Nahuatl are tepeyollohtli: "the heart of the mountain," tlaixmatiliztli: "knowledge of the face of things," tlaixpoloani: "the one who erases the face of things," or tlatozquitia: "to give voice to things." In relation to this issue, González Romero will highlight that in Nahua worldview, air, fire, earth, water, mountains, and stars are considered animate entities. This cultural feature is crucial to understanding that, although it is true that a clear distinction exists between the world and human beings, it is not possible to understand one without the other; that is, it is possible to appreciate an immanent and reciprocal link between both.



Osiris Sinuhé González Romero is a Ph.D. candidate at Leiden University, Faculty of Archaeology-Heritage of Indigenous Peoples. His dissertation is entitled "Tlamatiliztli: the concept of wisdom among Nahua people. Intercultural epistemology and indigenous rights." González Romero taught undergraduate courses for three years in the Faculty of Philosophy, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), focusing on the Philosophy of History and Philosophy in Mexico and Latin America. He was awarded the Coimbra Group Scholarship for Young Professors and Researchers from Latin American Universities in 2015. He holds a Master's degree in Philosophy from Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM), as well as a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and also a Master's degree (intern) in Mesoamerican Studies from UNAM, focusing on Aztec culture and Nahuatl language. González Romero's research interests include indigenous philosophies, ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy, endangered languages, and indigenous rights, and he has authored various specialized articles related to Nahuatl language and culture.



The Secret Life of Eccentrics and Other Sacred Stones: Going Beyond the 'Use-Life' Concept in Understanding the Uses and Lives of Classic Maya Sastuns

ZACHARY HRUBY

Northern Kentucky University

o-called eccentric flints and obsidians have resisted functional interpretations by archaeologists since they were first written about in the late 19th century. Their frequent inclusion in elite caches and burials provide ample peripheral information on the symbolism of their depositional contexts, but little on their actual use and meaning in Classic Maya society. Hruby explores the use-wear, technology, and symbolism of cache stones to better understand their role in everyday, pre-depositional contexts. The idea that these items were perceived as animate god effigies will be critically examined with implications for understanding Maya religion and philosophy. Among others, three basic interpretations of portable obsidian, flint, and jade stones will be discussed, including that: 1) they were imbued with soul essence, or ensouled, through craft production and use; 2) the materials themselves lent to a special understanding of these objects as powerful spiritual tools; and 3) they were perceived as living, animate spirit beings or deities, not unlike sastuns, or seeing stones, common in ethnographic Maya cultures. It is argued that all three of these interpretations may not be mutually exclusive. The study of what can only be described as sacred stones can reveal much about ancient Mesoamerican philosophies about the natural world, its agency, and the role of human action in materializing these beliefs.



Zachary Hruby is a full-time lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Philosophy at Northern Kentucky University. He earned his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California, Riverside and is interested in Mesoamerican and Maya religion as it is materialized in the archaeological record through ancient Maya texts, art, and ritual deposits (i.e., caches and burials), with a special focus on lithic artifacts. Hruby's goals are to understand how lithic economies changed across the ancient Maya world and through time, as well as how the symbolism and meaning associated with lithic goods such as jade, flint, and obsidian were reflected in both ritual and economic contexts. Most recently, Hruby studied the largest known obsidian cache, a deposit of over 600 obsidian macroblades, from Copan's Great Plaza.



A Mam For All Seasons: The Ontological Anchoring of Late Classic Maya Alliances in Naj Tunich Cave, Guatemala

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BARBARA MACLEOD

Independent Scholar

dvances in archaeology and ethnography have ratified Doris Heyden's original hypothesis regarding the role of caves in Mesoamerican religious life. Under the authority of resident earth deities and ancestors, cave rituals tied a polity to its geography and (re)affirmed its boundaries, rights, and privileges. Advances in Maya epigraphy have refined our interpretations of the painted hieroglyphic texts of Naj Tunich Cave, Petén, Guatemala. These exhibit an intriguing pattern of haab anniversaries and a suspension of the tzolk'in cueing intervals spent in "cave time." All but two dates cluster seasonally: rites termed Mon Pan 'Nurture-the-Sprouts' parallel the Ch'orti' Maya agrarian season while those of the final three months of the haab mirror Colonial Yukatekan feasts anticipating the New Year. Testifying to remarkable temporal and geographic continuity, interlocked dates in two Naj Tunich paintings mark haab anniversaries of an Early Classic fire-carrying rite depicted in Jolja', a distant Ch'ol Maya ceremonial cave in Mexico. Kings, ritualists, and scribes visited Naj Tunich from Late Classic courts local and distant. Dates, events, and emblem glyphs in the texts complement the monumental history of the Late Classic Southeast Petén and shed new light on the role of pilgrimages, haab celebrations, and collaborative cave practice in negotiating the metaphysical legitimacy of larger geopolitical communities amid their volatile final century.



Barbara MacLeod grew up in Missouri and took up cave exploration and mapping in her early teens. From 1971–1975, she was attached to the Belize Department of Archaeology as a speleologist, documenting extensive Classic-period underground ritual sites and salvaging endangered artifacts. She received a Ph.D. in Anthropology from The University of Texas at Austin in 1990. She has been an active contributor to the fields of Maya epigraphy and Maya cave archaeology for four decades. MacLeod is an expert in the Ch'olan and Yukatekan languages, specializing in linguistic approaches to Maya script decipherment. She first visited Naj Tunich Cave in 1987 as an archaeology field course instructor, and has maintained a keen interest in its texts. She is currently completing a book on Naj Tunich entitled Celebrations in the Heart of the Mountain (AMCS Press, 2018). She works in Austin as a flight instructor teaching beginners and basic aerobatics.



The Sacred Ecologies of the Mesoamerican Image

MICHAEL CARRASCO

Florida State University

n this presentation, Carrasco suggests that mythology serves to legitimate the ontology of images and their efficacy, and to inform basic patterns of ritual consecration fundamental to the ensoulment of sacred images. Elaborating these threads connecting worldview and the lived environment, as they find expression in the animacy of images, adds dimension to how we understand Mesoamerican conceptions of the sacred. Deities derive their mandate through the origin stories that often also instruct on the manufacture, consecration, and use of their images and shrines. In the Popol Vuh, gods initially appear as actors in the narrative, however, as the story turns to humans, deities recede from view; nevertheless, their influence remains in the form of material objects through which they are manifested and to which humans make offerings. The Codex Borgia cosmological sequence parallels this general outline: it too begins with origins, then turns to the adventures of specific deities, and finally concludes with images of these deities. Acknowledging this pattern, it is productive to view similar Classic period narratives through this lens, to better understand the panoply of sacred images that populated the Classic Maya sacred landscape and the ecologies of the sacred that linked these images to finely-reticulated rituals and their referents, human devotees, and architectural contexts. Informed by work in the history of religions and image theory, a close reading of texts and images paints a picture of the Mesoamerican sacred image that specifies and complicates the modern, commonly-held perception that matter is inherently and axiomatically animate.



Michael D. Carrasco is an Associate Professor of Art History in the Department of Art History at Florida State University. He specializes in the visual culture, literature, and writing systems of the indigenous peoples of Latin America, with a specific focus on the Maya. He is the co-editor of Pre-Columbian Foodways: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Food, Culture, and Markets in Ancient Mesoamerica (Springer, 2010), Parallel Worlds: Genre, Discourse, and Poetics in Contemporary, Colonial, and Classic Maya Literature (University Press of Colorado, 2012), and New Perspectives on Interregional Interaction in Ancient Mesoamerica (2018). Since 1997, he has conducted regular fieldwork in Guatemala and Mexico, most recently with support from Florida State University's Council on Research and Creativity, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología for a collaborative project focused on cycads and the domestication of maize in Mesoamerica.



Bringing the Rain: The Origin of the Gods of Rain and Lightning in Formative Mesoamerica

KARL TAUBE

The University of California, Riverside

mong the most basic defining traits of Mesoamerica is maize, which although highly productive, demands considerable amounts of water to thrive during the spring and summer months. In fact, the northern border of this cultural region is demarcated by the area where farming is no longer possible without irrigation. As in Neolithic Europe, the Formative period in Mesoamerica constitutes the time when agriculture, along with settled village life and ceramics, first developed, with one of the preeminent cultures being the Olmec (ca. 1200–500 Bc). In this presentation, Taube will discuss the Olmec rain god, including his attributes as well as attendant ritual and symbolism. As with Miguel Covarrubias, Taube will argue that many later rain gods of Classic and Postclassic Mesoamerica, including the Zapotec, the Maya, and Central Mexico, derive in many respects from this ancient Olmec being. In addition, due to recent archaeological discoveries, the time is ripe to document the origin and development of Mesoamerican rain gods in considerable detail.



Karl Taube is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside. In addition to extensive archaeological and linguistic fieldwork in Yucatan, Taube has participated in archaeological projects in Chiapas, Mexico, coastal Ecuador, highland Peru, Copan, Honduras and in the Motagua Valley of Guatemala. He is currently serving as the Project Iconographer for the San Bartolo Project in the Petén of Guatemala. Taube has broad interests in the archaeology and ethnology of Mesoamerica and the American Southwest, including the development of agricultural symbolism in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica and the American Southwest, and the relation of Teotihuacan to the Classic Maya. Much of his recent research and publications center upon the writing and religious systems of ancient Mesoamerica.

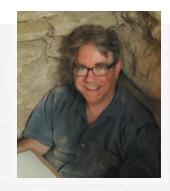


Conflated Identities: Rulership, Reflected Names and Multiple States of Being in Ancient Mesoamerica

DAVID STUART

The University of Texas at Austin

n the art and writing of Mesoamerica, marking or specifying the identities of historical and religious figures was never a simple or straightforward matter. As a matter of routine, monuments and textual narratives present named rulers and other elite actors with reference to other individual beings or characters, usually fusing identities of living persons with specific gods and ancestors. In formal portraits, for instance, Maya kings or queens seldom ever appear as direct representations of "a person," but rather as meaningful reflections of named deities and predecessors, or even as combinations of such alternate beings. The same pattern holds true when we consider a number of representations of kingly authority in Aztec (Mexica) art, as I have argued in my recent interpretation of the Aztec Calendar Stone as a deified portrait of the emperor Moteuczoma II. Certain aspects of this dynamic find correlations in the metaphysics of identity and being within Mesoamerican communities of the present-day, as documented and discussed by several previous researchers. This presentation makes the case that "conflated identities" should provide a key framework in our approach to understanding the metaphysics of Mesoamerican ideology and royal authority. And as pervasive features in Mesoamerican art and written narratives, they form a useful paradigm for their nuanced study and interpretation.



David Stuart is the David and Linda Schele Professor of Mesoamerican Art and Writing and the Director of the Mesoamerica Center at The University of Texas at Austin. He received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Vanderbilt University in 1995, and taught at Harvard University for eleven years before arriving at The University of Texas at Austin in 2004, where he teaches in the Department of Art and Art History. His primary research focuses on the archaeology and epigraphy of ancient Maya civilization, and for the past three decades he has been very active in the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphic writing. Over the past two decades his major research has centered on the art and epigraphy at Copan (Honduras), Palenque (Mexico), Piedras Negras, La Corona, and San Bartolo (Guatemala), though recent projects include explorations of the art and epigraphy of Central Mexico.



Luster and Essence: One's Fate in Shiny Objects

PATRICK HAJOVSKY

Southwestern University

himmering objects perform when worn or held on the body, not only because they dazzle the eye and trigger the senses, but also, for the Aztecs, they linked personal valor to socioeconomic and sociopolitical values, expressed in the Nahuatl concept of tonalli, the life-energy that manifests in personality and fame. Related to teotl (god) and tleyotl (body heat) and in complement to yollotl (heart), tonalli reveals how a person's essence could dissolve into the shimmering surface of luxurious objects. Aztec artists explored equivalences between luxury materials—lapidary, gold, feather—and the human body through synesthetic metaphors that tied materials to human fate, and to matters of blood. As materials and forms emphasized the intrinsic connections between person and object, the object became a surrogate of the owner's agency, even their sacrifice. Tonalli could thus be infused within the object, whose death through burial or fire suggests that it could eternally perform essential aspects of the deceased person's identity. Conversely, the heirloom chosen to continue 'living' with the tonalli of predecessors may be constitutive of the deceased, and like that person, can accumulate status and fame. Such lives are considered in the material contexts of bodily performances and final interments.



Patrick Hajovsky is an Associate Professor of Art History in the Department of Art and Art History at Southwestern University, where he also serves as core founding member of the Latin American and Border Studies Program. His research focuses on the pre-Columbian cultures of Mesoamerica and the Andes, as well as indigenous artistic traditions from the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru. His book, On the Lips of Others: Moteuczoma's Fame in Aztec Monuments and Rituals (University of Texas Press, 2015), examines how Moteuczoma's name in Aztec monuments conveyed his divine presence according to indigenous concepts of fame. His upcoming work features Aztec ideas of material and essence conveyed through art and language and in correlation to the morals and economies of luxury and sacrifice.



Touched by Fire: Volcanoes in Ancient Mesoamerican Belief

LUCIA HENDERSON

Independent Scholar

his paper explores the impact of volcanic landscapes on the art, iconography, and religious beliefs of ancient Mesoamerican cultures, with a particular focus on the extremely volatile southern region, which encompasses the Maya highlands and the Pacific Slope. The Maya highlands represent one of the most active volcanic regions in the world, yet volcanoes have played a negligible role in our studies of art and religious belief in this area. Volcano imagery encountered in central Mexico will also be addressed in order to situate the study in a broader context and to illuminate consistencies and ruptures encountered in volcanic iconographies across time and space. Exhaling puffs of smoke, capped with lightning storms, and regularly erupting in fire and ash, volcanoes would have been viewed as some of the most dramatic and imposing inhabitants of the Precolumbian living landscape. Cataclysmic eruptions would have displaced populations, devastated agricultural production, and interrupted trade routes. Revered and feared, such mountains would have affected the human worlds that surrounded them, altering religious practice, political structures, and economic systems. Henderson's comprehensive examination of volcano iconography promises to illuminate how these fiery mountains affected those who lived with them, how they were integrated into religious belief, how they influenced political ideologies, and how the diversity of ancient Mesoamerican landscapes encouraged equivalent diversity in the artistic embodiment of those landscapes.



Lucia Henderson received her Ph.D. in Art History from The University of Texas at Austin in 2013. She holds an M.A. in Art History from the University of California – San Diego and a B.A. in Archaeology from Harvard University. Henderson, a trained archaeological illustrator, is a specialist in the iconography of the early Maya and the Southern Region of Mesoamerica (ca. 500 BC – AD 150). Her broader research interests stretch across a diverse range of topics, from sculptural iconography to cave art, hydraulic systems, landscape imagery, and the ideology and symbolism of incipient rulership. Her published work covers two millennia, from the 6th century BC through the 16th century AD and discusses cultures as diverse as the Maya, the Aztecs, and the Hopi of the American Southwest.



Embedded Identity in Maya Philosophy

ALEXUS MCLEOD

University of Connecticut

number of interpretations of Classic and Postclassic Maya metaphysics take 'time' as a fundamental component of Maya ontology. Some even propose that the early Maya espoused a temporal reductionism, in which all components of the universe ultimately reduce to time (Knowlton, Maya Creation Myths, Leon-Portilla, Tiempo y realidad en el pensamiento Maya). McLeod argues that early Maya metaphysics is better understood through a system of what he calls "embedded identity," in which time and other features of the world are contingent features of an ultimately ineffable world process, or "ground of being." Time, persons, and other aspects of the world can be considered independently and treated as if separable, while on a fundamental ontology being considered aspects of the single world process. Using insights from process philosophy and early Daoist thought, McLeod argues that this metaphysics of embedded identity can be found most clearly in the K'iche' Maya *Popol Vuh.* Through consideration of the concepts of substitution (k'ex)and transformation in the Popol Vuh, as well as particular examples from Classic period imagery, McLeod argues that a metaphysics of embedded identity makes best sense of the Maya positions on time and the issue of identity through time and change.



Alexus McLeod is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Asian / Asian-American Studies at the University of Connecticut. McLeod earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Connecticut, and his work focuses primarily on early Chinese philosophy (Pre-Qin through Eastern Han) and Mesoamerican philosophy. Much of McLeod's current work is on the metaphysics of persons, philosophical methodology, and the concept of truth across traditions, and his most recent book is *Philosophy of the Ancient Maya: Lords of Time*. Within the Maya tradition, he is currently working on the issues of personal identity, sacrifice and representation, and philosophical interpretation of post-contact texts such as the Books of *Chilam Balam* and the K'iche' *Popol Vuh*.



Drilling # Killing: Perforated Plates in Classic Maya Funerary Contexts

ANDREW FINEGOLD

The University of Illinois Chicago

oles drilled through the centers of some Classic Maya dishes have commonly been discussed as "killing" these vessels at the time of their interment with deceased individuals. Such a designation suggests the termination both of their former functionality and of their animistic life force. Building off of recent scholarship that has begun to complicate this characterization, this paper proposes that, rather than deactivating them, the drilling of these plates served to enhance their role as materially and symbolically potent elements within the mortuary context. The perforations created by this ritual treatment occasionally interact with the imagery on the vessels, illuminating a number of possible metaphorical associations such holes may have held for both the artists who initially painted them and the individuals who later drilled them. The analysis presented in this talk is anchored by a close examination of a notably rich example of this overlay of iconography and perforation—the so-called Resurrection Plate, which simultaneously presents several distinct ideas in relation to the hole drilled through its center.



Andrew Finegold is an Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Illinois Chicago. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 2012, completing a dissertation on the brief and anomalous appearance of narrative battle imagery in Mesoamerica during the Epiclassic period. Finegold previously served as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the NYU Institute of Fine Arts. He is co-editor, along with Ellen Hoobler, of the volume Visual Culture of the Ancient Americas: Contemporary Perspectives (University of Oklahoma Press, 2017), to which he contributed an essay entitled "Atlatls and the Metaphysics of Violence in Central Mexico." Finegold's current book project examines the real and symbolic values ascribed to holes, cavities, and voids across a variety of media in ancient Mesoamerica.



Co-essences in the Ceramic Effigies of Far Western Mexico

CHRISTOPHER BEEKMAN

The University of Colorado Denver

ost interpretations of the "shaft tomb figures" of western Mexico have emphasized their differences from the rest of Mesoamerica, primarily by seeing them as the products of more or less egalitarian communities dominated by shamanistic beliefs and a cult of the dead. Beekman summarizes archaeological findings from recent decades that demonstrate that the figures are 1) not necessarily funerary in meaning; 2) were produced within a complex social milieu not so different in scale from most Late Formative sociopolitical systems; and 3) were portable forms of art whose uses were fundamentally distinct from the public monuments to which they are often disparagingly compared. Beekman will argue that these issues require us to clear the decks of past approaches and renew the inquiry into the figures. He will draw out one particular theme from the ceramic effigies for closer examination—that of the frequent relationship between warriors or rulers with animals. Whereas warriors could be portrayed with a diverse array of animals on their helmets or backs, rulers wore feline skins or fur caps. Beekman proposes that artists were portraying both of these social categories with their co-essences (Nahuatl "tonaltin", or Maya "wayob"), but in different ways. Warriors shared personal relationships with their animal co-essences, which did not define military orders as seen in places like Teotihuacan. Rulers, on the other hand, decorated themselves with dead felines, suggesting both a more specific relationship with a particular type of co-essence, but also implying a more predatory aspect to rulership.



Christopher Beekman is an archaeologist interested in Precolumbian western Mexico and its relationship with the rest of Mesoamerica. He earned his Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University in 1996, and his research addresses political organization and identity, particularly in the central highlands of Jalisco, Mexico. Since 1993, he has engaged in surveys, excavations, and the analysis of archived collections from the region. More recently, Beekman has been developing approaches to interpreting the well-known "shaft tomb figures" from Jalisco, Nayarit, and Colima. From 2015–2016 he was a Fellow of Precolumbian Studies at Dumbarton Oaks. Beekman is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Colorado Denver, and lives in the mountains west of Denver with his wife Kathy.



Pure-Nawal: Communicating Objects, Dream Bundles, and Contemporary Tz'utujil Maya Ritual Practitioners

LINDA BROWN

The George Washington University

n the highlands of Guatemala, contemporary Tz'utujil Maya ritual practitioners collect and curate found objects as sacred materials. These items—obsidian artifacts, fragments of pottery vessels, greenstone celts, glass bottle stoppers, and water smoothed cobbles, among others—are understood by their collectors to be animate and serve a key role in how the past manifests in the present. These sacred materials are physically embodied by ancestral beings known collectively as nawales. The nawales existed on earth during a previous era, long before the creation of human beings and our present sun. At the end of their era, they departed earth, leaving behind pieces of themselves in the form of material relics. These are the sacred materials collected and so valued today. Ritual practitioners refer to them as "pure-nawal," meaning they are permeated with the essence of powerful ancestral beings. Individuals enter into reciprocal relationships with these objects and communication is a vital component of their interactions. In this talk, Brown focuses on the role of pure-nawales as communicating objects. She explores how they mediate the transfer of ancestral insights to individuals during dreams and what this contemporary practice might suggest for understanding animate matter of the past.



Linda Brown is an anthropological archaeologist and the co-director of the Say Kah Archaeological Project, Belize. Her primary research focuses on Maya ceremonial activities. Brown has worked extensively with contemporary Maya ritual practitioners in the highlands of Guatemala with a focus on sacred objects and places. She is co-editor of a special issue of the Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory focused on archaeology and animism and has published numerous articles on her research at Maya sacred sites. Brown has academic affiliation at The George Washington University and the University of New Mexico, and various institutions have supported her research, including the National Science Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, The Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, and Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections.



Amore di fratello, amore di coltello: Huitzilopochtli's Myth and the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan

LEONARDO LÓPEZ LUJÁN

Insituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia & Proyecto Templo Mayor

his paper explores a paradigmatic case in Mesoamerican religious tradition in which myth, ritual, and architectural setting are inextricably intertwined. Utilizing a rich and diverse array of evidence dating from the 15th and 16th centuries, including native pictography, colonial historical documents written in Roman script, and various archaeological contexts and artifacts we ourselves have excavated in the ancient island city of Tenochtitlán, this presentation seeks to deepen the century-old proposition of the erudite German Mesoamericanist Eduard Seler (1849-1922) that the narrative account of the divine birth of Huitzilopochtli had its clearest worldly manifestation in the Templo Mayor, or Great Temple of the Mexica's imperial capital and ceremonial center, thus linking the ideal and the material—the imaginary and the tangible—realms of creation. As it is well-known, evocations of the famous myth of the Mexica patron deity's birth permeate this massive, 45-meter-high structure in terms of both its construction plan and its iconographic program. In fact, in the Templo Mayor, we can say that architecture, mural painting, polychrome sculpture, and buried offerings come together to confer the perfect qualities for the Mexica empire's preeminent religious edifice to serve as an extraordinary theater of ritual remembrance.



Leonardo López Luján is a Mexican archaeologist and the director of the Templo Mayor project of the National Institute of Anthropology and History. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Archaeology from Mexico's ENAH and a Doctorate from France's Université de Paris Nanterre. He specializes in the politics, religion, and art of Precolumbian urban societies in Central Mexico. López Luján has served as a visiting professor at Université de Paris 1-Sorbonne, Sapienza-Università di Roma, École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, and the Marroquín University of Guatemala. He has been a guest researcher at Princeton University, the Musée du quai Branly, Dumbarton Oaks, and the Institut d'études Avancées de Paris. In 2013, López Luján was elected correspondent member of the British Academy and honorary member of the Society of Antiquaries of London. He received the Shanghai Forum Archaeology Award as the director of one of the ten best archaeological research programs in the world in 2013–2015, and Arqueología de la Arqueología is the title of his most recent book.



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