

Intermediate Level – Sacred Narratives and Their Manifestation in Local Classic and Postclassic Maya Traditions

Tutors - Erik Boot and Elisabeth Wagner. List compiled by: Erik Boot



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Workshop Abstract - The discovery in March 1999 of the hieroglyphic bench inside Temple XIX at Palenque has changed our perspective on one of the most important sacred narratives of the Classic Maya, that of creation. This year the intermediate workshop will focus on hieroglyphic texts that contain sacred narratives, specifically (but not exclusively) those narratives related to creation and the calendar round date 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'uh, as manifested in local Classic and Postclassic Maya traditions. As such in this workshop it is possible to analyse the sacred narrative of creation from the perspective of Palenque as well as from the perspective of Quirigua. It thus becomes clear, based on presently available hieroglyphic texts, how kings in different local traditions employed the sacred narrative of creation within their strategies of political legitimization. Other examples of this narrative of different local origin will be available for study from for instance Caracol, Tikal, Naranjo, Tortuguero, Coba, and Chichen Itza, written down on stone monuments as well as on portable objects. These localized manifestations of the sacred narrative of creation extend to include (for the advanced members in this group, if interest arises) specific passages from the Dresden Codex as well as alphabetic passages from the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel.

The workshop will open with an introductory presentation on the subject and the material available for study. During the workshop several other short explanatory presentations are planned. As in previous years, a source book will be made available.

Preliminary Non-exhaustive List of Hieroglyphic Texts - The texts that will be available for study listed here refer to variants of the creation narrative, *k'atun* prophecies, *k'atun* histories, dynastic history, etc., all providing important elements of sacred narratives and Late Classic socio-political and religious legitimization

• *Early & Late Classic Monumental Texts*

Palenque – Cross Group: Tablets and Associated Texts

Palenque – Temple of the Inscriptions: Tablets

Palenque – Temple XIV Tablet

Palenque – Temple XIX: Bench (or Platform) Texts

Palenque – Palace, House E: Spring Vault Painted Text (incl. unpublished material)

Tortuguero – Monument 6

Caracol – Stela 16

Copan – Stela 12

Tikal – Stela 31

Tikal – Stela 39

Quirigua – Stela C

Quirigua – Stela E (a *k'atun* 13 Ajaw celebration as a sacred narrative)

Chichen Itza – Stela 1 (aka. Caracol Panel)

Chichen Itza – Monjas Lintels 1-7

Coba – Stela 1

Coba – Stela 5

COL FAMSI Panel (photo image: K6593)

COL Early Classic Mask, Text on Back

Others texts will be added

- *Texts on Classic Ceramics* (incl. non-creation narratives, add: comparative iconographic analysis)

Kerr No. 2796

Kerr No. 7750

Kerr No. 1398 (and associated iconography, including additional vessels)

Kerr No. 1440

Kerr No. 1485

Kerr No. 5113

“Black Background Narratives”: A series of some twenty seemingly unrelated Late Classic ceramics which illustrate visual narratives involving multiple complex interactions among a host of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic characters on a black background. Involves epigraphic analysis, but more so iconographic analysis

Other texts will be added

- *Postclassic Books*

Codex Dresden – Main Text Passages on: Pages 24, 61-62, 69-70, and 74 (w. new hires scans)
– Passages for Analytical Support: Pp. 25-28, Pp. 46-50, and others

Chilam Balam of Chumayel – Pages 60-63

Other texts will be added

NB: If you already have a specific corpus of material related to the workshop subject on which you want work, feel free to bring it and work on it.

Some Suggested Readings - These are only some recent and less recent references involving the subject of the workshop, as well as more general introductions to Maya toponymy and deity onomatology

Freidel, D., L. Schele, and J. Parker

1998 *Maya Cosmos*. New York: William Morrow, Inc.

The general thesis on creation as proposed in this book may still be valid, however, recent epigraphic analyses as well as discoveries of new monuments have shown that important elements of the argument are either incorrect or need amendment

Stuart, D.

2005 *A New Look at Palenque's Mythology*. In: Stuart, D., "The Inscriptions from Temple XIX at Palenque," pp. 158-189. San Francisco: PARI.

2006 *Sourcebook for the 30th Maya Meetings, March 14-19, 2006*, pp. 86-171. Austin: The Mesoamerica Center, Department of Art and Art History, University of Texas.

Stuart, David, and Stephen Houston

1994 *Classic Maya Place Names*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks.

Taube, K.

1992 *The Major Gods of Ancient Yucatan*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks.

For those who are interested in taking an anthropological approach to Maya mythology, please turn to any comparative work on the study of myth that discusses the work of for instance Barthes, Boas, Leach, Levi-Strauss, and Malinowski or studies that discuss and compare a variety of other world creation myths (e.g. Assyrian/Babylonian, Aztec, Biblical, Chinese/East Asia, K'iché' Maya, Navaho-Diné).