

24th European Maya Conference – Contact and Conquest in the Maya World and Beyond Jagellonian University of Cracow, Poland. 11th-16th November 2019

MARIA FELICIA REGA

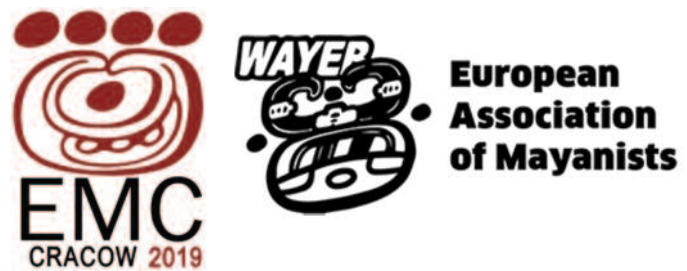
In 1996, a group of scholars decided to organize for the first time in Europe a conference focused on the Maya studies. The European Conference for Classic Maya Culture took place in the British Museum in June of 1996. Later in that year, some young scholars met again in Brussels and decided to create the Wayeb, European Association of Mayanists, officially born the 14th of July of 1998. Starting from the year 2001, the Wayeb was associated to the annual European Maya Conference.

Almost a quarter of century has passed since that first meeting in London and, from that moment, the EMC slowly became one of the most important meetings in the world, bringing together academics, students, professors and amateurs interested in the Maya studies. The approach during this meetings is an interdisciplinary look at academic disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, history, ethnography, epigraphy and many others.

The main objective of the EMC is to maintain academic contacts between different institutions and to allow hundreds of people to meet every year and participate in a unique process of sharing the knowledge about the Maya and the Mesoamerican cultures.

The conference takes place every year in a different European city, possibly in a different country, in order to involve as many institutions as possible. The organization always combines two days of Symposium and three days of Workshop. During the Symposium, various scholars selected by a review committee or directly invited to participate, can expose their papers on a specific topic.

The workshops can be three up to four or five and are basically focused on the decipherment of Maya writing system (Kettunen 2019). One workshop is always for beginners who want to learn how to translate the Maya inscriptions, starting from the very base. Generally, there is one or two workshops for people with intermediate or advanced knowledge of Maya hieroglyphics; these workshops can be an opportunity for many advanced epigraphers to work together on latest deciphered inscriptions and share their knowledge with stu-



dents and amateurs. The Wayeb often includes also special workshops about other topics apart from the Maya hieroglyphs, which can focus on codices, iconography, Spanish chronicles and even Mesoamerican cuisine.

With the changing of the institutions hosting the annual conference, there is also a change in the main topic. Across the years, the EMC was hosted by institutions in Spain, Sweden, Russia, Germany, Slovakia, Belgium, Finland, Denmark, Poland, France, Switzerland, Netherlands and United Kingdom.

This year event was hosted by the Jagellonian University in Cracow, Poland, from the 11th to the 16th of November 2019. The topic was “Contact and Conquest in the Maya World and Beyond”.

In the 500^o anniversary of the contact between the Spaniards led by Hernan Cortés and the Aztecs ruled by Montezuma, this conference followed a topic which was very common all over the world during this year: how a culture can change after the contact with another one.

Specifically, the focus was not just on the changes of Mesoamerican culture after the contact with Spanish conquerors, but also about how different populations across the centuries, can change each other. One example can be the contact between Teotihuacan, in Central Mexico, and the Maya people, during the Classic Period (250-600 AD), especially after the episode of the so-called *Entrada* of 378 AD.

However, contacts may also have smaller dimensions and include significant episode of Maya history involving important cities and their rulers. This was the topic of the Intermediate Workshop of Maya hieroglyphs, “The Life and Times of K’an II: The Great King of Caracol”, tutored by Christophe Helmke (University of Copenhagen) and Sergei Vepretskii (Russian State University for the Humanities). The main analysed text where inscriptions coming mainly from Caracol, in Belize, and cities in contact such as Naranjo, in Petén, Guatemala, and Xunantunich, in Belize (Helmke and Vepretskii 2019).

The beginners workshops focused on Classic period Maya texts relating to royal marriages among different ancient kingdoms, a topic also important when we talk

about the contact. The tutors were Dorota Bojkowska (Jagiellonian University), Ivan Savchenko (Independent Scholar) and Boguchwała Tuszyńska (Independent Scholar). These two workshops focused on Maya hieroglyphic writing.

Three special workshops were organized this year, focused on the changes in the Maya culture after the contact with the “Old World”. The topic of the workshop organized by Jesper Nielsen and Mikkel Bøg Clemmensen, both from the University of Copenhagen, was about the Early Colonial iconography in Mexico, with an analysis of various images from paintings, murals and sculptures which show traces of hybridization of the first Christian images appearing in Mexico.

Very interesting was the topic of the special workshop led by Lucas Asicona Ramírez (Independent Scholar) and Monika Banach (Jagiellonian University), dedicated to the oral tradition of the Maya Ixil, a population living in Guatemala. The examined texts were especially myths coming from the township of Chajul, including a comparison with texts of other Maya people, especially the K'iche' and the Yucatec Maya, and a brief touch on the intertextualities between this kind of myths and Classic Maya inscriptions and iconography.

Great success for John Chuchiak (Missouri State University) and his workshop focused on the wars engaged between Maya and Spanish people in a period going from 1517 to 1697. The materials provided during the workshop included sources and documentation in Spanish and Maya language which how long had been the process of the conquest in the Maya area and how the elements of war changed across the century.

The contact between two different realities can change many cultural aspects, even in everyday life. How many foods were unknown in the Americas before the arrival of Europeans, and *vice versa*? Many basic ingredients of modern cuisine in Europe exist because of the Spanish contact with Mesoamerica. During the XVIII and XIX centuries some plants such as potatoes and tomatoes started to be cultivated in Europe and definitively entered in modern daily life. Even nowadays the process of “cuisine conquest” is not totally ended. Even the existence of some words in European vocabulary derived not just from the Conquest of the “New World”, but also from all the interactions that this event has generated in the subsequent centuries. One of the main papers presented during the first session of Symposium, by Harri Kettunen, president of Wayeb, focused exactly on this topic.

In the second session, the focus was on the first conquests in Mesoamerica, especially the contacts between the Maya and Teotihuacan, as possible to see through defensive structures in El Zotz territory (Stephen Houston *et al.*; Garrison and Houston 2018), Maya inscrip-

tions from the V centuries (Dmitri Beliaev), mural from the Building B-XIII in Uaxactun (Milan Kováč *et al.*; Špoták 2017) and exchange of ceramic (Asia Jabłońska).

The third and fourth session of Symposium were both dedicated to language and script in the contest of contact and conquest, starting from the contact phenomena in Nahuatl writing system (Albert Davletshin) to the presence of bi-scripts in Mesoamerica (Christophe Helmke), passing through the impact of political domination on linguistic preferences in Maya writing (Mary Kate Kelly).

The fifth session was focused on the clashes between two cultures from a cultural and political point of view. On the one hand, the war is the main evidence of this kind of clashes, and it is possible to see it through the changes after the Maya collapse (Elizabeth Graham), analysis of tactics, weapons and battle strategies in Yucatec Maya warfare during Late Postclassic and Conquest Era (John Chuchiak; Chuchiak 2018) and archaeological remains in the context of underwater research in Lake Petén Itza, in Guatemala (Magdalena Krzemień *et al.*). But sometimes some elements simply cannot be conquests, as we can see thanks to some examples of ceramics used in Western Highlands of Guatemala and among Lacandons of Chiapas, Mexico, which still show traces of continuity with Maya ceramics (Dora Martiza García Patzán).

If the sixth session was dedicated to the religious conquest of Mesoamerica through missionization and syncretism, the seventh and last session focused on the topic of the conquest seen through the eyes of indigenous people. In this contest, was particularly interesting the paper on the murals found in Chajul, Guatemala, especially those ones in the house of Asicona family, which shows important events of the colonial period through dances organized by the *cofradías*, religious and social organizations still important nowadays (Jarosław Żrałka *et al.*).

The sharing of knowledge during the EMC takes place not just during the workshops or the symposium, but also during the moments of receptions, always included in the programme. These are moments where scholars, students and amateurs can share their ideas, get in contact and feel on the same level.

The last day of the conference, after the symposium, there is always a flag ceremony, with the passage of the testimony to the institution that will host the EMC in the subsequent year. In 2020, the European Maya Conference will take place in Warsaw, Poland, with a topic about boundaries, frontiers and divisions in the Maya area and beyond.

Every year many scholars and amateurs, not only from Europe, but from all over the world, wait for this event, with the hope that the Wayeb may have the

opportunity to continue its activities for many more years and extend the EMC organization in many other European countries.

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Aktivity Centra mezoamerických štúdií a občianskeho združenia ProMaya v rokoch 2018 a 2019

IVETA PUCHOVANOVÁ

Centrum mezoamerických štúdií (CMS) úspešne pôsobí ako vedecké centrum patriace pod Filozofickú fakultu Univerzity Komenského už od roku 2014. Počas šiestich rokov svojej existencie zrealizovalo množstvo aktivít jednak smerom k odbornému publiku, ale aj k širokej verejnosti.

CMS sa aj v rokoch 2018 a 2019 podieľalo na archeologickom projekte Uaxactún v Guatemale, v oblasti Petén (Kováč 2019). Pod vedením prof. Milana Kováča, PhD. projekt pokračoval terénnym výskumom, archeologickými, geodetickými a výskumnými prácami. Slo-



venský archeologický tím je taktiež súčasťou medzinárodného projektu Pacunam, v rámci ktorého boli pomocou technológie LiDAR letecky skenované územia pralesných oblastí Peténu. Začiatkom roku 2018 boli zverejnené prvé výsledky získané touto technológiou, ktoré spracovali a prezentovali prof. Milan Kováč, PhD. a Ing. Tibor Lieskovský, PhD. Nové informácie o mayskej architektúre, poľnohospodárstve, počte obyvateľstva vzbudili intenzívny záujem médií, o čom svedčí viac ako 40 mediálnych výstupov vrátane reportáží v hlavných spravodajských reláciách vo všetkých významných slovenských televíziách. Výrazným úspechom bolo aj publikovanie štúdie o výsledkoch projektu v časopise Science na jeseň 2018 (Canuto et. al 2018). Terénne výskumy v rámci Proyecto Arqueológico Regional Uaxactún taktiež priniesli nové objavy, okrem iného nález markeru loptovej hry v lokalite Buena Vista.

V roku 2018 a 2019 sa CMS viackrát prezentovalo aj vo vysielaní Rozhlasu a televízie Slovenska. Unikátny bol hlavne šesťdielny dokumentárny seriál Slovenskí archeológovia v Guatemale, ktorý zaujímavým spôsobom priblížil širokej verejnosti prácu archeológov, ich úspechy, predstavil archeologickú lokalitu Uaxactún v Guatemale. Každý diel seriálu sa podrobnejšie venoval inej súčasti výskumov mayskej civilizácie, pritom atraktívne poodhalil bežný život archeológov v Guatemale a ich úspechy. V dokumente boli prezentované aj aktivity CMS, ktoré realizuje doma na Slovensku, hlavne tradičné podujatie Bratislava Maya Meeting. Členovia CMS, prof. Milan Kováč, PhD. a Mgr. Jakub Špoták, PhD. sa na pozvanie Rozhlasu a televízie Slovenska zúčastnili ako hostia na natáčaní populárno-vedeckej relácie Experiment, ktorá bola odvysielaná 18. 4. 2019. Aj týmto spôsobom bola mayská kultúra a medzinárodné úspechy slovenských mayológov prezentované verejnosti.

Každoročne sa CMS aktívne zúčastňuje na medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencii Hľadanie indiánskej Ameriky, ktorú spoluorganizuje s Katedrou etnológie a mimoeurópskych štúdií Filozofickej fakulty Univerzity sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave. Na dvojdnovej konferencii, určenej odbornej verejnosti, vystúpili s prednáškami už viacerí členovia CMS. Témy prednášok boli venované mayskej mytológii, epigrafii, výsledkom projektu vo Uaxactúne.

Ďalšie prezentačné aktivity sa uskutočnili v roku