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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES**

*Jim Aimers* is an associate professor of anthropology at the State University of New York at Geneseo. He got his B.A. and M.A. at Trent University (Ontario, Canada) and completed his PhD in anthropology at Tulane University in New Orleans (2002). Aimers' dissertation was on the Maya collapse in the Belize River Valley. He edited *Ancient Maya Pottery: Classification, Analysis and Interpretation* (University Press of Florida 2012) and has authored numerous articles and book chapters. His other interests include architecture and gender/sexuality.

*Jaime Awe* is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at Northern Arizona University, as well as Emeritus member of the Belize Institute of Archaeology, where he served as Director from 2003 to 2014. Between 1990 and 2000, he taught in the Anthropology Departments of Trent University in Ontario, Canada, then at the Universities of New Hampshire and Montana. He received his Ph.D. from the University of London, England. During his extensive career in archaeology, Awe has conducted important research and conservation work at most of the major sites in Belize (including Altun Ha, Baking Pot, Cahal Pech, Caracol, Cerros, Lamanai, Lubaantun, and Xunantunich, and Actun Tunichil Muknal, Chechem Ha, and Barton Creek Caves). He has also published numerous articles in various books, journals, and magazines, and his research has been featured in several national and international television documentaries.

*Tim Beach*, Centennial Chair in Geography, UT Austin, directs its Soils and Geoarchaeology Laboratory. He has more than 100 publications on soils, geomorphology, and geoarchaeology of Central America and world-wide.

*Jack Biggs* is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Anthropology at Michigan State University and is affiliated with the Central Belize Archaeological Survey (CBAS). His dissertation research, under the direction of Gabriel Wrobel, focuses on ancient Maya childhood and the growth and development of the human skeleton and how cultural, environmental, biological stressors influence these processes.

*M. Kathryn Brown* is an Associate Professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She holds the Lucher Brown Endowed Professor of Anthropology. Her research focuses on the rise of complexity and the role of ritual, religion, and ceremonial architecture in the Preclassic period. She is the director of the Mopan Valley Preclassic Project and the Co-Director of the Mopan Valley Archaeological Project. She has focused her recent research at the sites of Xunantunich, Buenavista del Cayo, and Las Ruinas de Arenal. She is the co-editor of *Ancient Mesoamerican Warfare* and has several recent publications

that have appeared in *Mexicon*, *Advances in Archaeological Practices*, and *Research Reports in Belizean Archaeology*.

**Dorie Budet** is the curator of the ancient Americas collection at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and research associate at the Smithsonian Institution working with Ron Bishop on the Maya Ceramics Project.

**Melissa Burham** is a Ph.D. Candidate in the School of Anthropology at the University of Arizona. She has been a member of the Ceibal-Petexbatun Archaeological Project, directed by Takeshi Inomata and Daniela Triadan, since 2010. Her dissertation research focuses on neighborhood organization in outlying areas of the lowland Maya site of Ceibal, Guatemala, and how these groups influenced the larger sociopolitical order.

**Ryan Collins** is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Anthropology Department of Brandeis University. He has been a member of the Proyecto de Interacción Política del Centro de Yucatán (PIPCY), directed by Travis Stanton and Traci Adren, since 2011. Collins' dissertation research has focused on the Central Plaza, or E-group, Complex of Yaxuná, Yucatan Mexico with the goal of understanding the relationship between interregional interaction and urban development in the Northern Lowlands and its potential contributions to Mesoamerican culture during the Middle (1000 to 400 BCE) and Late (400 BCE to 250 CE) Formative periods. Collins is also an avid public anthropologist and the co-founder of the podcast *This Anthro Life*.

**Elizabeth Graham** (PhD, University of Cambridge, 1983) is Professor of Mesoamerican Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL). Prior to her move to London in 1999, she was in the Department of Anthropology at York University in Toronto and a Research Associate at the Royal Ontario Museum. She has carried out archaeological investigations in Belize for over 40 years, and served as Archaeological Commissioner in Belize from 1977 to 1979. She directed excavations at a number of inland and coastal sites in the Stann Creek District, at Tipu on the Macal River, and more recently at Lamanai on the New River Lagoon and Marco Gonzalez on Ambergris Caye. Her present research interests include the Maya at Spanish contact (*Maya Christians and Their Churches in Sixteenth-Century Belize*, UPF, 2011); commercial networks and water-borne trade; neotropical urbanism as a model for the long-term environmental impact of human activities; the fallacy of the concept of 'human sacrifice'; and warfare and the Maya collapse. She and her team are also working on developing best practices for long-term artefact storage and conservation at Lamanai, as well as ways of facilitating accessibility (see [www.lamanai.org.uk](http://www.lamanai.org.uk))

**Stanley Guenter** studied archaeology at the University of Calgary, La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia, and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, before receiving his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the latter in 2014. He has worked with three projects in Guatemala, at the sites of El Peru-Waka, La Corona, and a number in the Mirador Basin, as well as at Cahal Pech in Belize with AFAR, at Lake Minnewanka, in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta, Canada, and at Phnom Kulen in Cambodia. Stan's work involves combining archaeological, epigraphic, and ethnohistoric data to better

understand ancient civilizations and their history, and to compare this with paleoenvironmental data to better understand how ancient societies affected and were affected by their changing climates.

**Christophe Helmke** is Associate professor of American Indian Languages and Cultures at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on the archeology, epigraphy, iconography and languages of Mesoamerica. Since 2000 he has tutored hieroglyphic workshops as part of a series of conferences in Europe as well as North and Central America. Besides Maya archaeology and epigraphy, other research interests include the Pre-Columbian use of caves, Mesoamerican writing systems as well as rock art and comparative Amerindian mythology.

**Erlend Johnson** is a doctoral candidate at Tulane University and is affiliated with the Middle American Research Institute. Erlend's research, which is directed by Marcello Canuto, focuses on the integrative strategies employed by the rulers of Maya polities as they expanded into and absorbed surrounding populations. Erlend's doctoral research has taken place in the Cucuyagua and Sensenti valleys of Western Honduras, 25 and 50km southeast of the polity of Copan respectively.

**Mary Kate Kelly** is a PhD Candidate at Tulane University, studying the linguistics of Maya hieroglyphs. Her research looks at the linguistic variation present in the inscriptions, in order to gain better insight as to the distribution of different, but related, linguistic groups among the Maya. Her interests lie at the crossroads of language, literature, and culture, and extend to historical linguistics and the world's writing systems.

**Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire** is a Ph.D. Candidate in Anthropology at Tulane University and is affiliated to the Middle American Research Institute. His dissertation research – directed by Marcello Canuto – focuses on the political institution of the Classic Maya royal court. Max investigates this topic by excavating the regal palace of La Corona, Guatemala. Over the years, Max has dug holes looking for old things around Guatemala, Belize, Mexico, Honduras, and Québec.

**Simon Martin** is an Associate Curator at the University of Pennsylvania Museum. His research interests focus on Classic Maya history, politics and religion, and is perhaps best known for his two co-authored books "Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens" and "Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya". Since 1994 he has conducted epigraphic fieldwork at the site of Calakmul, Campeche, Mexico and has written extensively on the historical and political ramifications of the "Snake" dynasty that made this city its Late Classic home.

**Matthew Restall** is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of History and Anthropology, and Director of Latin American Studies, at the Pennsylvania State University. He was educated at Oxford and UCLA. He is Chair of the Association of Friends and Fellows and a Governor of the Board of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. He edited *Ethnohistory* journal for a decade, will be editor of the *HAHR* for the next five years, is the founding editor of Penn State Press's *Latin American Originals* series, and

edits Cambridge University Press's *Cambridge Latin American Studies* book series. The recipient of NEH, Guggenheim, and IAS-Princeton fellowships, Restall has over the last two decades published twenty books and sixty articles and essays. His work focuses on three specializations: colonial Mesoamerica, primarily Yucatan and the Maya (e.g. *The Maya World*; *Maya Conquistador*; and *2012 and the End of the World*); the Spanish Conquest (e.g. *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*; *Invading Guatemala*; and the forthcoming *The Meeting*); and Africans in Spanish America (e.g. *The Black Middle: Africans, Mayas, and Spaniards in Colonial Yucatan*). He is currently writing a book on early Belize.

**Scott Simmons** is a Professor of Archaeology at the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

**Maggie Morgan-Smith** is a PhD Candidate in Anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and is affiliated with their Research Labs of Archaeology. Maggie has spent the last several field seasons conducting survey, oral history, archival research, and household excavation for her dissertation with the Bolonchen Regional Archaeological Project in the Puuc Hills. Maggie's investigations have focused on labor and landownership in the historic community of Rancho Kiuic.

**Stephanie M. Strauss** is a Harrington Doctoral Fellow in Art History at the University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation on Epi-Olmec hieroglyphic writing and visual culture (co-supervised by Julia Guernsey and David Stuart) builds on her previous research into signalling practices in the Formative era.

**Jason Yaeger** is a professor of archaeology at University of Texas, San Antonio who has focused his research on the organization of ancient households and communities, urbanism, landscapes and environments, the relationship between climate change and culture change, material culture and identity, ethnohistory, the politics of archaeological research, and Maya epigraphy and iconography. Much of his research has sought to understand the organization of Classic Maya rural communities and the practices, institutions, and constructs that linked rural householders into extra-community socio-political entities. Jason has surveyed the countryside in Belize's Mopan River valley, mapped hundreds of houses and agricultural terraces, and excavated several rural houses in detail. His investigations also have taken him to the larger centers like Xunantunich, where he's excavated monumental temples and palaces. His current research focuses on documenting the changing relationships between Xunantunich and the rival center of Buenavista and understanding how competition between these two polities impacted the people who lived in the intervening countryside.

**Marc Zender** received his PhD from the University of Calgary in 2004, and he is presently an Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics at Tulane University. He has taught linguistics, epigraphy, and Mesoamerican languages at the University of Calgary (2002-2004), Harvard University (2005-2011), and Tulane University (2011-present). Marc's research interests include anthropological and historical linguistics, comparative writing, and decipherment, with a regional focus on Mesoamerica

(particularly Mayan and Nahuatl/Aztec), and he is the author of numerous books and articles exploring these topics. Marc is also the editor of The PARI Journal, and (with Joel Skidmore) maintains Mesoweb.com, a key internet resource for the study of Mesoamerican cultures.

## **HIEROGLYPHIC WORKSHOPS**

### ***The Royal Lives of La Corona: Introductory Hieroglyphic Workshop***

Mary Kate Kelly Thursday, April 27 9:00am-2:00pm

Who were the ancient Maya? Ancient temples overtaken by the jungle for a millennium, abandoned cities, and an enigmatic writing system that still bears hidden secrets typify our romanticized impression of the Maya. It turns out we know quite a lot about those who inhabited the now ruined palaces, in large part thanks to the thousands of inscriptions that remain to us in the archaeological record. And the subjects of the texts acted in ways that seem exceedingly human and relatable, even by our modern standards. This introductory workshop on the hieroglyphs is designed to provide a basic reading knowledge of the glyphs, but with a focus on the site of La Corona and its rulers. Despite the relatively small size of the site, La Corona played an integral role in the broader regional politics of the Classic Maya, as is beautifully detailed in the inscriptions they left behind. La Corona employed a unique rhetoric in its texts that gives us insightful perspective on the lives of their elite. With questions of political rivalry, alliance, and domination close at hand, we can understand the actions of elites in light of the political world they lived in.

### ***Altun Ha and the Riddle of the Water Scroll Emblem Glyph: Intermediate Hieroglyphic Workshop***

Christophe Helmke and Stanley P. Guenter, Thursday, April 27 9:00am-12:00pm

The hieroglyphic texts of the eastern Maya world talk about an important kingdom, identified by its royal title, known among epigraphers as the "Water Scroll" Emblem Glyph. This is believed to refer to the archaeological site of Altun Ha, in northern Belize, but the evidence has always been problematic. In this workshop participants will be able to join Christophe Helmke and Stanley Guenter in an exploration of the texts from Altun Ha, Pusilha, Nim Li Punit, Tikal and others and weigh the arguments for how to interpret these inscriptions and how they correlate with the archaeological evidence.

### ***Caracol's Lost Hieroglyphic Stairway: Intermediate Hieroglyphic Workshop***

Marc Zender, Simon Martin, Christophe Helmke, and Stanley Guenter, Sunday, April 30th, 9:00am-12:00pm

This intermediate-level hieroglyphic workshop explores our evolving understanding of an important hieroglyphic stairway discovered more than a hundred years ago (Maler 1908). Although discovered at Naranjo, the text focused on K'an II of Caracol, strongly suggesting the hand of a foreign monarch in the monument's design (e.g., Beetz and

Satterthwaite 1981, Stone et al 1985, Schele and Freidel 1990). Deepening the mystery, the stairway was clearly disordered and incomplete, and several scholars eventually pointed out disconnected blocks and fragments of the original monument as far away as Ucanal (Graham 1978, 1980) and even Caracol itself (Martin 2000; Martin and Grube 2000). This led to the consideration that the stairway may not in fact have originated at Naranjo at all, but may have instead been relocated there from Caracol (Martin 2000:57-58). Although the suggestion remains controversial in some quarters (e.g., Chase and Chase 2016:42) recent evidence bears it out in surprising ways. Just this past summer, Jaime Awe's project uncovered two substantial new portions of the same monument in front of Xunantunich Structure A9, contributing sixteen new glyph blocks and, it would seem, key elements of the beginning and end of the narrative (Helmke and Awe 2016a, 2016b).

Thanks to the archaeological and epigraphic detective work of many of our colleagues, we are now in a position to reconstruct a great deal of the original stairway that must once have stood at Caracol (Helmke and Awe 2016b; Martin 2017). As will be seen, the tale told by this fragmentary and disjointed monument is a fascinating one, including the dramatic conclusion to a 'civil war' in the Snake Dynasty, itself providing a critical prologue to a move of the dynastic capital from Dzibanche to Calakmul. Equally interesting is the archaeology of the monument. Erected at Caracol to celebrate the 9.10.10.0 ending of 642, it seems to have stood there for several decades before being damaged and dismantled (perhaps in 680), with substantial portions hauled away to Xunantunich, Ucanal, and Naranjo. As Awe and Helmke (2016b) have pointed out, this pattern of dispersal likely speaks to the composition of Naranjo's army: an alliance of (at least) these three centers, comprising warriors as well as (heavenly-laden) bearers, bringing home all manner of spoils from the sack of Caracol.

## **LECTURES**

### ***Invisible Clues: The Reconstruction of Classic Maya Palatial Activities with Interdisciplinary Methods***

**Maxime Lamoureux-St.Hilaire – Tulane University**

How can we study what kind of activities the ancient Maya performed, and where they did so? Beyond architecture and artifacts, what kind of more subtle archaeological traces are there for us to find?

This paper introduces how different interdisciplinary methods may be used to reconstruct activities, which occurred in the distant archaeological past. Namely, macro-botanical, micro-artifactual, and geochemical methods are presented through the Classic Maya case-study of the regal palace of La Corona, Guatemala. By combining these methods with more traditional archaeological ones, we will study economic activities such as the preparation of food, the manufacture of artifacts, as well as the storage and discard of both perishable and durable goods. The presented results provide insights into the practicalities, which were necessarily associated with the government of a Classic Maya political institution.

### ***The Chamber of Secrets at Xunantunich***

**M. Kathryn Brown – University of Texas at San Antonio & Leah McCurdy -  
University of Texas at San Antonio**

Although ancient Maya graffiti has been documented at a number of sites, our understanding of this art form remains limited. New evidence from the ancient Maya site of Xunantunich may shed light on the function of graffiti in certain contexts. Our investigations at El Castillo, a 39 meter tall acropolis, uncovered a Late Classic eastern room that was carefully filled with clay and stacked stones. The walls were covered with incised images and designs, ranging from simple sketches (graffiti) to more formal renderings. In this presentation, we suggest that this room was a special place where an ancient Maya Sage trained apprentices in the arts and sacred knowledge. Lending support to this interpretation, the walls were partitioned into sections and several images were repeated as if the designs were being practiced. This suggests that some plastered walls were not simply structural but also served as canvases for sketching, artistic training, and learned scribal expression. This newly discovered chamber of secrets provides a glimpse into how ancient Maya sacred knowledge is passed on.

### ***Land and Sea: Ancient Maya Coastal Trade and Exchange***

**Jim Aimers – SUNY Geneseo**

In archaeology, “trade” refers to the long-distance circulation of goods whereas “exchange” typically refers to the movement of people and ideas. In this paper I explore the importance of coastal trade and exchange to the ancient Maya with reference to the work of Elizabeth Graham.

### ***Commemorative Ceramics of the Ancient Maya: Ajaw Dates, the Calendar and Festive Crockery***

**Christophe Helmke – University of Copenhagen & Jaime Awe - Northern Arizona  
University**

Decorated ceramics are one of the hallmarks of Classic Maya civilization. The motifs, iconographic scenes and glyphic texts that adorn such vessels testify to the importance of such highly specialized serving vessels in the varied activities of royal courts. Vessels that bear emblematic calendrical notations constitute one specialized sub-set, providing abridged dates in the Tzolkin calendar. Typically these dates provide a numerical coefficient and the day *Ajaw* ‘king’, the final named day of the Tzolkin calendar. Here we will review a selection of vessels bearing such dates and propose correspondences to the Long Count calendar, by analogy to the monuments of Tonina, Caracol and Tikal that bear similar *Ajaw* dates, known as “Giant Ajaw Altars”. On this basis, we examine two recently discovered ceramic vessels with Tzolkin dates that were found within the tomb of Structure A9 at Xunantunich. These vessels and their dates constitute one crucial line of evidence in the dating of the tomb, evidence that will be presented here and weighed in relation to other dating methods.

***A Tale of Two Chapels: Toward an Understanding of Community Dynamics at Rancho Kiuic, Yucatan, Mexico***

**Maggie Morgan-Smith – University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

Formerly known as San Sebastián, the community of Rancho Kiuic functioned from the late Colonial to National periods as a ranching operation occupied by several generations of Maya-speaking landowners and laborers in the Puuc Hills region of Yucatan. Drawing on mixed-methods research, this paper explores the community's two chapel complexes (Capillas I and II), used by members of landowning and laborer families, respectively. I argue that differences in the uses and material signatures of these complexes give insight into community dynamics, specifically socioeconomic distinctions among the Rancho's occupants that impacted decisions to abandon the community in the mid 20th century, and continue to shape interactions with the landscape today.

***Verbosity and Ancient Mesoamerica: A Comparison of the Epi-Olmec and Maya Hieroglyphic Traditions***

**Stephanie M. Strauss – University of Texas at Austin**

Of the great logophonetic traditions of ancient Mesoamerica, scribes working in the Epi-Olmec and Maya systems were arguably the most verbose. Only a handful of Epi-Olmec inscribed objects remain extant today, and yet the corpus boasts some of the longest texts in Mesoamerican literary history. That said, the ways in which artist-scribes approached the presentation of text and image in the greater Isthmian and Maya regions differed in several key ways. This presentation will explore the conventions of Epi-Olmec visual culture, and compare its linear writing system - from specific glyphs to graphic orientation - to that of the ancient Maya.

***A View from the Hinterland: A Diachronic Investigation of the Integrative Strategies and Limits of the Classic period Copan Polity in the Cucuyagua and Sensenti valleys of Western Honduras.***

**Erlend Johnson – Tulane University**

Scholarship on the ancient lowland Maya has tended to develop black-box models describing the Classic period "polity". This presentation attempts to open up this black-box in order to investigate the dynamic processes by which lowland Maya polities functioned. It focuses on one aspect of Maya statecraft: the integrative strategies employed by Maya rulers as they expanded their polities. The Classic period Maya polity of Copan provides an ideal place to study these processes due to its position on the edge of the Maya world. Because the Copan polity was surrounded by non-Maya neighbors with distinct cultures and political structures, evidence for both material links from and structural transformations instigated by the Copan polity are more visible there than at contemporary sites in the Maya heartland. This presentation examines both the timing and degree of political changes during the Classic period (AD 100-900) in the Cucuyagua and Sensenti valleys located 25km and 50km southeast of Copan respectively. Results from survey and excavation



suggest that a Maya lowland style political hierarchy was adopted in the Cucuyagua valley by the Late Classic period (AD 600-900), suggesting that it was integrated into the Copan polity. Evidence of a fragmentary, heterarchical political system in the Sensenti valley during the Late Classic period suggests that this area remained outside of Copan's political hegemony.

***Searching in the Dark: social implications of pottery from caves in Belize***

**Dorie Budet - Museum of Fine Arts Boston & Ronald L. Bishop - Smithsonian Institution**

Explorations in Belize's karst caves reach back to the earliest days of archaeological investigations in the country. During the 1970s as Commissioner of the Department of Archaeology of Belize (then British Honduras), Liz Graham encouraged scientifically-based investigations of the caves. She recognized the importance of these underworld settings for Classic Period rituals of rulership and religious belief as well as their potential to better understand the fundamental ideologies of Maya society. This paper reviews more than 30 years of investigations of pottery found in Belize's caves, focusing on paste compositional, typological and stylistic analyses for evidence of social interaction and meaning.

***The Classic Maya Hiatus: A (Re-)Reassessment***

**Stanley Guenter – American Foreign Academic Research & Foundation for Archaeological Research and Environmental Studies**

Gordon Willey famously described the Hiatus as a “rehearsal for Collapse”, and this period of apparently lessened cultural (especially monumental) production has been interpreted in many different ways in the more than four decades since his seminal analysis. The Hiatus has been seen variously as affecting all of the Maya Lowlands or being a phenomenon restricted to only Tikal and a few of its neighbors. Causes have ranged from broken trade relations with Central Mexico to extreme catastrophic events, such as volcanic eruptions, to the currently most popular idea, that the Hiatus is a phenomenon restricted to Tikal and its nearest allies and is a result of defeat and domination by the Snake Kingdom of Dzibanche and Calakmul. This presentation reexamines a range of data from across the Maya Lowlands and beyond that suggest the Hiatus affected a far wider area than previously thought and that this has important implications for suggested causes for this phenomenon.

***The Revitalization of Maya Hieroglyphic Writing***

**Marc Zender – Tulane University**

Recent decades have seen a growing interest in Classic Maya hieroglyphic writing on the part of speakers of modern Mayan languages. Beginning in the late 1980s and consolidating in the mid-2000s, largely through the efforts of a handful of key scholars, amateurs, and institutions (such as Friends of the Maya, which later became MAM), Maya speakers were invited to participate in hieroglyphic workshops held in Mexico and Central America. Many of these Maya epigraphers have become well-versed in

hieroglyphs as a result, and have begun organizing and leading their own workshops. At the same time, sporadically throughout the 1990s and 2000s, but reaching a peak just before 2012, some of the more artistically-inclined Maya epigraphers had begun to experiment with producing new hieroglyphic texts. As is usual with such things, early efforts were unconvincing: derivative of the Classic tradition, inconsistent, erratic, and unrefined, even as late as several hieroglyphic monuments erected in the Maya area in December 2012. But there has been a sea change since 2012, and the art has matured substantially of late. Practitioners are aware of all of the latest decipherments, adapting their oeuvre accordingly, and they agree on a growing set of conventions in adapting lowland glyphs to highland languages. Gains have been consolidated, hands have become practiced, and some of the work produced during the last few years now ranks alongside that of master artists from the Classic period. The revitalization of Maya hieroglyphic writing is no longer just a possibility. It has happened.

***Serpent Rising: The Early Classic Kaanul Hegemony***  
**Simon Martin – University of Pennsylvania Museum**

This talk gives a summary of the latest developments in the complex history of the Kaanul kingdom. In recent years a better understanding of its early rise to power in the sixth century has emerged, beginning with the recognition of Dzibanche as its first major capital. New finds, joined by new ideas about earlier finds, allows us to fill some important gaps in our knowledge.

***Setting the Stage for Kingship: Ritual Practice, Urbanism and Sociopolitical Organization at Preclassic Ceibal, Guatemala***  
**Melissa Burham – University of Arizona & Jessica MacLellan – University of Arizona**

The enigmatic Classic Maya civilization traces its roots to the Preclassic period, a time when small communities gradually transformed into urban centers with centralized institutions of rulership. Recent investigations of outlying residential groups at the lowland Maya site of Ceibal, Guatemala shed light on this process, suggesting that ritual was at the heart of early sociopolitical organization and was a key consideration in later urban planning. In the Middle Preclassic period (ca. 1000-350 BC), domestic rituals had little in common with the public rites performed in the Central Plaza. However, as the city grew over the course of the Late Preclassic (ca. 350-100 BC) and Protoclassic (ca. 100 BC-AD 300) periods, temples were constructed amid residential groups in outlying areas, and ritual practices at all levels of society became remarkably similar. This paper explores how the changing relationships between domestic, semi-public and public rituals over the course of Preclassic period paved the way for divine kingship in the Classic period.

***Interregional Interaction and the Reinvention of Traditions: A New Perspective on Early Development in the Northern Lowlands from Yaxuná, Yucatan, Mexico***  
**Ryan Collins – Brandeis University**

Investigations of Yaxuná, Yucatan, Mexico are slowly beginning to shed light on the complex web of interregional interactions and processes of urbanization that impacted daily life in the early Northern Lowlands. Because of data from Yaxuná, we now believe this region to be contemporaneously occupied by permanent and semi-permanent settlements like those of the Central Lowlands in the Maya area during the earliest portions of the Middle Formative (1000 to 400 BCE) period and extending into the Late Formative (400 BCE to 250 CE). Despite seeming contemporaneity, however, the material traditions present in the Yaxuná E-group complex are strikingly distinct from deposits found in other Mesoamerican E-groups, during the Middle Formative period. Yet, by the onset of the Late Formative period, the material traditions (caches, commemorations, and termination rituals) at Yaxuná begin to take on more familiar forms and begin to include item classes like greenstone and obsidian. Because of this I argue that increasing interregional interactions between Yaxuná and its southern contemporaries led to a gradual transformation of traditions at the site, and suggest a rethinking of the paradigm which places the development of the Northern Lowlands as secondary, or peripheral, to that of the Central Lowland Maya.

***Cavernous Disparities: Using Biological and Mortuary Evidence to Understand Population Differences from Subterranean Contexts in Central Belize***  
**Jack Biggs – Michigan State University**

The significance of underground spaces for the ancient Maya can be easily seen via references in ancient texts and in the physical caves and rockshelters themselves. Bioarchaeological excavations of mortuary caves and rockshelters as part of the Central Belize Archaeological Survey (CBAS) have revealed that despite being located within a few kilometers of each other, these spaces appeared to have been used by very different populations as well as each been used for different rituals, both mortuary and non-mortuary. This paper explores how human remains from the caves of Je'reftheel and Actun Kabul as well as from the Sapodilla and the Caves Branch Rockshelters can inform us about the cultural differences between geographically close subterranean spaces as well as the different mortuary populations that were buried there.

***The Island and the Mainland: Connections between Maya Communities on Ambergris Caye and Northern Belize***  
**Scott Simmons – University of North Carolina Wilmington**

Ancient Maya occupation on Ambergris Caye has been documented from Preclassic through Postclassic times. Work at the site of Marco Gonzalez has concentrated on several structures in which solid evidence has been found for connections to Maya polities in northern Belize and beyond. Other sites on the caye have also yielded evidence of these connections. Nonetheless, relationships between island and mainland communities changed substantially over time. Although the northern location of the caye

makes it seem logical that its closest connections were with north-central Belize communities, there is evidence that connections with northern Belize in particular intensify in Terminal Classic times and continue through the Postclassic. Here we discuss the material evidence for these connections through time, focusing primarily on the Late and Terminal Classic Periods as well as Early Postclassic times.

***The San Pedro Maya and the British Colonial Enterprise in Belize, 1847–1936***  
**Jason Yaeger, UTSA President’s Endowed Professor of Anthropology, University of Texas at San Antonio**

Dr. Elizabeth Graham was a pioneer in colonial Maya archaeology, directing pathbreaking archaeological investigations at the early colonial settlements in Lamanai and Tipu. With these studies, she set the bar very high for later projects with her careful excavations and materials analysis, deep and productive interdisciplinary collaborative research design, and the training and mentoring younger scholars. Dr. Graham’s work provided a template for the San Pedro Maya Project. During four years of fieldwork from 2001 to 2004, a team of scholars combined archaeological, archival, and oral historical research to understand the ways in which Yucatec immigrants who came to British Honduras during the Caste War were incorporated into the colonial society and economy. In this paper, I discuss the methodological challenges of studying 19<sup>th</sup> century Maya villages, synthesize our data, and present some of the project’s major interpretations. I focus on questions regarding the degree and nature of the involvement of San Pedro Maya people in the colonial economy, San Pedro Maya engagement with and resistance to various colonial institutions, and the ways in which their material culture reflected and reinforced a Yucatec ethnic identity in the evolving colonial context.

***Ancient Maya Agroecosystems: Twenty Years of Fieldwork and Two Days of LiDAR***  
**Tim Beach – UT Austin, Geography and Environment**

The study of Maya agroecosystems has entered a period of great dynamism with the explosion of LiDAR imagery. Our research group acquired nearly 300 square km of LiDAR imagery that covers large areas of ancient Maya wetland fields for the first time. The coverage indicates both wide-scale wetland canal and field systems and intensive, polycultural complexes of upland terraces and wetland fields. Over the last 15 years, we tested many such systems with excavations and multiple proxies for past formation and cultivation. But, the LiDAR imagery shows we studied only a small spatial sample of these systems. We present what we now know based on excavations from Lamanai to Sierra de Agua, and use the Lidar imagery to outline our future plan to obtain a more geographically representative sample. Our goal here is to contextualize wetland agriculture both diachronically and synchronically within Maya History.

***The Times they are a Changing: Yucatec Influences in Terminal Classic Western Belize.***

**Jaime J. Awe – Northern Arizona University**

Archaeological investigations in western Belize have recorded a growing body of evidence that are indicative of the rise of Yucatec influences in this lowland Maya sub-region during the Terminal Classic period. Evidence for Yucatec influence in the Belize River Valley is manifested by shared architectural styles and programs, and by the presence of Yucatecan artifacts and ideology. This changing pattern represents a departure from the previous Late Classic cultural tradition which reflects closer ties with central Peten sites. Besides providing evidence for Yucatecan style architecture and artifacts in western Belize, I suggest that these non-local traits were likely associated with the waning influence of Peten sites during a period of decline and abandonment in the central Maya lowlands, and with the concurrent rise of Terminal Classic polities in the northern lowlands of the Yucatan Peninsula.

***The Missing Mayas: A Belizean Conundrum***

**Matthew Restall – Pennsylvania State University**

Where do the Mayas, ancient and modern, fit into the foundational mythology of Belize as a British colony and as a nation? The path to an answer is as twisting and unpredictable as any trail through the Belizean countryside. This paper does not claim to have found the answer, but it does seek to explain why the question must be answered, and what obstacles and guideposts might be found along the way.

***What's to Be Done?***

**Elizabeth Graham – University College London**

It's been suggested by the organizers that I highlight the challenges and successes of my career. I don't see myself as having successes, but since I ain't dead yet, I can talk about the challenges that have interested and still interest me, and which I hope some day will be met with some success. The obsession of my life as an archaeologist has been soils, but I have only recently been successful at getting funding for something I've fought for since 1989. This is my research on what are known as Dark Earths, and I think some of the project results and future plans will be of interest to the Maya at the Lago audience, especially since the topic is closely connected to environmental issues and, not least important, the future of the planet. But I might also mention the unusual ideas I have been writing about, and which I hope will be taken up by younger researchers—particularly indigenous researchers—who are not so set in their ways as we oldies are. By this I mean the rejection of the concept of “human sacrifice”; the critical importance of circum-peninsular trade and communication, which I see as the core of Maya civilization; and the ways that Maya history can be seen to be similar to the history of many other world civilizations or even empires in the nature of the links that bind economy and trade to conflict.