

## FROM THE EDITORS OF THE VOLUME

The 4th volume of *Contributions in New World Archaeology* series contains papers presented during the 14<sup>th</sup> European Maya Conference organized in Cracow on November 13-14<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The event was hosted by the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University, Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences and European Association of Mayanists (WAYEB). It was made possible thanks to funding provided by the organizing institutions as well as donations from Krakowskie Zakłady Automatyki, S.A., Concept Music Art and the Bratniak Foundation. Various institutions were honorary patrons, including the Mexican Embassy in Poland, the Guatemalan Embassy in Berlin, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Governor of the Małopolska Voivodeship (Jerzy Miller) and the President of Cracow, Jacek Majchrowski. Our media patrons included Radio Kraków, onet.pl, Dwutygodnik Miejski: Kraków.pl and Archeologia Żywa.

The main topic of the 14<sup>th</sup> European Maya Conference was *Maya Political Relations and Strategies*. Presentations at the symposium focused on interactions between Maya socio-political entities through time and across great distances. Papers presented showed many new epigraphic, iconographic, archaeological, ethnohistoric and linguistic evidence. Thirty two authors representing different countries and various scientific institutions presented twenty papers, most of which are included in this book. The current volume of *Contributions in New World Archaeology* is divided into two major parts: 1) Archaeology and Epigraphy and 2) Ethnohistory and Ethnology, reflecting the two main areas of data that were presented. The book opens with a paper by Sven Gronemeyer (*Statements of Identity – Emblem Glyphs in the Nexus of Political Relations*) which discusses the meaning of emblem glyphs in the overall geopolitical organization of the Maya. It gives details on the important role played by the glyphs in the network of complex relationships between various Maya centres. The next article, *El reino de la serpiente bajo la mirada de sus aliados* by Hugo García Capistrán begins with a general outline on the theories concerning Maya political organization during the Classic period. Subsequently, the author analyzes the role of the Kaanu'l state in lowland geopolitics; he also discusses the socio-political processes that several big Maya centres (Cancuen, La Corona, Caracol and Dos Pilas) experienced under the influence of the Kaanu'l dynasty, as seen from their own historic point of view. The article by Christophe Helmke and Jaime Awe (*Ancient Maya Territorial Organisation of Central Belize: Confluence of Archaeological and Epigraphic Data*) addresses the subject of political organization in the Central Belize River Valley. Based on old as well as new archaeological and epigraphic data, both authors present a complex socio-political landscape of the Belize Valley during the Classic period. The next paper, *A glimpse from Edzna's hieroglyphics: Middle, Late and Terminal Classic Processes of Cultural Interaction between the Southern, Northern and Western Lowlands* is by Carlos Pallán. It presents rich epigraphic data that helped establish a dynastic sequence of local kings and reconstruct political relations that Edzna had with different polities across time. Milan Kováč's and Ramzy Barrois' text *El papel de Sihyaj K'ahk' en Uaxactun y el Petén Central* address the role of one of the most mysterious characters of Maya history, *Sihyaj K'ahk'*. Both authors present

a brief summary of what we know about the origins and activity of *Sihyaj K'ahk* in the Maya Lowlands and discuss some new archaeological and epigraphic data collected in the recent research carried out by the Slovak team (SAHI-Uaxactun project) at Uaxactun. James Doyle's paper (*A Paleographic Approach to Political Change Using Classic Maya Day Sign Variants*) explores an often-overlooked subject, the variation in the names of days in Maya hieroglyphic writing. It reports patterns and details in day sign variants over time and space, and describes various approaches towards interpreting diachronic changes of essential graphic elements in relation to changes in scribal knowledge. The manuscript by Robert Sharer and Loa Traxler (*Copan and Quirigua: Shifting Destinies in the Southeastern Maya Lowlands*) deals with the complex relationship between Copan and Quirigua over 400 years of their history and is based on archaeological and epigraphic research; it starts with the founding events of Copan and its subordinate centre of Quirigua and shows the changing political links between these sites up till their collapse in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The next two texts deal with the final phase of Classic Maya history, an era marked by the collapse of Maya civilisation. Charles Golden and Andrew Scherer's text (*All of a Piece: The Politics of Growth and Collapse in Classic Maya Kingdoms*) discusses the mechanisms that led to both the growth and collapse of the Classic period kingdoms of the Usumacinta Basin. The authors argue that identical or very similar political processes that had led to the growth and expansion of both Yaxchilan and Piedras Negras finally led to their inevitable demise. The second paper by Bernard Hermes and Jarosław Żralka discusses recent archaeological and iconographic data from Yaxha and Nakum, two sites that thrived in the final part of the Classic period. The authors focus on "foreign" or "new" traits and modes seen in the architecture and iconography of both sites and seek the provenance of these influences. They show that most of these traits reflect a "new" international style that dominated Maya and Mesoamerican landscape towards the end of the Classic period. The last text of the first part of the volume, *Relaciones y estrategias políticas entre El Tajin y diversas entidades mayas durante el siglo IX d.C.* by Arturo Pascual Soto and Erik Velásquez García concentrates on a Veracruz centre of El Tajin and its relationship with Maya sites. Both authors argue that during the Classic-Postclassic transition, rulers of various Maya centres applied new military ideology associated with the cult of Venus in order to reaffirm their political power in the context of the economic and institutional crisis characterizing this period. They posit that this ideology originated in the city of El Tajin.

The second part of this volume contains three texts on the ethnohistory of the Maya. The first paper by Tsubasa Okoshi Harada entitled *El cūuchcabal de los Xiu: análisis de su formación y consolidación*, addresses the topic of Xiu dominance in the Northern Lowlands in the Late Postclassic period and highlights the tools they used to legitimize their power and rights in order to survive in a land to which they came as foreigners. Apart from the use of military power, one of the tools of this legitimization was to establish matrimonial alliances with the daughters of the powerful local kings. The following contribution, *Back to the Future for Predicting the Past: Cuchcabal – Batabil – Cuchteel and May Ritual Political Structures across Archaeological Landscapes, in Ethnohistoric Texts, and through Cosmological Time* is by Lorraine A. Williams-Beck, Bodil Liljefors Persson and Armando Anaya Hernández. The authors argue that in the Pre-Columbian times and following the Colonial period, there were several *may* seats of power that systematically rotated through time between different regional capitals in the Ah Canul province of north-western Yucatan. It began at Edzna and shifted to Acanmul, then Chakanputun and finally to Dzaptun/Ceiba Cabecera. By combining archaeological, architectural, environmental, epigraphic, and ethnohistoric evidence, the authors suggest that these centres were regional capitals and were the so-called *k'atun* seats of religious ritual power. The final paper in the ethnohistory section is by Iyaxel Ixkan Cojtí Ren and entitled *El Saqarik o Amanecer como ritual de fundación descrito en los documentos históricos k'iche's y kaqchikeles*. It discusses a special kind of ritual (known from Colonial sources) that was performed at a site before inhabiting it. Cojtí states that the myth of the resurrection of the Hero Twins as the sun and the moon was the model for such founding rituals.

Just before the present volume was completed we received a sad message that Prof. Robert Sharer, one of the speakers of the 14th EMC, had passed away. Not only was he one of the most prominent archaeologists whose contribution to the subject of Mesoamerican and world archaeology is priceless, but also a great friend, teacher, mentor and supervisor for many of us, including the editors of this volume. We would like to dedicate the present monograph to the memory of Bob hoping he accepts this small gift from us.

Jarosław Żrałka and Wiesław Koszkuł