



DRESS CODES

Regalia and Attire
in Ancient Mesoamerica



The 2019 Mesoamerica Meetings

Dress Codes: Regalia and Attire
in Ancient Mesoamerica



SYMPOSIUM

January 18–19, 2019

Art Building Auditorium (ART 1.102)

The University of Texas at Austin



THURSDAY — KEYNOTE

- 6:00 ***The Roots of Attire and Regalia: Fibers, Dyestuffs, and Weaving Techniques in Mesoamerica***
Alejandro de Ávila

FRIDAY

- | | |
|---|---|
| 8:45 Welcome
David Stuart | 1:30 <i>The Ecological Logic of Aztec Royal Attire: Dressing to Express Dominion</i>
Lois Martin |
| 9:00 <i>Logographic Depictions of Mesoamerican Clothing</i>
Marc Zender | 2:10 <i>Costume and the Case of Mixtecan Identity</i>
Geoffrey G. McCafferty
Sharisse McCafferty |
| 9:40 <i>Beyond Physicality: Dress, Agency and Social Becoming in the Nahua World</i>
Justyna Olko | 2:50 <i>Regalia and Political Communication among the Classic Maya</i>
Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire |
| 10:20 Coffee Break | 3:30 Coffee Break |
| 10:40 <i>Fit to be Tied: The Agency of Contested Bodies in Ancient Maya Art</i>
Caitlin Earley | 3:50 <i>To shine brightly in Mesoamerica</i>
Laura Filloy Nadal |
| 11:20 <i>Late Classic Maya Period Ending Costumes of Western Peten, Guatemala</i>
Martin Diedrich | 4:30 <i>All About Xanab: Understanding Ancient Maya footwear</i>
Franco Rossi |
| 12:00 Lunch Break | 5:10 Q&A Session |

SATURDAY

- | | |
|--|--|
| 9:00 <i>Ancient Maya Ear, Nose, and Lip Decorations in Art and Archaeology</i>
Nicholas Carter | 1:30 <i>Classic Maya Dress: Wrapping Body, Language and Culture</i>
Dacey Taylor |
| 9:40 <i>Emulation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery: Gulf Coast Olmec Costume in the Maya San Bartolo Murals</i>
Billie J. A. Follensbee | 2:10 <i>Of Solar Rays and Eagle Feathers: New Understandings of Headdresses in Teotihuacan</i>
Jesper Nielsen
Christophe Helmke |
| 10:20 Coffee Break | 2:50 <i>The Human Part of the Animal: Reflections on Hybrid and Anthropomorphic Images of the Feathered Serpent</i>
Ángel González
Bertrand Lobjois |
| 10:40 <i>'Men turned into the image of the devil himself!' (Fray Diego Durán) Aztec Priests' Attire and Attributes</i>
Sylvie Peperstraete | 3:30 Coffee Break |
| 11:20 <i>Ancient Maya Courtly Dress</i>
Cara G. Tremain | 3:50 <i>Preciousness Embodied: The Symbolism of Jade and Quetzal Plumes in Royal Maya Performance</i>
Karl Taube |
| 12:00 Lunch Break | 4:30 <i>Celestial Bodies: Materials and Divine Power in the Ancient Americas</i>
Joanne Pillsbury |
| | 5:10 Q&A Session |





PRESENTATIONS



KEYNOTE

The Roots of Attire and Regalia: Fibers, Dyestuffs, and Weaving Techniques in Mesoamerica

ALEJANDRO DE ÁVILA

Jardín Etnobotánico de Oaxaca

Two biogeographical realms and evolutionary histories join together in Mesoamerica. Neotropical lineages pervade the lowlands, with Nearctic groups restricted largely to areas above 1500 meters above sea level. Species used as fibers and colorants since antiquity pose a paradox: phylogenetic affinities to the north are negligible among them, even though dense human occupation of the highlands since the formative period would predict otherwise. The first part of the presentation will address this puzzle. The second part will discuss woven structures, where Mesoamerican artists have been viewed as passive recipients of South American innovations. Recent archaeological discoveries and ethnographic documentation indicate that a substantial number of textile techniques, formerly thought to be exclusively Andean, were known in Mexico and Guatemala. Newly excavated evidence suggests that some may have originated in this region, just like novel genetic analysis implies that cochineal and its cactus host were domesticated locally and then taken south. The final part of this presentation will focus on designs and symbolism. Oral traditions recorded by indigenous scholars provide a solid base to relate contemporary woven motifs to Mesoamerican epigraphy. Kapok trees, water serpents, the sun and moon twins, and numerical correlates of the calendrical cycle are some examples to think about.



Alejandro de Ávila is the founding director of the Oaxaca Ethnobotanical Garden, and curator and adviser of the Oaxaca Textile Museum, having proposed the creation of both institutions before enrolling in his doctoral program. De Ávila's family roots lie in Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí and Finland. He was born and grew up in Mexico City. A Bachelor's in anthropology and physiological psychology from Tulane University was followed by a Master's in psychobiology and then a Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of California in Berkeley. His interest in Mesoamerican cultures and plants goes back to a childhood spent near Chapultepec, a magnificent park of Aztec origin that now houses the National Museum of Anthropology. He began to study and collect textiles when he was eleven years old. As a teenager, he became an apprentice at a weaving and dyeing workshop in Oaxaca.





Logographic Depictions of Mesoamerican Clothing

MARC ZENDER

Tulane University

Ethnohistoric and ethnographic data attest to the importance of clothing in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. Ritual vestments adorned priests, royal regalia were restricted to nobility, and gender-specific dress marked men and women of all social classes. And yet, with rare exceptions, direct evidence of ancient attire is allusive: cotton and maguey-fiber textiles, feathers, and leather rarely survive the vicissitudes of Mesoamerican climates. For these reasons, scholars have turned to detailed depictions of costume in art and writing. Yet these sources come with significant challenges of their own. Uncertain representational conventions, frequent interregional stylistic influences, and confounding chronological developments all need to be carefully unpacked before depicted and referenced items of clothing can be clearly understood. This paper reviews a selection of Aztec and Mayan logograms representing signature items of Mesoamerican clothing—e.g., headdresses (*apanecatli*), helmets (*ko'haw*), jewelry (*cozcatli*, *uuh*), (back-) mirrors (*tezca[cuitlapilli]*, *nehn*), blouses (*huipilli*), skirts (*cueitli*), and sandals (*cactli*)—and explores their interactions with associated art in order to recover their *Sitz im Leben*, i.e., their function and significance in a given context, as well as their developments through time and in different regions of Mesoamerica.

Marc Zender received his Ph.D. from the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of the University of Calgary in 2004, and is presently an Assistant Professor of Anthropology 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). Zender's research interests include anthropological and historical linguistics, comparative writing, and decipherment, with a regional focus on Mesoamerica, particularly the Mayan and Nahuatl languages and their writing systems), and he is the author of numerous books and articles exploring these topics. Zender is also the editor of *The PARI Journal*, and (with Joel Skidmore) maintains *Mesoweb*, a key internet resource for the study of Mesoamerican cultures.





Beyond Physicality: Dress, Agency, and Social Becoming in the Nahua World

JUSTYNA OLKO

University of Warsaw

The exuberant insignia and repertory of dress used by the nobility in the pre-Hispanic Nahua world are recognized for their visual impact, status-marking, or conveying of esoteric symbolic messages and political statements. However, they also performed other key ritual, political, and social roles that influenced, (re)constituted, and transformed the multi-dimensional reality in which the Nahuas lived and acted. This presentation proposes to view apparel as a powerful component and tool of human agency, directly involved in shaping, maintaining, or changing multi-faceted social, political, and ritual relationships and behaviors. Expanding on the understanding of the non-physical dimension of dress, such as its role as the vehicle of transformation linked to an increase of spiritual essence in different kinds of ceremonies, I will explore its presence in social interactions, including its role in molding, living, and performing multiple, complex identities. Finally, by reflecting on the contemporary dimension of this process, this research involves the living descendants of the Aztecs for many of whom the traditional dress and heritage language have become not only the most essential carriers of identity, but also a common source of stigmatization, discrimination and violence.

Justyna Olko is Associate Professor in “Artes Liberales” at the University of Warsaw and Director of the Center for Research and Practice in Cultural Continuity. She specializes in the ethnohistory, anthropology and linguistics of pre-Hispanic, colonial and modern Mesoamerica, with a special focus on Nahua language and culture. She is involved in the revitalization of Nahuatl as well as endangered minority languages in Poland. Olko is the author of several books, including *Insignia of Rank in the Nahua World* (University Press of Colorado, 2014), the editor and co-author of *Dialogue with Europe, Dialogue with the Past. Colonial Nahua and Quechua Elites in Their Own Words* (University Press of Colorado & University of Utah, 2018), and co-editor of the Nahuatl series *Totlahtol* (“Our Speech”). She has received fellowships to conduct research at Dumbarton Oaks, the John Carter Brown Library, and Yale University as well as grants from the European Research Council and the European Commission. She has been awarded the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (2013) and a Burgen Fellowship by Academia Europaea (2013).





Fit to be Tied: The Agency of Contested Bodies in Ancient Maya Art

CAITLIN EARLEY

University of Nevada, Reno

From the swish of a quetzal feather headdress to the sheen of fine jade ornaments, the regalia of Maya rulers is a familiar focus of study in Mesoamerica. But what does it mean to wear nothing? This presentation explores the depiction of captives in ancient Maya art, and what they reveal about the agency of disempowered bodies in the Classic Maya world. Stripped of their fine clothes, these figures squirm and cower beneath imposing warrior kings—but this study of captive imagery reveals that despite their lowly status, such captives wielded potent rhetorical power. Considering nudity, binding, and violence as communicative motifs in Late Classic Maya stone sculpture, this presentation explores the iconography of the captive body, and the ability of that body to signify, whether clothed or naked, broken or whole.

Caitlin Earley is an art historian who studies the art of Latin America with a particular focus on ancient Maya sculpture. She holds a Ph.D. in Art History from The University of Texas at Austin, and has performed field research in Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico, working most extensively with archaeological and museum collections in Chiapas, Mexico. She has held research fellowships at Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Washington, DC, and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, NY. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Nevada, Reno, where she is completing her first book on the depiction of captives in Classic Maya art.



Late Classic Maya Period Ending Costumes of Western Petén, Guatemala

MARTIN DIEDRICH

Independent Scholar

Calakmul's hegemony over the Late Classic Southern Maya Lowlands has never been comprehensively examined from an iconographic angle. In the Western Petén a series of sites politically related to Calakmul produced a large number of period ending monuments during Late Classic times. These portrayed a very consistent, almost formulaic image of the ruler dressed in specific ritual attire. While there are differences in the ritual regalia the rulers wear in these sets of monuments, it is clear that there is deliberate purpose in the overall consistency that speaks to these sites' relationships with Calakmul, where we find the earliest examples of this costume. Was Calakmul setting a trend that its followers picked up, or did Calakmul bestow the privilege of the ritual costume on its clients or vassals in exchange for allegiance to strengthen its hegemonic bonds? Elements of the costume only appear at Tikal after its victory over Calakmul. Its use and distribution go hand in hand with the epigraphic record of Calakmul's reach. Anywhere else it appears in the Southern Lowlands, either partial or full, it is only after documented contact with Calakmul.



Martin Diedrich grew up in highland Guatemala and has been consistently immersed in the world of the Maya, both living and ancient. An apprenticeship with George Guillemin, one of the field directors of the Tikal Project, led to exposure and time spent in the ancient Kaqchikel capital of Iximché. Martin later spent many years in the Petén, running a jungle trekking expedition business, which included river trips on the Usumacinta and Pasión. In 1980, Martin took part in a field season at El Mirador and later that year was at the University of Arizona, Tucson, under the advising of Pat Culbert. He subsequently also pursued studies at The University of Texas at Austin with Linda Schele. Martin has founded and presently runs two successful coffee companies and returns frequently to Guatemala.



The Ecological Logic of Aztec Royal Attire: Dressing to Express Dominion

LOIS MARTIN

Fordham University

Dual regents ruled the Aztec empire: the *Tlatoani* (king, or “speaker”), and the *Cihuacoatl*, sometimes called a Prime Minister. Their roles were complementary: while the Tlatoani directed dry season trade and war, the Cihuacoatl managed internal affairs in the rainy season. The office of Cihuacoatl was especially associated with one ruthless, visionary leader—Tlacauelel—who seems to have been the architect of imperial pageantry. In state ceremonies, the king dressed in the guise of the warrior-god Huitzilopochtli, while the Cihuacoatl cross-dressed as the fierce goddess whose name he bore. This presentation argues that ecological symbolism underlies this attire, and key costume elements (accouterments, textile dye-colors, and decoration) relate to the seasonal habits of native wildlife, linking the Tlatoani to dry season species, and the Cihuacoatl to rainy. Even cloth structure correlates with annual alternation. On traditional Mesoamerican gendered garments, warp direction contrasts. Because warp direction was probably associated with the path of the Sun, the Tlatoani’s (male) vertical warps conjured the upright dry season Sun, while the Cihuacoatl’s (female) horizontal warps related to the prone (dead) Sun of the rainy season. As a result, the deep structure of royal costume was widely legible, and designed to literally “naturalize” state authority.



Lois Martin has worked professionally as an artist, illustrator, writer, educator, and museum researcher. She holds a Master of Arts in Pre-Columbian Art History from Columbia University, and an MFA in Studio Art from Brooklyn College (CUNY). Currently, she teaches in the Visual Arts department at Fordham University. Martin’s *Dress Codes* presentation builds on previous research into the deep structure of textiles and natural symbols in Mexica royal costume, especially her chapter “The Axochiatl Pattern: Aztec Science, Legitimacy, and Cross-Dressing” in *Visual Culture of the Ancient Americas: Contemporary Perspectives* (Edited by Andrew Finegold and Ellen Hoobler, University of Oklahoma Press, 2017).



Costume and the Case of Mixtecan Identity

GEOFFREY G. MCCAFFERTY
SHARISSE MCCAFFERTY

University of Calgary

Pictorial manuscripts from Postclassic Oaxaca recorded 600 years of elite history from the small city states of the Mixtec region. These codices chronicled marriage alliances and lineage successions, military campaigns and conquests, and religious rituals (among other events) for one of the richest 'written' chronicles of the Pre-Columbian world. They also feature over 3400 individuals dressed in a variety of textiles, skins, footwear, and headdresses, and many also include face paint and possible tattooing. A comprehensive analysis of the costume elements reveals details of different aspects of cultural identity, including gender, status, and ethnicity. This presentation will describe results of our 25-year study of the pictorial representations, and integrate the 'dress codes' of the ancient Mixtecs with their contemporaries from throughout Mesoamerica as well as with the colorful costumes of distinct regional groups from modern Oaxaca.



Geoffrey McCafferty is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Calgary. He has conducted archaeological research in Cholula (Puebla) and in Oaxaca, but most recently his focus has been on Mesoamerica's southern frontier in Pacific Nicaragua. His research touches on questions of social identity, especially gender, religion, and ethnicity. His research in Nicaragua was inspired by ethnohistorical accounts of Pre-Columbian migrations from central Mexico (specifically Cholula) to Central America, and by similarities in the beautiful polychrome pottery between the two regions. With his wife Sharisse he has published articles on costume elements from the Cacaxtla murals, weaving tools from Tomb 7 at Monte Alban, and spindle whorl iconography from Mexico and Nicaragua. His interest in the Mixtec pictorial manuscripts grew out of a year spent on an archaeological project in the Mixtec village of Tamazulapan.

Sharisse McCafferty is a Research Adjunct at the University of Calgary. She has conducted research into Pre-Columbian textile production for over 30 years, including art historical, ethnohistorical, and archaeological investigations. Her publications on the topic cover a broad geographical and thematic range, from Mexico to Nicaragua, and from bone weaving tools, to clothing on painted murals. Sharisse developed a multi-component system for analyzing spindle whorl morphology in order to infer the fibers used and the thread quality, and this system has proven effective for studies in Mexico, El Salvador, and even Egypt. In the present study she and her husband Geoff report results of an extensive investigation of costume elements depicted in the Mixtec pictorial manuscripts of Oaxaca, integrating these observations with diverse examples from the visual culture of Mesoamerica.





Regalia and Political Communication among the Classic Maya

.....

MAXIME LAMOUREUX-ST-HILAIRE

Boundary End Center

The current pervasiveness of media obscures the challenges that communication posed in the past. The absence of efficient communication technology certainly complicated political relations for premodern governments. In this talk, I explore the meetings that occurred in Classic Maya palaces to facilitate the exchange of goods, regalia, and information. These regime-enacting gatherings allowed the royals to not only acquire resources and distribute regalia, but also to receive and convey the political information that wove the fabric of their government. This presentation discusses the royal courtyard of the Late Classic palace of La Corona, Guatemala. This inherently political space, surrounded by hieroglyphic monuments and elaborate friezes, featured communicational settings ranging from intimate audience chambers to an impressive semi-public stage. Political gatherings in this courtyard would have grouped allies of distinct status—a fact undoubtedly reflected in their regalia. Necessarily, this research explores what information was encoded in the regalia that were worn and possibly distributed at these events. Drawing on Medieval historical literature, the present work evaluates the relevance of the concept of *liveries* for the Classic Maya. This research argues that regalia as liveries may have simultaneously entangled the royals and their allies, conveyed a political identity, and granted economic privileges.

Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire is currently a George Stuart Residential Scholar at the Boundary End Center and AFAR (American Foreign Academic Research) Director of Publications. He received his Ph.D. from Tulane University (2018), his M.A. from Trent University (2011), and his B.Sc. from Université de Montréal (2008). Lamoureux-St-Hilaire is most interested in the organization of ancient governments and in what this can tell us about our own political and economic systems. Specifically, he studies the operation of Classic Maya royal courts as evidenced by their institutional architecture. Recently, he has excavated the regal palace of La Corona, Guatemala, although his archaeological work has also led him to excavate and survey in Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and Québec.





To Shine Brightly in Mesoamerica

LAURA FILLOY NADAL

Escuela Nacional de Conservación and
Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City

Greenstone, feathers, lustrous shell, and gold were esteemed materials among Mesoamerican cultures for their aesthetic qualities. Significantly, all of these materials reflect light and change color with movement. These shared physical properties—brilliance, luminosity, and change—present in the Pre-Columbian aesthetic, are also reflected in the indigenous terms used to refer to these optical effects. To these organoleptic features of the raw materials were integrated polysemic values related to notions of preciousness, sacredness, and governmental authority. In Mesoamerica, specialized artisans transformed these precious materials into beautiful regalia and attires for the gods and their impersonators, as well as for rulers, priests, and other courtiers. This presentation examines sets of raw materials that differ in their physical characteristics but share many attributes with respect to their significance as precious materials used in attire and regalia among the Maya and Aztecs: greenstone and feathers, both of which reflected the complementarity between preciousity in the aquatic and the celestial worlds.

Laura Filloy Nadal is currently a professor at the Escuela Nacional de Conservación and Senior Conservator at the Museo Nacional de Antropología, both in Mexico City. With a B.A. in art conservation from Mexico's Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in archaeology from the Université Paris 1–Sorbonne, Filloy Nadal has been a visiting researcher at Princeton University and at Harvard University's Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, as well as a visiting professor at the Università degli Studi di Roma, La Sapienza, and the Sorbonne in Paris. She has collaborated on various research projects such as the Xalla Project and the Moon Pyramid at Teotihuacan, and in the restoration of important ancient Mexican artwork. She is a recipient of INAH's Awards, the *Premio Paul Coremans 2002*, for the Best Conservation Project: Pakal Funerary Mask, and the *Premio Miguel Covarrubias 2003*, for the best work on design and installation.





All About *Xanab*: Understanding Ancient Maya Footwear

FRANCO ROSSI

The University of Illinois at Chicago

Footwear is an oft-overlooked detail of Maya dress, though like any bodily adornment, it followed its own particular set of social, political and economic conventions, which in turn governed manufacture, use and decoration. Vivid glimpses of elaborate sandals and other footwear can be seen on the many stela monuments, ceramic vessels and murals depicting high-ranking lords in costume. Many other artistic works display the simpler side of footwear, depicting more basic, unadorned sandals in a variety of contexts. This paper utilizes these historical representations and artistic depictions as a primary means for exploring ancient Maya footwear—fleshing out the particulars regarding manufacture and use through archaeological examples, ethnography and the ethnohistoric record. As the guardian of individuals' primary means of movement, footwear was a vital piece of adornment in antiquity as it is today—and similar to today, ancient footwear would have been a key medium for signaling aspects of individual identity and status. By understanding how items of dress, like footwear, were created, used and represented by ancient societies, archaeologists can not only explore technologies of production and consumption, but can also gain subtle windows into the social hierarchies, gender dynamics and politics of display in ancient societies.

Franco Rossi is an archaeologist of the Americas, broadly interested in the diverse ways in which education, memory and statecraft come together at different political moments, and the material records, including elements of dress, that they involve. Drawing on a blend of archaeological methods, artistic and epigraphic analysis, and material culture examination, his research grows out of long-term collaborative fieldwork at the site of Xultun, located in the Maya Biosphere Reserve of the Petén district in Guatemala. Rossi's work explores how symbolically-charged media and other domains of expertise were crafted by particular political orders that fit precariously into broader systems of governance, power and representation, and the effects of such systems on human and non-human bodies. This includes how different bodies of knowledge figured into sustaining systems of inequality and sovereignty, as well as tracing the ways such systems were violently altered in the centuries following Spanish conquest.





Ancient Maya Ear, Nose, and Lip Decorations in Art and Archaeology

NICHOLAS CARTER

Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University

This presentation surveys the archaeological and artistic evidence for ancient Maya modifications to ears, noses, and lips through piercing, prostheses, and tattooing and scarification. It identifies regional and temporal trends in such practices, compares representations to physical reality as revealed by excavation, and finds contrasts between Classic Maya facial jewelry and the practices of later Mesoamerican peoples such as the Aztecs. The present work also considers the social and religious meanings of such decorations, including their role in myth and in the construction of group identity.

Nicholas Carter is a Research Associate with the Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions at the Harvard Peabody Museum and a Lecturer with the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University. He received his B.A. in Philosophy from Our Lady of the Lake University in 2003, an M.A. in Latin American Studies from UT Austin in 2008, and an A.M. and Ph.D. in Anthropology from Brown University in 2010 and 2016. His current research focuses on the western Maya Mountains of Petén.



Emulation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery: Gulf Coast Olmec Costume in the Maya San Bartolo Murals

BILLIE J. A. FOLLENSBEE

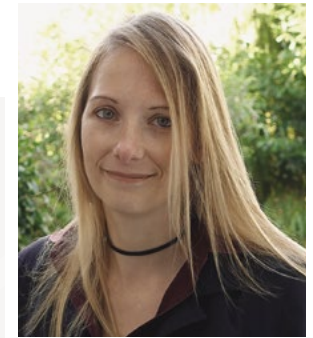
Missouri State University

The murals within the Pinturas structure at the site of San Bartolo, Guatemala have provided invaluable information for understanding the Maya of the Late Formative period. As noted by several scholars, the figures depicted in the murals have the distinctive, graceful, and relatively naturalistic body forms of early Maya images, but the facial types, the clothing and other adornments strongly reflect those of the Olmec and Epi-Olmec. In their emulation and imitation of Olmec-style costume, and in their depiction of these elements on the more sexually identifiable Maya-style figures, the San Bartolo murals serve to help us understand aspects of both cultures. On one hand, the clear Maya body types provide strong, conclusive evidence to confirm hypotheses on gendered, age-related, and high-status costume recently identified in Gulf Coast Olmec sculpture. In the integration of Olmec and Maya elements, meanwhile, the murals also create identifiably hybrid depictions that provide clues to understanding the nature of the early Maya adoption and adaptation of Olmec and Epi-Olmec iconography and culture.



Billie J. A. Follensbee, Professor at Missouri State University, teaches the art and archaeology of the Americas, Africa, and Oceania as well as art and artifact conservation, and she serves as the Museum Studies Program Coordinator. She has received numerous grants, fellowships, and awards, including a Dumbarton Oaks fellowship and MSU's highest awards for teaching and for service-learning. Follensbee's research is widely published, with work appearing in the premier journals in her field, including *Ancient Mesoamerica* and *Latin American Antiquity*; in scholarly edited volumes, the most recent being the 2017 *Dressing the Part*, which she co-edited with Sarah E. M. Scher; and with an upcoming invited chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of the Olmecs*.





‘Men Turned into the Image of the Devil Himself!’ (Fray Diego Durán): Aztec Priests’ Attire and Attributes

SYLVIE PEPERSTRAETE

Université libre de Bruxelles, and École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris

Smeared with soot from head to foot, the Aztec priests, with their long tangled hair and their temples coated with the blood of their autosacrifice, struck the imagination of the *conquistadores* and the first missionaries, who saw in their outfit the proof of a demonic worship. But beyond the usual clichés conveyed since the 16th century, the Aztec priests’ attire and attributes, documented by iconography, colonial descriptions, and sometimes archaeology, can offer particularly rich, yet little exploited, insights into the functions, the rank, or the societal role of these ritual specialists. Firstly, this presentation proposes an analysis of the most common attires and attributes of the Aztec priests, from their material production to the complex symbolisms they conveyed. Then, based on the observation that the garb of the priestly figures frequently varies from an image to another, the present work shall point out that certain attributes are often represented together and can refer to priest categories mentioned in the colonial texts (*tlenamacaque* and *chachalmeca*), thus providing new information on the Aztec sacerdotal organization.

Sylvie Peperstraete is an art historian specializing in ancient Mesoamerican religions. She earned her Ph.D. from the Université libre de Bruxelles in 2005 and was a research fellow, then a postdoctoral researcher, at the Fund for Scientific Research — FNRS. She is now professor at the Université libre de Bruxelles and director of studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris. Her research focuses on Aztec religion, which she studies from an interdisciplinary perspective. She is also a member of the Royal Academy of Overseas Sciences and a scientific collaborator at the Art & History Museum in Brussels. Peperstraete was president of the Société des Américanistes de Belgique from 2012 to 2017.





Ancient Maya Courtly Dress

CARA G. TREMAIN

Langara College

Ancient Maya courts consisted of individuals with various roles and identities, dressed in a wide variety of clothing and adornment. Colourful visual representations of Maya courts show us that they were places to see and be seen, whether it was wearing elaborate headdresses embellished with long shimmering feathers or fragrant florals, ornate jewellery made from exotic marine shells and greenstone, or textiles woven from fibres dyed in rich hues and shades. Dress has various functions and significance, including both identity and beautification, and there is much to learn about the role and value of dress among Maya courtiers. Despite the identification of interesting trends of courtly clothing and adornment by several scholars, dedicated research into the dress of courtiers has been lacking. This presentation will explore the results of a systematic study of royal court dress, and examine the relationship between sartorial expression and courtly identity. In thinking about whether certain dress elements were restricted to specific individuals, and whether courtly roles or offices were made visually salient through dress, we can move towards a better understanding of the ancient Maya world of dressing.

Cara G. Tremain is an instructor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Langara College in Vancouver. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Calgary, her M.A. from Trent University, and her B.A. from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Her doctoral research examined the representation of ancient Maya dress on Late Classic ceramics, for which she received support from several institutions including the Denver Art Museum, where she was an Alianza-Mayer scholar, Dumbarton Oaks, where she was a pre-doctoral resident, and the Smithsonian Institution, where she was a pre-doctoral Student Fellow. Her current research focuses on Mesoamerican antiquities (including fakes and forgeries) within museum collections and on the auction market. She is co-editor of the upcoming book *The Market for Mesoamerica: Reflections on the Sale of Pre-Columbian Antiquities* (University Press of Florida).





Classic Maya Dress: Wrapping Body, Language and Culture

DICEY TAYLOR

Independent Scholar

Classic Maya monuments in city plazas depict rulers dressed for ceremonies in lavish costumes. In the history of costume, public attire was, and still is, designed for the display of extravagant attire. Maya costume conformed to such public display, but with an important difference compared to Europe. Beginning with the Renaissance, European clothes were cut and tailored to conform to the body. Maya costume was based on wrapping the body with cloth, with jade, shell and painted wood jewelry. Headdresses were assemblages of diverse materials. Woven cotton was essential. Vase scenes attest to offerings of cotton from subservient lords. Vases depict cache vessels covered in bundled cloth. The dead were laid to rest in copious layers of cotton cloth covered with cinnabar powder. Additionally, the ancient Maya distinguished two types of writing: monuments display formal discourse and script, while texts on vases are cursive. The Maya resemble Asian societies in the use of wrapping the body with cloth, wrapping precious objects, and wrapping formal polite speech to distinguish it from everyday conversation. Wrapping body, language and culture in Mesoamerica and South America may stem from distant traditions from the migration of Asian groups into the Americas some 55,000 years ago.

Dicey Taylor received her M.A. in Art History from Tulane University and Ph.D. in the History of Art from Yale University. She worked as a curator and professor at diverse institutions during her career: The University of Virginia Art Museum, Yale University Art Gallery, El Museo del Barrio (NY), Taller Puertorriqueño (PA), and Atlantic Art Partners (NY). Her exhibitions and publications have primarily focused on the ancient Maya of Guatemala and the Taíno of the Caribbean. She is currently an independent scholar.



Of Solar Rays and Eagle Feathers: New Understandings of Headdresses in Teotihuacan

JESPER NIELSEN
CHRISTOPHE HELMKE
 University of Copenhagen

Headdresses, as visually complex markers of rank and affiliation, offer a unique opportunity to examine sociopolitical offices at Teotihuacan (c. A.D. 0–600). In particular, considering the few surviving glyphic texts from the site, the representations of headdresses, either isolated, in ritual transferrals, or worn by individuals, are in fact one of the only ways to achieve a deeper understanding of social stations as well as organizational and institutional aspects of the ancient metropolis. In this presentation, we discuss the generic properties of headdresses in Teotihuacan iconography and writing, before focussing on two specific types of headdresses: those qualified by the so-called “Year-Sign” and those marked by bleeding hearts and eagle feathers. In the latter case, we concentrate on the headdresses worn by Teotihuacanos in the spectacular murals discovered at the site of El Rosario, Querétaro. Next, we turn to a discussion of the Year-Sign headdress, and show how it was associated with calendrical dates, specific types of structures and high-ranking individuals at Teotihuacan. Finally, a comparison with the headdresses of Late Postclassic rulers suggests that the Year-Sign headdress may be a Classic period precursor to the *xiuhhuitzilli*, the crown or diadem of the Aztec *tlatoāni*, the supreme ruler.



Jesper Nielsen is an Associate Professor at the Section of American Indian Languages and Cultures at the University of Copenhagen. His research focuses on Mesoamerican iconography, epigraphy and religion, in particular in Teotihuacan, Epiclassic and Maya cultures. He also has an interest in early Colonial studies, as well as the history of research. Currently, he is co-directing the research project *The Origins and Development of Calendars and Writing in Central Mexico* together with Christophe Helmke. Jesper is also a member of the Proyecto La Pintura Mural Prehispánica en México at UNAM, and has published numerous books and articles and chapters in international peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes. Recent book publications include *The Writing System of Cacaxtla, Tlaxcala, Mexico* (2011) co-authored with Christophe Helmke, in *Ancient America: Special Publication No. 2*, and *Restless Blood: Frans Blom, Explorer and Maya Archaeologist*, co-authored with Tore Leifer and Toke Reunert Sellner, San Francisco & New Orleans (2017).

Christophe Helmke is Associate professor of American Indian Languages and Cultures at the Institute of Cross-cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on the archaeology, epigraphy, iconography and languages of Mesoamerica. Besides from Mesoamerican archaeology, other research interests include Mesoamerican writing systems and rock art, the Pre-Columbian use of caves, and comparative Amerindian mythology.



The Human Part of the Animal: Reflections on Hybrid and Anthropomorphic Images of the Feathered Serpent

.....

ÁNGEL GONZÁLEZ

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection

BERTRAND LOBJOIS

Universidad de Monterrey

For many years, the figure of Feathered Serpent, Quetzalcoatl, has attracted attention in Mesoamerican studies, primarily for its antiquity and creative powers. In Late Postclassic times, within Central Mexico, ethnohistorical, archaeological, and iconographic accounts have portrayed Quetzalcoatl with considerable variety. As a result, these research studies have left it only partially explored or under-developed, ignoring other aspects of the avian/ophidian creature. This presentation provides a complementary scenario by analyzing thirteen representations of hybrid beings, a mix of human and fantastic animals, located in eleven institutions across the world. An important part of this corpus was made of polished semi-precious stones, of bright surfaces, and a high aesthetic quality, that may suggest use by certain elite factions. However, this presentation highlights that dress codes were not the only node for the transmission of information, but at the same time were articulated with cosmological conceptions about the materials of which these artifacts were made. Also, this research seeks to explore three aspects of Quetzalcoatl: its links with sacrifice and war, its identity as the bearer of wind and water, and its role as a means to legitimate social status by creating connections with ancient civilizations.



Ángel González is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside. For ten years before his graduate studies, he was a member of the Proyecto Templo Mayor in the excavations of the Aztec Main Temple of Tenochtitlan in Mexico City. While his research focuses on Postclassic Central Mexico, González also has experience working at Teotihuacan, Cuicuilco, Cholula, the Sierra de las Navajas in Hidalgo, the Sierra Gorda in Querétaro, and southern Quintana Roo. His doctoral research focuses on Aztec iconography on sculptures from the Postclassic period. As the principal investigator of the Aztec Stone Sculpture of the Basin of Mexico Project (AZSSBMP), González aims to create a comprehensive archive of these monuments to facilitate comparative studies. A particular focus of study is the expansion of the Mexica Empire that altered the visual representation of religious imagery associated with a new political power by collecting, documenting, analyzing, and interpreting the symbolic narratives carved on stone. Currently, he is a Dumbarton Oaks Junior Fellow.

Bertrand Lobjois trained in Classics at Université de Picardie Jules Verne from 1994 to 2000, receiving a B.A. and a M.A. in Classic Letters. His 2002 DEA thesis focused on feathered serpent representations at Chichén Itzá, under the direction of Michel Graulich at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, in Paris, and is currently an adjunct professor at the Humanities Department of Universidad de Monterrey, Nuevo León, México. Lobjois hosts the anthropology and archaeology-focused radio program Raíces, broadcasted weekly on Radio UDEM, and coordinates classes and lecture cycles about the Prehispanic cultures of Mexico. Lobjois also co-founded and coordinates the Coloquio William Breen Murray, an academic event about archaeology, anthropology, rock art and heritage issues. His investigations focus on feathered serpent iconography and symbolism, and the history of Mexican archaeology and paleontology during the French Intervention and the Second Mexican Empire.





Preciousness Embodied: The Symbolism of Jade and Quetzal Plumes in Royal Maya Performance

KARL TAUBE

University of California Riverside

Among the most arresting images in Classic Maya art are the portrayals of Maya kings on public monuments, usually stelae. Rather than being the simple cloth garb of daily courtly life, these elaborate costumes were for public performance, when the ruler danced to celebrate his persona, including links to specific deities such as the Waterlily Serpent, the Sun God, Chahk, and the Maize God. This presentation addresses the two most salient material components of these godly guises, these being jade ornaments and quetzal plumes. The abundant quetzal plumage denotes these royal beings as celestial, much as if, in dance, they transform into birds. However, as precious green items, jade and quetzal plumes relate to verdant maize, the economic base of Mesoamerican wealth. In addition, the ethereal and undulating plumes of the quetzal and the adamantine solidity of jade are essential symbols of the breath soul, the plumes even being the exhalation of the precious stone. When wearing these materials in dance, the rulers embodied the soul essence of the spirit world.

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. Taube also served as the Project Iconographer for the San Bartolo Project in the Petén of Guatemala, and is currently studying the iconography of the Initial Series Group at Chichén Itzá, Yucatan. 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 in the American Southwest, and the relation of Teotihuacan to the Classic Maya.

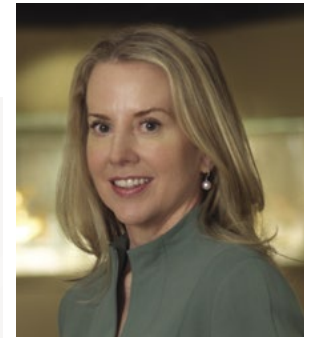


Celestial Bodies: Materials and Divine Power in the Ancient Americas

JOANNE PILLSBURY

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Regal ornamentation required the presence of certain elements emblematic of divine authority, including richly symbolic materials, superlative workmanship, and imagery underscoring the power and distinction of the sovereign. Such exceptional works transformed the royal body and, in performance, elevated both the wearer and viewer to a heightened sensorial experience. These adornments spoke of control over resources, whether the rare and costly materials from which they were made, or the highly skilled labor necessary to create them. Materials were selected on the basis of certain unusual physical properties, including the capacity to draw the eye—reflective surfaces, dazzling color—so essential to animating the objects in the performance of court ritual. Above all, the raw materials of regal jewelry were considered animate, active agents. In Mesoamerica, jadeite—which embodied evanescent life-giving forces such as water, mist, and breath—was the luxury material *par excellence* for most of its history. Choices about luxury materials, however, while conservative, were not static: what happened when a new material was introduced, such as the case of gold in Postclassic Mesoamerica? This presentation explores materials and their associated meanings, and how ornament transmutes the regal body into an image of enduring power and authority.



Joanne Pillsbury is the Andrall E. Pearson Curator at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. A specialist in the art and archaeology of the ancient Americas, she holds a Ph.D. in Art History and Archaeology from Columbia University. Previously Associate Director of the Getty Research Institute, and prior to that, Director of Pre-Columbian Studies at Dumbarton Oaks, Pillsbury also served as Assistant Dean at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, and taught at the University of Maryland and the University of East Anglia. She is the author, editor, or co-editor of numerous volumes, including *Moche Art and Archaeology in Ancient Peru* (2001); *Guide to Documentary Sources for Andean Studies, 1530–1900* (2008); and *Past Presented: Archaeological Illustration and the Ancient Americas* (2012). She is the co-editor (with Timothy Potts and Kim Richter) and co-author of *Golden Kingdoms: Luxury and Legacy in the Ancient Americas* (2017).





The **Mesoamerica Meetings**

The Mesomamerica Meetings are a program of
The Mesoamerica Center in the
Department of Art and Art History at
The University of Texas at Austin