

The Editorial

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We, *The Mayanist* team, are excited to introduce this new issue featuring three papers and one film review. The first two papers are research articles by Mary-Jane Acuña and John Chuchiak and Harri Kettunen. The third paper is a research report by David Mixter. Altogether, these papers cover a broad swath of time, ranging from the Middle Preclassic period to the Colonial era, and juxtapose various fields of Maya Studies: archaeology, epigraphy, ethnohistory, historical archival work, and codicology. The film review, by Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire, introduces a new ethnographic film directed by Sam Pack. As always, this issue would never have seen the light of day without the help of our layout maestro, Joel Skidmore, and our prompt and dedicated copy-editor, Jack Barry.

This seventh issue is liminal, lying at a crossroad of sorts. Our editor-in-chief has relocated to a new country, city, and institution—far away from Davidson, NC, the town which has anchored this journal for its first three years. This physical transition has implied a certain detachment from broader AFAR duties for Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire, especially conference organization. Indeed, after helping co-organize the *Maya at the Playa* and *Lago* conferences since 2014, he must now focus on other projects. But fret not! One of these projects is most definitely carrying on with this most amazing journal.

In the spirit of continuity, *The Mayanist* will remain everything it is at its core: a biannual, bilingual, free-to-publish-in, open-access, peer-reviewed journal that also happens to be beautifully illustrated. One significant shift, however, will be in its calls for papers. We are moving away from the “out-of-AFAR-conferences” model and towards a special issue model. Our eighth, “new model” issue, is already in the works. Yet, if you are interested in proposing a special issue and in acting as a future guest-editor for *The Mayanist*, please do email the editor-in-chief with a preliminary proposal. Papers for this ninth issue will be due in June 2023. When considering this, it is primordial to keep in mind that our journal is aimed at reaching a broader public than just the academic core; a commitment which includes our short paper length (between 3,000 and 4,000 words). We

will also continue aiming to publish between four and six papers per issue and we remain open to submissions in Spanish or English. To this effect, we are glad to report that, after a short summer hiatus, our translating team has resumed working on expanding access to our journal by translating all our English papers to Spanish.

Another transition occurred on the illustration front. After displaying the incredible art of Walter Paz Joj in our last two issues, we are featuring Daniel Parada's impressive artwork in this issue. Daniel is a prolific illustrator and author of the Zotz graphic novels, which are worth your time and attention. They can be found here: <https://zotzcomic.bigcartel.com>

The current issue stems from the 11th Annual Maya at the Lago Conference, which honored the career and achievements of David A. Freidel—one of the most prolific Mayanists of the past two k'atuns. This unique hybrid conference was our first with an in-person component in years, and seeing friends and colleagues converge in Davidson was a real pleasure (Photos 1 and 2). We were also privileged to have multiple, dedicated presenters Zoom-in from Latin America and beyond. Hearing the many testimonials about how supportive David A. Freidel is as a mentor was particularly moving. I (Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire) have had the privilege to collaborate on a few projects with David A. Freidel. And these months working with him gave me a glimpse of how central mentorship and generosity are to his identity. Quite fittingly, then, we now leave you with our guest editor, Kathryn Reese-Taylor, who is lucky enough to count herself as one of David A. Freidel's longtime mentees.



Photo 1. David A. Freidel and fellow presenters, organizer, and attendees during the 11th Annual Maya at the Lago Conference opening reception at the Davidson College Hurt Hub, Davidson, NC. Photo by Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire.



Photo 2. Left: David A. Freidel, David Mixer, and Marc Zender participating in person to the hybrid forum on Maya Rulership—along with remote presenters Jim Garber, Travis Stanton, Marcello Canuto, Kathryn Brown, Kathryn Reese-Taylor, Mary Jane Acuña, and Debra Walker. Right: a group of in-person attendees to the conference (not pictured are the 70+ remote attendees). Photo taken at the Davidson College Hurt Hub, Davidson, NC. Photo by Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire.

From our Guest Editor

I am privileged to be the guest editor for this issue of *The Mayanist* in honour of David A. Freidel. David has had a profound impact on our discipline for 40+ years. From his earliest work on Cozumel Island to his latest investigations at El Peru-Waka', his research has been on the cutting edge of Maya studies since the 1970s. Broadly, his research can be categorized into three important themes: political economy, religious ideology, and the art of governance.

Freidel's early research on Cozumel Island (Freidel and Sabloff 1984) was foundational for our current understanding of marketplace exchanges and long-distance trade in the Maya lowlands. His later work on political economy in the Maya region included investigations of market economies, currency, and long-distance trade of high valued resources, such as spondylus and jade, which he invariably linked back to governance in both the Classic and Preclassic periods. This was highlighted in his work at Cerros, which he successfully argued was an important trading port and a hub in the robust interaction sphere during the Late Preclassic (Freidel 1979, Freidel et al. 2002), as well as his recent work at El Peru-Waka' on the place of currency in the political capital of Late Classic kingdoms (Freidel et al. 2016).

His long-term interests in the intersection of religious ideology and governance is highlighted in his two books, *A Forest of Kings* (Schele and Freidel 1990) and *Maya Cosmos* (Freidel et al. 1993), both written with long-term collaborator Linda Schele. Both books – crucial reading for Mayanists – addressed the more straightforward aspects of divine kingship, including its material expressions and sociopolitical consequences, but also the sacred legitimization of governance through cosmological concepts and state-sanctioned ritual. Since the publication of these books, Freidel has honed his argument for the role of divine kingship among the Maya in publications detailing the religious sanctioning of governance at Late Preclassic Cerros, Early Classic Yaxuna, and Late Classic El Peru-Waka' (Freidel 1992, 2005, 2008, 2017, 2018; Freidel et al. 1998, 2010; Freidel and Guenter 2006; Freidel and MacLeod 2000; Freidel and Suhler 1995). His most recent work at El Peru-Waka' highlights the role of kings and queens as diviners for their kingdoms (Freidel 2022).

In addition to his research interests, David has pioneered reaching out to wider audiences through storytelling. He embraced multivocality and community engagement at a time when such methods were only beginning to gain momentum in the field of Mesoamerican archaeology. In *Forest of Kings*, he and Linda Schele also engaged the full potential of the narrative form, confident that the narrative structure of their interpretations would have much to offer both lay and professional audiences (Guernsey and Reese-Taylor n.d.).

However, even while this body of work has driven the field for over 40 years, David's devotion to the training, mentorship, and general cheerleading of younger scholars may prove to be his lasting legacy. He has generously shared his data and ideas, and his insightful guidance has been critical for so many of us. Indeed, David's impact has been widespread and deep, touching on scholars engaged in research at all levels of academia, professional tour guides, journalists, and artists, as well as avocational Mayanists throughout the world. The three articles in this issue exemplify an academic tradition built on Freidel's body of work, which integrates interpretation and storytelling with scientific inquiry.

"A Diachronic Assessment of Rulership at El Tintal" by Mary Jane Acuña explores the changing characteristics of rulership from the 350 BCE to 800 CE at El Tintal in the Central Karstic Uplands. Acuña uses archaeological correlates, such as monumental structures, large multi-courtyard residential compounds, key long-distance trade items, and use of select titles on codex-style ceramics to highlight the distinct political strategies that addressed sociopolitical circumstances in the Late Preclassic and the Late Classic periods. Acuña builds on Freidel's research regarding governance in the Maya lowlands to explain the increasingly administrative role and responsibilities of king, which is particularly evident when comparing the office in the Late Preclassic to that in the Late Classic.

The article by John Chuchiak and Harri Kettunen draws on a detailed analysis of the *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* (Account of the things of Yucatan) to explore the history of the manuscript. The article provides new insights into an important document detailing daily life in 16th century Yucatan. Chuchiak and Kettunen address questions of authorship and, perhaps more importantly, documentation of state secrets. Like Freidel's work on the epigraphic corpus of El Peru-Waka', which seeks to interpret Classic period inscriptions in the context of specific historic events, the contingencies of the period in which the transcriptions were made are paramount for understanding the original text and the subsequent commentary.

Finally, David Mixter explores how the Maya reshaped their political institutions during the Terminal Classic period at the site of Actuncan in central Belize. Following Freidel and Suhler's (1999) engagement with performance spaces at Yaxuna, Mixter lays out an argument that the new modifications are designed for post-royal ritual performances and reflect a rejection of divine kingship during a period of political fragmentation in the Maya Lowlands.

In the foreword to *A Forest of Kings*, Schele and Freidel (1990:19) state, "The story we construct here is one of drama, pathos, humor, and heroics." I think this statement sums up well David's lifelong passion, to tell the remarkable story of the Prehispanic Maya. Through his writings, he has aroused our curiosity and introduced the rich history of the Maya people to a global audience, well beyond the white towers of academia, and we thank him profoundly for sharing his constant wonder at these ancient voices with us all.

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