

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST SEMINAR FOR THE STUDY OF MAYA WRITING*

Nicholas A. Hopkins, University of Texas

TOPICS RELEVANT TO THE DECIPHERMENT OF THE MAYAN WRITING SYSTEM were discussed at the Primer Seminario para el Estudio de la Escritura Maya, held in Mexico City, December 4–10, 1966. This conference, attended by scholars from several nations (principally Mexico, Germany, and the United States), represents the first attempt to organize and coordinate the various groups and individuals involved in hieroglyph studies. The meetings, sponsored by the Mexican Comisión para el Estudio de la Escritura Maya (CEEM), were organized by Alberto Ruz, director of the Seminario de Cultura Maya of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, and Alfredo Barrera Vázquez, director of the Instituto Yucateco de Antropología e Historia.

The presentation of papers took place at the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (located in the new Museo de Antropología) and at the Centro de Cálculo Electrónico of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Presiding over the meetings were two members of the CEEM, Leonardo Manrique C. and Daniel Cazés. A list of the contributions appears at the end of this report; the complete set of papers, together with critical commentary by the participants, will be published as Volume 7 of *Estudios de Cultura Maya* (Seminario de Cultura Maya, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México).

The presentation of papers and the discussion following each paper revealed that while research is converging in some respects, such as the use of computers to process large amounts of data, no work is being duplicated in the various centers of research. Rather, the work being done by each group or individual complements the research being carried out by others.

Thomas S. Barthel reported that work in progress at the University of Tübingen includes a continuation of Barthel's and Kelley's work on inscriptions at Chichén Viejo, the preparation of two papers linking archaeological and astronomical data with glyph sequences in the Dresden Codex, and the preparation of a study of miscellaneous inscriptions carved or inscribed on ceramics, jade, and bone. Günther Zimmermann reported continuing work at the University of Hamburg on the correlation of astronomical calculations of visible solar and lunar eclipses in the Mayan area with the eclipse records in the Mayan codices; continuing work on early manuscripts from the Quiché, Tzutujil, and

* A report on the Primer Seminario para el Estudio de la Escritura Maya, Mexico City, December 4–10, 1966.

Cakchiquel area; and the preparation of a corrected and expanded edition of Thompson's *Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs*, as well as concordances of glyphic inscriptions arranged by site and by date. Brito Sansores reported that a Mexican group centered in Mérida is preparing a new edition of the Motul dictionary, a grammar of modern Yucatec Maya, and a study of Mayan place names. Additional work is aimed at further decipherments of the non-calendrical glyphs in the Mayan Codices, with special attention to certain sets of glyphs.

Michael Coe reported that a linguistic project at Yale University headed by Floyd G. Lounsbury includes studies of modern Chortí (by John Fought) and modern Yucatec (by Michael G. Owen)—both languages are important for the decipherment of the hieroglyphs. An additional program at Yale involves the publication of Mayan materials from several archives, including the publication of the second part of the Motul dictionary (Spanish-Maya) and a study of the script in which the dictionary was recorded; this work is reported to be almost ready for the printer. Coe also reported that Harvard University is preparing an English translation of Yuri V. Knorozov's study of Maya writing, with revisions by Tatiana Proskouriakoff, and that Princeton is preparing an annotated catalog of the Gates Collection.

Mauricio Swadesh noted that linguistic work under his supervision at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México includes the production of compact dictionaries of Yucatec (Ramón Arzápalo) and Tarascan (Swadesh), as well as continuing investigations of the internal and external relations of the Mayan family of languages and a modern study of Mam. Norman A. McQuown reported that work at the University of Chicago includes the completion of a textbook and practical grammar of modern Yucatec Maya, which will include a dictionary of modern Yucatec. McQuown's sketch of Classical Yucatec will appear in the *Handbook of Middle American Indians*. Further work in Huastec and Mam is planned for 1967–68, and a textbook on Quiché is now in preparation. Marshall Durbin is beginning a study of Yucatec Maya at Tulane; other work at Tulane includes Edmonson's work on a Quiché dictionary and an English translation of the *Popol Vuh*; Judy Josserand is cataloguing and editing the Beyer collection at Tulane. Daniel Cazés pointed out that the Comisión para el Estudio de la Escritura Maya is continuing along the lines of investigation exemplified by papers presented at the conference, including a new classification of the hieroglyphs, compilation of concordances and examination of the structure of writing in the Mayan Codices, investigations of the relations between glyphs and other elements in the Codices, and a study of glyphs appearing on ceramics.

David H. Kelley reported that he is pursuing the lines of investigation illustrated by his papers at the conference, with emphasis on historical studies, especially the identification of personal names in the glyphic inscriptions and

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further decipherment of glyph values. Nicholas A. Hopkins is beginning a study of the syntax of the inscriptions in Thompson's *Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs* and will attempt to write a grammar of the glyph sequences. Hopkins also noted that he is continuing descriptive work on Chuj, and that additional studies are being carried out in Jacaltec by Christopher C. Day (University of Rochester), and in Tojolabal and Mam by students of Terrence S. Kaufman (Berkeley). Kaufman is also continuing his important research into the history of the Mayan languages.

In order to maintain the level of cooperation in Mayan hieroglyph studies set by the Primer Seminario and to promote the rapid dissemination of results, the participants in the conference encouraged the establishment of a newsletter, to be coordinated by the CEEM and sent periodically to all investigators presently working on the Mayan hieroglyphs. A second Seminario para el Estudio de la Escritura Maya will be held in December 1969 at a site yet to be determined.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTIONS

- MARÍA CRISTINA ÁLVAREZ (CEEM). Descripción estructural del Maya del Chilam Balam de Chumayel.
- MARICELA AYALA FALCÓN (CEEM). Relaciones entre texto y dibujos que lo acompañan.
- THOMAS S. BARTHEL (University of Tübingen). El Complejo "Emblema."
- JUAN RAMÓN BASTARRACHEA (CEEM). Sobrevivencia de algunos dioses en grupos mayas actuales.
- DANIEL CAZÉS (CEEM). Frecuencias de algunos elementos lingüísticos del Chilam Balam de Chumayel.
- ROBERTO ESCALANTE (UNAM). Método de desciframiento.
- MARTHA A. FRÍAS (CEEM). Catálogo de las características de los personajes en el Códice de Dresde.
- NICHOLAS A. HOPKINS (University of Texas). A Method for the Investigation of Glyph Syntax.
- DAVID H. KELLEY (University of Nebraska). Mayan Fire Glyphs. Kakupacal and the Itzas.
- FLOYD G. LOUNSBURY AND MICHAEL D. COE (Yale University). Linguistic and Ethnographic Data Pertinent to the "Cage" Glyph of Dresden 36c.
- LEONARDO MANRIQUE CASTAÑEDA (CEEM). Esquema de un proyecto de cooperación internacional para el estudio de la escritura maya.
- NORMAN A. MCQUOWN (University of Chicago). La estructura tonal de las formas canónicas del maya yucateco.
- MICHAEL G. OWEN (Yale University). Yucatec Phonology and Mayan Glyph Values: A Case.
- JUAN JOSE RENDÓN M. (CEEM). Descripción estructural interna y externa de un cartucho constante del Códice de Dresde.

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MARÍA EUGENIA REYES (UNAM). Programas de computación electrónica usados por la CEEM.

MAURICIO SWADESH (UNAM). Algunas orientaciones generales sobre la escritura maya.

GÜNTER ZIMMERMANN (University of Hamburg). Using computers for the solution of certain problems in Maya astronomy.

Other papers presented were by RAMÓN ARZÁPALO (CEEM), WILLIAM BRITO SANORES (Instituto Yucateco de Antropología e Historia), MARSHALL DURBIN (Tulane University), DIETER DÜTTING (University of Köln), and JIM RAUH (University of Pittsburgh).