

Save Ancient Studies Alliance

Summer 2023 Texts-in-Translation Reading Group

Painted Stories: Reading Maya Mythology in Codex-Style Ceramics

Welcome to our summer reading group! This reading group introduces participants to key mythological themes in Classic Maya (250-900 CE) material culture, particularly as seen on a subset of ceramic vessels known as “codex-style” vessels. It builds on materials covered in a previous reading group from Summer 2021 (“Maya Myths in Art and Writing”) although participation in that reading group is not required to participate in this group. After a brief introduction to Classic Maya mythology, we will read about and discuss three common and lesser-known mythical themes found on codex-style vessels. For each week, participants will receive a digital image of the ceramic vessels to be discussed, a translation of key texts from that vessel, and one or two academic articles that provide important background information on the theme to be discussed. During the weekly meeting, I will provide a brief (30 minutes) presentation on the theme, and we will discuss insights, questions, and connections that participants encountered while doing the reading. We will conclude the reading group with a broad discussion of what we know (and still don’t know) about Classic Maya mythology. No previous knowledge of Maya hieroglyphic writing or art is required for this reading group. Participants of previous reading groups are warmly welcomed!

Your SASA Educational Ambassador:



Catherine Nuckols

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mesoamericanstudiesonline.com

[Session Recordings Playlist - Youtube \(Private\)](#)

[Reading Group Folder Link](#)

Week 1 - Introduction: What do we know about Classic Maya mythology?

- Chinchilla, Oswaldo. *Art and Myth of the Ancient Maya*, Chapter 1: Image and Text
- Chinchilla, Oswaldo. *Art and Myth of the Ancient Maya*, Chapter 2: Pictorial and Textual Sources

Week 2 - The Maize God and the Hero Twins

- Chinchilla, Oswaldo. *Art and Myth of the Ancient Maya*, Chapter 7: The Sun
- or-
- Chinchilla, Oswaldo. *Art and Myth of the Ancient Maya*, Chapter 8: The Perfect Youth
 - Examine images and text from assigned vessels: K1892, K3033

Week 3 - Old Gods, Moon Goddesses, and Rabbits

- García, Erik Velásquez. "Reflections on the Codex Style and the Princeton Vessel." *PARI Journal* 10, no. 1 (2009): 1–16.
- Examine image and text from assigned vessels: K1398, K0504, K5166

Week 4 - Wild Things: Wahyoob', Forest Creatures, and Animals

- Helmke, Christophe, and Jesper Nielsen. "Hidden Identity & Power in Ancient Mesoamerica: Supernatural Alter Egos as Personified Diseases." *Acta Americana* 17 (2011): 49–58.
- or-
- Stuart, David. "The Wahys of Witchcraft: Sorcery and Political Power among the Classic Maya." In *Sorcery in Mesoamerica*, 179–205. University of Colorado Press, 2020.
- or-
- Taube, Karl. "Ancient and Contemporary Maya Conceptions About Field and Forest." In *The Lowland Maya Area: Three Millennia at the Human-Wildland Interface*, edited by A. Gómez-Pompa, M. Allen, S. Fedick, and J. Jiménez-Osornio, 461–92. University of California Riverside, 2003.
 - Examine image and text from assigned vessels: K0791, K1181

Week 5 - Concluding Discussion: What *don't* we know about Classic Maya mythology?

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