

REPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE *SEARCH FOR INDIGENOUS AMERICA 7***(Charles University, 4–5 March 2024, Prague)**

On 4–5 March 2024, the Centre for Ibero-American Studies had hosted the *Search for Indigenous America*, an already traditional conference dedicated to the indigenous peoples of the Americas. In its seventh year, the conference was, as usual, brought together by the founder of this annual event, Radoslav Hlúšek from the Department of Comparative Religion and Centre of Mesoamerican Studies (Comenius University, Bratislava) in collaboration with the Centre for Ibero-American Studies (Faculty of Arts, Charles University).

The conference opened with a keynote address of Marcel Kornfeld of the University of Wyoming, who spoke about possible religious connotations of the production of artifacts known as Folsom points, named after an eponymous location in New Mexico, where they were first found.

In the first section of the programme, researchers focused on the present-day situation of the native populations of the Americas. Rochelle Foltram (Universidade Federal de São Carlos) presented her contribution ‘On the Paths of the Pandemic: Xikrin Tales and Forest Remedies Rochelle’, which focused on the Brazilian Xikrin community. Mauricio Roberto Díaz-García (Comenius University) spoke about ‘Reclaiming the Past, Forging the Future: Indigenous Rights, Democracy, and Archaeological Patrimony in Guatemala’, and Miroslav Černý (Ostrava University) focused on the work of the poet Ofelia Zepeda in his paper ‘Advancing Environmental Justice Through Poetry: Ofelia Zepeda’s Earth Movements’.

The second section of the conference was dedicated to various historical topics. Monika Brenišinová (Centre for Ibero-American Studies, Charles University) had a contribution named ‘Hidden Voices: (Native) Women in the Inquisition Documents of Colonial New Spain’, Elizabeth Mateos Segovia (Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla) presented a paper on ‘Geografía mítica entre los nahuas de la Sierra Negra de

Puebla, México’, and the last speaker, Petr Vyšný (University of Trnava) shared his thoughts ‘On Some Theoretical and Methodological Issues of Research Into Pre-Hispanic Law’.

The last section of the day started with Raquel Ofelia Barceló Quintal (Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo) presenting her paper on ‘La importancia de la chaya en el huerto familiar entre los mayas de Xocón, Valladolid, Yucatán’, while her colleagues from the same university, Víctor Eduardo Hernández Juárez and Jorge Dolores Bautista, spoke about ‘Bioculturalidad y tradición oral. Impacto de la patrimonialización de las lenguas originarias en México’. Jorge Bautista was then joined by two colleagues, Estefanía Soto Carrasquel and Reynaldo Amador Pérez, and they jointly spoke on the subject of ‘Dilemas contemporáneos en torno a la construcción del patrimonio indígena. Entre las representaciones identitarias y la hegemonía cultural’. The first day closed with a discussion on the subject of ‘Environment and Education among the Tupi Guarani of São Paulo, Brazil’ by a panel consisting of Paride Bolletín (Masaryk University), Cristiano Awa Kiririndju (Renascer Indigenous Territory, Brazil), Lenira Dina de Oliveira (Piaçaguera Indigenous Territory, Brazil), Amanda Cristina Dagna (Universidade do Estado do Mato Grosso), and Edmundo Antonio Peggion (Universidade do Estado do São Paulo, Brazil).

The second day of the conference started with a paper on the ‘Star Constellations in Maya Art and Imagery’ presented by Jakub Špoták (Comenius University, Bratislava). Špoták discussed the study and identification of constellations depicted in Maya art, especially ceramics, with specially attention paid to some less well-known artifacts and depictions of constellations. He focused on the possible relationship between the symbolic level and astronomical knowledge, thus contributing to a better understanding the impact of concepts related to heaven on Maya artistic expression.

Jakub Špoták was followed by his colleague from the same university, Milan Kováč, who spoke about 'Lacandon Maya Incense Burners: Living Gods on the Earth'. Kováč drew on his findings from a research stay in the Mexican Chiapas, where he investigated the rituals and mythology of Lacandon Maya with focus on the social and religious significance of incense burners for this indigenous community.

The following two contributions were related to alternative spirituality. Zuzana Marie Kostíčová (Charles University) spoke about the impact of the Maya calendar on current spirituality. She focused on the *Dreamspeel* by José Argüell, one of the most important protagonists of millennialism linked to the 21st of December 2012, who interpreted the Maya calendar and Maya culture within the framework of New Age spirituality. The second paper was presented by Jan Kapusta (University of West Bohemia), who spoke about alternative spirituality in Czech Republic that draws on Native American themes. In this context, he referred to encounters between Western alternative spirituality and Latin American indigenous traditions, which he illustrated by pointing to events that took place in the Czech Republic with active participation of the indigenous people from Columbia belonging to the Kogi tribe. The morning session on the second day concluded with a presentation named 'Mexican Dances: Traditions and Cultural Identity of Mexico in the 21st Century' by Alena Prokopius (Centre for Ibero-American Studies). She pointed out that although these dances (*baile*

folklórico) have been presented to the world as part of Mexican folklore, what is presented is just their 'official' form that has little in common with folklore or the daily lives of Mexicans.

The afternoon session of the second day of the conference was opened by Jan Dolejš (independent scholar) and his contribution 'Identification of Selected Artifacts from the Colloredo-Mansfeld Collection, Opočno Castle, Using Comparative Analysis', which focused on a small but important collection of North American native artifacts at the Opočno Castle. This presentation was followed by Marek Halbich (Charles University) and his contribution named 'Korima: A Form of Tarahumara Reciprocity and Social Resistance'. Halbich spoke not only about the importance of the practice of *korima*, but also more generally about the significance of reciprocity in this indigenous group based on his field research in Ejido Munerachi in Tarahumara Baja.

The conference concluded by Karla Maressa Crisostomo Peregrina (Masaryk University) and her online contribution 'Kimelfe: The Case of the Mapuche Traditional Teacher Isabel Quilacán', which investigated the identity of a woman from the Mapuche tribe, a teacher who found a way 'back to her roots'. This was based on an interview with Isabel, where the author identified three main topics: identity, community, and education.

*Written in Czech by Tereze Dleštíková and
Ema Labudová, Prague
(Translated into English by Anna Pilátová)*