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Introductory Note

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Peninsular Maya of Yesterday and Today

Volume 3 Number 1 (2021) is composed of six research articles from a historical and anthropological perspective on the peninsular Maya of Yucatán and Quintana Roo, and the Maya from the Ixil region of Guatemala. The first three articles belong to two generations of Maya peninsular scholars. The first one is of Julián Dzul Nah. Looking at the prohibition of bullfighting in patronal saint festivities during the first quarter of the 20th century, he analyzes the strategies for resistance and the ways in which Maya villagers and state and local authorities agreed to continue bullfights. Dzul highlights that behind these prohibitions were the racial prejudices of the revolutionary authorities and of the successors of socialism who sought to "de-barbarize" and "de-fanaticize the Indians" of the time.

The second article was written by Abrahan Collí Tun. He introduces us to the ethics of words through an analysis of the *exempla*. These are narratives, advice and local stories that Maya tell themselves to reflect upon, point out, sanction, and criticize those who have acted outside the margins of morality. Collí Tun points out that the performativity of discursive acts function as an iterative strategy of enunciation and as a didactic device, that produces a borderline between accepted norms and social values, and the transgression of these as well as the punishments and adversities suffered by people who lack morality.

The study by Deira Jiménez-Balam, María Dolores Cervera Montejano, and Fidencio Briceño Chel examines how children of a community in Quintana Roo become knowledgeable about the causes, treatments and prevention of diseases recognized by the Maya medical system. They also discuss how children learn about diseases that are classified in the Western biomedical system. Based on ethnographic research of the health-disease complex, the authors reveal that children not only learn about these issues from their experiences, but also from interactions they have with the sick, and with

traditional specialists. Learning also comes from the Maya worldview of the body, family and cultural environment, and the belief and knowledge system associated with disease. The study of Hilda Landrove looks at the relationship between the Cruso'ob Maya and the representatives and institutions of the State of Quintana Roo. In light of political interference of the state government and the creation of state institutions such as the Gran Consejo Maya, the author demonstrates how the state continues to abuse and destabilize the autonomy of the Macehual people, but also points out that there are political practices of the Maya Cruso'ob that reveal their political agency and historical character of rebellion and resistance.

The work of Adriana Cruz-Manjarrez studies the social and economic impact of migration on the older people who live in southern Yucatán and who have children in the United States. Her analysis on long-distance family relationships highlights the importance of local and transnational family networks on the sense of well-being and quality of life for the elderly. Ethnographic research on community work carried out by both international immigrants and local activists on behalf of older adults who do not have immigrant children in the United States reveals that there is a section of this elderly population that lives on the streets, abandoned by family, and coping with extreme poverty in the Yucatan.

Giovanni Batz examines the social, historical and cultural processes that have contributed to new models of education and forms of appreciation for traditional knowledge in the Ixil Maya communities in Guatemala. Batz discusses the origins of the Ixil University, and the problems and criticisms that the university has encountered during its challenge to the colonized education that has long monopolized the production of education.

In the “Tribute” section, three friends of the late activist Felipe de Jesús Tapia Chablé present their memories of this great leader who recently passed. In an “Arts” section, we present some original lyrics and music by the Maya rap artist Pat Boy. In addition, we highlight four Maya cultural paintings from the Maya painter Marcelo Jiménez Santos. Marcelo’s painting of the Ceiba tree adorns the cover to this issue of Maya America. In the “Commentary” section, we present a critical and reflective commentary on the current situation of the Yucatec Mayan language, by Fidencio Briceño Chel, a Maya activist and linguist.

As editors, we want to highlight the contributions of the two generations of Maya scholars, artists, and community leaders who participate in this issue. Their thinking, creativity and vision of what has happened in the Gran Mayab and beyond weave multiple voices, experiences and realities in different times and spaces.