



International Colloquia on Otopames

Brief History

In 1994, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), through its Anthropological Research Institute (Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas-IIA), invited several national research institutions in an effort to create a Colloquium on Otopame. The initial goal of this effort was to perform a diagnostic of available research and create a network of investigators and institutions doing research on the Otomí, Mazahua, Ocuilteca, Matlatzinca, Chichimeca-Jonas, and Pame— indigenous populations with a long presence in the Mexican basin and northern Middle America. At present, these groups can be found in some regions of the states of México, Querétaro, Hidalgo, Michoacán, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Puebla, Veracruz, Tlaxcala and Mexico City.

That same year, an Organizing Committee representing researchers from the Anthropological Research Institute at UNAM, the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), and the Anthropology departments of the UAEM (Autonomous University of the State of Mexico), UAQ (Autonomous University of Queretaro), and the UAEH (Autonomous University of Hidalgo) was put into place. Some time later, researchers were invited to study and share the socio-cultural legacy of these ethnic groups which have been systematically marginalized from Mexican social history.

Since the organization of the first Otopame Colloquium in September 1995, the Organizing Committee has systematically broadened its membership to include other national research institutions. These include, besides IIA-UNAM, UAEM, UAQ and INAH, the Colegio Mexiquense, the Intercultural University of the State of Mexico, the Colegio del Estado de Hidalgo, Hmunts'a Hem'i - Hñähñu Documentation and Assessment Center, the Intercultural University of Hidalgo, the Center for Culture and the Arts of Hidalgo, the University of Guanajuato, the National Coordinating Office for the Development of Indigenous Populations (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas-CDI, formerly National Indigenous Institute), the Autonomous University of Puebla, and the Universidad Veracruzana,.

The Colloquia have undergone a series of expansions throughout their history. Initially named the Otopame Colloquia in an effort to coordinate with other academic efforts promoting diverse colloquia at the state and regional levels, the Otopame Colloquia were eventually replaced by the International Colloquia on Otopames. Indeed, in 2004 the Organizing Committee decided to internationalize the colloquia in order to acknowledge the presence of internationally renowned researchers in Mesoamerican studies.

The Organizing Committee agreed to create the “Memoirs of the International Colloquia on Otopames” in an effort to print selected papers from each of the colloquia. Host institutions are charged with editing and publishing the proceedings of their respective colloquium.

So far the Colloquia have provided a creative and effective space for the dissemination and promotion of research pertaining nutrition, health/sickness, traditional/herbal medicine, codices, archeology, physical anthropology, linguistics, oral tradition, indigenous rights/normativity, carnivals, rituals and traditions, *cargo* systems, social and kinship networks, productive systems, education, demographics, ecology, modernization, migration, globalization and their impact on indigenous culture. The Colloquia also include the presentation of recent books and journals addressing issues of interest.

In 1998 and at the suggestion of Dr. Yolanda Lastra and Dr. Noemi Quezada, the Organizing Committee decided to edit the results of current research on the Otopame through the creation of *Estudios de Cultura Otopame*, a journal currently published by the UNAM-IIA as a coordinated effort to publish research sources on the Otopame with an anthropological perspective. Six volumes of this series have been published so far.

Since 2004, the International Colloquia on Otopames have highlighted one or two researchers in the field focusing on their academic trajectory and expertise. The decision to organize the colloquia in this manner resulted in a more focused and beneficial dialogue among the participating academics that are part of this research network. Thus the latest colloquia have focused on the following researchers and thematic lines:

VI International Colloquium (2004) in homage of Noemí Quezada and organized by IIA-UNAM focused on Indigenous and Colonial Religiosity: the inquisition and evangelization in the new world, religion and magic; Traditional medicine; Settlement Patterns and Indigenous and Colonial Social Organization: *República de Indios*, *encomiendas*, *repartimientos* and indigenous communities; Indigenous Migration and the Urban Context: production of cultural artifacts: dance, music, literature, arts and crafts; Cultural Politics.

VII International Colloquium (2005) in homage of Pedro Carrasco and Rosaura Hernández and organized by the Colegio Mexiquense A.C. focused on the Toluca Valley; Pre-hispanic era and XVI century; Otopame in Mesoamerican ancient history; Otopame groups in the national context; production of cultural capital.

VIII International Colloquium (2006) in homage of Roberto Weitlaner and Doris Bartholomew. This colloquium, organized by Centro INAH Michoacán and hosted by the Instituto Tecnológico de Zitácuaro and the Ethnography Museum-INAH, Michoacán, focused on Frontiers and Inter-ethnic relations during the colonial period: Archeology and Territory, Narratives; Borders and migration: Culture, tradition and future; Identity and inter-ethnic relations, linguistics, rituals, and the environment.

IX International Colloquium (2007) in homage of Carlo Antonio Castro Guevara and Roberto Williams García. Organized by the Universidad Veracruzana (UV), this colloquium focused on Otopame carnivals; interculturality; language, culture, and education; inter-ethnic boundaries and relations; water as a resource of the people and its symbolisms; indigenous narratives, ethno-literature; production of cultural capital. We

were very pleased with the large and engaged attendance of UV students to many of the sessions.

X International Colloquium (2008) in homage of Yolanda Lastra, linguist and indefatigable student of sociolinguistic processes and interculturality and a committed defender of indigenous native languages in peril of disappearance. This colloquium was organized by the Institute of Anthropological Research (IIA) of UNAM and focused on: National and transnational interculturality: past and present; Cultures and languages in contact and peril; Cultural registry and revitalization; Interculturality and mass communication: radio, TV, written and virtual media; Interculturality and material life; Interculturality and state cultural and linguistic policies; Interculturality and the transformation of popular religiosity; Interculturality, environment and territoriality; Interculturality, resistance and social movements.

XI International Colloquium (2009) in homage of Richard M. Ramsay and James W. Dow, was held at the University of South Florida-St Petersburg. The general theme of the colloquium was *Migration, extended community, and citizenship* and it included the following lines of enquiry: Historical and cultural impact of the Otopame; Shamanism and worldly wisdoms, Religious conversions and alternatives; Cultural and linguistic conflict and negotiations, Plurilinguism, Transnational and multidimensional identities; Sustainable communities, Global citizenship.

XII International Colloquium (2010) in homage of Carmen Aguilera and Yolanda Ramos, was held in Tlaxcala and focused on: Codices and prehispanic populations of Tlaxcala, Popular culture and development: Patrimony and cultural artifacts; Otopame peoples and their relationship with the national state: Language and power, Territory, culture and identity, Climate change and sustainability; Indigenous religiosity and ontologies; Economy, development and land tenure.

XIII International Colloquium (2011) in homage of Bodil Christensen and Hans Lenz, was held at the Autonomous University of Puebla and focused on: the Otopame in the cultural horizon of Puebla and Mesoamerica, Paper, ritual and cosmovision, Indigenous art and environment, History, interethnic and interlinguistic relations, Security and violence in Otopame regions.

XIV International Colloquium (2012) in homage of Jacques Galinier, was held in Tulancingo and Tenango de Doria and focused on: Ethnography of the night, Carnival, Otopame thought, language and praxis, Use and disuse of Otopame languages, Otopame voices and traces in historic and archaeological sources.

The recent decision by the Organizing Committee to launch the Colloquia into cyberspace should help with the increasing flow of information/communication between Otopame experts, the Organizing Committee, and the host institutions. We are glad to announce that a webpage has been created and can be consulted at www.otopames.net. This website will include calls for meetings, papers, general news and hopefully PDF files of past proceedings. It will also include information about the Noemi Quezada Prize to the best BA/MA theses and Ph.D. dissertations on the

Otopame. We welcome all institutional affiliates to help us keep this website with the latest information and research of all matters Otopame.