Daniel Graña-Behrens (ed.)

Places of Power and Memory in Mesoamerica's Past and Present

How Sites, Toponyms and Landscapes
Shape History and Remembrance

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Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut
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How Sites, Toponyms and Landscapes Shape History and Remembrance

Daniel Graña-Behrens
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Places of Power and Memory in Mesoamerica's Past and Present. How Sites, Toponyms and Landscapes Shape History and Remembrance

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Introduction

This volume shares the insights of well-known Mesoamerican scholars from Europe, Mexico and the U.S. who analyze how power and memory are conceived through places, toponyms and landscapes in pre-Hispanic as well as in Colonial and modern Mesoamerica. They address the question of how places, toponyms and landscapes gained importance for people, and how politics and remembrance shaped them in the long term by addressing the underlying histories, myths and rituals and strategies in responding to new circumstances. Still today, the people of Mesoamerica, which includes Mexico and part of Central America, show a continued preference for places, towns or urban centers to distinguish themselves individually and as a collectivity, although they constantly reshape and transform those according to their political, religious or economic needs.

Mesoamerica's archaeology and history reveal that people inhabited a vast region of what is today Mexico and Central America from the Paleo-Indian period onwards (for at least 10,000 years), with the initial domestication of plants having taken place around 7,000 BC and the establishment of agricultural villages evident all over Mesoamerica by 1,500 BC (Adams 2000: 10). Important cultures like the Olmecs at the coast of the Gulf of Mexico or the Zapotecs in the Highlands of Central Mexico, just to name two examples, had by then established settlements with mounds, pyramids, temples and palaces as seats of power and memory that reflected their political and religious organization. From the common substrate of Mesoamerican ideas, beliefs and customs, it is the urban center, the community, town or village that since the pre-Hispanic period have served as markers of distinction regarding foundation myths, the enactment of rituals, the submission to particular authorities and ultimately the shaping of history and remembrance (Megged 2010: 6). The prototypes for such place-oriented modes of distinction, however, were natural places like mountains, volcanoes or caves, which among other topographical features were considered the dwelling places of gods and sites for renewing rain or corn. The occupation of land and the creation of a landscape was thus a ritual endeavor (Arnold 2001). Hence, single places or multiple places that

were ritually plotted and connected in a larger area gained importance for the people. The Spanish Conquest did not change this substantially (Lockhart 1982: 369). Local entities retained their importance because of their history and identity, modified only by the new rules and circumstances. If natives were forced by the Spanish authority to settle at a new place – within the so called *repúblicas de indios* or *pueblos de indios* (Indian townships) – the history of that place was largely invented and a kind of 'false' memory promoted by the elite with the intention to recreate their micro-identity (Florescano 1996: 268; Leibsohn 1994: 161). Landscapes were kept in memory, and rituals still performed in caves or at mountains. Even today, anthropologists can observe how communities in Mesoamerica shape people's identity (Carmack 1995; Monaghan 1995; Redfield 1930). However, this does not mean that the inhabitants of a community see their entity as a coherent one to which they should feel a deep loyalty (Sandstrom 1991: 140). Nor should a place be considered static or a form of 'closed-corporate community'. Rather, it always "emerges out of particular relations and interactions" (Monaghan 1995: 14).

From the viewpoint of seats of power and memory, pre-Hispanic and early Colonial places are mostly the product of the local elite, but do also have an impact on the collective consciousness of the inhabitants, just as their religious and agricultural experience and kinship. Mirroring the effects of modernity and capitalism in the contemporary world, urban centers and cities are today places of diversity – culturally, sociologically, economically, ecologically etc. – and they have become the focus of anthropologists and sociologists since the mid-1980s. It was even predicted that anthropological studies would be undertaken mostly in urban and complex societies in the future (Basham & DeGroot 1977: 415). Such urban centers are now associated with different metaphors expressing what these places mean, ranging from the ethnic city to the global city or the traditional city, among others (Low 1996). Metropolises like Mexico City or Guatemala City are examples of Mesoamerican mega-cities that have a geopolitical impact on the countries in which they are located. They absorb a significant part of the national population and all kinds of resources (water, electricity, food etc.), oftentimes to the disadvantage of other regions and in the brutal form of endo-colonialism. At the same time, they are constantly in flux, shifting their territorial limits (Azuara Monter, Huffschmid & Cerda García 2011: 11). In other areas, like modern China, the ongoing building of dozens of giant, partially deserted cities entirely from scratch and the occasional copying of complete towns or house blocks from other cultural areas, although not quite a new phenomenon, also calls to mind the function of power and memory. With cities either already inhabited or in the process of becoming so and constantly adding new heterogeneous populations, the people residing in them struggle to define themselves, as history and memory must be built as well. However, one must keep in mind that 'space', even if occupied and inhabited for the first time, is neither naturally given, as if it were a natural habitat in the sense of the

German *Lebensraum*, nor can it be regarded solely as socially constructed or invented. In the long term it is both and as such the result of a production that triangulates the natural habitat (biology), the conceptual idea (ideology) and the lived experience (sociology) (Lefebvre 1991). Therefore, there are good reasons to explore the different ways in which places and landscapes were formed and manipulated by politics and memory over time and the question how cities, towns or communities struggle to find their distinctiveness as particular places. Yet the two aspects – power and memory – are still responsible for shaping urban centers with a 'proper logic' throughout the world, although they do so less noticeably in daily life than they do in the long term (Löw 2012: 18, 65-68).

In contrast to landscape, land, or space, a place is something more specific, and its meaning depends on the historical and cultural background (cf. Ingold 1992). Regardless of the circumstances, a place is a distinguishable location, be it a city or a smaller area within a city (Chen, Orum & Paulsen 2013: 7). It is always shaped by humans, albeit in different ways, for instance by assigning to its space a particular or insightful myth-based name, by rebuilding and changing it, by hosting a ruling elite, or by making it culturally more attractive, economically more prosperous, or politically more influential. A place can be studied from a broad range of perspectives and disciplines, among others from the viewpoints of city planning (architecture, geomancy), social life and institutions (sociology, politics), population and movements (demography), commerce and income (economics). Finally, places, toponyms and landscape are embedded within a process of communication that shapes and reshapes their meaning (anthropology and history); this is the approach in this volume.

Power is something relational between two individuals, but also between and within larger groups (Erdheim 2004: 102). Power can be related to memory, especially if it is thought of more in the form of domination (*Herrschaft*) in the Weberian sense and less in its theoretical conception (as *Macht*). The struggle for the interpretation of a place's past and its future always expresses the power relations among groups, whether they dominate or not. Memory, the second important element that is constitutive for understanding a place's history, refers to the forms of how people recollect, organize, interpret, recognize and re-enact knowledge about past events under particular circumstances, traditional or new. A place can be arranged or structured by different memory principles and it can itself become a mnemo-technique as well (Yates 1974: 2). In this sense, a place is a physical unit of a collective understanding of shared experiences and principles, albeit an ephemeral one. In contrast to memory, remembering produces knowledge about oneself or others, based on perceptions that are transformed into memory (Fabian 1999: 68). While memory expresses the form and its content, remembrance is an act that produces ideas about the world in constant exchange with the past through words, text, images, bodily performance, food or other items.

Memory is regarded as distinct from history since historical truth exists independently of remembering (Connerton 1989: 14; Le Goff 1999: 11). However, as memory itself may be used by a society to perceive certain aims, the organization of memory influences how societies reconstruct their past and design their future (Confino 1997: 1403). Nevertheless, there are constraints under which memory operates, since the past remains a 'scarce resource' and sets limits to the free use of symbols (Appadurai 1981: 201). These constraints are related to the authority over the sources of the past, the continuity of or consensus about the nature of the relation to these sources, the depth, and the interdependence between the different pasts. Groups may strategically reshape the past or invent traditions according to their aims of controlling others or identifying themselves, and they may try to manipulate the past arbitrarily. As a scarce resource, people keep the past alive but not only for instrumental reasons (Misztal 2003: 68). It is negotiated between different groups – although they are neither closed nor homogenous – and accepted by them in accordance with certain principles, even if under slightly different viewpoints. The organization of memory involves different instruments (oral, ritual, writing, images) and sets of principles based on these instrumental constraints and it relates to forms like social, collective or cultural memory. Although memory regarding urban centers exists as discursive or architectonic practice and as space constructed and related to different experiences (Azuara Monter, Huffschmid & Cerda García 2011: 32), it is more than that. For in- and outsiders alike, it evokes what an urban center represents in its totality. This model is more enduring and less variable. Thus, a place, but also its twin, the landscape, may work as a mnemonic device on which larger groups base their memory (Ingold 1992: 154). In the case of landscapes, the semiotic signs are not so much buildings or monuments, but the landscape itself is considered to possess semiotic quality that converts the whole into a "sacred landscape" or "topographic text" (Assmann 1999: 60). A place, in contrast, may be confused with other places or times, although people relate to a place through memory (Bender 2002: S107). A good example from Mesoamerica is Tollan, the 'place of reeds'. It stands for a mythical place that was literally replicated throughout the region as different sites were related to or said to be Tollan (Aké and Copán in the Maya area, Xochicalco, Chollolan and Tenochtitlan in Central Mexico). At the same time, it refers to the important urban center of Tula at the end of the first millennium BC. In the case of Tollan, the process of transmitting images generated remembrance (Melion & Küchler 1991: 3-7). But not only larger groups or societies organize the past, memory also helps them to organize the present and also the future in the light of significant experiences. Taken as a turning point, the present will then become the subject of rearranging social, collective or cultural enactments either by re-constructing a lost continuity, by beginning a new collective identity or 'new era', or by accepting the past and reinterpreting it constantly (Cavalli 1997: 457). Another

strategy is forgetting, which as the counterpart of memory is an art in its own right but less easily recognizable (Weinrich 2005). Rather than being a failure to remember, this forgetting is brutally organized and entails a "repressive erasure", "prescriptive" or simply a "planned obsolescence" (Connerton 2008: 62-65). In 'nation building' the act of forgetting is even far more important a prerequisite to shaping collectiveness, since some events or places may represent a threat to unity and must therefore be eliminated by collective amnesia (Misztal 2003: 17). In the light of these implications, memory is elusive and far from easy to describe, so that it can be grasped only from a specific viewpoint. In the present volume, this will be to consider political and religious power and willingness.

Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica

Modern scholars generally ascribe archaeological sites in Mesoamerica to different cultures or cultural areas, taking into account their architecture, ceramics, writing, iconography or burial practices, among other features. Examples are Tikal related to the Maya, Tilantongo to the Mixtecs or Tenochtitlan to the Mexica (or Aztecs). In contrast to these and other cultural correlates, there are important culturally linked sites as well, like Chollolan, Teotihuacan or the already mentioned Tula that are solely representative for a particular culture, as no hinterland or regional affiliation is archaeologically or historically recognizable. For Mesoamerica, as for ancient Greece, these sites are considered city-states, with the city-state cultures having a language, writing or other important cultural aspects in common (Hansen 2000: 19; Smith & Schreiber 2006: 7). The question of how the perspective changes if a place or a city-state is understood in a wider spatial context can be answered only when a political landscape that considers sites meaningfully arranged on the basis of existing relations of power is accepted (Smith 2003: 72-77). Hence, archaeologists investigate physical entities like houses, altars and monuments to understand their co-relation as a manifestation of power (Schortman & Urban 2011: 6). Within these city-states or urban centers, burial practices, the deposition of artifacts and other rituals turn smaller units like domestic spaces into 'places of social memory'; they constitute memory communities that may even have been in competition (Hendon 2010: 236).

Toponyms in Mesoamerica are represented in an array of forms. In most cases, however, they are indexical, i.e. referring to the idea of a mountain, a lake, a stream or a tree, and by this they probably reflect the already mentioned prototype that converts land into a place or into a landscape. In the case of the Maya from the Classic period (300 - 1000 AD), they are written in logograms, syllables or a combination of both which must be deciphered prior to understanding the meaning (Tokovinine 2008: 342). During the post-Classic period (from the eleventh century to the Spanish Conquest),

the overwhelming majority of Nahuatl-speaking people from Central Mexico (thus Nahua) represented their places by hieroglyphic or pictographic signs. They usually refer to the elements of their meaning, like in the case of Cuauhtinchan (*cuauhtli*, 'eagle' and *chantli*, 'house') or Chicomoztoc (*chicome*, 'seven' and *oztoc*, 'cave'). The same principle was used by the post-Classic Mixtecs, where stylized mountains, caves or temples stand *pars pro toto* for an entire place or town, or as a distinguishable feature for one site, as in the case of Tilantongo (Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2007: 128-129). In the case of the Zapotecs, there is a similar practice documented from the Colonial period on the *Lienzo de Guevea*. The document illustrates the boundaries of the town of Guevea and its natural landscape by placing the centered place glyph of the town (a mountain with three arrows) behind the ruler's image alongside other places from the local area in the form of a hill or mountain (Marcus 2005: 94). Similar kinds of representations of a site and its surroundings can be found among the Mixtec and Nahua in native documents throughout Central Mexico.

Apart from why and where a settlement occurred and who settled there, the place itself became the focus of attention and glorification. Around such a place, the people spun their history and myth, enriched by other important place names, either those of other communities within their marked identification sphere or those of natural geographic phenomena like mountains, volcanoes or rivers. The bestowing and legitimation of a ruler and his power by sovereignties from foreign places, as attested particularly in the case of ruler '9 Wind' from Tilantongo (Ñuu Tnoo) during the eleventh century in the Mixtec region is equally important in this context (Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2007). Another good example is the presence of an enigmatic figure from Teotihuacan in Central Mexico called 'Spear-thrower Owl' in the early Classic inscriptions of Tikal in the southern Maya Lowlands, in what is present-day Guatemala (Martin & Grube 2000: 30-31). As it was said at Teotihuacan, he may have been a ruler or the heir to a ruler who was married to a Tikal woman and later became father of a subsequent Tikal ruler. Although the complete story of the Teotihuacan presence at Tikal and elsewhere in the Maya Lowlands is still not fully understood, it is important to mention that whether it be a place name, deity or temple building, 'Spear-thrower Owl Hill' has been detected at some murals at Teotihuacan (Nielsen & Helmke 2008). Whatever the 'Spear-thrower Owl Hill' represents and whatever the Maya may have thought of it, it is of great importance to understand the relationship between the symbolic representation of places, history, and memory. Generally, the foreign place named either in the language of the ruler to be bestowed or in its corrupted or original language term ultimately represents the enactment that legitimized the local rulership and shaped the memory of that place. Teotihuacan, itself one of the most densely populated Mesoamerican cities in pre-Hispanic times, was a site that after its decline around 700 AD turned into a memory

place or *lieu de memoire*. By this, Nora (1998) defines the process that converts a living memory into memory shaped by history. It was this truncated tradition of Teotihuacan, the distance in time alongside the obligation to preserve it, that Aztecs paid homage to when they founded their capital Tenochtitlan in the Valley of Mexico during the twelfth century. As they did so, Teotihuacan not only became the place par excellence where the deities set the Aztec cosmos in motion, but they also copied Teotihuacan's cave-pyramid concept and street layout and made this model part of the underlying Aztec city planning (Heyden 2000; Marcus 2000: 68). As *lieu de memoire* Teotihuacan was a pilgrimage center and a place from where the Aztecs brought relics and copied traits in sculptural art (Matos Moctezuma & López Luján 1994). Hence, Teotihuacan became the second important place in Mesoamerica after Tollan 'where time began' and from which memory is preserved (Millón 1994), something that did not happen to the Maya sites from the Classic period, which had collapsed by the end of the first millennium, or to other important places like Xochicalco, Tajín or Monte Albán.

Before a place becomes important as a seat of power, foundation rites need to be performed. Mandatory among the Mixtec and Nahua were performing a fire drilling ritual and erecting a temple, building or altar-platform associated with a deity that would become a *pars pro toto* for the entire town to be founded. However, there were differences in the various rites performed by the different cultures – in the case of the Nahua, a deity or sacred bundle was involved, whereas among the Mixtec it was believed that the first people emerged from a tree and land was organized by repeating specific rituals several times in order to gain control over it (Boone 2000b: 550-552). Moreover the intimate relation between land and rulership was established among the Nahua by using ropes or cords and by the act of binding and weaving as suggested by the map of Metlatoyuca, where conquered sites are connected by ropes (Megged 2010: 143). By dominating other *altepetl*, the Aztecs developed imperial strategies that influenced the painting of the documents and the representation of places as seats of power and memory (Boone 1996: 181). As land was not purely a territorial phenomenon and represented an inventory of community boundaries or a jigsaw puzzle of ancestral migrations, it seems that territory in Central Mexico or in Mesoamerica could not exist without historical events puzzled together (Leibsohn 2009: 97-98).

In the case of the Maya, there is less documentation of the founding of places during the Classic period or earlier in the pre-Classic period (before 300 AD). Nevertheless, the much-referenced stele or altar binding ceremony of the Classic period may well be considered a reenactment of such an original foundation rite (Stuart 1996). Maya inscriptions also refer to an enigmatic and perhaps generic title (*wil te' nah*) whose wider implications point to rituals related to the founding of a site in which a tutelary or sacred bundle may have played an important part. Furthermore, taking possession of land and

cultivating it further required a ritual directed to the four cardinal directions, something that is attested to in the Maya inscriptions from the Classic period as well as in early colonial Maya documents (Restall 1997: 171, 190; Tokovinine 2013: 92).

Within a place, ceremonial life was based on the 260 or 365-day calendar (ritual and solar calendars respectively). These calendars structured the cycle of activities related to important places within the polity and the landscape including caves, mountains, volcanoes and other natural places of importance for rain, fertility and veneration (Carrasco 1991; Arnold 2001). Through time and ritual they were converted into a sacred landscape, thus becoming a memory map of religious and spiritual events and social life. The ceremonial landscape refers to natural places as well to others that are difficult to distinguish as either real or imaginary ones. As López Austin (1997: 51) summarized it, this is quite a problem in Mesoamerica:

> One of the serious problems historians of Mesoamerican tradition have to face is the difficulty of distinguishing among the toponyms in the sources as to which places belonged to the world of the humans and which did not. It is also a problem to separate these which had been confused by the Christians' lack of understanding, those which had an ambiguous identity even before pre-Hispanic times, and those which were ambiguous because of the determination of ancient historians to place form historical accounts on the shifting soil of myth.

Thus, places like Tamoanchan or Tlalocan among the Nahua, Wak Chanal among the Classic Maya or Yuhua Cuchi among the Mixtec are difficult to grasp in terms of their interrelation with real places like Tenochtitlan, Tikal or Tilantongo. Hence it seems that mythological and real places are best intercalated by the people themselves. Therefore, it seems better not to distinguish between real or fictive categories of toponyms, but to question how historic narrative and remembrance intervene in the mingling of these toponyms by constructing important topics of identification and collectiveness. These constitute a set of meaningful references that are reconstituted by remembrance before and after the Spanish Conquest. In this sense the term 'place' is preferable to others like landscape. Yet, as has been remarked recently, using 'place' in the Mesoamerican context means to include both the terrestrial and non-terrestrial locations (Maffie 2014: 421). Although in Mesoamerican terms a place is thus a meaningful unit that encompasses geographic aspects, human settlements or culturally constructed extraterrestrial locations, it is always time-related, as time and space in the Mesoamerican native view constitute an inseparable entity. Neither time nor space exists *per se* or in the abstract (Arnold 2001: 62, 130; Maffie 2014: 422). Hence, place-situated achievements exist only as time-bounded phenomena and relate to the cosmological cycle, while time-situated achievements are place-oriented within one open-spaced cosmos. As there is no equivalent occidental concept, this might best be understood as the existence of history as the product of space-time.

In a less broad perspective, a settlement becomes controlled by the elite through manipulating rituals at some point in history; thereby the space is simultaneously divided up and access to it is limited. Ancestor veneration, control of water resources or rainmaking are some of the crucial elements that played and still play an important role among the people in the Maya area and in Central Mexico (Lucero 2003; Boone 2000a). By war, marriage and political affairs the ruling dynasties were either bestowed with new places or forced to leave their original place and to settle down in a new territory. A prominent case are the Aztecs who left their homeland Aztlan around the eleventh century in search for a new settlement, later to be known as Tenochtitlan, and who during their pilgrimage transformed themselves into the Mexica on demand of their tutelary god Huitzilopochtli. As Patrick Johansson in this volume (pages 233-253) observes for the Aztecs, the Great Temple in their capital-site Tenochtitlan – devoted to Tlaloc and their chief cult god Huitzilopochtli – is shaped by the accounts of what happened at Mount Coatepetl, the place of his rebirth, during the Aztec pilgrimage when he led them from Aztlan to the promised new homeland. As documented occasionally, the ruling elite or their tutelary gods assigned particular names to the places that were recorded and written down. They constructed their history around these toponyms, gave special emphasis to certain foundational events and named themselves after the location. However, the ritual acts to give a new place a meaning and a foundation for a collective experience vary considerably depending on the cultural background of the group that is going to establish themselves (Zantwijk 1995). As analyzed by Viola König (this volume, pages 159-198) for Central Mexico, regional patterns of how places and landscapes became important seats of power and memory for the newcomers emerge out of Central Mexican migration stories. Although not only migration stories and their ritual acts were important to give meaning to new places, places became related to sacred actions and times and turned into sacred sites endowed with divine spirits and meaningful constructions throughout Mesoamerica. In addition, long established and well-known places were commemorated and strengthened as seats of power and memory by ritual acts. Often the ceremonial center is vividly remembered and constantly experienced precisely by a series of important rituals, as documented in screen-folded pre-Hispanic books. Thus, a place of memory emerges out of rituals constantly renewed and from mythological accounts that act as stimulus for remembrance (Graña-Behrens 2009: 189).

In Central Mexico, the *altepetl* (literally 'water-mountain') unified land and rulership over people, a core concept that the Spaniards later translated as *señorío* (Hodge 1984: 17). Each *altepetl* can be roughly understood as a city-state with its hinterland, governed by its own ruler (*tlatoani*), and divided up into smaller units (*calpolli, tlaxillacalli*). More important city-states could be referred to as *huey altepetl* – 'great altepetl' – and there are several other terms like *tlatocaaltepetl*, meaning that a town is ruled by a king, or

tlatoani or *altepamaitl*, which indicate that a town has 'arms or hands', i.e. other towns depending on it (Carrasco 1996: 27-28). Sites bestowed with rulership had their own history and other sites depended on them, although they were less important than the supreme site itself.

Among the Mixtec a settled place is called *ñuu* and each place name contains this word. In contrast to this general practice, important places result from the marriage of a hereditary lord and a lady and are called *yuhuitayu* (from 'reed mat' and 'seat/pair'). They represent the juncture of separate places (*ñuu*). This means that only places ruled by a royal couple were termed *yuhuitayu* and that the rulership extended to both places of origin until the couple died. This concept survived the Conquest and lasted throughout the Colonial period (Terraciano 2012: 395-396). It differs from the Nahua concept, where only the ruler or *tlatoani* himself is important and the origin of his wife's family did not automatically install him as a ruler over this site. Although there is no equivalent term in the Classic Maya inscriptions, the expression *chan ch'en* ('sky-cave/well') that occasionally follows a place name or appears in the iconographic register of a monument comes close to the Nahua term of *altepetl*. Apart from this, Maya sites can be distinguished by a royal title represented as an emblem glyph. Maya rulership existed long before the Classic period and developed distinctive attributes like receiving a special headband, a scepter, and being seated on a throne of jaguar skin (Houston & Stuart 1996). Most importantly, Classic Maya sites like Tikal, Calakmul or Yaxchilán established their hegemony over the surrounding areas and subjugated other towns (Martin & Grube 2000; Mathews 1991). The success of such politics leads to the distinction that some rulers used an emblem glyph that contains the word *k'uhul*, 'divine', while others did not (Stuart & Houston 1994). Similar to the Nahua case of mountains as indication of an altepetl, the Maya emblem glyph is somehow considered a reference to the city-state, with the emblem referring to the city and not to the territorial unit (Grube 2000: 553). Alternatively, it has been suggested to term it *ahawlel* (or *ajawlel*) (Lacadena & Ciudad Ruiz 1998: 41) according to the Maya word used for rulership. As Peter Biro remarks in this volume (pages 123-158), Maya emblem glyphs are place names and thus have a toponymic character, even though their historical origins may be different. Most importantly, they were the organizational principle of a collective memory for a community inhabited by humans and non-human deities. The analysis by Christophe Helmke and Felix Kupprat (pages 33-83) further supports this idea and makes it clear that one of the most prominent emblem glyphs in the Maya inscription from the K'anul dynasty from Calakmul has a mythological origin and refers to a cave or watery location where the Earth Lords beheaded the Maize God. Thus, like the Aztec in the case of Huitzilopochtli, the Maya at Calakmul selected a portion of the mythological account to highlight an important deity in order to give meaning to a place-name.

While the mythological place was recreated by real architecture in the Aztec case, in the Calakmul case mentioned here it was incorporated and constantly manifested as a royal title. Above and beyond that, the Classic Maya inscriptions reveal a wide arrange of classificatory schemas for toponyms, as analyzed by Sven Gronemeyer (pages 85-122). Not only emblem glyphs, but also locations – both real and fictitious – are mentioned; they show a certain syntax, morphology and semantic, something that has until now been underrepresented, although it seems that their structural variability is smaller compared to those of anthroponomy. Despite helping to gain more insights into the function and meaning of emblem glyphs, approaches as to how to classify the Classic Maya political units, from city-states to regional states, and to understand the territorial organization vary greatly among scholars (Rice 2004: 6-7; Tokovinine 2013: 57). It is also unclear if a ruler's marriage with a lady of another site implied political domination over her site of origin or not (Schele & Mathews 1991).

Taking these native concepts into account, the urban tradition in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica seems less comprehensible if one is using categories like 'regal-ritual', or administrative and mercantile center, just to give some examples (cf. Sanders & Webster 1988: 523). It seems more appropriate to look at how sites are embedded as seats of power and how history and memory shaped their image. Although archaeology provides evidence to reconstruct the structure and organizational principle of such sites, especially the use of space and its change over time (Smith & Schreiber 2006), the subtle message behind these principles cannot be fully grasped. Here hieroglyphic writing and iconography open new perspectives by documenting the most important toponyms in titles together with events or labeling spaces. As Angel Iván Rivera, Maarten Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez (this volume, pages 199-232) show for Mixtec place names in the pre-Hispanic codices, linking toponyms to historical places and their meaning by means of the Mixtec tonal language is an arduous task, albeit a fruitful one if carried out carefully. Thus, they are able to identify the post-Classic archaeological site of Huajuapan in Mixtec codices and also offer clues suggesting that Huajapan was part of a sacred landscape devoted to the cult of a specific goddess.

It is the use and manipulation of place names in writing and iconography by the local elite or groups that manifests how places became seats of power and memory. Although this may be considered propaganda in the political sense (Marcus 1992), from the viewpoint of memory this marks an attempt at distinguishing people or communities far beyond the mere dominance and temporal setting of political groups. In Colonial times, native pictography continued to be used to allow the copying or creation of land documents or maps (Boone 1998). Even today, the past and the ancestors can always become present through written or painted representations (Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2007: 34).

Colonial and contemporary Mesoamerica

With the Spanish Conquest native sites did not lose their history, but they did lose their legitimacy due to the new authority, the Spanish king. The native pattern of reaffirming their places and land rights according to Spanish colonial rules nevertheless goes back to pre-Hispanic times. Thus, the native elite continued to consider the place they formerly controlled autonomous and different from other places, communities, or towns (Lockhart 1982: 369). Since the Spanish Crown allowed indigenous municipal self-administration, albeit under Spanish supervision, and the reclamation of their land, battles over native places and land claims were fought in Spanish courts in New Spain, as the colony came to be named. The objective of all these claims was to restitute or retain land rights of communal or private character (Graña-Behrens 2011a). Most of them served to win land claims against the neighboring native community, to defend the interests of the elite and to memorialize the political affairs and the supremacy of people over land – perhaps with the intention to reutilize these documents after the Spanish or national episode of intervention ended (Smith 1973: 169). However, these claims evoked new strategies for rearranging native history into meaningful episodes for the Spanish authorities. Hundreds of maps known as *Títulos Primordiales* and *Codices Techiayolan* (either on bark, or European paper, or on cotton cloth) with thousands of place names, especially from the Mixtec, Zapotec and Nahua regions, were copied, repainted, carefully rearranged or in many cases re-invented (Arnold 2002; Florescano 2002; Robertson 1975). Some of them, like the so-called *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca*, are of mixed type with alphabetic text and iconographic scenes. Not merely centering on a single place (e.g. Cuauhtinchan), they illustrate the history of a wider region, and the origin of people from different places as well. In the case of the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca*, the document notoriously omits any mention of pre-Hispanic deities, although it does refer to the mythic past of the Chichimeca, a people who inhabited the most northern part of Mesoamerica (Leibsohn 2009: 40).

Place names in the native documents are centered on people and enriched by genealogies of the ruling dynasties, as in the aforementioned *Lienzo de Guevea*. Sometimes Spaniards are highlighted as allies or friends with the mere purpose of retaining the status of being important according to Mesoamerican standards of rulership and alliance. Nonetheless, there are notable differences among them. While the colonial Maya and their political geography have hardly been studied (Roys 1957), the colonial and post-colonial native documents of wider Central Mexico have been of greater interest in the past fifty years. Here, the natives either decided to hide their history from the authorities, like the Mixtec, or openly used it for land claim causes, as in the case of the Zapotec (Romero Frizzi 2012: 97). However, not all documents produced by natives for land claims during the early Colonial period show the same strategy of merging

places, dynasties and history. Thus, the Spanish presence was omitted or highlighted, depending on the underlying aims and self-understandings. Examples for the first group are the *Codex Cotzcatzin* or the *Mapa de Papel Europeo y Aforrado en el Indiano de Cuauhtinchan*, and examples for the second category include the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* or the *Mapa de Cuauhtlantzinco* (Graña-Behrens 2011a; Wood 2003: 78). Like in nation building, forgetting or collective amnesia were used as strategies to rebuild or reshape the place identification. These are the strategies, or at least the reflections of political and historical circumstances employed by the natives, which greatly contributed to the social changes in the communities – either by forcing violence or by slowing down the process of transformation (Gruzinski 1991: 83-84; Martínez 1984: 185).

Among the colonial Maya from Central Mexico, there is no analogous strategy of reaffirming place-bound power and memory by copying, composing or inventing pictorial documents in the form of the *Titulos Primordiales* or *Codices Techialoyan* in order to retain land rights. At least among the Maya from the Peninsula of Yucatan, this might be a reflection of differences in the nature of place and land concepts. Prior to the Spanish Conquest and especially among the Nahuatl-speaking people in Central Mexico, there existed several forms of land possession, depending on the collective operating with them (Gibson 1964: 267; Harvey 1984: 84); the Maya considered only the individual house and adjacent gardens and the more remote fields in the bush to be important (Restall 1997: 206, 210). While Central Mexican pictorial manuscripts, like the *Lienzo Guevea* or several maps from Cuauhtinchan – just to mention two of them – show the principal place surrounded by other real or mythological places that mark the wider landscape, Yucatecan sources written alphabetically in Maya center only on the town with its trees, well, patio and plazas as symbolic expression and seat of political power (Restall 2001: 347). Hence, they refer more to the former seat of a royal court and later to that of the native municipal administration or palace than to the political and ethnic distinctiveness of the town and its people, as is the case in Central Mexico. The Maya town thus ended abruptly where the forest began, in contrast to the wider landscape embedded in Central Mexican documents. Another difference is that land among the Maya is marked or specified mostly by tree names, whereas in Central Mexico stone markers were used. Although this is still understudied, farming land for individual use could have been more important to the Maya than communal plots (Restall 1997: 208). However, the plots for farming (mainly maize and beans) were often far from the village. Hence, unlimited access to and the unrestricted use of the forest or bush were important. From this perspective, the so-called cast war on the Yucatan Peninsula during the second half of the nineteenth century was not only a struggle between rebelling Maya and the Mexican authorities over tax increases, but on a deeper level about a threat to peasant and communal autonomy (Reed 1964; Rugeley 1996). Peasant Maya first armed with

tools and later with rifles provided by Englishmen from Belize fought to gain a degree of territorial autonomy, mostly in what is the present-day estate of Quintana Roo. At the same time, they established shrines devoted to a living cross that spoke to them and supported their resistance in a mostly peaceful fashion after a few years of intensive armed fighting. These shrines mark a sacred landscape even today, although it has become overrun by tourism at the Caribbean coast. One of their demands was the unrestricted use of the forest or bush land and the use of their fields (Gónzalez Navarro 1979: 94).

The Spanish Conquest and period initiated a process of the reevaluation of sites and a new constellation based on the politics of the colonial authorities. Sites like ChololIan (modern Cholula), Texcoco or Tzintzuntzan lost their religious and political importance, while others like Tenochtitlan or Merida (Ti Ho) continued to be important to the Spanish administration. At the same time places like Antigua (Guatemala), Cuernavaca, Guanajuato, Morelia, Oaxaca, Puebla, Queretaro, San Cristobal de las Casas, Taxco, Zacatecas (all Mexico) or Tegucigalpa (Honduras) were founded by the Spaniards and transformed the Mesoamerican landscape in ways that have scarcely been investigated. Other native places were converted into *lieux de memoire* by the brutal interruption or suppression of rituals or customs whose meaning became newly arranged for the sole purpose of retaining collective identification with the past. Such a process can be seen in the native documents of Cuauhtinchan, Tlaxcala and Coixtlahuaca (Graña-Behrens 2011b: 123). Still other sites like Tenochtitlan were refurnished and re-used, first for Spanish purposes of power and hegemony, then for constructing the post-colonial Mexican state. Although it was designed to express the glorious past, the use of the eagle on the cactus, the original foundation symbol of the Mexica (or Aztecs) on the modern Mexican flag ultimately stands for the political elite's misinterpretation of the country's cultures, their places and identities then and now.

As in the pre-Hispanic period, places underwent transformations and redefinitions in the Colonial period and beyond. An ancient name or its hieroglyphic signs could change in one of two ways. It could have been changed either through corruptive Spanish pronunciation, writing, or misinterpretation or by different native sets of explication or additional information given for a particular place. In most cases, however, the original meaning was not completely lost, so that the memory of the place is preserved in its name. Cholula, which has the biggest pyramid constructed by pre-Hispanic peoples, is an example for both forms, being a pilgrimage site where lords from the Mixteca and elsewhere were bestowed as kings by the local priests and the feathered serpent was venerated. Although its original pre-Hispanic name is not attested in documents of that time, early colonial native texts speak of Chollollan, but mention other names related to the site as well, like the one for its great pyramid (Tlachihualtepetl). Spanish sources corrupted Chollollan, which led perhaps to the modern denomination Cholula. According-

ing to different colonial and modern interpretations, it could mean either 'place where water flows' or 'water that flows' or "place of those who fled or place where they fled" (Ashwell 2002-2003: 39). While the first interpretation points to an ancient natural name, the second one suggests more a mythic or historic event that may have been of importance later.

A second form implies that a place name could be enriched with different connotations, as in the case of the site of Cuauhtinchan. Its place glyph, which is mentioned in the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* among other documents, appears to be associated either with military ambitions, with emphasis on its founders or with internal divisions, which suggests that different political identities existed and have been remembered over a longer period (Leibsohn 2009: 50). Similarly, the pictography for the Zapotec site or town of Guevea, which had already been reported and displayed on several maps elaborated during the early Colonial period, not only differs with regard to the signs involved, but also in terms of the associated meaning, which ranges from "hill with mushrooms" to "hill with leaves" to the "hill with arrows" already discussed (Oudijk 2000: 5).

Besides changes in the place name or etymology, another kind of transformation is how memory and power of places changed due to the Spanish Conquest and the historical circumstances that followed. Here, the transformation and remembrance of places as seats of memory and power varies as well. One example of how an indigenous village was transformed through Spanish settlement politics without losing its ancient memory about the place and the rights to rule is Momostenango, a K'iche town in the Highlands of Guatemala, which was originally called Chwa Tz'ak. After the Spanish Conquest it retained most of its late post-Classic boundaries and settlement arrangements as the head town of the pre-Hispanic province became the colonial center of Momostenango. At least two pre-Hispanic district towns were recognized by the Spanish authorities as secondary political centers (Carmack 1995: 29-33; 1998: 332). As a written document by the ruling elite from Momostenango for the Spanish officials in 1558 states, the province or 'lordship' (in K'iche *ajawarem*) was the most important corporative group that structured Momostenango society (Carmack 1995: 29). What the document clarifies as well is that the overall social and political structure in relation to land was engendered by genealogy and an ancestor cult that continued to be of importance for the administration of the colonial town of Momostenango and the ancient province. This seemed not to have changed substantially when the town center was moved from the pre-Hispanic location to the present-day location of Momostenango a few kilometers away after 1590 (Carmack 1995: 53-56). Even after the loss of land to neighboring communities in the course of the nineteenth century and despite a modern municipal administration at the end of the twentieth century, traditional authorities and structures still operate and are intimately related to the ancient places, sacred mountains, and the boundaries of ham-

lets closely identified with the lineages, although they are not without internal tensions (Carmack 1995: 56, 135, 277-229, 296).

Another illustrative example is the town of Anenecuilco in the modern state of Morelos in Central Mexico. The place's history and memory shaped local identity according to different circumstances, although in a different manner than in Momostenango. While founded as *pueblo de indios* a few miles from a pre-Hispanic place of the same name in the sixteenth century, it needed to be connected to the past. As the Spanish authorities initiated a process of land grants to communities (*merced de tierras*) in the early seventeenth century, a legal Spanish document alongside a map in the style of a primordial title was created. This act is considered to be the town's foundational act. As the circumstances changed, the inhabitants of Anenecuilco repeatedly tried to gain access to these and other documents at the end of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, first by reclaiming them from the Spanish Crown and later from the Mexican government (the National Archive in Mexico City). The reason for such attempts was a sugar-cane mill established against the will of the people of Anenecuilco on their community land (Hernández Chávez 1993: 25-27). Incidents like this and similar cases still occur in modern Mexico, especially in Central Mexico, where places from pre-Hispanic times exist alongside settlements created by the Spanish Crown. As Ethelia Ruiz Medrano remarks in her seminal paper (this volume, pages 255-274) about present-day Nahuatl-speaking people from the town of Atliaca in the state of Guerrero, people are still willing to defend communal land claims which go back to either late pre-Hispanic, Colonial or modern assignment. They use and reshape local history according to their needs and circumstances to this end, drawing on testimonials like cave rituals or ancient books or codices. As in many other areas in modern Mexico and especially Central Mexico, communal land remains an important issue for smaller villages with inhabitants still heavily invested in or dependent on traditional crop farming. Their struggle for communal land and their strategy to access the history of their village by means of remembrance makes clear that they consider the village to be a dynamic, 'living' place, not an ossified entity. Thus, there is a double strategy behind the struggle for claiming their land rights: it means to connect the past with the present, ancient with modern life. This is what John Monaghan (this volume, pages 275-290) shows when he insists that the building of churches in several towns in the Mixteca region in Central Mexico after their inhabitants were able to purchase land from local patrons or *caciques* in the late nineteenth and during the twentieth century is nothing more than a program to enter modernity. Thus, communal land plus a newly constructed church, or conversely, the destruction of a church by neighboring villages, recall on the one hand the pattern of power and memory so important in ancient times, and fit on the other hand with the Spanish understanding of what a village needs to possess

in order to be recognized as a town or place of importance. In this sense, certain Mixtec villages entered modernity directly by artificially evoking foundational events from the Colonial period, like the construction of a church that political authorities have long recognized as a criterion entitling people and places with rights and distinction. But new political circumstances have also opened up new possibilities for indigenous people to reshape places and connect them to the present through remembrance.

Last but not least, modern cities like Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey (all in Mexico) or Guatemala City (Guatemala), just to mention the most densely populated and expansive urban centers in Mesoamerica which today are nurtured and confronted by capitalism and globalization, are widely recognized as the most important memory models for modernity, although this means at the same time that within the national boundaries inequality between these cities and the hinterland is increasing (Azuara Monter, Huffschmid & Cerda García 2011: 29). However, the multi-ethnic and historical recognition of people is a growing concern that affects small villages and mega-cities alike and contrasts with the dominating discourse of the modern city as a place-model of modernity since the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in September 2007. So the metropolitan zone of the Valley of Mexico which encompasses Mexico City and the surrounding state of Mexico is said to be the living space for 358 *pueblos originarios* or *pueblos indígenas* (Correa Ortiz 2011: 199). The terms *pueblos originarios* or *pueblos indigenas* indicate to people that they constitute a minority within the larger national population today and inhabit a territory that has roots going back to pre-Hispanic times (Noack 2011: 147). Hence, within the metropolitan zones and mega-cities, places are reevaluated in the light of politics and memory as the original people adapt constantly to new circumstances and needs. This has implications for how native people transform their socio-political unities and how this correlates to place (Correa Ortiz 2011: 207-208).

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Where Snakes Abound: Supernatural Places of Origin and Founding Myths in the Titles of Classic Maya Kings

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Abstract: Emblem glyphs functioned as exalted regal titles that incorporated place names, some of which refer to primordial locations and the settings of mythic events. The title *k'uhul kanu'l ajaw*, 'godly Kanu'l king', most prominently borne by the Late Classic rulers of Calakmul, is one of these supernatural emblem glyphs. Evidence from hieroglyphic texts on Late Classic ceramics suggests that the toponym *kanu'l* names a cave where the defeat, death and resurrection of the Maize God took place. By incorporating this place name in their regal title, kings of the Classic period (AD 250-950) emulated and fostered ties to events set in deep-time and legitimated their claim for divinity.

Keywords: epigraphy; iconography; emblem glyphs; toponyms; Classic Maya.

Resumen: Los glifos emblema sirvieron como distinguidos títulos reales que incorporaron nombres de lugares, algunos de los cuales se refieren a ubicaciones primordiales y a los escenarios de eventos míticos. Uno de estos glifos emblema sobrenaturales es el título k*'uhul kanu'l ajaw*, 'señor divino de Kanu'l', el cual fue portado por los gobernantes de Calakmul en el Clásico tardío. La evidencia de los textos jeroglíficos en vasijas del Clásico tardío sugiere que el topónimo *kanu'l* denomina a una cueva donde sucedió la derrota, la muerte y la resurrección del dios del maíz. Al integrar el nombre de este lugar en su título real, los reyes del Clásico (250-950 d. C.) emulaban y fomentaban sus vínculos con ciertos eventos del tiempo profundo y legitimaban su demanda a la divinidad.

Palabras clave: epigrafía; iconografía; glifos emblema; topónimos; mayas; periodo clásico.

Introduction

Ever since the ground-breaking discovery of toponyms in Classic Maya texts (c. AD 250-950), it has been known that supernatural localities occupied a privileged position in ancient Maya narratives (Stuart & Houston 1994: 69-80). As to why so many supernatural places are named in the texts, can be explained by the paramount importance of myths in human societies, and the Maya are no exception in this regard. At their most elemental, all myths can be grouped under four major functional headings. The first

views myths as a means of preserving the memory of an event, or series of events, be they historic or allegedly so. In time and with the distortive effects of oral recitation, the events develop into fantastic stories. The second includes myths that serve to explain the advent of certain features of the human world, including social organisation, traditions, rituals and taboos, but also the physiography of valleys, mountains, streams and caves, or even the physical appearance of animals; why some, for example, have long tails and other short ones, why the vulture is bald and why the jaguar has spots. The third category serves to shape and instil moral and ethical values, providing stories wherein right is pitted against wrong. As a didactic means of explaining what something is, by what it is not, trickster tales abound in Amerindian folklore, wherein a supernatural figure – often a shape-shifter – gets involved in predicaments due to antagonistic and asocial behaviour, which are often diametrically opposed to the cultural values of the narrator. By means of humour and antithesis the younger generation is imparted with the moral and ethical values of their society. Finally, the fourth takes into consideration the role of myths in the legitimation of power and the development or maintenance of social inequality. Thus, myths can explain the distinct and in some cases divine origin of those in power and also the necessity of unequal social structure and differential relations.

Whereas these headings provide a framework for understanding the functions of myths, they do little to emphasise the importance of the constituent elements of such narratives, involving at their most basic, the actors, events, timeframe and places where the actions take place. Although most scholars tend to focus on the actors and the events, the supernatural localities of mythological narratives remain resignedly understudied, and it is on precisely such toponyms that we focus here, especially the places that are incorporated into regal titles, known as 'emblem glyphs' (hereafter abbreviated as EG). When Heinrich Berlin (1958) described the structure of EGs for the first time, he recognised that they are composed of two elements – today known to be read as *k'uhul*[1] 'god-like,

1 In this paper, the first level of analysis of glyphs, the transliteration, which represents the way in which glyphic segments are originally written, are rendered in bold typeface, with logograms written in uppercase and phonograms (vocalic signs and syllabograms) in lowercase. Square brackets [...] mark infixed signs, whereas braces {...} are used for reconstructed graphemes. The second level of analysis, the transcription, which provides the assumed pronunciation, or reading, of particular segments, is written in lowercase and in italic typeface. At this level of analysis square brackets mark reconstructed elements not originally rendered in a given segment. Proper names, including anthroponyms, ethnonyms, theonyms and toponyms are rendered in Roman typeface with initial capital letter. Considering the focus of this paper on toponyms, it is at times necessary to morphologically segment and analyse a given toponym. In such cases these are rendered phonemically in forward slashes /.../ and in lowercase italics. Italic typeface is otherwise also used for emphasis and to render foreign terms, especially those from Latin, Spanish and Nawatl, not found in standard English. Single quotes '...' are used for glosses as well as literal and direct translations, leaving double quotes "..." for quotations and "so-called" instances. In spelling Maya terms, we follow the orthography formulated and endorsed by the Academy of the Mayan Languages of Guatemala, with the exception of [ɓ], which is phonemically represented as /b/.

divine' and *ajaw* 'lord, king' – and one variable main sign that changes according to the site under scrutiny. While most researchers associate EGs with socio-political institutions and territorial organisation (Mathews 1991a; see also Freidel 1986; Marcus 1976), it was initially thought that these signs "seem to refer to something closely associated with each place; it could, for example, concern the very name of each locality, of a tutelary deity, of a dynasty, etc." (Berlin 1958: 111, translation ours). With the discovery of toponyms proper (Stuart & Houston 1994), it has become clear that the main signs of many EGs record toponyms, but that many archaeological sites were equally known by other names than those recorded in the EGs. This allowed scholars to recognise that EGs constitute, first and foremost, the exalted title of royalty, in essence providing a dynastic name, and that the toponyms occurring outside of EGs are place names properly-speaking. In combing through the glyphic corpus and attempting to match these toponyms up with earthly locales, one finds that several instead involve supernatural toponyms (Helmke 2011; Helmke 2012a). Thus, while some EGs appear to refer to actual locations in the natural and physical world, in other cases no historical events are known to have transpired there. The most convincing cases are those wherein the toponym appears widely in mythological texts, such as Matwiil that is referred to so often in the texts of Palenque, which is tied to supernatural entities in the deep past, before the present creation (Helmke 2012a: 95-100; Stuart & Houston 1994: 75-77). In addition, the toponyms of the two EGs associated with the Yaxchilan dynasty can both be related to mythological events. The first, read Pa'chan (*/pa'-chan/*, 'broken-sky') is tied to the myth recounting the defeat of a great celestial bird at the hands of the Hero Twins, and the toponym seems to name the place where the bird descended from the heavens, and where it was ultimately vanquished (Helmke 2012a: 100-107). The second, although it remains undeciphered in its reading, is closely tied with mythological events before and at the time of the last creation, involving long-lived rulers from a dynasty with a bafflingly long line of successors, as well as being connected to the supreme celestial deity, God D, who is somehow involved, if not responsible for the demise of the Maize God (Helmke 2012a: 107-115).

Although it may strike the reader as odd to think that the ancient Maya kings bore titles incorporating the names of distant mythological places, this certainly was the case. Indeed, even a quick foray has identified a whole series of other EGs that appear to be of mythological origin (Grube 2002a; Helmke 2012a: 117-119). Here we will continue the investigation of supernatural EGs and focus on just one toponymic main sign, that of the so-called Snake-head EG, for which some suggestive data exists to propose that it may be of mythological origin as well (Helmke 2012a: 117-118). We will analyse the appearance of this place name in the different contexts in which it occurs, throughout the Maya area, in order to reconstruct the mythological narratives that are tied to this particular toponym. The most important sources for this enterprise are two groups of Late Classic iconographic

programmes, namely the so-called 'confrontation scenes' and the Holmul Dancer scenes, both rendered on a series of exceptional ceramic serving vessels, including vases and dishes. By determining the role of the Snake-head toponym in these iconographic programmes we not only shed light on the origins of main signs included in EGs, but also exemplify the discursive functions of mythological scenes as represented on ceramic media.

Our analysis will deal with symbolic spaces, which is to say, places and landscapes that have a meaning and trigger shared, or collective, memories of past events. The power of toponyms, at the mere utterance of their name, to conjure up events that transpired there is truly remarkable (Helmke 2012a: 92, 116-117). However, as with any recall of information, a relationship between the greater conceptual referent and the compact symbolic reference first has to be established and imparted. This relationship can be termed the narrative precedent, wherein an explanation or story serves to better imbue meaning to a given symbolic referent, and toponyms function in precisely the same way. One of the first to point out the function of landscapes as *mnemotopes* was Halbwachs (1941) who realised an extensive study of the symbolic landscape of the Holy Land. Since then, much of the research on the relation between memory and space has focused on physical landscapes and their conversion into cultural symbols of historic episodes (Assmann 1999: 298-339; Meusburger, Heffernan & Wunder 2011). In this chapter we part from a very distinct premise since we do not know where the place in question was located, or if it was thought to be located in the tangible and physical world. Therefore, we cannot study the interaction of the social world with a physical space; on the contrary, we depend on the discursive and emic conception of the location, which is only preserved and conveyed to us in texts and contextualised by graphic representations. In consequence, the places treated in this chapter are not commemoration sites, but they are projections of memories per se, since they only exist in mythological narratives and their reflections in Classic Mayan society.

The narratives that concern us here reflect events of a distant or foundational past in which cultural realities were shaped and the cosmogonic order established. In comparative theoretical terms we can speak of 'deep-time' (Bierhorst 1985; Bierhorst 1988; Bierhorst 1990), or 'cultural memory' (Assmann 1992; Assmann 1995), on the whole equivalent concepts, set in opposition to the recent 'historical past' or 'communicative memory', respectively.[2] By treating myth as a type of social memory it is possible to

2 Some authors, instead, prefer to speak of 'mythical' and 'historical' past. However, these terms are culturally biased, since a 'historical' narrative purports to reflect objective reality, whereas a 'mythical' narrative conveys emic and idiosyncratic beliefs. We consider it erroneous to equate accounts of the recent past with historical reliability, since recall sensitivity can only be evaluated by the method of source critique and by a clear evaluation of the information storage technology that is employed. However, for our purposes we require more descriptive terms, which are more sympathetic to emic conceptions, and therefore prefer to use the above mentioned terminology.

notice its dynamic structure. In the same way in which an individual's memory is a subjective recreation of past events, determined by social circumstance and discursive goals (Halbwachs 1925), myths change with every reproduction and adapt to the necessities of those who control and reiterate them. Of course, cultural memory – to which myth belongs – is usually highly canonised and specialised, so that it is less susceptible to change and develops more slowly and gradually than other informal genres of communicative memory, such as eye-witness accounts, gossip, or hearsay (Assmann 1992: 48-56, 87-103). Nevertheless, cultural memory is functional (Assmann 1999: 138-139), and in the following discussion it will become clear how mythological elements were used to legitimate rulers of the Classic period and their claim to divinity, by drawing on each of the basic functions of myths.

The Snake-head emblem glyph

The Snake-head EG is quite simply the most widely cited EG in the entire corpus of Classic Maya texts. While there are still discussions about the Early Classic and even Preclassic origins of this dynastic title (Grube 2004; Guenter n.d.; Hansen, Howell & Guenter 2008: 56-60; Martin 1997; Martin 2004; Martin & Grube 2000: 102-104; Nalda 2004; Velásquez García 2008a), the earliest contemporary examples of the Snake-head EG are found at Dzibanche and the sites of El Resbalón, Yo'okop, Los Alacranes and Pol Box in Quintana Roo, Mexico (Carrasco & Boucher 1987; Esparza Olguín & Pérez Gutiérrez 2009; Grube 2005; Martin 1997: 861; Velásquez García 2004). In addition, one of the earliest potential examples has been found at the site of La Muerta in the Mirador region of the Peten, Guatemala (Suyuc *et al.* 2005: 78-79, 81). It is equally clear that during the Late Classic period (c. AD 600-800) this title was employed by a series of rulers established at Calakmul (as first proposed by Marcus 1973, see also Marcus 1987; Martin 2005). The Early Classic references to the Snake-head EG at Dzibanche and the corresponding absence of the title at Calakmul have prompted researchers to suggest that Dzibanche was the Early Classic seat of the Snake-head dynasty, which ultimately relocated to Calakmul sometime after the turn of the sixth century (Martin 2005: Fig. 1. Fig. 6; Martin & Grube 2008: 103-106; Velásquez García 2008a; Velásquez García 2008b). That this EG was transferred from one site, to another, over the course of the Classic period demonstrates that even though EGs incorporate toponyms, these did not function as toponymic references per se, but are first and foremost titular expressions referring to the exalted ruling elite and dynastic lineages (Helmke 2012a: 93-94; Helmke & Awe 2008: 70-75). However, while it is by now well-known that many if not most EGs are built up on toponyms, this nevertheless needs to be demonstrated on a case-by-case basis, rather than inherently assumed. Below we provide evidence to demonstrate that the main sign of the Snake-head EG is indeed a toponym.

Let us begin with the archaeological site of Calakmul, a site of profound paradoxes. For one, it is among the largest archaeological sites in Mesoamerica and commensurate with its size, the ancient rulers oversaw the erection of at least 117 monolithic monuments (Marcus 1987; Morley 1933; Ruppert & Denison 1943). Despite this staggering number, the glyphic corpus of Calakmul is that which represents the smallest fraction of preserved texts, for any site in the Maya area. Thus, only a handful of examples of the regal Snake-head emblem have been documented at Calakmul itself. To blame is the local limestone, which is soft, porous and friable. Centuries of downpours and tropical growth have extensively weathered, toppled and broken these monuments, with sculptural details and associated texts remaining as nothing but faint outlines (Marcus 1987: 195-197; Martin & Grube 2000: 101; Morley 1933; Ruppert & Denison 1943). Consequently, apart from Dzibanche and the sites of Quintana Roo, the majority of references to Snake-head rulers are found outside of Calakmul itself, at surrounding sites such as Uxul and El Palmar, among others (Grube 2008; Grube *et al.* 2012; Tsukamoto; López Camacho & Esparza Olguín 2010), and from a wide array of distant sites, including Edzna, Palenque, Moral-Reforma, Piedras Negras, Yaxchilan, La Corona, El Perú, Tikal, Naranjo, Holmul, Caracol, Dos Pilas, Seibal, Cancuen, Quirigua, as well as Copan, and possibly La Milpa (Estrada-Belli 2013; Grube 1994: Fig. 3b; Martin 2003; Martin & Grube 1994; Martin & Grube 2000; Pallán Gayol 2009: 265-268). This wide collection of sites is truly astounding and to this we should also add the foreign mentions made to the two principal toponyms of Calakmul, namely Chikunaahb[3] (/*chiku-naahb*/, 'coati

3 The toponym written **chi-ku-NAB** poses problems in its transcription. For starters we prefer to see the final term 'pool, lagoon, *aguada*' transcribed as *naahb*, with a long vowel due to the occasional phonetic complementation of this term with **-bi**. Particularly revealing cases from the fallen stuccoes of Temple 18 at Palenque spell the same term as **NAH-bi** (n. 438, 450, 514), using the logogram 'house' **NAH** by means of rebus, here demonstrating the presence of the post-vocalic glottal fricative /h/, a reflex of the proto-Mayan *najb (Brown & Wichmann 2004: 174; Kaufman 2003: 429). One might be tempted at first sight, to view **chi-ku** as an example of disharmonic spelling, thereby prompting the transcription *chi'ik ~ chi'k* 'coati' (Kaufman 2003: 581; Lacadena & Wichmann 2004: 142). Nevertheless, bearing in mind that the lexeme is a loanword from proto-Mije-Soke *tziku 'coati' (Boot 2010: 138-139; Campbell & Kaufman 1976: 87) it seems more plausible to view the Classic Maya spelling as an attempt to represent an open syllable term, in a language that is characterised by closed syllable structure. Supporting this claim is the Chontal form attested as /*aj-chiku*/, 'AG-mapache' (Keller & Luciano 1997: 13), duplicating the case at hand and confirming the incidence of the terminal vowel in a Ch'olan language. The deeper meaning of Chikunaahb – 'coati pool', or more probably 'coati *aguada*' – remains still unknown. Whereas it was long thought that the large reservoir or *aguada* to the north of Calakmul was the reference of Chikunaahb (Martin & Grube 2000: 106), there is now some evidence to suggest that this toponym designated the North Acropolis of the epicentre of Calakmul (Carrasco Vargas & Bojalil 2005; Vázquez López 2006: 107-108).

aguada') and Uxte'tuun[4] (/*ux-te'-tuun*/, 'three-NC-stones') (Martin 1997: 852; Tokovinine 2007: 19, 20; Tokovinine 2008: 99-104). Both toponyms were cited at Dos Pilas, Naranjo, La Corona and Cancuen, but Chikunaahb was also mentioned, farther afield, at Tonina, and Quirigua. This can hardly be compared to the next runner-up, the toponym of Tikal (Mutu'l), which was referred to by as many as thirteen sites, whereas the toponyms contained within the EGs of both Palenque (Baake'l) and Yaxchilan (Pa'chan), in comparison, were only cited at seven sites (Tokovinine 2007: 21). Yet these are the sites that figure most prominently in the epigraphic record, making clear the significance and extent of the influence that the Snake-head kings exerted across the Maya area.

As with other EGs, the Snake-head emblem is composed of the characteristic logograms **K'UH** and **AJAW** and features a distinctive emblematic main sign, in this case the eponymous head of a snake (Coe 1978: 28; Marcus 1973: 912; Marcus 1976: 9; Martin 1997: 851-852; Martin 2005) (Figure 1a). In its most basic form the Snake-head EG can thus be read as *k'uhul* 'snake' *ajaw*, or 'godly snake king'. Whereas in other contexts the head of the snake typically functions as the logogram **CHAN** 'snake' (T764) (Davoust 1995: 603; Justeson 1984: 357; Kaufman & Norman 1984: 89, 117), there are instances wherein the same logogram receives an initial, or prefixed, phonetic complement **ka-** (Grube 2010: 31), cueing the spelling **ka-KAN** and the reading *kan*. The main sign of the Snake-head EG is one of these cases that regularly receives an initial **ka-** phonetic complement, to such an extent that it can be deemed a diagnostic trait (Figure 1a). The same snake head logogram thus functions to convey two variants of the word for 'snake', a more standard Classic Ch'olan lexeme *chan* that has already undergone the *k* > *ch* palatisation sound change (Houston, Robertson & Stuart 2000; Lacadena & Wichmann 2002), and a more archaic form *kan*, which deviates from the standard pronunciation, and therefore requires initial phonetic complementation.[5] Earlier researchers puzzled over the spelling of the velar form *kan*, and attempted to link it to vernacular Yukatek forms *kaan* ~ *kàan* or even with the proto-Maya forms *kaan ~ *kaahn (Bastarrachea, Yah Pech & Briceño Chel 1992: 25, 94; Bricker, Po'ot Yah & Dzul de Po'ot 1998: 122; Brown & Wichmann 2004: 134, 145, 171; Gómez Navarrete 2005: 33; Grube 2004: 119; Grube 2010: 31-32; Justeson *et al.* 1985: 19; Kaufman 2003: 636; Kaufman & Norman 1984: 89, 117; Lacadena & Wichmann 2002: 312; Martin 2005: 5, n. 2).

4 The toponym Uxte'tuun can be deemed to be a trigger for cultural memory. Uxte'tuun is probably related to the first hearth that was established at the creation event on 13.0.0.0.0. There might have existed a specific place within the ancient city of Calakmul that served to emulate this primordial place, although it has not been identified at present.

5 The same pattern can be seen in the spellings of the logograms for 'earth' and 'sky', **CHAB** and **CHAN** or **CHA'AN**, respectively in standard Classic Ch'olan. The palatised, or palato-alveolar reflexes do not receive initial phonetic complements, whereas the velar forms *kab* and *kan* ~ *ka'an* tend to be written **ka-ba**, **ka-KAB** and **ka-KAN** ~ **KA'AN**.

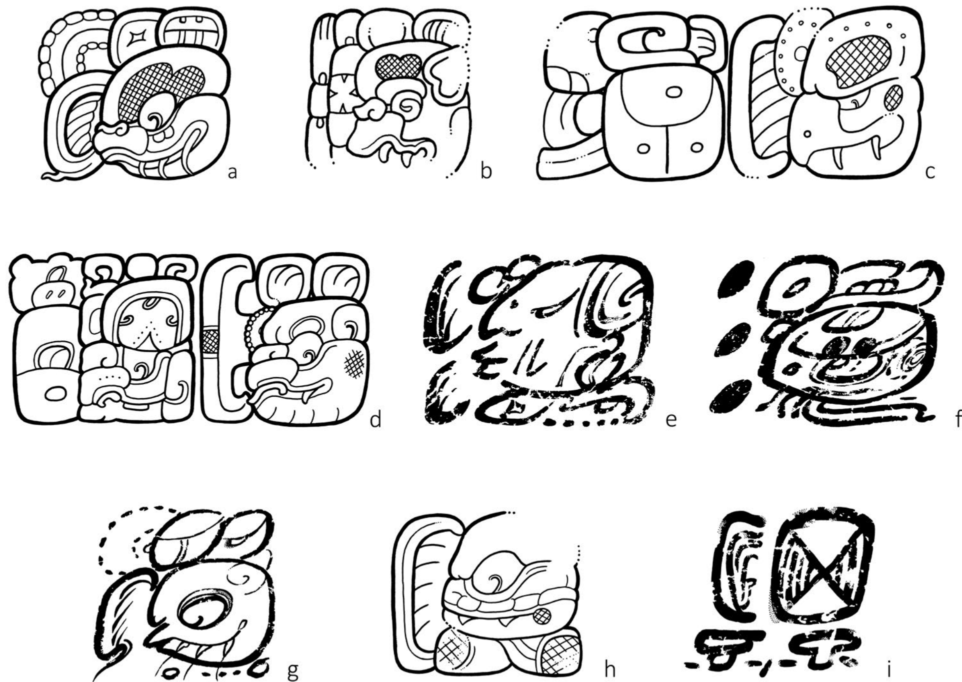


Figure 1. The Snake-head main sign in various contexts: *a)* The Snake-head EG (La Corona, HSB, Monument 15). Anthroponyms involving Kan: *b)* K'ihnich Kan Bahlam III of Palenque (Pomona, St. 7, verso), *c)* Ahne'l Kan (Jonuta Panel). *d)* The supernatural entity Yax Chit Juun Witz' Nah Kan (Pomona, Pan. 1). *e)* The toponym Kana' paired off with *f)* the toponym Uxte'tuun (details of vase K1457). *g)* The Snake-head sign in an EG written **ka-KAN-la** (K1344); *h)* The Snake-head sign involved in a collocation written **ka-KAN-nu** (Copan, St. 13); *i)* Complete phonetic spelling **ka-nu-la** (K1901) (drawings by Christophe Helmke).

Despite these hypotheses it is most likely that the spellings involving the voiceless velar stop [k] reflect an earlier Greater Ch'olan (proto-Ch'olan-Tzeltalan) form that subsisted in deferential contexts, such as 1) the names of the nobility, including K'ihnich Kan Bahlam of Palenque, Ixk'awiil Kan of Tonina, or Ahne'l Kan of Jonuta (Figure 1b-c), 2) the theonyms of certain supernatural entities such as the Yax Chit Juun Witz' Nah Kan (e.g. Pomona, Pan. 1, pL1; Yaxchilan, HS2, Step 7, R4) (Figure 1d) as well as 3) toponyms, which are characteristically conservative and resilient. That this is the case with the Snake-head EG is substantiated by two clear phonetic spellings rendered on vase

K1457 wherein the usual snake head is replaced with **ka-na**, cueing the reading *kan*, rather than the putative forms with long vowel or falling tone (Figure 1e).

It is precisely these lines of evidence that allow us to ascertain that the main sign of the Snake-head EG records a toponym. In the example just cited, the phonetic spellings actually record **ka-na-a**, yielding /*kan-a'*/, 'snake-water' (Figure 1e) including a well-known toponymic suffix, naming a variety of bodies of water, including springs, streams and lakes. This suffix is also seen in place names such as Yaxa' (/*yax-a'*/, 'blue.green-water'), Ik'a' (/*ik'-a'*/, 'wind-water'), and Uxwitza' (/*ux-witz-a'*/, 'three-mountain-water'), the ancient names of the archaeological sites of Yaxha, Motul de San José and Caracol, respectively (Helmke 2009: 196; Stuart & Houston 1994: 5, 7, 27-28, 52-53; Zender 2005). This *-a'* suffix is thought to attest to a Preclassic Yukatekan stratum that was originally present in the central lowlands, whereas toponyms including the allomorph *-ha'* reflect the later spread of Ch'olan during the first millennium BC, resulting in the displacement of Yukatekan populations to the northern lowlands (Kaufman 1976; Zender 2005).[6] As such the toponym Kana' would seem to attest to the great antiquity of this place name. The same Kana' toponym occurs in a controlled occurrence since it is paired off with **3-TE'-TUN-ni**, *uxte'tuun*, the primary toponym of Calakmul (Grube 2005: 96-97; Martin 1997: 852; Martin 2005; Stuart & Houston 1994: 28-29) (Figure 1f). As such there can be little doubt that **ka-na-a** is a purely phonetic spelling of the toponym that is usually rendered in abbreviated form as **ka-KAN**. Aside from these exceptional examples, the main sign of the Snake-head EG is occasionally written **ka-KAN-la**, or even **KAN-la**, accompanied by a syllabogram **-la** in final position (Figure 1g). Although it is difficult to ascertain the intervening vowel, it is clear that this syllabogram serves to spell a *-Vl* suffix. Comparing this and other similar toponyms to attested colonial forms, Lacadena & Wichmann (n.d.: 22) have proposed that the missing vowel should be [u], providing the toponymic suffix *-u'l*, which designates localities wherein a particular qualifying feature occurs in abundance (Lacadena & Wichmann n.d.: 21-28). Thus, the colonial and modern forms Canul, San Juan Acul, Motul de San José and Motul de Carrillo Puerto, appear to be reflexes of Classic period toponyms Kanu'l, Ahku'l and Mutu'l, reflecting also the start and end points of the suffix's evolution (i.e. *-u'l* > *-uul* > *-ul*). These toponyms occur in a variety of spellings

6 Alexandre Tokovinine (pers. comm. 2013) suggests that this suffix could function as an agentive or *gentilicio*, to be understood as part of 'person of …' constructions, rather than toponymic suffixes in their own right. The most supportive example is that found in the text of the Tablet of the Foliated Cross at Palenque wherein a coronation (lit. *k'al-huun* 'paper-fastening') is written, rather unusually as **u-K'AL-HUN-a**. Nevertheless, the example in question may be the inflection for the active voice of non-CVC transitive verbs (which take a Set A or ergative pronominal prefix and an *-a* suffix) and it is highly significant that all other examples of *-a'* in Classic Maya writing appear as suffixes to toponyms, including even the name of a mythic ballcourt Ux Ahaal Ehb ('three conquest stair').

including: 1) the fully-phonetic **a-ku-la** > *a[h]ku'l*, 2) what can be termed truncated logographic **AK-la** > *a[h]k[u]'l*, and 3) underspellings **a-ku** > *a[h]ku['l]* (Lacadena & Wichmann n.d.: 21). The same paradigm is attested for Kanu'l, with a predominance of truncated logographic spellings **ka-KAN-la**. Possible examples of underspellings, such as **ka-KAN-nu** > *kanu['l]*, are also attested (Figure 1h), although these may cue and be fixed to spelling the name of the Teotihuacan War Serpent (Simon Martin, pers. comm. 2013). However, it is a unique and fully-phonetic example written **ka-nu-la** that betrays the phonetic constituents of the toponym and confirms the incidence of the *-u'l* suffix (Dmitri Beliaev pers. comm. 2007) (Figure 1i).[7] As such there can be little doubt that in most cases the toponym of the Snake-head EG was read Kanu'l /kan-u'l/, with the meaning '(where) snakes-abound'. But, how are we to resolve that in some instances the toponym is recorded as Kana' and in others as Kanu'l? In fact this is not the only example wherein we see differing locative suffixes attached to toponyms. Other examples include the ancient toponyms of Motul de San José, Piedras Negras, Caracol and Palenque:

Locality	**predominant form**	**variant**	**text**
Motul de San José	/ik'-a'/	/ik'-iil/	K2573; K4996; Tamarindito vase
Piedras Negras	/k'ihn-a'/	/k'ihn-nal/	Palenque, House C
Caracol	/uxwitz-a'/	/uxwitz-nal/	Caracol, Stela 17; La Rejolla, Stela 3
Palenque	/baak-e'l/	/baak-a'/	Palenque, TC, Central Panel

Table 1. Variable suffixation of select Classic Maya toponyms.

Based on these examples it seems that there is a certain flexibility as to which suffix could be employed in the formation of a place name. Nevertheless, these deviations are mostly found in foreign references, which may help to explain these alterations. Thus, we find the mention to a captive from Piedras Negras as an Ajk'ihnal (/*aj-k'ihn-nal*/, 'AG-hot-place') in the panels of Palenque's House C (Zender 2002: 170-176), and Stela 3 at La Rejolla records Uxwitznal in place of the expected Uxwitza'. Similarly, the patron of vase

7 That this particular example can be taken to record a toponym is based on the regular structure of captions accompanying supernatural spirit companions, or *wahy* creatures. These captions start off naming or describing the *wahy*, which is then followed by a possessive construction /*u-wahy*/ '3SA-nagual', and closed either by an EG, anthroponym or toponym to which the *wahy* is tied (Helmke & Nielsen 2009: 53). In the case at hand the caption consists of three glyph blocks, the first two recording the name of the *wahy*, and the final the toponym. The name indicates that this is a type of *masaakoowaatl* or 'deer-snake', since it is named a *chijil tal chan*, lit. 'deer's plait snake' (Grube & Nahm 1994: 693-694; Helmke & Nielsen 2009: 69-80). The medial possessive construction is completely omitted and is not represented with any of the *wahy* on this bowl. As such the **ka-nu-la** segment must record the toponym to which this beast is associated, not the least since other examples make it clear that this particular *wahy* is connected to the Snake-head EG (Grube & Nahm 1994: 693-694; Helmke & Nielsen 2009: 78-79).

K4996 was a lady of Xultun, possibly explaining the use of the alternate Ik'iil in the EG of a king of Motul de San José (Lacadena 2008: 25; Tokovinine & Zender 2012: 31, 35; Valdés 1997: 327, Fig. 11). Based on present evidence, these instances involve toponyms whose original forms were appended by the archaic *-a'* suffix, only to be reinterpreted and replaced by the more productive Ch'olan suffixes *-iil* (Lacadena & Wichmann n.d.: 16-19) and *-nal* (Schele, Mathews & Lounsbury 1990; Stuart & Houston 1994: 20, 21, Fig. 22). In the case of the Snake-head toponym we appear to have a reversed situation since the vast majority of examples record the place name as Kanu'l, and it is in an exceptional and relatively late instance that the Kana' form of the toponym appears. If our line of deduction is sound, it stands to reason that the late form is a deliberate archaism as if to underscore the great antiquity and permanence of the Kan place name. A precedent for this might be seen in the texts of Palenque where the toponym that is involved in the local EG occurs with an *-a'* suffix as Baaka' instead of the more typical *-e'l* (Helmke 2012a: 97, n. 5). Significantly, the Baaka' toponym is used in conjunction with the quasi-mythical dynastic ruler known as Ukokan Kan (Mathews 1991b: 120; Stuart 2005: 113, 124-125), again as if to create a deliberate archaism and cast this place name within the deeper reaches of pre-dynastic history.

In sum, considering the regular occurrence of the locative suffixes, there can be little doubt that this central portion of the Snake-head EG records the toponym Kanu'l (/*kan-u'l*/, '(where) snakes abound') and its rarer variant Kana' (/*kan-a'*/, 'snake-water'). The toponym, in and of itself, could very well derive its name from a feature of the natural landscape, in this case an abundance of snakes, following the same processes and principles in which other toponyms are formed and named. Here for example, we can think of the Yucatec toponym Acanceh (/*ahkan-keej*/, 'groan-deer'), or even the Aztec toponym Coatepec (/*koowaa-tepee-k*/, 'snake-mountain-place'). In much the same way, Kanu'l may thus be the name for a less than desirable place, one that is allegedly infested with snakes. Nevertheless, although Kanu'l on the surface appears to provide a natural toponym, close inspection of the Classic Maya historical narratives reveals that not a single event, political encounter or ritual action is said to have taken place at Kanu'l. Furthermore, as we have seen, the city of Calakmul was associated with the toponyms Uxte'tuun and Chikunaahb (Martin 1997: 852; Stuart & Houston 1994: 28-29), and at present there is no evidence that any site of the Classic period was named Kanu'l. One is thus left to wonder what Kanu'l is and where it is meant to be. The answer can be found by looking outside of EGs and historical narratives, and delving into mythological texts. The vantage provided by the mythological text could not be more different. There the Kanu'l toponym is one of primordial importance, where a whole series of key mythological events are said to have transpired, events that are integrally connected to the shared memories of the Snake-head kings and other elite groups throughout the

Maya area. We will look at the events that occurred at Kanu'l, by combing through the mythological texts, so that we can learn more about this locality and the events that have transpired there. Before proceeding, however, we need to consider the relationship between myths, rulers and divinity.

The mortality paradox

In considering the evolution of EGs we can see that in their most basic form these are produced by the simple addition of the titular logogram **AJAW**, *ajaw* 'king' to a given toponym. Such early EGs have been termed partial or "Problematic Emblem Glyphs" (Houston 1986: 1; see also Grube 2005: 87, 97, 98; Mathews 1991a: 24) precisely because they are seen to lack the qualifier **K'UH** of complete and exemplary Late Classic EGs. The qualifier is usually read *k'uhul*, lit. 'godly' and by extension 'divine', although we now know that this is a feature that was first developed in the latter half of the Early Classic. The earliest examples suggest that this practice stems from Tikal since it is found in the texts of the statue known as the Hombre de Tikal (AD 406) and Stela 9 (AD 475). The addition of the qualifier *k'uhul* to early (or partial) EGs undoubtedly served to create status inequalities between kings at the end of the Early Classic and was initially a prerogative reserved to the most important dynasties. Eventually this trait was assumed by all ruling monarchs, irrespective of actual power or influence, and by the end of the Late Classic even the smallest kingdoms could claim to be ruled by 'divine kings'. It is precisely this trait that has attracted the attention of scholars since it necessarily implies that rulers viewed themselves as akin to gods or exhibiting god-like features. Examinations of regal names, or the regnal names taken upon accession, reveal that Classic Maya monarchs considered themselves to be the incarnation of a particular aspect of a deity (Colas 2004; Colas 2006; Grube 2002b). Thus, whereas they did not perceive themselves as equal to gods, or gods *per se*, they certainly were conceived of as an earthly representative of one specific facet, or multiple facets, of a much larger supernatural entity (Helmke 2012b: 77). Unlike the deification and mortuary cults known from other civilisations, such as the pharaonic cult of Ramses II, who achieved the status of god in 1250 BC, during his own lifetime (Clayton 1994: 155; Hart 1990: 66-68; Wilkinson 2003: 54-59), or even the posthumous deification of Julius Caesar in 42 BC by his adopted son Augustus (Matyszak 2003: 228; Scarre 1995: 17), no good evidence exists to suggest that ancient Maya rulers were worshipped as gods, not during their lifetime nor posthumously. That being said, the question remains then, as to how Maya rulers bolstered their claims to divinity thereby effectively segregating themselves from the population not only socially, economically, politically and even genetically, but also supernaturally.

For one, this required monarchs to first resolve and explain what can be termed the mortality paradox. Considering the divine status of rulers, why then would they be subject to death as all common mortals? This seems to have constituted the greatest slight to claims of divinity and was therefore an aspect that absorbed considerable attention in early civilisations (Trigger 2003: 79-87). To draw an analogy from the Old World, in ancient Egypt attempts to resolve the mortality paradox drew on the mythological precedents of deities, in particular the mythic narrative known as the Osiris cycle (Hart 1990: 29-41; Richter 2001; Wilkinson 2003: 118-123). This myth relates the death and dismemberment of Osiris, primordial ruler of Egypt, at the hands of his brother Seth – the epitome of disorder and chaos – in order to seize the throne. Isis sets out to recover all of the dismembered body parts of her defunct husband, in hopes of reassembling him, but finds only thirteen. The last missing part, his penis, has been swallowed by a catfish, so Isis magically fashions one instead. Using a series of spells and incantations she is able to bring Osiris temporarily back to life, just long enough for Isis to copulate with the mummy of her husband and to be impregnated. Thereafter she gives birth to their son, Horus, who defeats Seth, restores order and thereby avenges the murder of his father. It is this myth that provides the foundation for considering Horus as the resurrected form of Osiris, the life that has been conceived in death.[8] The Osiris cycle also sets the precedent for the idealised rule of succession from father to son, in perpetuity. Thus, as Trigger relates, each individual pharaoh "represented the rebirth and earthly renewal of the previous monarch (and ultimately of Horus), while dead kings were identified with Osiris, the unchanging ruler in the realms of the dead" (Trigger 2003: 80). The existence of Osiris and Horus thereby revolved around a relation of interdependence, a cycle of life, death and resurrection, the cyclical permanence of impermanence.[9] In a deeply agrarian society the life, death and resurrection cycle was naturally enough conceived in analogous terms to the growth, harvest and sowing cycles of cereal crops. As such, Osiris was associated with the growth of grain and regeneration, and it is in his guise as Osiris-Neper, the personification of wheat, that cult figures of the mummified Osiris were made, serving as germination beds for sprouting wheat (Budge 1973: 58; Pinch 2004: 171; Wilkinson 2003: 117, 122).

Returning to Mesoamerica, we see very similar processes at play in the resolution of the mortality paradox. For the ancient Maya, the life-spans of rulers and their heirs

8 In an earlier Egyptian version of the myth the penis of Osiris is said to be buried in Memphis. Moreover, Abydos was the main cult centre for Osiris precisely because, according to the myth, it is at Nedyet in the district of Abydos that Osiris was murdered and dismembered (Hart 1990: 31).

9 Intriguingly, from archaeological evidence it is clear that Seth is a deity of much greater antiquity than Osiris and there is in fact no evidence for the existence of Osiris before Dynasty V (Hart 1990: 30). From this follows a whole series of important ramifications concerning the use of development of myths in regal ritual and pageantry.

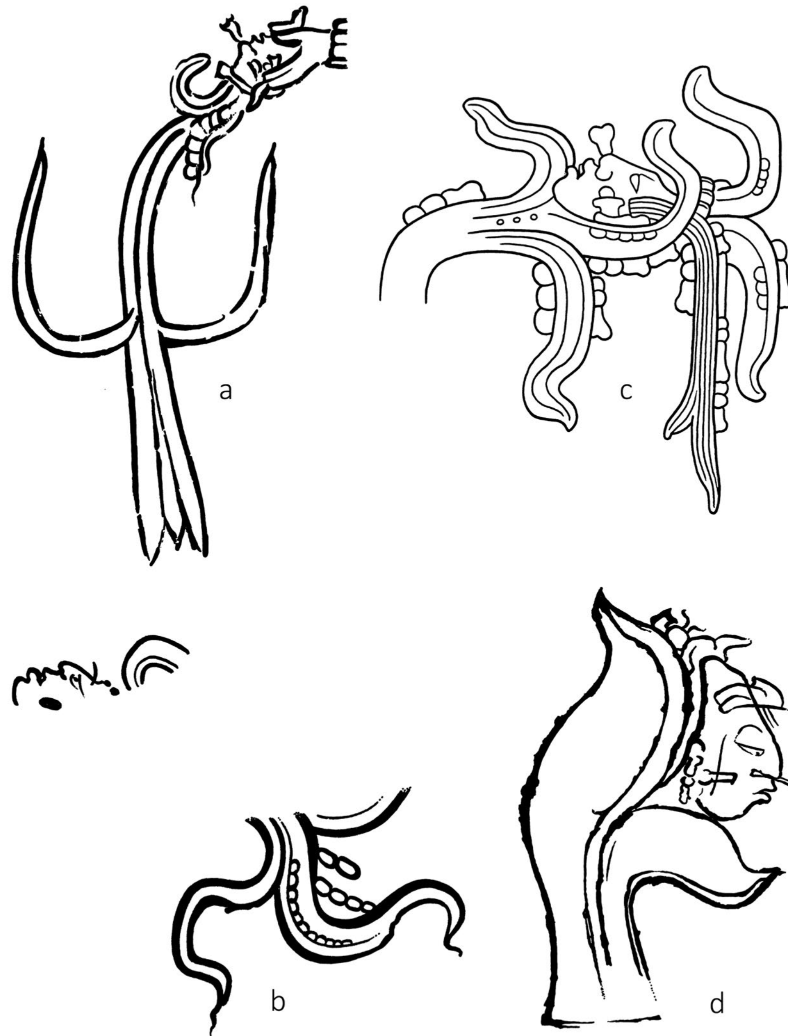


Figure 2. Depictions of maize cobs as the head of the Maize god. Offerings clasped by the burdens of the Maize god, as depicted on the *a)* Buenavista vase and *b)* the Cuychen vase; *c)* Tablet of the Foliated Cross, Palenque; *d)* The head of the Maize god emerging from a young leafy stalk. Post-slip incised graffito, Balanza black vessel, from Calakmul, Str. 2, Tomb 4, the final resting place of Yihch'aak K'ahk' (drawings by Christophe Helmke).

were also, in essence, if not in words, conceptualised as cycles of life, death and rebirth, permutations that were inevitably set in analogy to the growth, harvest and sowing of maize, the paramount crop of Mesoamerica. It is in this capacity that Maya rulers were the earthly incarnations of deified maize (Freidel, Schele & Parker 1993: 139; Nehammer Knub, Thun & Helmke 2009: 189-190; Schele & Mathews 1998: 115-117; Stuart & Stuart 2008: 172-180; Taube 1985; Taube 1992: 41-50) and it bears remembering that the Maya maintain that the gods fashioned humanity from maize dough (Christenson 2003: 180-184; Freidel, Schele & Parker 1993; Taube 1992: 54-55). Based on iconographic examples and onomastic patterns, it is now also known that in certain instances Maya rulers were posthumously identified with an aspect of *ajan*, the deification of young maize (Colas 2009: 201-203; Taube 1992: 48-50). Completing the pattern of personification, maize plants naturally embodied the Maize God, the cobs representing the head, the maize silk the fine hair of the divinity (Taube 1985: 175) (Figure 2). Thus the harvest of maize, wherein the cobs are twisted and torn from the stalk is equated with the decapitation of the Maize God. All of these features lie at the basis of intricate myths involving the Maize God. As is so commonly seen, myths and their iconographic representations focus on episodes of disjunction, as if events in mythic deep-time are breaches of otherwise uninterrupted stability and order (Helmke 2012c: 163-165). Maize God myths, thus almost out of necessity focus on one of the three major junctions – also called a nexus – in the life-cycle, and especially the dramatic moments of death and resurrection.

It is precisely these two principal turning points that are emphasised beyond any other in the iconography of the Maize God. The nexus comprising the death of the Maize God was expressed by a whole series of euphemisms including *och-bihil*, 'road-enter', *och-ha'*, 'water-enter', and *och-ch'e'n*, 'cave-enter'. All of these expressions were also used as death euphemisms for earthly kings, but it is unknown to what extent the metaphors were reciprocal or reserved for the Maize God, thereby heightening relations between kings and deified maize. In mythical contexts, these metaphorical constructs are known from a series of alternate motifs, and it is not always clear if these were meant to represent sequential episodes in the same narrative or regional variations of the same myth. In Classic Maya imagery the death euphemisms were variously illustrated as the Paddler deities ferrying the Maize God in their canoe, until it sinks into the underworld (Freidel, Schele & Parker 1993: 89-94; Quenon & Le Fort 1997: 886, 891), as the Maize God's entry into the watery underworld, where he obtains his prized and characteristic item of regalia – a thorny oyster shell (*Spondylus* sp.) set in the maw of a stylised shark (Helmke 2012a: 111-113; Helmke 2012c: 171-173; Taube in press) – and as a confrontation scene in which the Maize God and his acolytes are pitted against a group of heavily armed Earth Lords, in the cavernous underworld (García Barrios 2006;

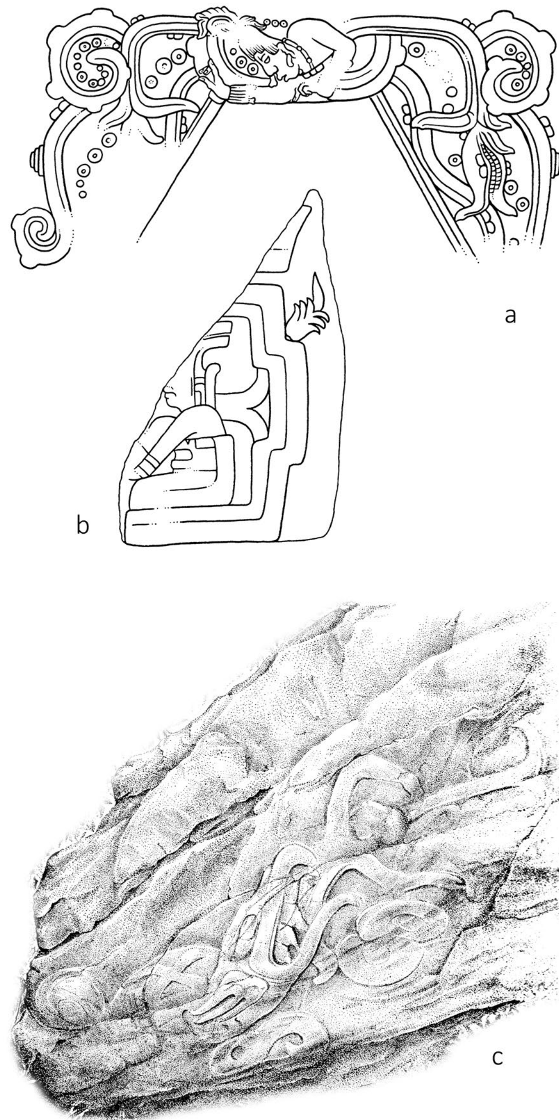


Figure 3. Key events in the mythology of the maize cycle: *a)* The death nexus, wherein the Maize god dives in the tumultuous waves of the aquatic underworld. Palenque, Palace, Subterranean passages, Western Vault. *b)* The Maize god seating within in a quatrefoil, Chalcatzingo, Monument 13 (drawings by Christophe Helmke). *c)* The Maize god in the maw of the leviathan, Chalcatzingo, Relief 5 petroglyph (after Gay 1971: Fig. 25).

García Barrios 2011: 85-87; Helmke 2009: 90-98). The rebirth nexus is also preserved in a series of different myths, one representing the Maize God in supine foetal position, emerging from a supernatural seed (Stuart, Houston & Robertson 1999: II.47; Stuart & Stuart 2008: 175; Taube *et al.* 2010: 70-71, Fig. 45), or spewed from the maw of a monstrous shark (Coe 1975: 19-21; Quenon & Le Fort 1997: 886-890; Taube 2004: Fig. 4d; Taube 2010). Another variant depicts him growing like a maize stalk out of a cracked turtle carapace symbolising the earth (Coe 1987: 175-177; Freidel, Schele & Parker 1993; Quenon & Le Fort 1997: 887; Schele & Mathews 1998: 115-117; Taube 1985: 173, 177; Taube 1993: 66-67). Naked at his rebirth, the Maize God is tended by female attendants who dress him in his rich attire (Freidel, Schele & Parker 1993; Quenon & Le Fort 1997: 892), and finally, the Maize God is also represented dancing in glory, in a motif known as the Holmul Dancer scenes (Coe 1978: 94-99; Houston, Stuart & Taube 1992: 504-512; Reents 1985; Reents-Budet 1991).

In the stunning Protoclassic (c. 100 BC) murals at the site of San Bartolo, Guatemala, the whole three-part cycle of the Maize Gods' birth, death and resurrection is vividly displayed. In the southern portion of the west wall murals is the first nexus, the birth, wherein the Maize God is depicted as an infant, cradled by an unidentified supernatural figure, wading through tumultuous waters (Taube *et al.* 2010: 70, Fig. 45a). To the north is the second nexus, the death of the Maize God, here represented as if diving, a snake coiled around his abdomen, hauling him along a stylised water band into the aquatic underworld (Taube *et al.* 2010: 81-83, Fig. 54a). Finally, in the centre is the third nexus, the resurrection, a scene dominated by a large stylised quatrefoil turtle, symbolising both the earth and a cavernous hollow, wherein the Maize God undergoes his resurrection, under the watchful gaze of the rain and thunder deity Chaahk as well as the deity of bodies of water (Taube *et al.* 2010: 71-75, 80). The Maize God dances out of the underworld, to the sound of solemn drumming, that he produces by striking deer antlers against a turtle carapace, as a percussion instrument (Taube 2009: 48-49). This remarkable triptych scene is the most comprehensive portrayal of the life-cycle of personified and deified maize, and in one measure or another, all later depictions pertaining to the Maize God cycle, are resounding echoes of the myths represented in these early murals. Actually, comparable elements and mythic motifs can also be found elsewhere in Mesoamerica, demonstrating the antiquity of shared pan-Mesoamerican conceptions. At Early Classic Teotihuacan (c. AD 470-540), for instance, shell-diving scenes are also represented, apparently a local variant of the Maize God's death, analogous to the Maya tale recounting the immersion of the Maize God into the watery underworld (Helmke 2012a: 113; Taube in press) (Figure 3a). However, the great antiquity of these myths is nowhere clearer than at the Middle Preclassic (c. 900-500 BC) site of Chalcatzingo, where we find a clear depiction of the Olmec Maize God, within a quatrefoil cave, antici-

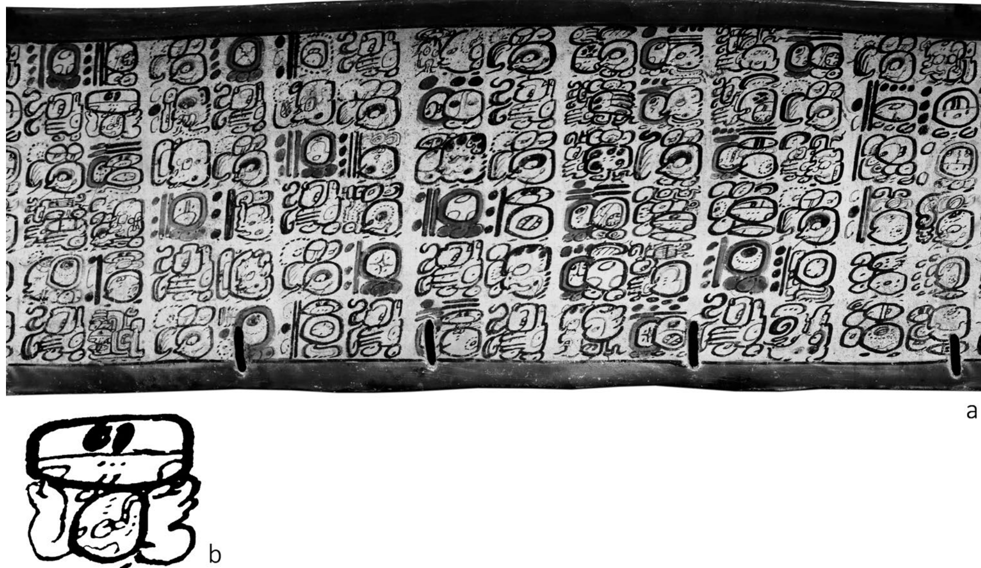


Figure 4. The longest and most complete of the Kanu'l king lists. *a)* Roll-out photograph of the codex-style vase K6751 (photograph © Justin Kerr). *b)* The sequence is initiated by the accession of the dynastic founder, a figure dubbed "Skyraiser" (drawing by Christophe Helmke).

pating his resurrection (Angulo V. 1987: Fig. 10.12; Taube 1996: 48-49) (Figure 3b), while a petroglyph represents one of the earliest examples of the Maize God within the maws of an aquatic monster (Gay 1971: 56-59, Figs. 25-27) (Figure 3c).

Armed with this overview, we can now turn to the fascinating mythic narratives that are directly related to the founding myths of the Kanu'l kings, namely the confrontation scenes and the Holmul Dancer scenes. As such, let us consider each of these narratives in turn, below.

Confrontation scenes

Before turning to a discussion of the Maize Gods' resurrection, let us first explore the confrontation scenes, involving his demise. This mythological narrative was first studied by Robicsek & Hales (1981: 71-74, 80-82), who identified 15 codex-style ceramics from the Mirador region of northern Peten and south-eastern Campeche, as forming part of a series that they named the confrontation scene. Nowadays more than two

dozen examples are recognised for this group of figurative ceramics.[10] Taube (2004: 74-76) was among the first to analyse the iconography of the confrontation scenes and interpreted them as representing the capture of the Wind God at the hands of Chak Xib, an aspect of the thunder deity, here rendered in an anthropomorphic guise (García Barrios 2006: 137-138; Martin 2004: 107). Martin (2001a: 178-179; Martin 2004: 105-109), who focused on the verbal expression *och-ch'e'n* 'cave-enter' that is found in these scenes, was able to identify that these represent euphemistic expressions for martial actions. Three years later Grube (2004: 118-120, 123-127) successfully linked the confrontation scenes with the founding myths of the Kanu'l dynasty, by identifying the name of the mythic founder on vase K4117. Another series of codex-style vases is crucial in this regard. Known as the painted king lists, these vases provide a register of royal accessions for the earliest Kanu'l monarchs of the remote past, and although they provide several names of historical rulers, these appear to be much earlier, pre-dynastic namesakes (Martin 1997: 857-862). On vase K6751 – the most complete of the painted king lists – 19 separate accessions are recorded, starting with the dynastic founder, a figure dubbed Skyraiser (Guenter n.d.; Martin 1997: 857; Martin & Grube 2000: 102) (Figure 4). Since then, the senior author has reinterpreted the confrontation scenes as depicting not the capture of the Wind God, but the defeat and eventual decapitation of the Maize God at the hands of Chak Xib and his warriors (Helmke 2009: 90-98). The discovery of codex-style specimens at Calakmul over the past decade, including complete vases and dishes from tombs and sherds from midden deposits, have since prompted a whole new phase of research, including the instrumental neutron activation analyses by Dorie Reents-Budet and her colleagues (Reents-Budet & Bishop 1998; Reents-Budet, Bishop & Bell 2004; Reents-Budet *et al.* 2010), as well as the extensive iconographic and epigraphic analyses of Ana García Barrios and her colleagues (Boucher Le Landais 2014; Delvendahl n.d.; García Barrios 2006; García Barrios 2010; García Barrios 2011; García Barrios & Carrasco Vargas 2006; Salinas Méndez & Valencia Rivera 2012).

The many Calendar Round Dates that caption the various scenes are one of the noteworthy features of the confrontation scenes. The Calendar Round dates associated with 14 of the vessels are inconsistent and difficult to fix into absolute time due to the absence of anchors to the Long Count. However, three basic events in this series can be recognised, starting with the date 7 Ajaw 7/12 Sak or even 7 Ak'bal 8 Sak, at which time the Maize God is said to die. On K6979 the event is cited as *och-ha'* 'water-enter',

10 The vessels that form part of this series are: K1224, 1248, 1333, 1338, 1343, 1346, 1365, 1366, 1395, 1489, 1562, 2011, 2096, 2710, 3428, 4117, 5002, 8201 (Kerr 2008), as well as Vessels 91, 95, 98, 100 and 106 in the Maya Book of the Dead (Robicsek & Hales 1981: 70-74) and another in the collections of the Fundación Ruta Maya, Guatemala (Michelet 2011: 172). Related to the confrontation scenes are vessels K1202, 1488, 1566 and 6979, which depict the death of the Maize God.

Figure 5. The death of the Maize god: *a)* K6979 with the *och-ha'* verb enlarged; *b)* K1202 with the *och-bihil* verb enlarged (photographs © Justin Kerr).

whereas on K1202 the expression is *och-bihil* 'road-enter', both of which are known euphemisms for 'death' that we have already touched on above. The scenes depict what is clearly the Maize God, standing waist-deep in water with one or both of his sons, Juun Ajaw and Yax Bahlam, surrounded by four to six nude women with death markings, denizens of the underworld (see also Boucher Le Landais 2014: Figs. 4-5) (Figure 5).

The following event takes place on the date 1/3/12 Ik' 12/15/19 Kej, at which point an individual named Chak Xib is said to *och-ch'e'n* 'cave-enter'. The scenes associated with this event depict two groups of people standing waist-deep within the same watery netherworld, confronting one another (Figure 6). One group is heavily armed, menacingly wielding spears and round shields, wearing elaborate avian, cervid and cranial headdresses and have facial markings that convey their identity as Earth Lords. The other group is headed by the Maize God, who attempts to placate and appease the bellicose group of armed Earth Lords by bringing tribute consisting of large bundles and stacks of cloth mantas, each topped by bunches of long quetzal feathers and *Spondylus* shells. Members of the Maize God group wear simpler accoutrements and at times have bunches of writing quills tucked into their wrapped cloth headdresses. In many respects the dress of the figures in the Maize God group

closely corresponds to that of the priestly order known as the *ajk'uhu'n*, lit. 'worshipper' (Zender 2004: 139-152, 164-195) (Figure 7). In one example the Maize God has dauntingly set his index finger on the spear point of his opponent, to mollify the Earth Lords (Figure 8a). Tensions running high, the events appear to culminate on the date 9 Ajaw 7/15 K'ayab at which point a *ch'ahkaj* 'axing / beheading' is said to take place. The accompanying scenes are mostly the same as those of the foregoing event and the beheading is not in fact depicted. In one case, however, (K5002) we see the lone Maize God surrounded by armed figures brandishing their shields and raised axes and the inevitable is easily imagined (Figure 8b).

Since the decapitation of the Maize God is a pervasive and well-known theme of Maya mythology (Miller & Martin 2004: 54-58, 72; Miller & Taube 1993: 108-110; Taube 1992: 41-50), we suspect that the decapitation cited in the texts is none other than that of the Maize God.[11] The basic thread of this mythological narrative then is the decapitation and death of the Maize God, which serves as the leitmotif of life, death and rebirth, but also as the underlying template for war (or at least a particular type of martial conflict), since this very same expression is seen in more than a dozen historical examples from the sites of Copan, Dzibanche, Naranjo, Palenque, Bonampak and Tikal (examples dating to between AD 416 and 702). Working from an earlier study of this expression (Martin 2004: 105-109), it can be argued that the historical use of the *och-ch'e'n* expression is based on this particular mythological event, in which a cave was entered and an armed conflict ensued. This mythological confrontation between the Maize God and Earth Lords, primeval opposites and antagonists, thus served as the conceptual framework and template for later historical events that were likened to and metaphorically framed within that narrative.[12]

11 On K4117 the text refers to a decapitation, but strangely the patient of this verb is not recorded by the typical name of the Maize God. On this vessel the Maize God appears to be replaced by another figure wearing regalia that are usually associated with Chak Xib Chaahk, a particular manifestation of the storm and rain deity Chaahk. This is peculiar since in all other scenes it is the Earth Lords who wear the knotted pectoral, and at times the *Spondylus* earspools of Chak Xib Chaahk, which suggests that the Chak Xib cited in the accompanying glyphs is a reference to the Earth Lords or their leader.

12 The demise of the Maize God represented in the confrontation scenes may also have served as the mythological precedent for certain rituals. In the confrontation scenes, companions to the Maize God bear what appear to be tribute offerings, including not only stacks of cloth mantas, but also large cloth bundles that are marked with the glyphic caption *juun pik* (see K1366, K2096 and K4487). These glyphic captions can be understood as the numeral 'one' followed either by a numeral classifier or by the noun 'cloth'. The former reading suggests that the bundles may have contained 8000 unspecified items (Houston 1997; Schele & Grube 1993: 3), whereas the latter simply may designate the bundles as 'one cloth'. The fragments of cloth which were found in association with macro-floral remains, including maize and other domesticates in Barton Creek Cave in Belize (Morehart *et al.* 2004) are therefore all the more significant. Such food offerings that were wrapped into cloth bundles and deposited in caves, may therefore be re-enactments taking as their precedent the mythic event depicted in the confrontation scenes. Were this hypothesis to be corroborated it would demonstrate the importance and influence of this myth for the ancient Maya.

a

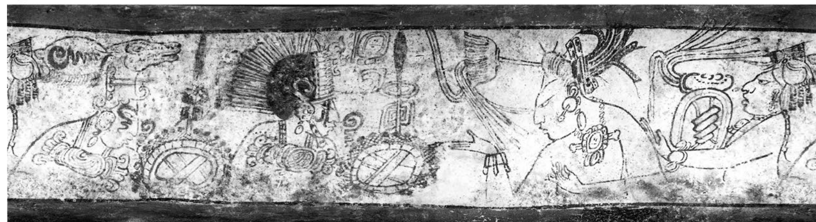
b

c

d

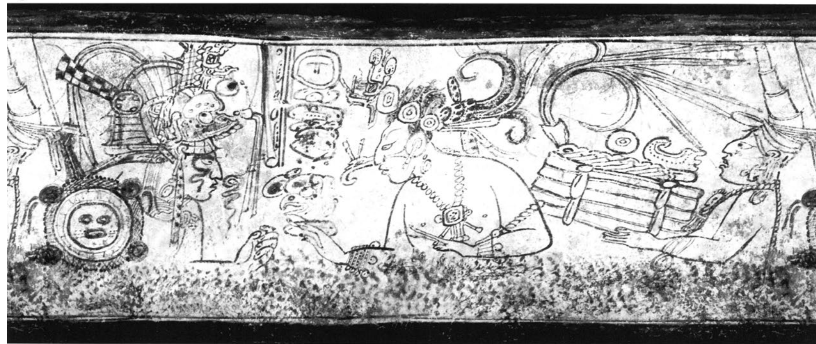
Figure 6. Examples of the confrontation scenes: *a)* K1248, *b)* K1338, *c)* K1365, *d)* K1366 (photographs © Justin Kerr).

e



f

g



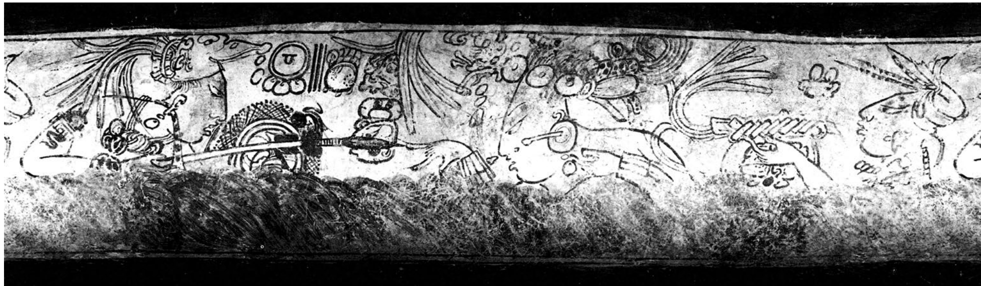
h

Figure 6. Continued: *e)* K1489, *f)* K2011, *g)* K4117, *h)* K8201 (photographs © Justin Kerr).

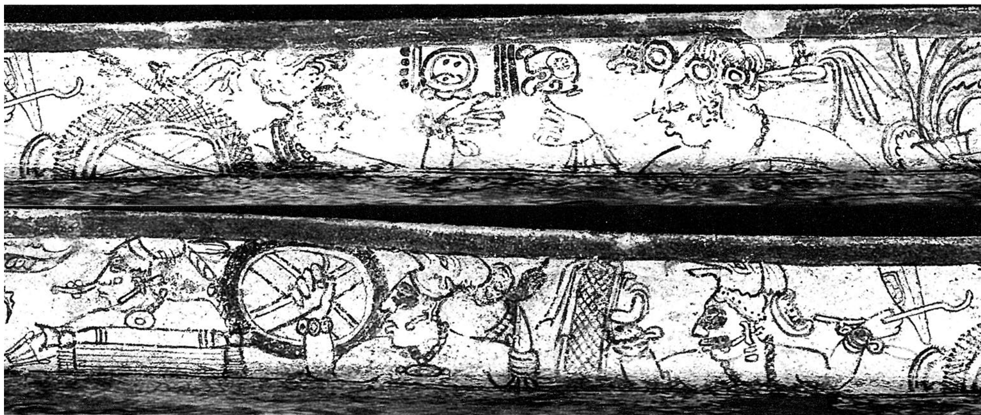
Figure 7. Examples of *ajk'uhu'n* religious specialists in Classic Maya iconography. Note the characteristic headdress, the bundle of quills tucked into the headdresses and the simple garb. It is significant that such individuals are depicted in cave contexts at Najtunich and in the confrontation scene. *a)* Detail of polychrome vase from the vicinity of Motul de San José (K1728); *b)* Detail of Codex Style vessel (K1248); *c)* Detail of Codex Style vessel (K2011); *d)* Najtunich (Drawing 76); *e)* Najtunich (Drawing 72); *f)* Najtunich (Drawing 22) (photographs © Justin Kerr; drawings after Stone 1995: Figs. 6-21, 6-34 & 6-37 © University of Texas Press).

That an entry into a cave would be deemed a bellicose act is not something inherently given, since one could surmise that it refers straightforwardly to peregrinations into caves. However, none of the glyphic texts present in caves record such *och-ch'e'n* events and examinations of historical texts, reveal the distinctly martial connotations of this verbal expression (Helmke & Brady 2014: 203-205; Martin 2001a: 178-179;Martin 2004: 105-109; Martin & Grube 2000: 181). In addition, considering the absence of outright terms for 'war' and 'warfare' in the Classic script, verbal expressions for martial actions are by necessity euphemisms, or metaphorical constructions, to varying degrees. The historical use of the *och-ch'e'n* expression therefore appears to be entirely metaphorical and serve to relate military engagements, in terms of the mythical confrontation between the Maize God and Earth Lords, primeval opposites and antagonists.

What is remarkable is a codex-style sherd (Fragment 7 of Vase 23) discovered in the midden associated with Str. XX at Calakmul, during the 2003-2005 excavation seasons (García Barrios 2011: 86; García Barrios & Carrasco Vargas 2006: 129-130, 136; Helmke 2012a: Fig. 16b) (Figure 9). This sherd depicts a warrior with a large avian headdress, brandishing a spear or an *atlatl* dart. Another now-missing figure – only a hand subsists – appears to be thrusting what may be a spear. Based on these features it seems evident that this vase depicts a segment of a confrontation scene. However, what is truly astounding is the accompanying glyphic caption. Although it is partially eroded, and only preserved in parts, it is headed by the verbal expression *och-ch'e'n* (here written as **{OCH}-CH'EN-na**) followed by the name of the cave that was entered. This toponym is written **ka-KAN**, recording the place name *kan[u'l]*. As such we are finally in a position to understand that the toponym Kanu'l names the cave where the Maize God is said to have been defeated by the Earth Lords. The Snake-head rulers who bore the corresponding EG thus all inherently claimed an affinity to this place and may even have conceived their lineage to have emerged from the cave of the same name. This certainly goes a long way to explaining why on one of the vases depicting a confrontation scene (K4117), the Maize God is replaced by a human ruler, who is captioned as Skyraiser, the name of the dynastic founder. After the mention of *kanu'l* the clause continues, but only parts of the following glyph block remain. Clearest of all is a **jo** syllabogram, subfixed by what may be a very simplified **ma** syllabogram. Initially, we entertained the idea that this segment might record the name Tajo'm Uk'ab K'ahk', as mythic namesake of the historical ruler (Martin & Grube 2000: 106), one who appears as the 15th ruler in the mythical king lists (Martin 1997: 860). Considering that the confrontation scenes appear to involve Skyraiser, the mythical dynastic founder, it seems unlikely that Tajo'm Uk'ab K'ahk' should be named. We now speculate that the poorly preserved segment might instead have recorded a **ha-jo-ma** expression akin to that found on the newly discovered stairway panel of La Corona (HS2, Bl. V, G6a). In the La Corona text it



a



b

Figure 8. a) The Maize god sets his finger on the spear point of his opponent (K2710). *b)* The Maize god is attacked by the Earth Lords (K5002) (photographs © Justin Kerr).

occurs in a Distance Number and precedes the intransitive *uhto'm* 'it will happen'. Stuart (2012) proposed the reading of /*hal-j-o'm*/ wherein *hal* is the Ch'olan temporal adverb 'a long time', closed by the future marker *-o'm*. To this, Dmitri Beliaev (pers. comm. 2013) has remarked that this expression may be related to several intransitive forms, including: Tzeltal *halaj* 'durar, permanecer'; proto-Tzeltal-Tzotzil *hal 'largo (tiempo)'; Ch'ol *jal'an* 'tardarse'; and proto-Ch'olan *hal 'long time' (Aulie & Aulie 1978: 62; Kaufman 1972: 102; Kaufman 2003: 1269). If a similar expression were represented on the codex-style sherd we suspect that it may record a temporal adverbial expression, thereby providing an emic label for 'deep time'. Instead of the intransitive interpretations that require the reconstruction of the clear /*l*/ to form the root *hal*, it remains possible that both the sherd and the La Corona panel record *hajo'm* ~ /*ha'-j-o'm*/ wherein the first element is

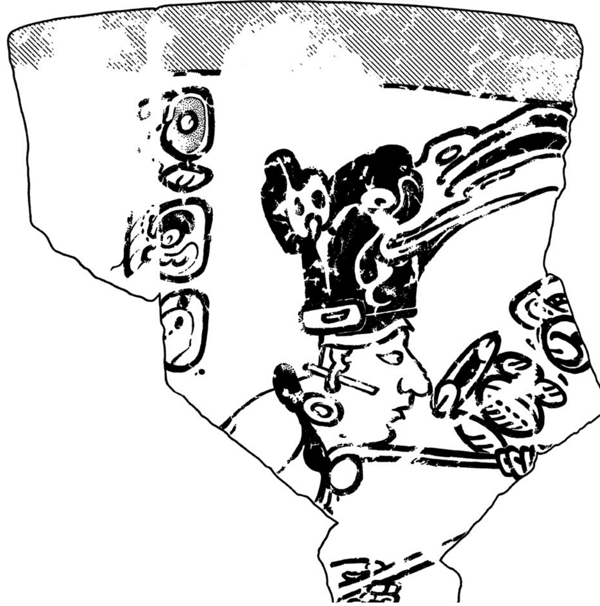


Figure 9. Detail of a confrontation scene depicting a cave-entry event into a cave named Kanu'l. Fragmentary codex-style vase, Calakmul, Str. xx (Fragment 7 of Vase 23) (drawing by Christophe Helmke).

the demonstrative particle that is otherwise seen as the root of independent pronouns (Hull, Carrasco & Wald 2009: 36; Lacadena 2010: 36; Stuart, Houston & Robertson 1999: II.24; Stuart 2005: 52-53), followed by a denominaliser *-j* and closed by the future participial *-o'm*, leading to the free translation 'this will be'. In this case, the future reference could reflect another temporal perception of the Maize God myth as ongoing and perpetually repeating. Having tied Kanu'l to the defeat and death of the Maize God, in the next section of this chapter the same toponym will be connected to another nexus of the myth.

Holmul Dancers

As has already been mentioned above, the so-called 'Holmul Dancer' scenes are part of a narrative that symbolises the resurrection of the Maize God (Coe 1978: 94-99; Reents-Budet 1991; Tokovinine 2008: 130-133, 280-282). These scenes represent groups of two, sometimes three and rarely four youthful Maize Gods (Taube 1985: 172-174), wearing opulent jewellery and sumptuous backracks (Figure 10a). As the name implies, these Maize Gods are depicted in an attitude of dance, with knees partly bent and

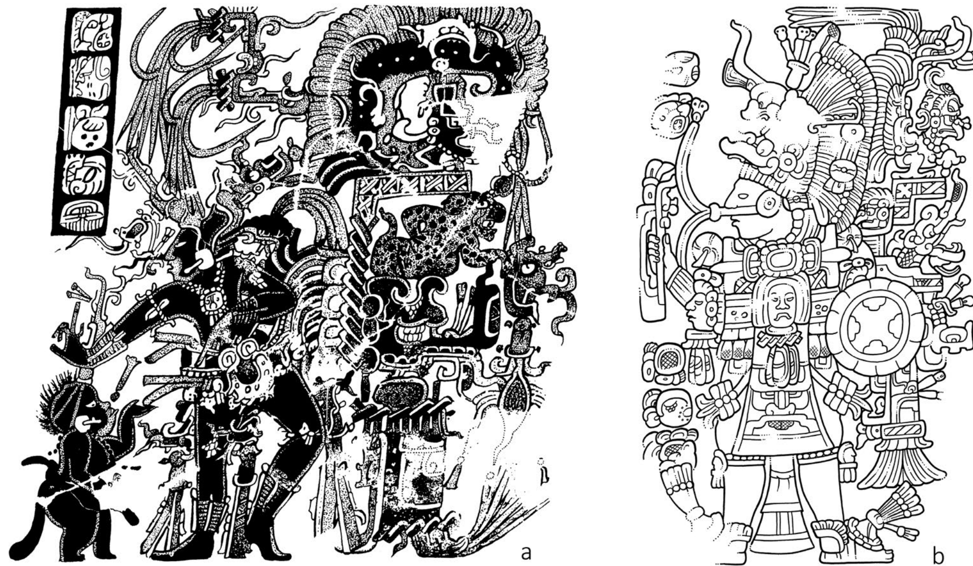


Figure 10. Holmul Dancers in mythology and historical pageantry: *a)* The Maize god associated to the Tikal toponym and bearing an ocelot burden in his backrack (K0633). The caption is written: **u-BAH / 1-IXIM / 6-[HIX]NAL / T'AB?[yi] / MUT**, and can be read as *ubaah juun ixiim wak hixnal t'abaay mutu'l* (after Miller & Martin 2004: 58); *b)* The historical figure, K'ihnich Yook wearing the backrack of the Maize god, with the saurian burden associated to the Kanu'l place name (La Corona, Panel 1b) (drawing by Christophe Helmke, based on photographs by Felix Kupprat and a preliminary drawing by David Stuart).

left heel raised (Grube 1992: 201, 204; Proskouriakoff 1950: 28, 145, Fig. 9.J1), as well as one arm raised, the other lowered, another characteristic of dance portraitures (Looper 2008: 3, Fig. 1; Taube 2009: 46-47). Typically, the belt assemblages worn by these Maize Gods are composed of a *Spondylus* shell set in the maw of a stylised shark. It is this item of regalia that the Maize God obtained from the watery underworld, and displaying it served to reify and make manifest his resurrection and the defeat of death (Helmke 2012a: 111-113; Helmke 2012c: 171-173; Taube in press).[13] The very

13 From extant iconography, we know of a myth that recounts the emergence of the Maize God from the maw of a giant sea monster, designated in the glyphic captions as a type of shark (Coe 1975: 19-21; Taube 2004: Fig. 4d; Taube 2010). This myth may represent yet another variant of the Maize God's rebirth nexus, wherein his emergence from the maw of the aquatic creature and his return to dry land are conceived of as his resurrection. Several supernatural entities, including the deity Chaahk and the more elusive deity named Sibikte' (i.e., the so-called patron of the month Pax), set out to vanquish the shark, and eventually spear it, thereby releasing the Maize God, who is disgorged from the jaws of the

same belt assemblage was worn by Classic Maya royalty and forms part of the netted jade-bead garment worn as part of important ceremonies (García Barrios & Vázquez López 2013; Miller 1974: 153-155; Nehammer Knub, Thun & Helmke 2009: 190, 192; Proskouriakoff 1950: 71, Fig. 26.J) (Figure 11). As such, historical figures assumed the guise of the deity, by wearing the Maize God's own distinctive regalia. It is precisely such correspondences that allow us to argue that Maya nobility sought to overcome the mortality paradox by seeking affinity to the Maize God.

Even though almost four dozen examples of ceramic vessels depicting Holmul Dancer scenes are known, only a small fraction have known archaeological proveniences (Looper 2008: 4-7) (Figure 12). Yet as recently as 2010 a stunning example was found in Cuychen, a small and remote cave in western Belize (Helmke *et al.* 2015) (Figure 12f), and another one was discovered in Naranjo in 2014 (Fialko & Barrios 2016). The origin of the specimens without archaeological provenience can be reconstructed on the basis of stylistic traits, execution of the iconography and glyphic texts, citing the names and titles of the individuals who once owned these vessels. With this footing, it can be said that the majority of Holmul Dancer vessels were produced at ceramic workshops attached to the court of sites in the eastern Maya lowlands, including Naranjo, Holmul and Xultun (Helmke *et al.* 2015; Reents-Budet, Bishop & MacLeod 1994: 179-188). This grouping of sites is not only the primary production area for Holmul Dancer vessels, but was also where this particular mythic motif occupied a particularly predominant role.

Earlier iconographic studies of Holmul Dancer scenes have focused on the symbolism of the elaborate backracks worn by the dancing Maize Gods (Coe 1978: 94, 96; Houston, Stuart & Taube 1992: 502-503; Reents-Budet 1991; Tokovinine 2008: 130-133). These studies have demonstrated that the backracks worn by the Maize Gods essentially represent cosmograms wherein the terrestrial realm is represented by a personified mountain, or *witz* monster, and the heavens are symbolised by a stepped sky band, atop of which is perched the Principal Bird Deity (Bardawil 1976; Taube 1992: 29-31, 36, 40, 118, 145) (Figure 10a). Seated atop the mountain sign, in the cavernous space framed by the stepped sky, is a small figure. Although there is some variability, the figures, or burdens, that are usually seated within the niches include an odd hairy

shark. We suspect that it is this mythic narrative that explains the origin of the Maize God's distinctive belt insignia, comprising the head of the defeated shark, with the valve of a *Spondylus* shell set within its maw. Thus in much the same way as the head of the defeated Principal Bird Deity serves as the primordial headdress of the elder Hero Twin (Nielsen & Helmke 2015), the head of shark symbolises the fall of the leviathan and the Maize God's triumph.

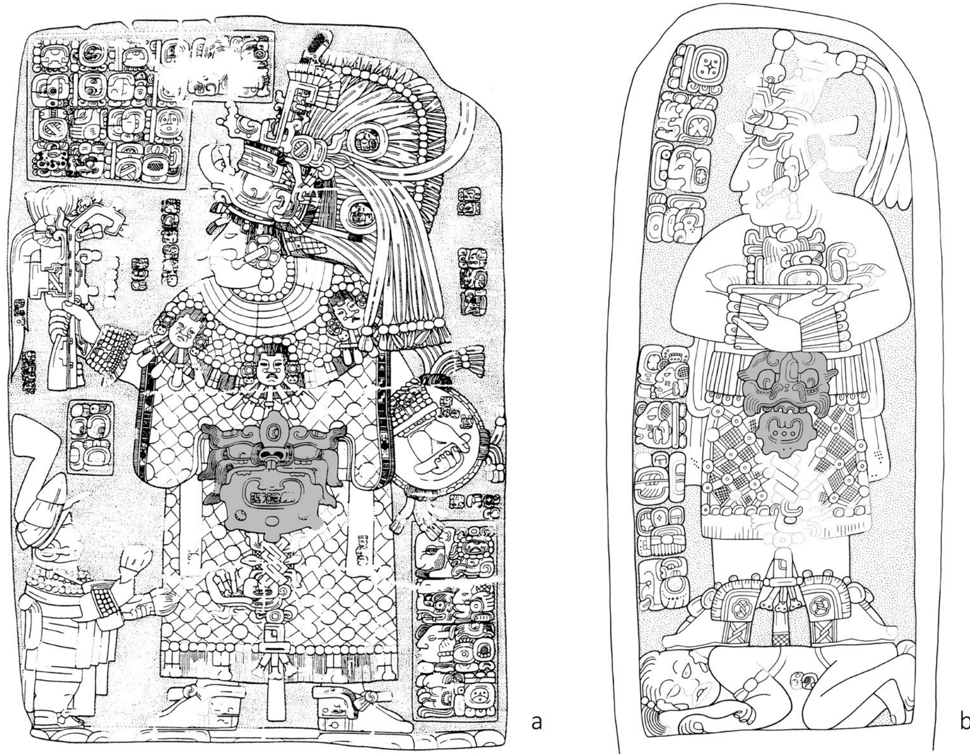


Figure 11. Examples of the shark's head and *Spondylus* shell regalia of the Maize god, worn by historical figures (shaded grey): *a)* El Perú, Stela 34 (drawing by John Montgomery © Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc.); *b)* Drawing of Naranjo, Stela 24, Front, by Ian Graham, Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM# 2004.15.6.2.45 (digital file #99100038).

saurian creature, a simian entity and a spotted feline (Table 2).[14] Importantly, accompanying glyphic captions make it clear that the small figures seated in the backracks were specifically tied to the toponymic main signs of select emblem glyphs (Coe 1978: 96; Houston, Stuart & Taube 1992: 502-503; Tokovinine 2008: 130-133, 280-282). As a result, the different maize divinities depicted in the Holmul Dancer scenes would seem to represent distinct and localised manifestations of the same deity, each embodying mythological beings of particular city-states. The question rapidly arises as to what the guiding principle, or underlying rationale was, which dictated the representation of these particular groupings of Maize Gods and not any other.

To take an illustrative example, by matching the glyphic captions to the iconography on K0633, a vase originally from Naranjo, we can see that the saurian creature was viewed as a 'snake' (*chan*) and paired, aptly enough, with the toponym Kanu'l of the Calakmul EG; the spotted feline, termed 'ocelot' (*hix*), was associated with Tikal's place name (Mutu'l 'where reed effigies (?) abound') (Figure 10a); and the simian, named 'monkey' (*chuwen*), was tied to the toponym of the Machaquila emblem (as yet undeciphered). The same pattern is seen for the most part on other Holmul Dancer vases on the basis of accompanying glyphic captions and the burdens depicted (K3400, K4464, K7814, K8966, as well as the Río Azul, Baking Pot and Naranjo vases) (Table 2). Whereas the Holmul Dancer scenes make it clear that these particular backracks were intimately tied to the Maize God, key examples are known from Classic Maya monuments at Tikal, Dos Pilas, La Corona and Quirigua wherein historical kings are depicted carrying the same backrack (Coe 1978: 96; Houston, Stuart & Taube 1992: 502-503; Reents-Budet 1991: 219). In historic contexts these backracks were probably borne by kings who ceremonially took the guise of the youthful Maize God, as part of particular dance and impersonation ceremonies (Nehammer Knub, Thun & Helmke 2009: 187, 189-190, 191). These examples make it clear that deity impersonation rituals were utilised to make manifest mythological precedents and foster links between rulers and the Maize

14 Some surprising parallels to the composition of the backracks are depicted on the north wall of the San Bartolo murals (Saturno *et al.* 2005: Figs. 5, 12): The central scene depicts the Maize God, surrounded by four female and three male characters. The scene broadly resembles the dressing scenes mentioned above (Saturno *et al.* 2005: 31; Taube, Saturno & Stuart 2004: 855). The left part of the mural is dominated by a cavernous feature, inside of which the hairy saurian is clearly visible. A spotted feline is also present, atop of the cave entrance. Most importantly, on the lower bottom of the cave a snake is slithering out of its burrow. Another snake is depicted on top of the cave, coiled around a tree and devouring bird and most significantly, a giant feathered serpent slithers out of the cave, forming the ground-line for the whole scene (Saturno *et al.* 2005: 21-25). Is this a Protoclassic depiction of the snake-infested cave that was named Kanu'l? Another interesting coincidence is the presentation of maize. On the San Bartolo mural a kneeling woman offers a bowl of tamales (Saturno *et al.* 2005: 31), while the animal burdens in the Holmul Dancer scenes offer maize ears in the form of diminutive Maize God heads in a very similar gesture. This indicates, once again, that it is from primordial caves that maize stems from.

Figure 12. Examples of Holmul Dancer vases with archaeological provenience: *a)* Recovered by Thomas Gann in a cave in the vicinity of Benque Viejo (after Gann 1925: 72), *b)* Uaxactun (after Smith 1955: Vol. 2, Fig. 2b); *c)* Río Azul; d) Buenavista del Cayo; *e)* Baking Pot; *f)* Cuychen. Cabrito Cream-polychrome copies of Holmul Dancer vases: *g)* Lower Dover (courtesy of Jaime Awe) and *h)* Cahal Pech (where unspecified, photographs by Christophe Helmke).

God. Intriguingly, the same backrack with the ocelot burden was carried by Bajlaj Chan K'awiil, dynastic founder of Dos Pilas (Martin & Grube 2008: 56-58; Schele & Miler 1986: 77). This indicates that Dos Pilas and Tikal shared not only the same EG, but also the mythology and supernatural entities attached to the dynastic title (Houston, Stuart & Taube 1992: 503), as well as the ritual privileges tied to dance pageantry (Helmke 2010). Even more importantly, on Panel 1 from La Corona, the local ruler, K'ihnich Yook is shown wearing the Maize God's backrack, complete with its saurian burden (Guenter 2008: 18; Martin & Stuart 2009: 31; Michelet 2011: 164) (Figure 10b). Besides him, the glyphic caption provides a synoptic description of the event. The caption can be read *ubaah ti paat piik*, lit. 'it is his image with the *paat piik*', wherein we have a reference to the backrack itself (Tokovinine 2008: 281). Here the backrack is designated emically as a 'back cloth', or more freely, 'that which is behind/covers the garments', or even the 'outer garment', since in several Mesoamerican languages the word 'back' also refers to the outermost layer, such as the bark of a tree (Smith-Stark 1994: 18-19). The caption therefore not only draws attention to the backrack, but serves to make clear that the backrack was the feature of import in the scene. The panel's main text makes it clear that K'ihnich Yook lived for several years at Calakmul and from other texts we know that he was the son-in-law of the Kanu'l lord Yukno'm Ch'e'n II (Martin 2001b: 183-184). By wearing the saurian backrack he asserted his ties to the Kanu'l lineage and the ritual privilege to bear the regalia of the Maize God, a right that he obtained from the Calakmul sovereigns.

A closer look at the glyphic captions on the remarkable Cuychen vase provides us with detailed epithets for the three Maize Gods depicted on the vase, as well as their associated burdens (Figure 13). Each is headed by *ubaah juun ixiim* 'it is the image of One maize' (R1-2, S1-2, T1-2). The third glyph block of each caption makes reference to the burden, wherein the first two match well-known examples, namely **6-[CHAN]NAL**, /*wak chan-nal*/, 'six snake-place' (R3) and **6-[HIX]NAL**, /*wak hix-nal*/, 'six ocelot-place' (S3). Unusually, the third is the otherwise rare **6-[OK]NAL**, /*wak ook-nal*/, 'six coyote-place' (T3), tying the Cuychen vase to the other Holmul Dancer vase discovered at Río Azul (Figure 12c). Combining these spellings it is evident that the central element of the name provides us with the emic zootaxon of the supernatural burden (i.e. snake, feline, canine), but it is equally clear that these form part of toponymic constructions, since each is suffixed by toponymic suffix *-nal* 'place'. As such the burdens and their mountain seats together constitute important physiographic features in the sacred landscape to which the toponyms refer. The fourth glyph block (R4, S4, T4) records a rare spelling for what seems to function as a verbal form, here written **KAL-wi-TE'** and read *kalaawte'*. This same segment is seen in the glyphic captions of other Holmul Dancer vases (e.g. K3400 and K8966), but the Cuychen vase provides the only complete

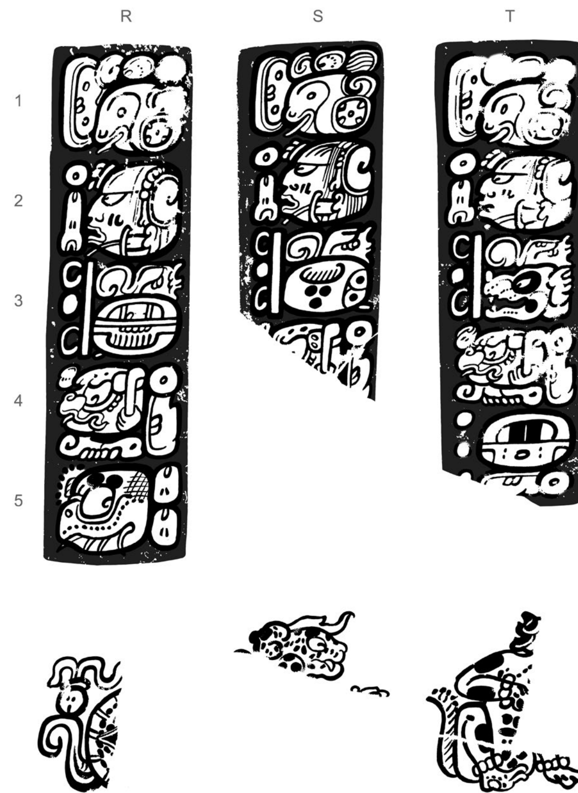


Figure 13. Glyphic captions to the Maize Gods (top) with their associated animal burdens (below), as rendered on the Cuychen vase (drawings by Christophe Helmke).

spelling. Furthermore it bears remarking that *kalaawte'* directly substitutes for another verbal expression, possibly read *t'abaay* (the so-called mediopassive inflection of the verb *t'ab* 'lift, raise, ascend'; see Stuart 1998: 409-417; Stuart Houston & John Robertson 1999: II.28, 30), which is seen in precisely the same syntactic context in the captions of another Holmul Dancer vase (Figure 10a). As a result, one possibility is that there is some semantic equivalence between *kalaawte'* and *t'abaay*. However, it is also possible that the two verbal expressions refer to different, and even consequent actions that form part of the same narrative.

specimen	saurian	feline	simian	canine	rodent	avian	ungulate	unknown
K0517	X			?				
K0633	X	X	X					
K3388	?							X
K3400	X	X						
K4464	X	X						
K4619		X		X				
K4989						X		X
K5169					X	X		
K5723		X						
K5976		X	?					
K5977	X	X						
K6002		X						X
K6679	X							
K7434	?						?	
K7814	X	X	X	?				
K8088		X	X					X
K8533		X						X
K8966	X	X						
Baking Pot Vase	X	X						
Cuychen Vase	X	X		X				
Naranjo Vase	X	X					?	

Table 2. Some Holmul Dancer vessels and the incidence of the different animal figures, or burdens, depicted in the iconography. Vessels wherein the burdens are missing or could not be identified are not tabulated above (for additional examples see Looper 2008).

We wonder if these expressions do not somehow provide emic labels for the resurrection of the Maize God, who ascended or was raised out of the underworld and acceded to the supreme title of *kalo'mte'* (assuming that *kalaawte'* is the de-nominalised form of the title). The final glyph blocks (R5, S5, T5) record the place-names ascribing the resurrection of the Maize Gods to particular mythic locations, including Kanu'l and Mutu'l. In contrast, the third is not the toponym of Machaquila, as might otherwise be expected,

but a dynastic title (*uxhaabte'*) connected to the lords of Río Azul. Appropriately enough this title also closes the caption on the Holmul Dancer vase from Río Azul. Compiling all the known examples of Holmul Dancer scenes we can see that these involve a rather great variety of burdens, of which the saurian and the spotted feline are the most common, underlining the pre-eminence of Kanu'l and Mutu'l as supernatural places (Table 2). It is by these means that we are able to identify Kanu'l as the place where the Maize God was resurrected – ascended or lifted, to use the emic wording – and the place where he became the king of kings, ruler of all, the primordial *kalo'mte'*.

To summarise, let us provide a précis of the mythic narrative, wherein the Holmul Dancer scenes depict but one event. As such, the Holmul Dancer scenes collapse a complex narrative into a single powerful scene that epitomises the mythology of maize. In Classic period mythology it is the Hero Twins, the sons of primordial maize that resurrect him, by literally watering the seedling, as he emerges from the back of a cracked turtle carapace embodying the earth (Coe 1987: 175-177; Freidel, Schele & Parker 1993; Quenon & Le Fort 1997: 887; Schele & Mathews 1998: 115-117; Taube 1985: 173, 177; Taube 1993: 66-67). Based on natal analogies, the reborn Maize God is represented as nude, and a key episode represents this divinity being dressed by a series of female attendants while the Hero Twins carry platters brimming with their father's regalia (Coe 1987: 177-178). The growth of maize and his resurrection was portrayed as a dance (Taube 2009) and as such the Holmul Dancer scene represents maize in apotheosis, after his rebirth, donning his majestic jewellery and regalia. The Holmul Dancer scenes do not only provide a snapshot of maize in glory, having vanquished death, but what is equally significant is that the growth and resurrection of maize was conceived of as a dance. Although so much of Classic Maya culture has been lost, it is conceivable that the Maize God is depicted performing a particular kind of dance, perhaps on par with the *danza del maíz* known from the Huasteca region (Croda León 2000; García Franco 2000) and the so-called green-corn dances that are well-known among North American Indians, especially in the Southwest and Southeast (Laubin & Laubin 1977: 171-228). The Holmul Dancer scenes may thus provide the mythic origin of the young maize dance that would have been celebrated and performed in the Classic period.

It is intriguing in this regard that so many Holmul Dancer scenes emphasise the multipartite aspect of divine maize, which is differentiated in large measure by the animal burdens, tied to different dynastic houses. It is noteworthy that some of the animal entities closely match the three named stone thrones depicted in the iconography of Palenque and cited in Classic period creation accounts, such as the text of Quirigua, Stela C (Looper 2003: 158-160). The latter text relates that at the last creation, in 3114 BC, three throne-stones were planted at the edge of the sky to form the first three-stone-hearth by the Paddler deities and goes on to name each stone in turn as "Ocelot",

"Saurian", and "Water" (Freidel, Schele & Parker 1993: 64-67). Are these triadic stones the premise that warranted the existence of three different incarnations of the reborn Maize God? If this is the case then it follows that the Late Classic 'divine kings' of Kanu'l and Mutu'l – and the other places named in the Holmul Dancer scenes – could claim affinity to a particular aspect of the maize God, but also tied their reigns to the last creation, with their seats of power located at the very place where the Paddlers planted the stone and where the Maize God was resurrected in the deep mythological past.

Conclusions

While we have focused on just one particular toponym and its titular use, we have been able to show that Kanu'l was a place that referred not only to a dynasty of Classic Maya kings and their kin, but also to a mythic location that was strongly connected to the Maize God and the myth of his death and resurrection. It is at Kanu'l, that cavernous and watery underworld, where the Maize God was overcome and beheaded by the Earth Lords. It is at Kanu'l that the Maize God dances out of the underworld in glory, at his resurrection. At present, we do not know if the ancient Maya associated this supernatural place with any physical location; in the corpus of Classic texts there is not a single reference to Kanu'l as the setting of contemporary events. However, considering the importance of caves in the sacred geography of Mesoamerican cultures, it is highly probable that, somewhere, a cave was indeed regarded as the original Kanu'l.

The depictions of Kanu'l in the confrontation scenes makes it clear that the rulers who bore the *k'uhul kanu'l ajaw* title, consciously embraced the origins of this title in mythic deep-time to legitimise not only their political power, but also their claim to divinity. In calling themselves 'divine Kanu'l kings' they associated themselves directly with the Maize God, and especially his localised manifestation. Since Kanu'l was a key location in the narrative of the Maize God's death and resurrection, historic Kanu'l lords also could claim to overcome death, on par with the mythic precedent. Not only the Kanu'l EG but also the *kalo'mte'* title reflect this claim, since the latter may be the nominalised form of the verbal expression *kalaawte'* that appears in the context of resurrection scenes depicted so prominently on the Holmul Dancer vessels. Thus whereas the *kalo'mte'* title has usually been connected to a distinct manifestation of the thunder deity Chaahk, we now have the impression that this title connects monarchs to the Maize God. This intimate relation between the Kanu'l rulers and the Maize God goes even further, since in the confrontation scenes the Maize God is occasionally substituted by the pre-dynastic namesakes of Classic period rulers, thereby establishing a more concrete link between the historical present and deep-time – a materialisation of the past in the present.

Panel 1 from La Corona shows that rulers expressed their connection to the maize God of Kanu'l very explicitly, and assumed his guise as part of impersonation rituals,

dancing like the Maize God at his resurrection and wearing his ritual attire, including the backrack with the saurian burden. However, the Holmul Dancer vessels make it clear that the Kanu'l Maize God is but one of many aspects of this deity, which were linked to other dynasties and place names associated with the archaeological sites of Tikal, Machaquila, Río Azul, and several more. Since all these toponyms appear in a mythological context as settings for the Maize God myth, this leads us to deduce that all these places might have been supernatural in origin – or at least attributed retrospectively to the mythical past. This conclusion is supported by some Late Classic texts that feature groupings of emblem glyphs in contexts wherein the particular *k'uhul ajaw* do not seem to refer to historical persons but rather to supernatural beings (Helmke & Kupprat 2013). For instance, on Stela A, at Copan, four EGs are mentioned in association with the 'four skies' and the four cardinal directions (Barthel 1968; Marcus 1973: 913; Marcus 1976: 17-22; Wagner 2006: 157-159). Among them is not only the Kanu'l EG (Calakmul), but also the Mutu'l EG (Tikal), both of which occur so frequently on the Holmul Dancer vases. Another EG in the same grouping has Baake'l (Palenque) as its main sign, and it too can be traced back to the distant past (Helmke 2011, 2012a: 95-100). The fourth and final EG is that of Copan (T756[528]-**pi**), and although an extensive study of that EG remains within the purview of future research, based on association alone, and the contexts wherein it appears, we propose that such groupings refer mostly, if not exclusively, to emblems that are supernatural in origin.

Although supernatural toponyms employed as the main signs of EGs seem to have their origin in the cultural canon of narratives and beliefs that were shared among many regions, city-states and dynasties of the Maya area – and also in Mesoamerican cultures beyond the Maya area – we cannot dissociate them from the ruling elites who styled themselves with such regal titles, thereby preserving them for modern scrutiny. As such it seems patently clear that the 'divine lords' not only used myths and cultural memory to legitimate their power, but made recourse to narratives, ritual actions and regalia so as to more adequately adapt to and shape their socio-political context. These processes help to explain, for example, the bewildering diversity of mythic narratives at each nexus of the Maize God cycle, why so many different burdens are depicted in the backracks of the Maize Gods, or even how the Maize God could be substituted by the mythical dynastic founder in the confrontation scenes. It is these variations and local adaptations that betray the dynamic role that these vibrant narratives played in the lives of royalty, and the power of place in mythic narratives.

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The Linguistics of Toponymy in Maya Hieroglyphic Writing

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Abstract: In onomastics, toponyms embrace a broad variety of categories to name geographical entities, objects and features, whether they are natural or artificial. This paper pursues the question of how toponyms can be classified and seeks examples to illustrate these cases, involving a structural approach of how to identify toponyms in the hieroglyphic record. This in turn leads to the question of how toponyms of different categories are formed, by compounding, affixation patterns, or morphosyntax.
Also, linguistic peculiarities may be indicators to identify a Classic Mayan language geography, likewise in comparison with general onomastics. Finally, the formation of demonyms relates how toponyms are integrated into the socio-political sphere and help to shape identities.

Keywords: onomastics; toponymy; linguistics; Classic Mayan; hieroglyphic writing.

Resumen: Estudios onomásticos demuestran que topónimos pueden designar una amplia variedad de categorías, como por ejemplo entidades geográficas u objetos y características tanto naturales como artificiales. Este artículo examina cómo topónimos pueden ser clasificados y presenta ejemplos para ilustrar estos casos, proponiendo una aproximación estructural para identificar topónimos en el registro epigráfico. Esto lleva a la cuestión de la formación de topónimos de diferentes categorías a través de la composición, los esquemas de afijación o la morfosintaxis.
Además, peculiaridades lingüísticas también pueden ser indicadores que permiten identificar la geografía del idioma maya clásico, tal como indica la onomástica general. Finalmente, la formación de gentilicios esta relacionada con la inclusión de topónimos en el contexto socio-político y juega un papel importante en la construcción de identidades.

Palabras clave: onomástica; toponimia; lingüística; idioma maya clásico; escritura jeroglífica.

Introduction

Toponymy, the study of place names, is a branch of onomastics, the study of proper names (based on the Greek word ὄνομα, 'name'). While a 'name' is, broadly speaking, a specifier for things, abstract ideas, substance, or events; it is always the sign for a denotation within a non-linguistic class (e.g. Kripke 1980), according to one concept of 'name'. More of interest for this study are two subclasses of names, appellatives as names for a generic multitude of individual things, and proper names for an individual, singular thing, following the distinction by Mill (1846: I, 17). However, proper names may frequently develop from generic names (e.g. consider the anthroponym 'Smith' or

the toponym 'Bath'), sometimes we encounter the reverse process (e.g. the appellative 'Kalashnikov' or *wil+te'+nah* as an original Teotihuacan oikodonym (Fash, Tokovinine & Fash 2009: 213-214) re-used in several Maya sites to designate ancestral shrines); thus both categories are permeable (Bauer 1996). Proper names (generally of any kind) can also be classified by several domains, for example their etymology, eponymy (if 'name-source' is broadened to physical features), semantics, linguistics, pragmatics, or taxonomy (see next section).

While anthroponyms as one major category have received an intensive discussion (Colas 2004) with regard to their different domains in Maya epigraphy, theonyms as well as toponyms still lack a substantial study, a desideratum this article can hardly remedy for the latter. The most concise study of its time on toponyms (Stuart & Houston 1994) provided substantial insights on the syntax, context, and iconography of place names. García Campillo (2002) specifically dealt with place names from the inscriptions of Yucatan. Only most recently, Tokovinine (2013) deepened our understanding of place and identity. A toponymy of modern Maya place names, on the other hand, is widely available (e.g. Arriola 1973; Brito Sansores 1981; Ochoa 1987; Pacheco Cruz 1967; Réjon Garcia 1910; Roche Canto 1987; Romero Castillo 1987). Other philological disciplines are more advanced on a theoretical level, especially the German onomastics and toponymy.[1] Likewise, the thematic range within general onomastics is rather broadly settled (cf. Eichler *et al.* 1995: xxiii-xxxii, 1996: v-xvi). It is probably most appropriate to consider classification schemes of toponyms first, before examining their linguistics.

Classification of toponyms

Toponyms can be classified in a variety of ways (Tent & Blair 2009: 2-16), most of these following a descriptive or etymological scheme. Zelinsky (2002: 243) objected such "primitive level of specifying" by proposing a logical coherent hierarchy of eight major *taxa* with branched subdivisions, also with regards to place names (2002: 254-255) in which he includes natural and artificial features. A feature-based classification scheme has the advantage that each of its categories can independently be reviewed in terms of its naming conventions. Only in a second step can etymologies or social reasons be applied as explanatory and comparative parameters. I will apply a modified terminology introduced by several authors (Cassidy 1996; Kamianets 2000: 47-48), enhanced with categories from Zelinsky's (2002) scheme:

1 Interestingly, the first compilation of German place names was conducted by no less a person than Ernst Förstemann (1872), custodian and commentator of the Dresden Codex; besides his merits as a pathfinder for quantitative linguistics.

A. Proper names of natural features

1. *Oronyms*, from *ὄρος*, 'mountain': The proper names of geomorphological features of the topographic relief, such as mountains, hills, or valleys.
2. *Drymonyms*, from *δρῡμός*, 'forest': The features determined by biogenic influence, both primary and secondary (anthropomorphic), such as forests and cultivations.
3. *Hydronyms*, from *ὕδωρ*, 'water': The generic term for all watery environments, which can further be broken down.
   a. *Potamonyms*, from *ποταμός*, 'river': For the proper names of all watercourses.
   b. *Limnonyms*, from *λίμνη*, 'lake': For the proper names of all basins filled with water (for which sinkholes may also account in the Maya area).
   c. *Pelagonyms*, from *πέλαγος*, 'sea': For the proper names of all exterior bodies of water not enclosed by land.
4. *Astronyms*, from *ἄστρον*, 'star': The generic category for the proper names of extraterrestrial objects, especially planets and stars.

B. Proper names of cultural features

1. *Choronyms*, from *χώρα*, 'land': This is a special category linking natural and artificial features. It mainly refers to regions and landscapes (including islands and peninsulas) in their anthropological sense (Kirchhoff 2011).
2. *Politonyms*, from *πόλις*, 'city/state': The term refers to administrative, political, and historic units and territories (see 'Toponyms in their Socio-Political Context' below).
3. *Mythonyms*, from *μῦθος*, 'narrative': The term refers to supernatural places of any kind, acknowledging that this in particular is an epigraphic and etic distinction not congruent with the emic Maya belief system, hence it may be difficult to define this category other than context. Also, existent locations may be named after mythological places.

C. Proper names of artificial features

1. *Dromonyms*, from *δρόμος*, 'road': The proper names of route ways, which in part could be natural and also be extra-urban (if this is an applicable terminology in the Maya area at all). Among their aspect as public space, *hodonyms* (from *ὁδός*, 'place') could be separated for open spaces within settlements, such as plazas.

2. *Oikonyms*, from *οἶκος*, 'dwelling': The generic term for assemblages of architecture, specifically settlements and cities.
   a. *Urbanonyms*, from *urbānus*, 'urban': For the proper names of residential subdivisions and other features within a settlement, such as groups and architectural compounds.
   b. *Oikodonyms*, from *οἰκοδομή*, 'building': For the proper names of individual structures of profane nature.
   c. *Naonyms*, from *ναός*, 'temple': For the proper names of individual structures of sacral nature.[2]
   d. *Necronyms*, from *νεκρός*, 'deceased': For the proper names of burial places, both burial grounds and funeral monuments.

Epigraphic examples can certainly be found for most of the categories (while the taxonomy is definitely not exhaustive), while it is sometimes unclear to which a toponym pertains. For example, *yaxa'* (Stuart 1985) refers to a site and its polity, but it was likely named after the lake whose northern shore it occupies, and which is still carrying the name today (also think of 'Salt Lake City'). We may find many more examples, after which a site or features within were named after a natural characteristics, especially when the proper names contains words like *(h)a'*, 'water', *witz*, 'hill', or *te'(el)*, 'tree, forest'. In the ideal case, the etymology can be deduced when examining the surrounding topography, but the inscriptions often lack a clear attribution. But it is detrimental to think that the immediate name will automatically point to the underlying natural feature. Nevertheless, I will include such inferences based on the generic term among the examples, unless a clear attribution to any other toponym is possible and points out to which toponym such attestation refers to in the inscriptions (e.g. Figure 1c).

Oronymic place names are widely attested in the inscriptions (Figure 1) and comprise the most examples attested (Tokovinine 2013: tab. 1) with *witz*, 'mountain, hill' or *tun*, 'stone, rock'. In most contexts, a topographic feature becomes highlighted to refer to a settlement or an individual structure as an artificial mountain (Figure 1i). However, neither the etymology nor the attribution of the place name to a known feature is possible in the majority of cases.[3]

2 I introduce this term in contrast to the otherwise used *ekklesionym* (from *ἐκκλησία*, 'assembly'), because of its Christian connotation. The term *naos* is instead established in architecture and art history to refer to a sacral building or parts thereof.

3 For example, one well known exception is the toponym *k'a[h]k'+witz* for Tortuguero (Wanyerka 2002: 54). In addition, it also likely served to refer to the Cerro de Macuspana, a steep limestone cliff rising amidst the Tabasco floodplains and on whose east side the site was located, towards the rising sun (Gronemeyer 2006: 401-441). Another, yet less specific instance is *bax+(tun)+witz* for Xultun (Prager *et al.* 2010), named after *in-situ* quartzite formations in the adjacent ranges, thus *witz* serves as a collective plural. The case of *kol-ol te'* is one where a hill (close to Tonina) is not referred to by *witz*, but where a secure relation can be established by its still modern name (Boot 2009: fn. 132).

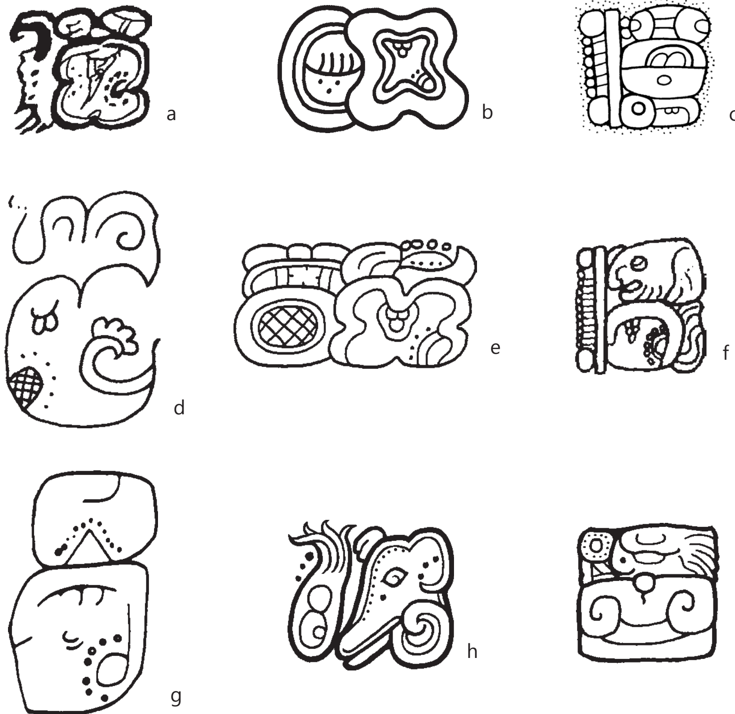

Figure 1. Examples of oronyms and place names of oronymic eponomy. **a) BAX-TUN-WITZ-AJAW** < *bax+tun+witz+ajaw*, "Quartz-Stone-Hills-Lord" = Xultun (XUL K3743, H1; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **b) HIX-WITZ** < *hix+witz*, "Jaguar-Hill" = Zapote Bopal (DPL HS. 2 V-W, F2b; drawing by Luis Luin in Fahsen 2002: fig. 8), **c) AJ-ko-^{2}lo-TE'** < *aj=kol-ol te'*, "He of Scabby? Tree" = Tonina hillside (TNA Mon. 149, N1; drawing by Lucia Henderson in Graham *et al.* 2006: 82), **d) K'AK'-WITZ** < *k'a[h]k'+witz*, "Fire-Hill" = Tortuguero (TRT Mon. 8, B21a; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer in Gronemeyer 2006: pl. 16), **e) K'INICH-pa-a-WITZ** < *k'inich pa'-Ø+witz*, "Hot Split-Hill" = Aguateca (DPL HS. 2 V-E, F2; drawing by Luis Luin in Fahsen 2002: fig. 7), **f) AJ-PEK-TUN** < *aj=pe[h]k+tun*, "He of Speaking-Stones" = Usumacinta area site (PNG St. 40, C11; drawing by Stefanie Teufel in Teufel 2004: 465), **g) TOK'-TUN** < *tok'+tun*, "Flint-Rock" = Pasion area site (ITN St. 17, K5b; drawing by Christian Prager in Mayer 1995: pl. 15), **h) ^{u}USIJ-WITZ** < *usij+witz*, "Vulture-Hill" = Bonampak (BPK ScS. 5, F6; drawing by Alexandre Safronov, courtesy Wayeb Drawing Archive), **i) ?-ka-WITZ** < *CVk+witz*, "? Hill" = the *wayib of K'an Tatbu Max* (COL Lnt. "Po Throne", D3; drawing by Alexandre Safronov, courtesy Wayeb Drawing Archive).

Place names of drymonymic origin are mostly known from the context of settlements (for an exception see Figure 1c), these may in turn be named after individual trees, their appellatives, or woodlands (Figure 2). The latter can especially be assumed when not only *te'*, 'tree, wood' is used, but the collective *te'el*, 'forest'.[4] Nevertheless, the frequency among oikonyms or urbanonyms is considerable high (Tokovinine 2013: tab. 1).

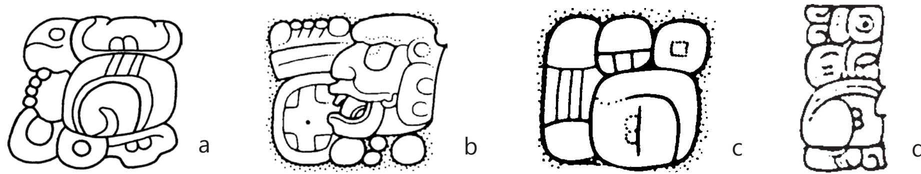

Figure 2. Examples of drymonyms and place names of drymonymic eponomy. **a) a-na-yi-TE'**< *an-ay-Ø? te'*, "Incarnated? Tree" = Tonina area site (TNA Mon. 155, B1; drawing by Lucia Henderson in Graham *et al.* 2006: 89), **b) AJ-K'AN-TE'-la** < *aj=k'an te'-[e]l*, "He of the Yellow Forest" = Usumacinta area site (YAX Lnt. 23, G2; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham 1982: 135), **c) ko-TE'-AJAW** < *ko[k]+te'+ajaw*, "Trogon?-Tree-Lord" = Usumacinta area site (YAX Lnt. 8, C1; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham and van Euw 1977: 27), **d) SAK-TE'-AJAW**[wa] < *sak te'+ajaw*, "White Tree-Lord" = Copan area site (CPN Alt. K, K1a; drawing by Linda Schele in Grube and MacLeod 1989: fig, 1).

Among hydronyms, there is often a high degree of confidence to associate the attested name with a body of water or the site located on its banks or shores (Figure 3). With any luck, the ancient name still persists in modern designations, as for example with Coba and Yaxha, or is partially hispanicised, as likely in the case of the Riachuelo and Laguneta Chacrío (Stuart & Houston 1994: 37-38), a tributary of the Rio Petexbatun. While the generic *(h)a'*, 'water' can refer to both potamonyms and limnonyms, *nahb*, 'lake' has to be restricted to the latter.[5] Pelagonyms, except the generic appellative *k'ahk' nahb* for 'ocean' (e.g. on PAL TI-W, P12), often in connection to primordial waters (Stuart 2005: 168-169), are unknown so far.

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4 See CHR *te'eh*, 'trees, grove, forest' (Wisdom 1950: 670), CHN *te'e*, 'montaña, selva, bosque' (Keller & Luciano 1997: 235), and CHL *te'el*, 'bosque' (Aulie & de Aulie 1978: 88). A *-Vl* marking for a collective abstractive was proposed by Stuart (1998: fn. 3).

5 Stuart & Houston (1994: 52) proposed that the differences in writing **HA'** < *+ha'* and **a** < *+a[']* should be dialectal, with the latter predominant in the eastern lowlands. Although there seems to be more evidence for an abbreviated spelling in these regions, I do not consider it because of a Western / Eastern Ch'olan distinction, as there are rare occurrences of substitutions (e.g. the **YAX-HA'-AJAW** spelling on K4427, M1, a Uaxactun / El Zotz' area ceramic vessel). An initial /h/ is often elided upon possession in many Mayan languages, e.g. YUK *ha'*, 'agua' with *yaa'l ich*, 'lágrimas de los ojos' (Barrera Vásquez 1993: 165), also refer to Yoshida (2013: 9-15) for a discussion of /h/ representations in Colonial YUK orthography. It is not unlikely that the same phonological process appears in compounds, where a spelling with **HA'** is then more etymological and analytical, than with just **a** as the more phonemic spelling. With regards to *nahb* for lakes, seasonal *bajos* may also be attributed to this category, as suggested by *chik nahb* for Calakmul, which is not neighboured by any permanent body of water.

Figure 3. Examples of hydronyms and place names of hydronymic eponomy. **a) AJ-^{2}bu-lu HA'** < *aj=bub-ul ha'*, "He of Tadpole?-Water" = Usumacinta area site (PNG P. 2, J'2; drawing by David Stuart in Schele and Miller 1986: pl. 40a), **b) AJ-CHAK-HA'** < *aj=chak ha'*, "He of Great Water" = Chacrío? area site (ALS P. 1, A4; drawing by Stephen Houston in Stuart and Houston 1994: fig. 43c), **c) chi-ku-NAB** < *chik+na[h]b*, "Coati?-Lake" = Calakmul (DPL P. 7, B6b; drawing by Stephen Houston in Houston 1993: fig. 5-11), **d) a-IK'-AJ** < *a[j]=ik'+a[']*, "He of Wind-Water" = Motul de San Jose (YAX St. 21, pH8; drawing by Peter Mathews in Tate 1992: fig. 151), **e) ko-ba-a** < *kob a'*, "Turbid Water" = Coba (COB P. Gr. D; drawing by Eric von Euw in Grube and Stuart 1987: fig. 13), **f) K'AN-TOK-a-AJAW** < *k'an tok+a[']+ajaw*, "Yellow Mist-Water-Lord" = Caracol area toponym (CRC St. 3, A10b; drawing by Carl Beetz in Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981: fig. 4), **g) IX-AJ-K'IN-a** < *ix=aj=k'in+a[']*, "Lady of Sun-Water" = Piedras Negras (COL St. Lausanne, I7-J7; drawing by Simon Martin in Miller and Martin 2004: 167), **h) LAKAM-HA'** < *lakam ha'*, "Big Water" = Río Otolum? = Palenque (PAL T19B-S, P8; drawing by David Stuart in Stuart 2005: pl. 2), **i) ^{2}pi-a** < *pip+a[']*, "Raptor?-Water" = Pomona (PMT Mon. 8, pD4; drawing by Peter Mathews), **j) 3-WITZ-a** < *ux witz+a[']*, "Three Mountain-Water" = Caracol (CRC St. 3, B15a; drawing by Carl Beetz in Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981: fig. 4), **k) YAX-a** < *yax a[']*, "Green Water" = Yaxha (YXH St. 2, B1; drawing by Linda Schele in Grube 2000b, fig. 197), **l) ?-HA'** < *?+ha'*, "'Dragon'-Water" = Dos Pilas (DPL HS. 2 II-E, C2b, drawing by Luis Luin in Fahsen 2002: fig. 7).

I will only tangle astronyms briefly, as they are less tied to toponyms as 'places of power and memory'. There are additionally some major difficulties involved. Many celestial bodies are intimately connected with (named) supernatural actors or aspects thereof. Several names may exist for one extraterrestrial object, depending on its visibility or position within a cycle. However, when naming an astronomical object, the designation was specifically used as a proper name, as it likely did not expand to an appellative in Classic Mayan astronomy.[6] Thus, *k'in*, 'sun' and *uh*, 'moon' are indeed astronyms, likewise *chak ek'*, 'great / red star' as the apparent generic name for Venus, but also specifically for the Morning Star.[7] The situation becomes more complicated in the Venus tables in C Dr. 24, where *chak ek'* is associated with different supernaturals, as well as on C Dr. 46-50, where different Venus aspects / periods are equalled as representations of (Central Mexican) deities (cf. Milbrath 2000: 163-177 for a concise discussion). Mars also has its own calculation tables in C Dr. 43b-45b (Bricker & Bricker 1986; Willson 1924: 22-25), and is referred to by the still undeciphered **MARS.BEAST** sign already attested in Classic inscriptions (Kelley 1976: 120, 334; Lounsbury 1991: fn. 7), but it is unknown if it refers to the planet itself or a related supernatural.

Among the choronyms, the Peten region and department still inherits a Classic Mayan designation, although the applicability of *peten* in general (also translatable as 'province'), its ancient use for the central lowlands and thus its extension are unknown. But the word is attested in Naranjo and Cancuen[8] as geographically related sites. It also appears in a toponym that possibly refers to the Laguna Mecoacan peninsulas at the mouth of the Río Seco and the site of El Bellote alike (Ensor 2003: 107). Likewise obscure is the possible *mon+pan* toponym mentioned six times in various drawings

6 For example, 'moon', the original proper name for the Earth's single satellite, became the common designation for any other body orbiting a planet, after Galileo's discovery of the four Jupiter satellites Io, Europa, Ganymed, and Kallisto. Therefore, the Latin proper name *Luna*, 'the Moon', *la luna* (with article) in English and Spanish, or *Erdmond* (i.e. 'Earth's moon') in German are sometimes used to provide a general or language-specific astronym. The distinction between proper name and appellative becomes even more apparent in the universal common distinction between 'sun' and 'star' inherited from the observations of early astronomy.

7 After the entry in the Motul dictionary, cf. *chak ek'*, 'estrella de la mañana' (Barrera Vásquez 1993: 79). At the same time, the name also refers to a wasp species in the *Ritual de los Bacabes* (cf. Roys 1965: 132) on p. 119. There may thus be a relation between insectoid representations of stars descending from skybands in Postclassic iconography (Iwaniszewski 1987: 211; Miller 1982: 86) and the diving star in the eclipse table of C Dr. 58b (Aveni 1992: 71). Another instance of a supernatural possibly embodying different phases are the spelling variations of Goddess I as either *uh ixik* or *sak ixik* in the Dresden Codex (Taube 1992: 64) with youthful and mature aspects.

8 There is a lengthy passage on CNC P. 1, G2-H8 that starts with the arrival of the Cancuen Ruler K'ib Ajaw, followed by the **SHELL.TUN** 'foundation verb' – possibly *kaj*, 'to settle' (Tokovinine 2013: 80-81, fig. 46c) – and the three place names *o[']+jal*, *o[']+mak*, and *o[']+na[h]b*, referred to as *ux a[h]k+pet-[e]n*, 'Three Turtle-Peten'. The Peten is thus part of a nominal compound, and its specification by *ux a[h]k* may relate to a sub-region of the Peten related to the Cancuen polity.

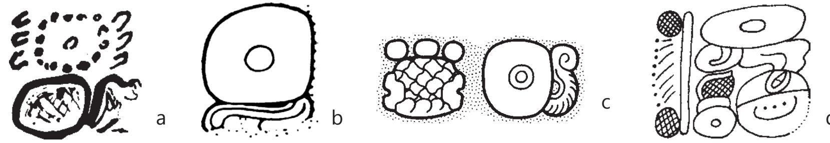

Figure 4. Examples of choronyms and place names of choronymic eponomy. **a) mo-no-pa-na** < *mon+pan*, "?" = Mopan area? (NTN Dwg. 29, A4-A5; drawing by Barbara MacLeod in MacLeod and Stone 1995: fig. 7-8), **b) PET-ni** < *pet-[e]n*, "The Rounded" = Peten (NAR St. 23, E21b; drawing by Eric von Euw in Graham and von Euw 1975: 60), **c) 3-AK PET-ne** < *ux a[h]k+pet-[e]n*, "Three Turtle-Peten" = part of Peten (CNC P. 1, G5-H5; drawing by Yuriy Polyukhovich), **d) AJ-PET-ne-ti-i** < *aj=pet-[e]n+ti'*, "He of Island-Mouth" = El Bellote? (TRT Mon. 8, B64; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer in Gronemeyer 2006: pl. 16).

of the Naj Tunich cave, possibly referring to the area around the upper reaches of the Río Mopan (MacLeod & Stone 1995: 169).[9] Other regions or landscapes frequently equal political units, e.g. *sum?-[a]l* as a regional toponym for the Petexbatun, but also the larger polity and interest sphere of Tamarindito (Buechler 2012: 529-536, fn. 4). Therefore, I postpone providing examples of politonyms to the socio-political discussion of toponyms below, also to provide them more space as 'places of power'.

Mythonyms (Figure 5) have already been summarised by Stuart & Houston (1994: 69-80). There are several prominent place names mentioned in texts across the Maya area, linked to certain mythological events. Of special importance are those places associated with the different fragments we have from the era day story on 4 *Ajaw* 8 *Kumk'u* (Figure 5b, d, f-h), for which several reconstructions are possible (Callaway 2011: 197-208). Besides named localities, era day events also simply happen in unspecific spheres of the heavens or on the earth,[10] but can also be quite specific in terms of the type of place.[11] In the Classic Maya world view, mythological places permeate with the physical world. This is best demonstrated by the *matwil* mythonym almost exclusively mentioned in Palenque. It is the birthplace of the Palenque Triad (Kelley 1965: 97; Stuart

9 Originally, the reading was ***mo-o-pa-na** < **mo'pan*, hence making a toponymic reference reasonable. As the spelling indeed involves **no** instead of **o**, the revised *mon-Ø+pan* became reinterpreted as an agricultural rite (MacLeod & Sheseña 2013: 205-206). While the contexts following the perfective verb form *y-il-j=iy* to witness an event perfectly fit other parallel statements (such as with *k'al-Ø+tun*) of a compound with a nominalised verb, it still might be possible that the texts refer to the landscape being spotted. If *mon+pan* (of a different and unclear etymology, then) was indeed a toponym, it could likewise have turned into Mopan by elision.

10 Compare to the **u-ti-ya KAB-KAJ-la** < *u[h]t-Ø=iy kab+kaj-[a]l*, 'it happened in the land-settlement-place' as a couplet term for territory (Tokovinine 2013: 43-44).

11 The *sak ch'en-nal* mentioned on the Yax Wayib Mask is the proper name of the *way-b-il*, the 'sleeping place' (Houston & Stuart 1989: 9-13; Stuart 1998: 399-401) of the *chan-al k'uh* and *kab-al k'uh* (Prager 2013: 504-517).

& Houston 1994: 77); and frequently, Palenque rulers identify themselves as *matwil* lords to claim their godly descent (Gronemeyer 2012: 32). Likewise, *mo' witz* may as well refer to the hill range north of Copan (Elisabeth Wagner, personal communication, November 7, 2014).

I am aware of only one potential dromonym (Figure 6a), where the apparent descriptive *chan+te' sak bih* must also refer to a specific causeway of that length,[12] considering the prominence of numerals in proper names. The situation for hodonyms is even more unsecure. Because of a quatrefoil deepening in the main plaza of Machaquila (Graham 1967: 59, fig. 42), Stuart & Houston (1994: 33) relate the suggested Machaquila oikonym (Figure 6b) **?^{na}-HA'** to the main plaza as well.[13]

Oikonyms have already been referred to a couple of times in relation to examples from other taxonomic categories in case they derive from natural features or contain such appellatives. Apart from these cases, there are abundant other oikonyms (Figure 7) that may likewise overlap with politonyms (see below), but even more problematic is their distinction from urbanonyms. The etymology of is often harder to assess, both in terms of morphological segmentation and eponymy.[14]

12 The classifier *-te'* is not only used for the count of calendrical units (Prager 2003), but is also attested for counting miles, eggs, and calabashes in YUK (Thompson 1972: 333).

13 The place name consists of the quatrefoil sign with an infixed **HA'** sign, complemented by **na**. It is attested as an in-text reference on SBL St. 8, C5, and as a separate spelling on DPL St. 15, B7 without reference to Machaquila, but a local place. In Machaquila, it only appears as an iconographic representation in the basal register of MQL St. 4, 7, 8, 10?, and 18 to let the ruler stand on. Although the common formula for an event to take place on a plaza is *ta[h]n ha'* + emblem/toponym (e.g. TRT Mon. 6, J2, YAX Lnt. 25, I3), it is unlikely that the quatrefoil is a substitution to **TAN**, although plazas are also referred to as a watery surface. Looper (2000) suggests the reading **CH'EN**, based on the complementation pattern, and in comparison with an infixation of **TUN** on CPN Alt. S, J1 (where the **ni** more likely serves as the complement to **TUN**). But no substitution patterns with other **CH'EN** graphemes are known, so I question this reading. But in the light of spelling variations, the supposed Machaquila oikonym might have been derived from the proper name of its central plaza, the nucleus of any settlement (similar to the title *Markt* that became part of German place names with a market and market rights, e.g. Markt Schwaben). In comparison with the Seibal and Dos Pilas cases, it might even be the appellative for a centrally located space which was only architecturally recreated in Machaquila.

14 For example *ahin* and *yohm pi* mentioned on TRT Mon. 6 as warfare targets and which both must be located in the Tabasco floodplains (Gronemeyer 2006: 38, 40, 59). As alligators populate watery and swampy areas, a relation can be established for the first site. Tabasco also has fertile soils and is a region to grow cacao. The fruits of the Canistel or Yellow Zapote (*Pouteria campechiana*) can be fermented into a drink, a boiling of its bark is used in traditional medicine, and it also provides latex (Morton 1987: 402-405). The site may be named after a plantation or its main production, thus indirectly supporting the assumption that Tortuguero wars were to gain control of the economic resources and trade network of northern Tabasco (Gronemeyer 2006: 58-59). Another example is *bital*, a site / polity mentioned in texts of Naranjo and Caracol. It is possibly the abstractive of the adjectival root *bit*, 'small, little', based on CHL *bi'tal,* 'niño' and *bi'ti mut*, 'pajarito' (Aulie & de Aulie 1978: 10), and CHN *bit*, 'chicos' (Keller & Luciano 1997: 45).

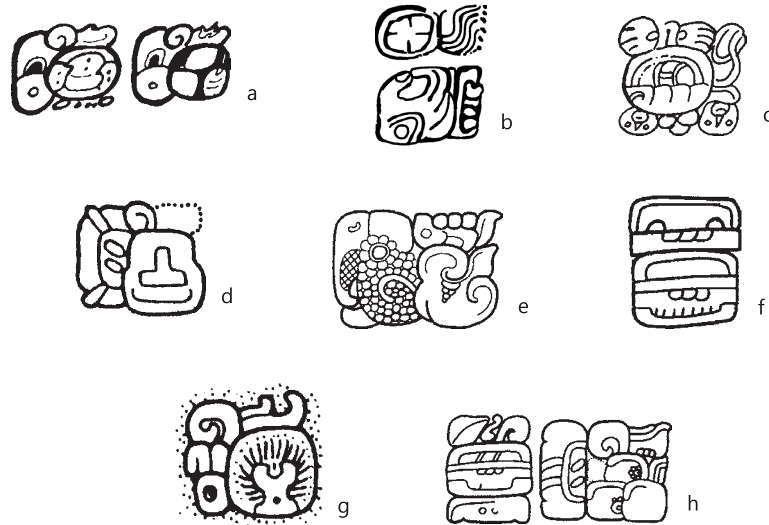

Figure 5. Examples of mythonyms and place names mythonymic eponomy. **a) IK'-WAY-NAL^{la} IK'-NAB-NAL** < *i[h]k' way-nal i[h]k na[h]b-nal*, "Black Portal-Place, Black Lake-Place" (COL K1609, F1-G1; drawing by Linda Schele in Schele and Miller 1986: pl. 122c), **b) K'IN-ni-chi-li** < *k'inich-il*, "Hot Place" (NAR K7750, C'11; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **c) ma-ta-wi-la** < *mat-w-il*, "?" (PAL TFCB, B2; drawing by Merle Greene Robertson in Robertson 1991: fig. 13c), **d) MIH-IK'-NAL** < *mih ik'-nal*, "No Wind-Place" (QRG Alt. P', L2a; drawing by Matthew Looper), **e) MO'-^{wi}WITZ** < *mo'+witz*, "Macaw-Mountain" (CPN St. B, C1; drawing by Alexandre Tokovinine in Tokovinine 2013: fig. 36f), **f) NAH-5-CHAN** < *nah jo' chan*, "First Five Skies" (QRG St. C, A9b; drawing by Matthew Looper in Looper 2003: fig. 5.1), **g) SAK-CH'EN-NAL** < *sak ch'en-nal*, "White Cave-Place" (COL Yax Wayib Mask, A5; drawing by Stephen Houston in Houston and Inomata 2009: fig. 2.3), **h) TI'-CHAN^{na} YAX-THREE.STONES-NAL** < *ti'+chan yax* THREE.STONES*-nal*, "Edge-Sky First 'Three Stones'-Place" (QRG St. C, B13b-A14; drawing by Matthew Looper in Looper 2003, fig. 5.1).

Figure 6. Examples of dromonyms and place names of dromonymic eponomy. **a) 4-TE'-SAK-BIH** < *chan+te' sak bih*, "4-miles causeway" (CPN HS. 1 XXIX, T1b; drawing by Barbara Fash), **b) ?^{na}-HA'** < *?-ha'*, "?-Plaza?" (SBL St. 8, C8; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham 1996: 27).

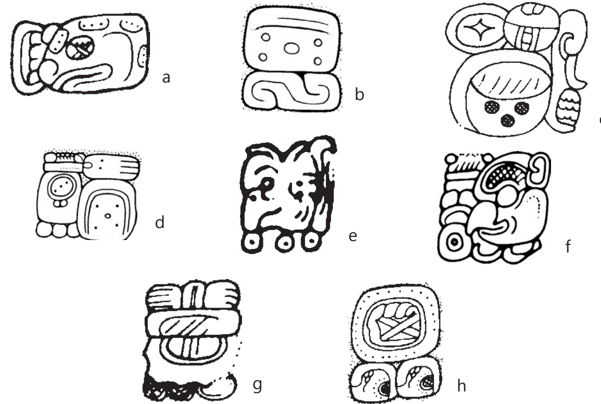

Figure 7. Examples of oikonyms and place names that likely refer to a site. **a) ta-AHIN** < *ta ahin*, "at Alligator" (TRT Mon. 6, F10; drawing by Ian Graham in Gronemeyer 2006: pl. 12), **b) bi-TAL** < *bit-al*, "The Little?" (NAR St. 13, G16; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham and von Euw 1975: 38), **c) HIX-NAL-AJAW** < *hix-nal+ajaw*, "Jaguar-Place-Lord" (TRT Mon. 8, B13; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer in Gronemeyer 2006: pl. 16), **d) AJ-ja-ma-li-bi** < *aj=jam-l-ib*, "He from Opening?" (YAX Lnt. 23, J1; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham 1982: 136), e) **PA'-ni-li** < *pa'-Ø+nil*, "Split-?" (COL St. Canberra, A5b; drawing by Stephen Houston in Mayer 1989, pl. 101), **f) AJ-SAK-o-ka** < *aj=sak ok*, "He of White Foot" (YAX Lnt. 26, R1; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham and von Euw 1977: 57), **g) tza-ma** < *tzam*, "?" (CRC St. 3, D19b; drawing by Carl Beetz in Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981: fig. 4), **h) yo-mo-pi** < *y-o[h]m-Ø pi*, "Froth of Canistel" (TRT Mon. 6, H1; drawing by Ian Graham in Gronemeyer 2006: pl. 12).

Often, toponyms attested in and attributed to a specific archaeological site may not refer to the settlement as a whole, but rather seem to be urbanonyms (Figure 8). Inherent to the nature of a Maya city state is the equalisation of the royal court with the settlement and polity. Often, emblems also appear in the 'place name formula' or contexts of demonymy (Gronemeyer 2012: 14, 18; Grube 2000a: 553; Stuart & Houston 1994: 57-60, 93).[15] There are several instances where we can at least narrow down the location

15 That a settlement's oikonym is often the same as or similar to the politonym is true for many cases, as best demonstrated by substitutions of titles of origin (among one person or between different persons), i.e. the proclitic *aj=*, the generic *winik* and the title *(k'uh) ajaw*. As previously discussed examples demonstrate, it is often not possible to establish an unambiguous relation between a toponym and the named entity in hieroglyphic inscriptions. While e.g. *ux witza'* is related to Caracol, there is no proof that it was the ancient name of the site, while the ruling house / polity was *k'uh k'antu mak*. Perhaps, it is either the proper name of the *Caana* structure crowned by the three pyramids B-18, B-19, and B-20 (Chase & Chase 1987: 18), or the opposite elite compound comprising of Structures B-4, B-5, and B-6 with extensive Tlaloc and water lily serpent iconography (Ishihara, Taube & Awe 2006), or

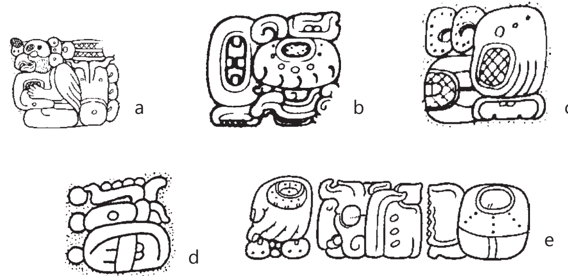

Figure 8. Examples of urbanonyms and place names that likely refer to architectural compounds. **a) ko-xo-o-pa** < *koxo'op*, "?" = Copan Group 9N-8 (CPN Alt. W, E2; drawing by Barbara Fash in Baudez 1994), **b) K'IN^ni^-HA'-NAL** < *k'in+ha'-nal*, "Sun-Water-Place" = Dos Pilas El Duende group (DPL St. 8, H6; drawing by Ian Graham in Houston 1993: fig. 4-14), **c) to-ko-TAN^na^** < *tok+ta[h]n*, "Mist-Centre" = Palenque southwest groups location (PAL TS, P5; drawing by Merle Greene Robertson in Robertson 1991: fig. 95), **d) 3-wi-ti-ki** < *ux witik*, "Three ?" = Copan principal group location (CPN Alt. Q, D5; drawing by Linda Schele in Schele 1989: fig. 1), **e) ye-ma-la K'UK' LAKAM wi-tzi** < *y-e[h]m-al-Ø k'uk' lakam witz*, "Descent of the Quetzal [from] the Big Mountain" = Palenque Cross Group / Mirador (PAL T18J, D17-D19; drawing by David Stuart in Stuart and Robertson 1994: fig. 34).

of urbanonyms within archaeological sites, e.g. in Palenque and Copan[16] by contextual inferences or archaeological evidence.

Oikodonyms (Figure 9) are often attributable to a specific structure by the inscription referring to a house dedication and a name formula (Stuart 1998; Stuart & Houston 1994: 85-86). Also, building names often comprise the term *nah*, 'house', but may

the B-Group plaza as a whole. One case, where the name of the polity does not equal the oikonym, is Aguateca (while *k'inich pa' witz* in turn is certainly derived from the chasm separating the main plaza from the palace group). The ruling *mutul* lineage was exiled from Tikal and made Dos Pilas the foundation of a new royal court (cf. Gronemeyer 2012: 18-20), with Aguateca acting as a 'twin capital'.

16 In Palenque, two major toponyms are recorded: *tok tahn* and *lakam ha'* (cf. Stuart & Houston 1994: 30-31). The former is related to the Early Classic (Martin & Grube 2000: 157) and possibly relates to the complexes south-west of the Cross Group, entrenched between the hill ridges and where mist often forms at dawn. It is also the location of the spring of the Otulum, which is also referred to in writing (**TAN^na^ CH'EN^na^ LAKAM-HA'** < *ta[h]n ch'en lakam ha'*, 'amidst the well of *Lakam Ha'*', PAL T19B-S, O7-O8). The usual *lakam ha'* toponym referring to Palenque is thus probably more the central plaza with the palace acropolis as the administrative heart of the site, located along the course of the Otolum. Specifically, we have a 'shell-tun' event at *lakam ha'* by Butz'aj Sak Chik (PAL T17P, B5-B6) that may relate to the foundation of the palace complex, also a *pat-l-aj* event for *lakam ha'* noted on PAL TFCJ, B12. Interestingly, *lakam ha'* is also never used as a demonym (Bíró 2011: 40) except on BPK Lnt. 4, B1. Within Copan, we can likely relate the *ux witik* toponym with the principal group (Schele 1989: fn. 2), as the founding of the Copan lineage by K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo' took place here (CPN Alt. Q, C5-D5). We can also identify *koxo'op* as the urbanonym of Group 9N-8 (Wagner 2006: 13-14) and even as the emblem of the lineage occupying it.

involve more specialised functions, such as 'ball court' or 'platform'.[17] But there is a particular uncertainty to distinguish building functions in the epigraphic record. Buildings (or parts thereof) may serve different purposes, while at the same time religious aspects also permeate a building's role (cf. Stuart 1995: 155 for a comparable historiographic perspective) beyond dedication rituals (Stuart 1998).[18]

Naonyms (Figure 10) are most easily distinguishable from other buildings when the context explains that the respective structure is a dwelling for gods (e.g. by *u-pib-Ø+nah-il u-k'uh-il*, 'the sweat bath of his gods'), or the dedication formula specifically acknowledges that the proper name is *u-k'uh+k'aba'*, 'it's god-name', also used for necronyms of venerated ancestors. Architecturally, such proper names refer to the superstructure atop a stepped pyramidal platform.

A secure identification of necronyms (Figure 11) is ensured by the relation to the deceased via the phrase (*u-k'uh+k'aba'*) *u-muk-Ø-nal*, '(it's god-name) the burial-place of'. However, it is possibly from case to case if such a name only refers to the tomb or crypt or encompasses the entire funerary shrine, as for example with the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque.

The taxonomic distinction just presented is of course solely based on an etic perspective and not without conceptual pitfalls. As first noted by Stuart & Houston (1994: 12-13), certain nominal compounds (the so-called 'sky-bone' and 'earth-bone') often accompany proper names that can be identified as toponyms by their verbal embedding. Today, we have a more thorough understanding of an emic Classic Mayan landscape description (Tokovinine 2013: 19-48). For *kab+ch'en*, Lacadena (2009: 46-47) noted parallel constructions in the *Chilam Balam* books of Chumayel and Tizimin, where

17 The ball court sign ZY3 was first identified by Houston (Miller & Houston 1987), but still resists decipherment. Its frequent complementation with **na** or **ni** suggests a **CVn** reading. The platform / pyramid sign ZH4 is also frequently suffixed by **na**, and could possibly read **CHEN** (Christian Prager and Elisabeth Wagner, personal communication, November 19, 2014). In C Dr. 42a3, Goddess I is seated on a three-tired platform. In comparison with other *t'ol* texts in the same almanach, the second block always denotes the locality the respective deity is depicted in / on. Although washy, the block in the scene under discussion might read **che-na**. In Chontal, *chen* is a transitive verb meaning 'hacer, construir, elaborar, fabricar' (Keller & Luciano 1997: 84), so the putative reading might generally refer to a 'construction'.

18 One example is House E of the palace in Palenque (Stuart 1998: 378), referred to as the 'dwelling' of K'inich Janab Pakal (e.g. *sak nuk nah ta y-otot k'inich janab pakal*, PAL 96G, A8-C1). It served as a throne room and probably never had a residential purpose. Although administrative in function, courtly activities were never separated from ritual ones, especially when considering that House E was likewise the place of coronation. Therefore, Figure 9 may include examples of other taxonomic groups, unless these buildings can be assigned to another primary function or the exact taxonomic categorisation is unknown. For example, ball courts are not necessarily considered by the scheme. Another category difficult to capture by the proposed taxonomy are portable places such as palanquins that also bear proper names (e.g. *nun+cha[h]k+ba[h]lam-nal* on TIK T. 1 Lnt. 3, D2).

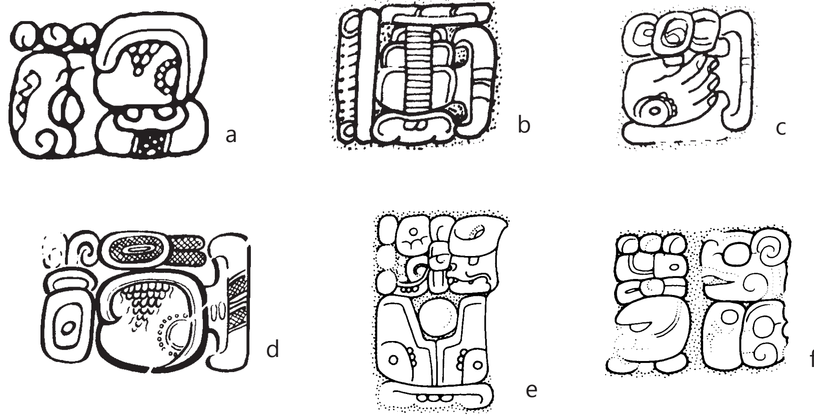

Figure 9. Examples of oikodonyms and place names that likely refer to structures or building parts. **a) cha-hu-ku-NAH** < *chahuk+nah*, "Thunder-House" = Piedras Negras Structure J-6? (PNG Trn. 1, K'4; drawing by Stefanie Teufel in Teufel 2004: 549), **b) AJ-5-CHEN?$^{\text{na}}$-NAH** < *aj=ho' chen?-Ø+nah*, "He of Five Platform?-Hous(es)" = either proper name or collective count (PAL PT, I14; drawing by Merle Greene Robertson in Robertson 1985: fig. 258), **c) K'AL-HUN$^{\text{na}}$-NAH** < *k'al-Ø+hun+nah*, "Headband-Tying-House" = Palenque Palace House A-D? (PAL PT, Q14; drawing by Merle Greene Robertson in Robertson 1985: fig. 258), **d) SAK-nu-ku-NAH** < *sak nuk+nah*, "White Cover-House" = Palenque Palace House E (PAL 96G, A8; drawing by Merle Greene Robertson in Robertson 1991: fig. 264), **e) 3-a-ha-?$^{\text{na}}$** < *ux ah-Ø+?*, "Three Awakening?-Ballcourt" = Tonina Ball Court (TNA Mon. 141, C4a; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham and Mathews 1999: 173), **f) 3-a-ha-la e-bu** < *ux ah-al e[h]b*, "Three Awakened? Stairway" = ? (NAR HS. 1 VII, O2b-P2a; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham 1978: 109).

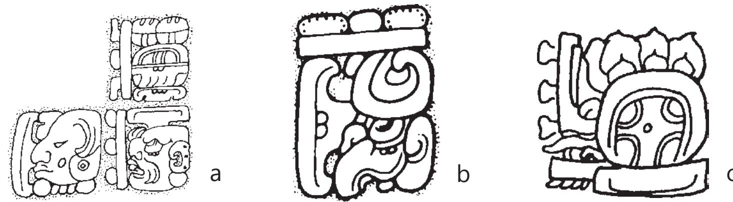

Figure 10. Examples of naonyms and place names that likely refer to temples or secular buildings. **a) 6-CHAN$^{\text{na}}$-AJAW NAH-la 8-CHAK-NAH** < *wak chan+-ajaw+nah-[a]l waxak cha[h]k+nah*, "Six Sky-Lord-Houses Eight *Chahk*-House" = Palenque Temple of the Cross (PAL TC, D10-D11; drawing by Merle Greene Robertson in Robertson 1991: fig. 9), **b) 6-HAB-NAH** < *wak hab+nah*, "Six *Tun*-House" = Tortuguero temple of Mon. 6 (TRT Mon. 6, I12; drawing by Ian Graham in Gronemeyer 2006: pl. 12), **c) square.nosed.beast-K'AN-JAL-NAH** < *? k'an jal+nah*, "? Yellow Reed-House" = Palenque Temple of the Foliated Cross (PAL TFCB, H1; drawing by Merle Greene Robertson in Robertson 1991: fig. 13c).

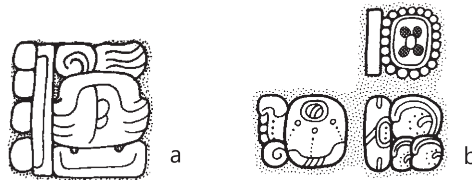

Figure 11. Examples of necronyms and place names that likely refer to tombs or funerary shrines. **a) 9-ET-NAH** < *balun e[h]t-nah*, “Nine Companion?-House” = Palenque Temple of the Inscriptions (PAL TI-W, T11; drawing by Merle Greene Robertson in Robertson 1983: fig. 97), **b) 5-JAN wi-tzi CHAK-ku-pi** < *ho' jan+witz chak kup*, “Five Maize-Flower?-Mountain Great ?” = Burial place of *Itzam Ahk Wi' Takin Chay* of Cancuen (CNC P. 1, P5-P6; drawing by Yuriy Polyukhovych).

reference is made to the town of Mani. By comparing an account on f. 5r of the *Chumayel* (Gordon 1913) with a concordance analysis of epigraphic contexts, Tokovinine (2013: 24-26) concludes that the Classic Mayan concept of *ch'en* subsumes place in the ‘ordered’ landscape of humans, including artificial features (Tokovinine 2013: 29). This reminds to the *kàaj* / *k'áax* dichotomy still existent in modern Yucatan (Le Guen 2005; Stone 1994: 15-18; Taube 2003). On the other hand, *kab* in the inscriptions seems to refer to ‘land’ as a political concept and not as a landmark or the ‘wilderness’ (Tokovinine 2013: 43-44) as opposed to agricultural lands. Within the ‘place name formula’, *chan+ch'en* refers to the all-embracing ‘world concept’, in which all places abound (Tokovinine 2013: 41), and is often (but not exclusively)[19] used in narratives involving supernaturals or mythological accounts. More profane then, and bound to political narratives, is the *kab+ch'en* (Tokovinine 2013: 36-38) kenning for the actual site and its domain.

The syntax, morphology and semantics of toponyms

There are several structural methods to identify toponyms that alone may already provide strong evidence for the identification of a place name. The most fundamental approach by a combination of the syntactic position with context was established by Stuart & Houston (1994: 3-18) by the ‘place name formula’. It is often a secondary statement to a preceding action, where the place name is introduced as a prepositional phrase

19 For example in the ‘axing’ event against Tamarindito mentioned on TAM HS. 2 III, K2-P1: **3-OK 18-BIX-OL CH'AK^{ka}-SUM?-la u-CHAN-CH'EN^{na} ju-bu-yi u-TOK'-PAKAL^{la}** <*ux* OK *waxaklahun bix+o[h]l ch'ak-Ø+sum?-[a]l-Ø u-chan-Ø [u-]ch'en jub-uy-i-Ø u-tok' [u-]pakal*, ‘9 *Ok* 18 *Kumk'u*, it [was] the Tamarindito-axing, it [is] his place, [where] his flint, his shield [were] put down.’ The attestations of *kab+ch'en* and *chan+ch'en* would require a more thorough analysis in terms of the predicate and syntactic arguments to better understand all nuances.

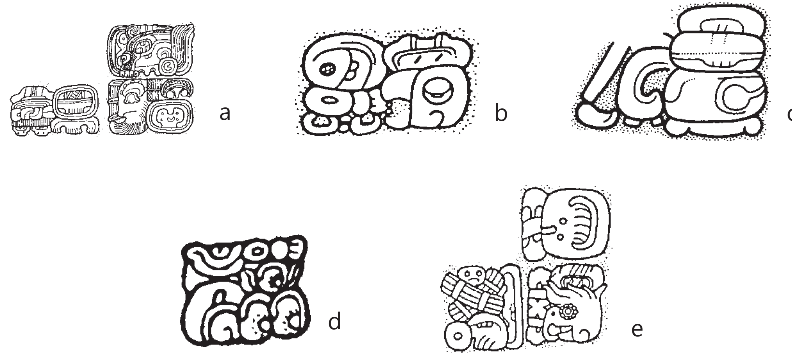

Figure 12. Examples of toponyms in prepositional phrases. **a) $^{\mathrm{u}}$UH-ti YAX-MUT-la-CHAN$^{\mathrm{na}}$ CH'EN-ta-u-CH'EN** < *uht-i-Ø yax mut-[a]l chan-Ø ch'en ta u-ch'en*, "it happened [in] Tikal, it [is] the place, in his cave" (TIK St. 39, Bp7-Bp8; drawing by Linda Schele in Schele and Freidel 1990: fig. 4.14), **b) u-ti-ya YAX-a** < *u[h]t-Ø=iy yax a[']*, "it happened [at] Yaxha" (DPL HS. 2 E III, D2; drawing by Ian Graham), **c) CH'AK$^{\mathrm{ka}}$-SUM?-la u-CHAN-CH'EN$^{\mathrm{na}}$** < *ch'ak-Ø+sum?-[a]l-Ø u-chan-Ø [u-]ch'en*, "it [was] the Tamarindito-axing, it [was in] his place" (TAM HS. 2 III, M1-N1; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer in Gronemeyer 2014: pl. 31), **d) STAR.WAR-yi ti SEIBAL** < *?-[V]y-i-Ø ti ?*, "'star war' in Seibal" (AGT St. 2, A2; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham 1967: fig. 5), **e) ta-li WIL-TE'-NAH K'INICH-YAX-K'UK'-MO'** < *tal-i-Ø wil+te'+nah k'inich yax k'uk'+mo'*, "He arrived [in] the *Wil-Te'-Nah*, *K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo*" (CPN Alt. Q, B4-B5; drawing by Linda Schele in Schele 1989: fig. 1).

following an inflected form of the verb *u[h]t*, 'to happen', frequently followed by the compounding of landscape descriptions, such as *kab+ch'en* (Figure 12a-b). Of course, other verbs may also form statements parallel to the place name formula (Figure 12c).

But even if a place name is not identified by a following place indicator, the fixed word order of Classic Mayan allows an easy isolation of place names, both appellatives and proper names, in the syntagma (Figure 12d-e). The prepositional phrase is always preceding the agent, and as the predicate is often an intransitive verb, it directly follows the predicate (also after stative constructions), while the preposition itself is often omitted (cf. Stuart & Houston 1994: 13-18) in writing and likely in language.

Besides certain key words from the natural and built environment, toponyms frequently also feature typical affixes that help to identify a locative use. Most overt is the suffix *-nal*, '-place' (Stuart & Houston 1994: 21), which itself is probably a contraction of a collective abstractive *nah-al*, 'house-place' (cf. Stuart 1998: fn. 3), or connects to maize and the *milpa* (Tokovinine 2013: 8-10). The relevance of maize and local self-identity must not be underestimated (Tokovinine 2013: 115-122). The conception

to eat local corn to pertain to a group is still present in modern Maya communities (e.g. Christenson 2006: 212-213). Related (and rarely substituting) is the somewhat still enigmatic 'locative' *-Vl* suffix (Houston, Robertson & Stuart 2001: fn. 12; Lacadena & Wichmann 2005: 21-28) that is occasionally attached to emblems when not used as a mere politonym (Colas 2004: 231-232).[20] Occasionally, the instrumental *-ib* suffix may also indicate a place name.[21]

Part of the formation of toponyms is their internal morphosyntax that is decoupled from suffixation patterns. In the most simple case, we have monomial appellatives as proper names, as for example with *peten* (Figure 4b) or *ahin* (Figure 7a). Most frequent is the structure of a specifier (S) plus a generic term (G). While the qualifying element can comprise of one or more elements, the generic term is usually a singular appellative, and the majority of examples are nominal. We have the combination of adjectives plus nouns, e.g. (S)*lakam* (G)*ha'* (Figure 3h); substantival qualifiers and a noun, e.g. (S)*kol-ol* (G)*te'* (Figure 1c); numerals (plus classifier) and a noun, e.g. (S)*chan+te'* (G)*sak bih* (Figure 6a, note that the generic term is bipartite, but one standing expression); or nominal compounds, e.g. (S)*k'ahk'*+(G)*witz* (Figure 1d). Enhancements of the specifier are possible, e.g. with (S)*bax+tun*+(G)*witz* (Figure 1a), (S)*ux witz*+(G)*a[']* (Figure 3j), or (S)*sak nuk*+(G)*nah* (Figure 9d). To a lesser degree, toponyms are a sentence name with an internal syntax, e.g. (S)*y-o[h]m-Ø* (G)*pi* (Figure 7h) or the more complex (S)*y-e[h]m-al-Ø k'uk'* (G)*lakam witz* (Figure 8e), where the positions in the syntagma take the role of specifier and generic term (note that this complex pattern involves a nested (S)-(G) pair for the generic term in the latter example). Currently, no overt patterns of how toponyms (from an etic and taxonomic perspective) are formed can be identified, and even less by the still poorly understood emic notions. By the current state of research, there is no discernable relational pattern between the designated feature and its eponym or etymology.

Besides overt eponyms (more for the ancient Maya, often less for the epigrapher), the syntax and morphology of toponyms carries underlying semantics that are inherent to the Classic Mayan language and contribute a largely opaque facet to the etymology

20 See for example Figures 12a and c. Linguistic support, often tangling concepts of abstraction or collectiveness, is hard to find in grammatical descriptions, e.g. from CHL *-(l)el ~ -(l)ol* (Schumann Gálvez 1973: 27) or ITZ *-il* (Hofling & Tesucún 2000: 108); but more the result of lexical analyses (e.g. Lacadena & Wichmann 2005: 23-24). The pan-Mayan *-Vl* suffix is also attested in many contexts of positional instrumentals that describe places, e.g. TZO *k'ot-eb-al*, 'purgatorio' (García de León 1971: 30).

21 In many Mayan languages, the instrumental can also derive a noun of locative meaning (Wichmann 2002: 6), but more as the place of the verbal action as an appellative (e.g. *way-ib*, 'dormitory'), sometimes further derived by a *-Vl* suffix. Enigmatic remains the **4-KIP-pi-bi** < *chan kip-ib* spelling on CPN Alt. G, D3, involving the Copan emblem glyph (with the *kip* reading suggested by Péter Bíró, Nikolai Grube, Guido Krempel, Christian Prager and Elisabeth Wagner in 2010). Its syntactic embedding is unclear, but it stands in a context with the toponym *chan witik* in block C1 which resembles the common *ux witik* urbanonym.

or conceptualisation of place names. For example, substantival roots can be suffixed with a *-V₁l* that is likely attributive[22] (as for example in *bub-ul ha'*, Figure 3a), while other toponyms do not feature it (for example in *ik'+a[']*, Figure 3d). Another evident pattern among toponyms is the use of cardinal numerals in the first position (also see the following section on artificial landscape divisions). While some numerals may indeed be descriptive (see Footnote 15, Figure 6a), one must also consider the mantic load of numerals and their many, still poorly understood, connotations (Christian Prager, personal communication, November 24, 2014), e.g. *balun* as 'nine / many' or *ux* as 'three / abundance'. Questions as exemplified by the two cases have thus far only received little attention in the epigraphic research, and there are certainly many more connotations to be found if thorough context analyses take place.

Toponyms in their socio-political context

One category hitherto excluded from the taxonomic discussion are toponyms that originate from or are related to artificial divisions or denominations, i.e. which pertain to an artificial or social division of the natural landscape – subsumed as politonyms. The most granular level identifiable in the epigraphic record is the so-called 'emblem glyph' first discussed by Berlin (1958) and later recognised as a title (Mathews & Justeson 1984: 216-217) within nominal phrases. The nature of the variable emblem (Figure 13) has been discussed by several authors as the place name of a site and the territory it was governing (Barthel 1968: 120; Berlin 1958: 111; Grube 2000a:553; Kelley 1976: 215; Marcus 1976: 11; Mathews 1985, 1988, 1991). But emblems are more, amalgamating the self-identity of the ruling house and above all its king as the embodiment of the territory he is ruling (Gronemeyer 2012), equating 'city' as the seat of power and 'polity'.

Pursuing this idea, one might even speculate if oikonyms exist at all in Classic Maya toponymy as a category. While epigraphers often equate them by the place name formula with emblem glyphs (see footnote 15), some emblems may have derived from certain smaller toponymic units as the nucleus of a royal court. At the same time, an endonymic origin of an "intra-group self-projection" (Gronemeyer 2012: 30) is possible. There is the notable impression that emblems indeed regularly follow the (S)-(G) pattern of other toponymic categories (e.g. *yax a[']*, Figure 3k or *pa'+chan*, Figure 13d) that may explain their origin, e.g. by natural features (e.g. *bax+tun+witz*, Figure 1a). Others (e.g. *bak-al*, *kan-al*, or *mut-al*, Figure 13a-c) do not only often differ from attested toponyms,

22 For example, compare the *k'a[h]k'+witz* compound (Figure 1d) for 'Fire-Mountain' with the *k'a[h]k'-[a]l jul* spelling on YAX Lnt. 24, D1 as 'fire-spear' = 'torch'. The *-V₁l* suffix seems to indicate a non-intrinsic property. In such constructions, the second substantive expresses the object that is made for the first substantive, or pertains to it, or enables it to come to being (Tozzer (1921: 38) already referred to such constructions in YUK as "attributive relationship"). It is important to stress that this suffix does not appear to be derivational, but is a modifier.

but also feature no specifier, not to mention deviating patterns (Houston 1986), such as *k'uh-Ø k'an t-u-mak* for Caracol lords. Emblem glyphs also interfere with mythonyms (Helmke 2012). Likewise, emblem glyphs of different nature may be paired (cf. Bíró 2011: 51-56; Gronemeyer 2012: 23-26; Helmke 2012: 99). As it seems, the eponymy of emblems is multi-faceted, as the emergence of a royal court is an individual process and therefore the genesis of an emblem as well, together with all power-political developments over time.

Emblems are also sometimes elevated to refer to a regional level, where they may interfere with another distinct class of politonyms. The best evidence comes from the Tamarindito emblem (Figure 13d) whose eminence likely originates from the site's Early Classic role as the regional hegemony (Buechler 2012: 529-536, fn. 4; Gronemeyer 2013: 8). In a text from the reign of the Dos Pilas king K'awil Chan K'inich, when Tamarindito was subordinated to Dos Pilas, there is one interesting detail about hierarchies of place names. For the 9.15.10.0.0 period ending, AGT St. 1, D6-10 mentions that the patron gods were accompanied by people from the 'eight provinces', people from the 'Tamarindito' domain and that it happened at Aguateca in the Tamarindito domain.[23] The context suggests that the 'Tamarindito' emblem possibly refers to the Petexbatun region as a whole, while its political sovereignty was lost.

The passage from AGT St. 2 also seems to equate the *sum?-al* emblem with *waxak-pet*, a division into eight 'provinces'. The mention of regional provinces following the pattern of a numeral and the classifier *-pet*, 'province, plot of land' is attested in other areas as well (Figure 14). The earliest datable context is from TIK St. 31, F8-E14 (Figure 14i), when Yax Nun Ahin took the '28-provinces' under the auspices of Sihaj K'ahk' at the *Wil-Te'-Nah* (cf. Stuart 2011: 6). It is unclear whether the action described took place at Teotihuacan or a substitution *Wil-Te'-Nah* at Tikal, but it is possibly related to the "New Order" (Martin & Grube 2000: 34) that the *entrada* established in the Peten lowlands (Tokovinine 2013: 115). This is also the highest number attested with *pet*, later examples do not exceed 13, indicating a fragmentation of the political landscape (compare to the later 4-*pet* in Tikal, Figure 14a).[24]

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23 The passage under question reads: **yi-chi-NAL^{la} CHAK-K'AWIL yi-ta-ji 8-PET AJ-SUM? u-ti-ya K'INICH-PA'-WITZ ti SUM?-la** < *y-ich-nal-Ø cha[h]k k'awil y-it-aj-Ø waxak+pet aj=sum?[-al] u[h] t-Ø=iy k'inich pa'+witz ti sum?-[a]l*, 'it [was] in the presence of GI and GII, they were accompanied by the eight-province Tamarindito-people, it happened at Aguateca, in the Tamarindito realm'.

24 Peter Mathews (personal communication, October 14, 2014) considers the 28-*pet* concept to be of even greater ancestry, originating from the Late Preclassic hegemonies of Nakbe and El Mirador, into whose succession Tikal was set, also in relation to the numbered *tzuk* partitions. Despite the later 'balkanisation' into different numbered *pet* provinces, vestiges of the old group identity of the 28 among several dynasties in the southern Peten and Belize can still be found in the Late Classic with the *waxak-k'al ajaw-taak* / *winik* titles (Tokovinine 2013: 113-115, fig. 61), e.g. on DPL P. 19, F1b-G1a. The title can also be specified by cardinal directions, e.g. *el-Ø+k'in waxak-k'al* on NAR

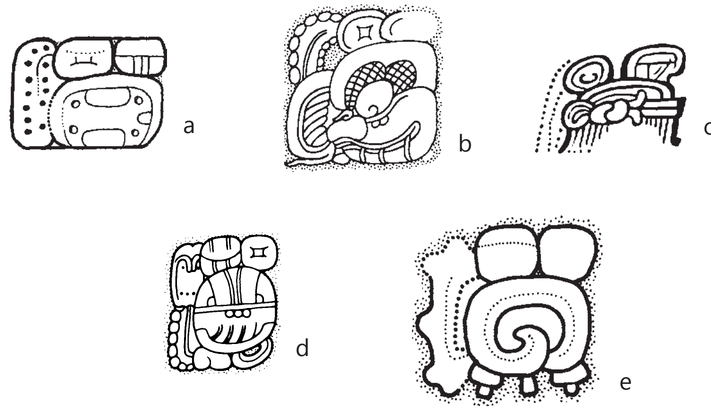

Figure 13. Examples of emblem glyphs. **a) K’UH-BAK-AJAW** < *k’uh-Ø bak[-al]+ajaw* = Palenque / Tortuguero / Comalcalco (TRT Bx. 1, F1; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer in Gronemeyer 2006: pl. 1), **b) K’UH-$^{\text{ka}}$KAN-AJAW** < *k’uh-Ø kan[-al]+ajaw* = Dzibanche / Calakmul (CRN HS. 2 X, A2, drawing by Berthold Riese in Mayer 1987: pl. 28), **c) K’UH-MUT-AJAW** < *k’uh-Ø mut[-al]+ajaw* = Tikal / Dos Pilas (TIK Msc. Hombre, C5; drawing by Rene Ozaeta in Fahsen 1988: fig. 4), **d) K’UH-PA’-CHAN-AJAW** < *k’uh-Ø pa’+chan+ajaw* = Yaxchilan (YAX Lnt. 46, F7; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham 1979: 101), **e) K’UH-SUM?-AJAW** < *k’uh-Ø sum?[-al]+ajaw* = Tamarindito / Arroyo de Piedra (TAM St. 2, C5; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer in Gronemeyer 2013: pl. 5).

Another politonym of the structure numeral plus classifier plus noun (Figure 15) sometimes follows the numbered provinces title (Figure 15a-b) and also takes the form of a demonym (Figure 15c-d). Several examples were independently recognised as place names by Tokovinine (2013: 16-18, fig. 8). That a larger geographical area of socio-political importance is indicated, is best demonstrated by the (5-*pet*) 5-*pet* 3-*hab te’* combination (note that only modern YUK features *haab* as a numeral classifier for ‘years’ (Miram 1983: 292)). On K2914, it is associated with Yuknom K’awil, and on K1383 with Tzahkaj K’awil, both entitled as *bah kab* and carrying the *nun* title associated with

St. 21, B11-B12. On the other hand, related sites should feature identical *pet* numbers. There are two instances with 6-*pet*, but their provenance is uncertain. The example of Figure 14d is attributed to Champerico, while the example of Figure 14e is allegedly said to come from Uaymil; while both sites are geographically separated. Likewise, we also have a *ho’+pet kab* from PAL HCEF, F2, far away from the north eastern Peten examples. But there is one important difference in both cases: although the #-pet part is the same, one example is followed by *kab*, the other is not. Tokovinine (2013: 44-45, fig. 26) details several other numbered *kab* toponyms, some with *pet*, others without (e.g. *huk kab*, TIK MT. 16, J1). But the *pet* attribution might also base on reasons other than geographic proximity to form a ‘province’, and the numbered *kab* toponyms might yet indicate something different (e.g. note that the 7-*kab* is associated with *Aj Wosaj* of Naranjo, a site in the 7-*tzuk* division).

the kings of Rio Azul (Houston 1986: 5-7). The vessel K7524 (Figure 14c) mentions the title sequence in relation to Tut K'in Chahk Jil[el], the lord of *Buk'*, or Los Alacranes.[25] Other ceramic vessels stylistically associated with the North-East Peten (specifically the sites of Rio Azul and Xultun) also mention 3-*hab te'*, but without the 5-*pet* before. Furthermore, 3-*hab' te'* has, like other place names, its own *way* figure (Grube & Nahm 1994: 706). The patterns leave little doubt that the 3-*hab te'* sphere comprises an area around Los Alacranes, Rio Azul, Holmul, and Xultun, while not all of these sites seem to pertain to the 5-*pet* provinces, suggesting it to be an independent and intersecting division of the 3-*hab te'* area (as it precedes it, like the inferior *k'inich pa'+witz* does on AGT St. 1 before *sum[-al]*, the name of the 8-*pet*).

The line of argument is completed by two vessels painted in a north-eastern Peten style. K5022 (Figure 15c) in a Xultun style and K7720 painted in a Holmul manner (but likely also from Rio Azul or Xultun (Krempel & Matteo 2012: 164)) mention an 3-*hab te' ajaw* named K'inich Lamaw Ek', associated with the 13-*tzuk* division (see below), attested for same region in the Late Classic (Beliaev 2000: 65). While there is a Motul de San Jose lord of the same name (Tokovinine & Zender 2012: 45-46), it is probably a namesake, because of the 13-*tzuk* division. Support comes from K2295, a vessel similar in style to the north-eastern Peten school, but painted by a Motul artist (named with the proper 7-*tzuk* title) for a Rio Azul ruler (Krempel & Matteo 2012: fig. 9a).

Tokovinine (2013: 16) noted that 3-*te' tun* (Figure 15e), previously considered as a proper Calakmul toponym (Stuart & Houston 1994: 28), also appears in Oxpemul. Intriguing is the case of the title sequence on OXP St. 7, C1-C5, where the ruler is referred to as an 3-*te' tun kalomte'*, while carrying the 'bat head' emblem glyph that was in use in Calakmul before the 'snake head' interlude and later became the emblem glyph in Oxpemul (Gronemeyer 2013: 26-29; Grube 2005: 95; Martin 2005). Even more intriguing is the case of NAR HS. 1 VI, N2-L3 that creates different demonyms for both toponyms[26] and clearly separates 3-*te' tun* from *chik nahb*.

The identification of areal politonyms of the structure numeral plus classifier plus noun also allows to reconsider the nature of 3-*te' k'uh* in the epigraphic record. It was previously considered the toponym of an unlocated Tabasco site (Gronemeyer 2006:

25 Another mention of *buk' ux+hab te'* comes from a lidded vessel recently excavated in Tz'ibatnah (Guido Krempel, written communication, June 13, 2013), west to Rio Azul (Kovač, Hulínek & Szymanski 2011) and one from the unprovenanced vessel K5241, but without any other politonyms. With the mention of *buk'+ajaw* on ALC St. 1, B3 and ALC St. 2, B3 among different rulers, Grube (2005: 91-93, 2008: 195, 196) was able to relate this toponym to Los Alacranes. It is also mentioned in connection with a captive on XUL St. 21, pE4.

26 The passage reads: $^{\textbf{ka}}$**KAN-la ta-3-TE'-TUN**$^{\textbf{ni}}$**-AJ-chi-ku-NAB** < *kan-[a]l ta ux+te' tun aj=chik+na[h]b*, 'the Calakmul [lord] in *Ux Te' Tun*, He of *Chik Nahb*'.

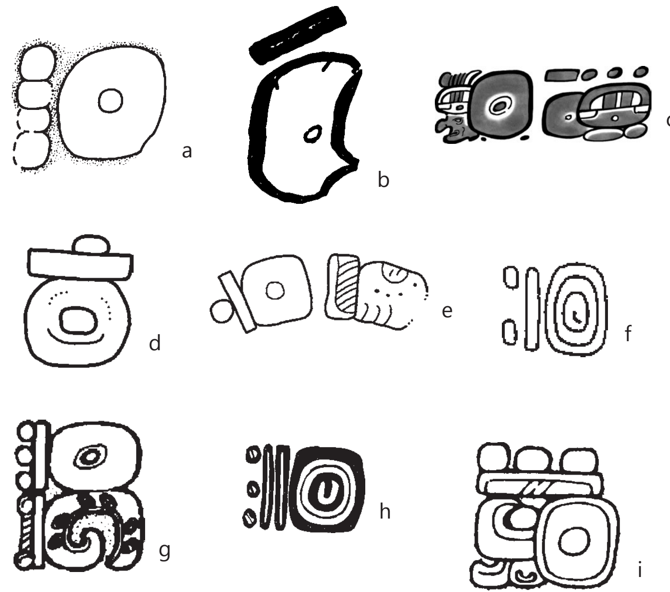

Figure 14. Examples of numbered province divisions with pet. **a) 4-PET** < *chan+pet* (TIK St. 13, A8a; drawing by William Coe in Jones and Satterthwaite 1982: fig. 19), **b) 5-PET** < *ho'+pet* (RAZ K1383, F4a, drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **c) 5-PET 5-PET 3-HAB-TE'** < *ho'+pet ho'+pet ux+hab te'* (COL K7524, N1-O1; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **d) 6-PET** < *wak+pet* (CHP St. 4, C5a; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **e) 6-PET ka-ba** < *wak+pet kab* (UYM Mirror Back, L1-M1; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **f) 7-PET** < *huk+pet* (OXK Msc. 30, B1; drawing by Miguel García Campillo in García Campillo and Lacadena 1988: fig. 6), **g) 8-PET AJ-SUM** < *waxak+pet aj=sum[-al]* (AGT St. 1, D8b; drawing by Ian Graham in Graham 1967: fig. 3), **h) 13-PET** < *uxlajun+pet* (COL K3064, C1; drawing by Persis Clarkson), **i) 8-20-wa-PET** < *waxak-k'al+pet* (TIK St. 31, F12; drawing by William Coe in Jones and Satterthwaite 1982: fig. 52b).

39-40), because it was twice the target of belligerent actions from Tortuguero.[27] But a closer investigation of the epigraphic evidence from Tortuguero, Palenque and other Tabasco sites[28] suggests that 3-*te' k'uh* was somehow related to the entire region between the Gulf Coast and the northern slopes of the Chiapas highlands.

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27 It was also supposed that the relations to the related lineage in Palenque were unfriendly because of these incidents (Grube, Martin & Zender 2002: 19), as an individual from 3-*te' k'uh* attended the accession ceremony of K'inich Ahkul Mo' Nahb III of Palenque (PAL T19B-W, J1-M1), and his mother Ix Kiniw Mat (PAL T21B-P, B5-A7) also originates from there (Stuart 2005: 129-131).

28 Among the war campaigns of Bahlam Ajaw of Tortuguero, 3-*te' k'uh* is associated with the first (TRT Mon. 6, E11) and last (TRT Jd. 1, B9-B10) 'star war' event, while several other military actions took place in between. Most likely, Bahlam Ajaw sought to gain control of the economic resources

A final category of areal politonyms are the numbered *tzuk* titles (Figure 16) first contextually discussed by Beliaev (2000), while *tzuk* means 'division' as a noun and numerical classifier. Like we have the few examples of 5-*pe*t preceding 3-*hab te'* (Figure 14c), there are also attestations where 13-*tzuk* follows 3-*hab te'*, indicating a larger order (Figure 16f). It also follows *bah kab* in several instances (e.g. on K2295, K7720, K8015), a title intimately connected to the king as the embodiment of his own polity (Houston, Taube & Stuart 2006: 7, 61, 62-63).[29] Beliaev described the 7-*tzuk* (Motul de San Jose and eastern Peten) and 13-*tzuk* (Tikal and north-eastern Peten), while subdivisions per the cardinal directions are possible (Figure 16c). Later research also isolated 9-*tzuk* in northern Belize (Helmke *et al.* 2012: 84-86) and 6-*tzuk* in Nim Li Punit (NMP St. 2, H4). Interestingly, such divisions are absent from the western Maya area.

It is important to note that the *tzuk* references are always used as an epithet and thus indicate a group identity (Tokovinine 2013: 98). While the titles also appear as a self-identity,[30] they are also preferred as an exonymic identifier and may refer to a geopolitical or ethnic identity (Beliaev 2000: 75-77; Tokovonine 2013: 102-105), an 'us' and 'them'. This pattern seems to be more accentuated with the 7-*tzuk* division, e.g. a Naranjo king is never referred to as 7-*tzuk* on monumental inscriptions at Naranjo, but only on portable objects possibly made for him by outsiders (Tokovinine 2013: fn. 51), and possibly manufactured at Naranjo as royal gifts. The usage of the *tzuk* titles is thus also a rhetoric device to evoke some difference and social demarcation, sometimes

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and trade network of the Tabasco lowlands by ultimately conquering Comalcalco (Gronemeyer 2006: 58-59, tab. 2), attacking sites along the way. The mention of 3-*te' k'uh* is thus almost like a narrative parenthesis to summarise the war events in Tabasco. Also, COL St. Antwerp (Mayer 1995: pl. 114) erected for Ix Ok Ahin of the unlocated site of *Pomoy* mentions a sculptor and an *ahnab* person from 3-*te' k'uh*.

29 It is also interesting to note that the position of *bah kab* among the epithets of numbered territorial divisions is variable. In most cases, it is in a position after, e.g. on K1383 with nun 5-*pet* 3-*hab te' bah kab*, while it may also precede, as with *nun bah kab* 5-5-*pet* 3-*hab te'* on K2914. Normally, the order of epithets in any nominal phrase seems to remain rather constant, although variations are possible. In this case, we must ask whether the position of *bah kab* is indication that the ruler in question was only so for his own polity or actually having domain over a larger area, instead of only being part of it.

30 For example on K8015, I1-L1, a north-eastern Peten style vessel, we encounter **K'UH BAX-WITZ-AJAW ba-ka-ba 13-TZUK** < *k'uh-Ø bax+witz+ajaw ba[h] kab uxlahun+tzuk*, 'a God [is] the Xultun-King, the Countenance of the Earth, [in] 13 Divisions'. A difficult question to answer is the case of K2295 made by a Motul scribe, indicated by *u-tz'i[h]b k'uh ik'+a[']=aj och+k'in 7-tzuk*, made for a 3-*hab te' ajaw bah kab* 13-*tzuk* person. The Motul emblem seems to made into a demonym by an enclitic agentive, not untypical for external references. If the scribe did not sign by himself, it has to be an external reference added later, possibly supported by the fact of the two different styles of writing.

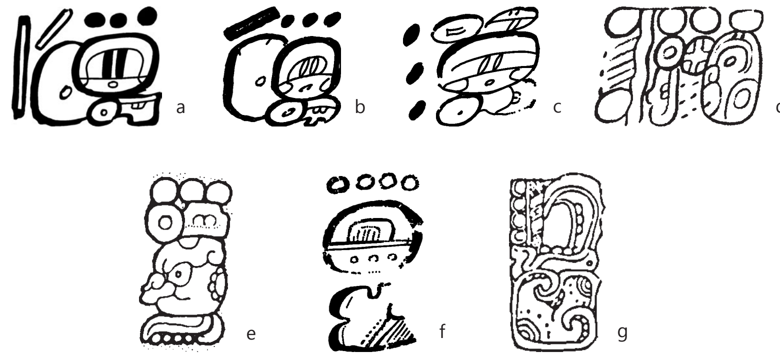

Figure 15. Examples of numbered areal divisions with different nouns. **a) 5-5-PET 3-HAB-TE’** < *ho’[+pet] ho’+pet ux+hab te’* (RAZ K2914, N7; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **b) 5-PET 3-HAB-TE’** < *ho’+pet ux+hab te’* (RAZ K1383, F4; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **c) 3-HAB-TE’-AJAW** < *ux+hab te’* (COL K5022, B5; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **d) AJ-3-TE’-K’UH** < *aj=ux+te’ k’uh* (PAL T19B-W, M1; drawing by David Stuart in Stuart 2005: pl. 1), **e) 3-TE’-TUN** < *ux+te’ tun* (CLK St. 89, D5; drawing by Nikolai Grube in Mayer 1989: pl. 7), **f) 4-HAB?-WITZ** < *chan+hab witz* (SBT Las Pinturas Fragment; drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), **g) 9-TE’-^{wi}WITZ** < *balun+te’ witz* (CPN St. I, C3a; drawing by Barbara Fash in Schele 1987: fig. 2).

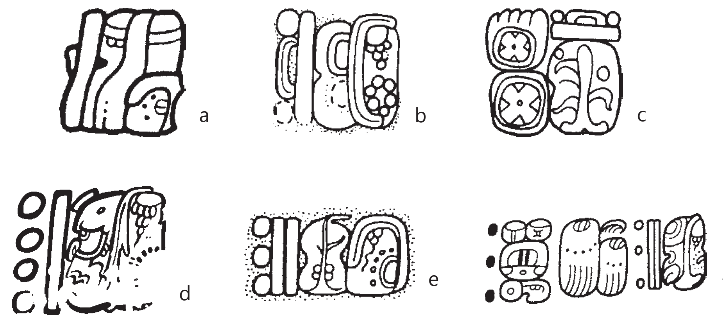

Figure 16. Examples of numbered tzuk titles. **a) 6-tzu-ku** < *wak+tzuk* (NMP St. 2, E4; drawing by Stephen Houston in Grube, MacLeod and Wanyerka 1999: fig. 4a), **b) 7-tzu-ku** < *huk+tzuk* (TIK Alt. 8, B2; drawing by William Coe in Jones and Satterthwaite 1982: fig. 30), **c) OCH-K’IN-7-TZUK** < *och-Ø+k’in huk+tzuk* (TPX TPMO 067, A6; drawing by Stefanie Teufel in Teufel 2000: fig. 107), **d) 9-TZUK^{ku}** < *balun+tzuk* (CUY Vessel, Q7; drawing by Christophe Helmke in Helmke *et al.* 2012: fig. 9), **e) 13-tzu-ku** < *uxlajun+tzuk* (DPL HS. 2 III W, D2; drawing by Ian Graham), **f) 3-HAB-TE’-AJAW ba-ka-ba 13-TZUK^{ku}** < *ux+hab te’ ba[h] kab uxlajun+tzuk* (COL K7720, B3-B5; drawing by Alexandre Tokovinine in Tokovinine 2013: fig. 55h).

even in a pejorative manner.[31] Certainly, more research on the distribution and context patterns of numbered *tzuk* titles is needed.[32]

Based on the scarce evidence we have, it is possible to propose a hierarchy of politonyms. The smallest unit is the polity ruled by a *(k'uh) ajaw*. Polities in turn may form a numbered *pet* province (Figure 14). These may be part of partitions designated by numbered nouns (Figure 15). There is no full congruence, but only an intersection between these socio-political levels. The widest geographic coverage is then provided by the numbered *tzuk* titles (Figure 16). It is also important to note that the mention of certain numbered regional divisions and titles may simply be a snapshot of political organisation at a certain time, and demarcations may shift.

Another socio-political aspect of toponyms is their function to derive demonyms, being a subset of socionyms. The most common way is with the agentive proclitic *aj=* or the female classifier *ix* as the 'title of origin' (Stuart & Houston 1994: 7-18), especially in the context of non-royal persons. As such references are usually made to people from a certain site, we may expect oikonyms as the smallest unit of reference (e.g. Figures 1c, 3a-b, 4d, 7f). Only in rare instances, such as the *aj=lakam ha'* on BPK Lnt. 4, B1-C1, smaller scaled taxonomies are used, in the case mentioned to possibly refer to a member of the royal household or referring to the court in a disrespectful manner. In several instances of war rhetorics, an emblem can also be referenced simply by *aj=* or *winik* to deny the royal status of the defeated lord (footnote 30; Gronemeyer 2013: 18), especially his *k'uh* essence (Gronemeyer 2013: 32-34). Emblem glyphs with *(k'uh) ajaw* are thus a demonym as well, although restricted to the ruler and his lineage, more an autonym, but also used as a xenonym. Titles indicating a social role can also be used with larger scaled politonyms, as the example of the 3-*hab te' ajaw* demonstrates, and such larger areas can also serve as a title of origin, as with *aj=3-te' k'uh* (footnote 27).

31 Compare to the war report of Bajlaj Chan K'awil against his (half-)brother Nun Ujol Chahk in the fratricidal war between Dos Pilas and Tikal. Here, the victorious Dos Pilas king refers to his relative as a *mut-al winik*, 'Tikal-Person' (DPL HS. 4 III, C2-E1), and describes the defeat as *witz-aj u-jol-[i]l uxlahun-tzuk mut-[a]l winik*, 'piled up were the skulls of the 13 Divisions and Tikal-People' (DPL HS. 2 W III, C2-E1).

32 A vexing case is ARE Alt. 2, pA1-pB1 (Grube 2008: 180-182) that mentions *k'uh kab* 13-*tzuk* and lists 13 emblem glyphs, including Motul de San Jose, Tikal, Edzna, and Palenque. Except Tikal, none is otherwise associated with 13-*tzuk*, and especially Motul is always 7-*tzuk* in other texts. But the text of the altar may refer to yet another concept of '13 gods' mentioned in other texts (Tokovinine 2013: 106-109).

Conclusions

The field of toponymy in Maya writing is a topic that deserves a more detailed review than previous studies were able to provide or the present overview can offer. There is an enormous potential to the general field of onomastics, especially in comparison with other more studied areas, such as anthroponyms in Classic Mayan (Colas 2004). Although the evidence scanned through and compiled for the taxonomy is fragmentary, one impression becomes manifest in comparison with the empirically backed up linguistic patterns of anthroponyms as worked out by Colas (2004): The structural variability is smaller. Personal names basically exhibit the same nominal structure as toponyms (e.g. *chak sutz'*, 'Great/Red Bat', PAL SLAV, E1a; *k'an mo'+hix*, 'Yellow/Precious Macaw-Jaguar', PAL TISL, E53), as well as stative, possessive constructions (e.g. *y-ich'ak-Ø ba[h]lam*, 'It/He [is] the Claw of the Jaguar', AGT St. 2, F2). Particular to anthroponyms are verbal sentence names (e.g. *baj-l-aj-Ø chan k'awil*, '*K'awil* Hammers [in?] the Sky', DPL HS. 4 I, N1-M2) that can be as complicated as an antipassive construction in a relative clause with a head noun (e.g. *k'a[h]k'-Ø til-iw-chan-Ø cha[h]k*, 'It [is] Fire [what] Chahk Heaven-Drills', NAR St. 21, A9-A10). And while Colas (2004) also examined the regional and temporal preferences for certain anthroponym structures, a similar survey is missing for toponyms.

Both onomastic fields combined may provide a substantial contribution to language geography in a diachronic perspective, eventually tracing the language furcation of the Ch'olan branch and demarcating it from other neighbouring Greater Lowland Languages (i.e. Yukatekan and Tzeltalan). At least for the structure of epithets in nominal phrases, Lacadena (2000) was able to identify vernacular differences, and possibly a closer examination of onomastics might be of service as well to contribute to an overall picture.

A context analysis of toponyms may not only provide deeper insights into Maya rhetorics, but also a closer correlation between the etic taxonomy and emic concepts as expressed in the different 'place name formula' configurations (also see the discussion among the different sub-classes of oikodonyms), as exercised to a certain degree for *ch'en* (Tokovinine 2013: tab. 2). Moreover, a multivariate mapping of toponyms and their contexts may enhance our insights of how and where royal power was exercised, both within a city or polity, and between polities. This especially concerns the larger territorial units that subsume individual polities. It will foster our understanding of territorial organisation and its social conception, and to possibly identify regional varieties, e.g. considering the absence of numbered divisions in the western lowlands (with a possible exception in Palenque, see Footnote 24). Other group identities can be made out, e.g. those following quadripartite patterns or the numbered **XE1°XQ3-ni** compounds (e.g. on K1383, J1), and to what extent these adhere to yet unrecognised territorial organisations and thus politonyms can only be guessed at the moment.

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Emblem Glyphs in Classic Maya Inscriptions: From Single to Double Ones as a Means of Place of Origin, Memory and Diaspora

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Abstract: The use of more than one emblem glyph as royal title is one of the least explained features of Classic Maya politics. Epigraphers suggest that double or triple emblem glyphs indicate dynastic mergers, although in several cases it could point to the move of a dynasty from one place to another. Women played an important part in connecting royal houses but in many instances their role is not well spelled out in the inscriptions. There is no overall pattern, however examination of several examples from different regions allows to propose plausible explanations on why certain rulers had double emblem glyphs.
Keywords: epigraphy; emblem glyphs; politics; toponyms; Classic Maya.

Resumen: El uso de más de un glifo emblema como título real es una de las características menos explicadas e la política del Clásico Maya. Los epigrafistas sugieren que glifos emblema dobles o triples indican fusiones dinásticas, aunque en varios casos podrían señalar el movimiento de una dinastía de un lugar a otro. Las mujeres jugaron un papel importante en las relaciones entre las casas reales, pero en muchos casos su rol no es descrito en detalle en las inscripciones. No hay un patrón general, sin embargo el examen de varios ejemplos de diferentes regiones permite proponer explicaciones plausibles sobre por qué algunos gobernantes tenían glifos emblema dobles.
Palabras clave: epigrafía; glifos emplema; política; topónimos; periodo clásico maya.

Emblem glyphs are a ubiquitous element of Classic Maya inscriptions and scholars have utilized them to model the Classic Maya political organisation and politics (Berlin 1958; Culbert 1996; Marcus 1973; Martin & Grube 2008). As scholars still disagree on the general meaning of the emblem glyphs, this chapter deals with one aspect of the several facets of these glyphs, namely the question of when the rulers operated such emblems as tokens of the identity of place embedded in the cultural memory of their ancestors.

Emblem glyphs were one of the most frequent and important titles in the monumental discourse, and it was a matrix of the memory of myth, history and migration. Memory as such refers to our human capacity to remember things that happened to us, or to others. Not only individuals, but also groups construct their memory, which has been designated as 'cultural memory' by many scholars and which is entangled with ethnicity, rituals, orality and writing, all of which contribute to the maintenance of a

society's structure. Indeed, when a group of human beings stops remembering their own past, this is frequently considered tantamount to the disappearance of the group itself.

According to Assmann (1992), memory is subdivided into individual remembrance and collective remembrance. The former is connected to one person and usually only individuals participate in their remembrances. Concerning the latter, as groups also construct memory, to remember collectively is by necessity to store memories into 'figures of remembrance'. Such figures are connected to space and time, and they are group-specific and always reconstructive. Strictly speaking, it is not the past that remains in memory, but rather what a society is able to reconstruct of it in its present. Collective memory is not a unified whole but can again be subdivided into 'communicative' and 'cultural memory'. While the first refers to a memory that is shared freely among the members of a group and connected to a time span ranging to as much as century, the other is fixed and commemorates ancient times. In a table which is highly enlightening, Assmann (2004: 56) contrasts the main characteristics of 'communicative' and 'cultural memory':

	Communicative	**Cultural**
Contents	Historical experience in his/her life	Mythic ancient history, absolute past
Forms	Informal, natural and interaction; commonplace	Demand foundation, formal, ceremony and ritual
Mediatory channels	Organic remembrance and individual experience	Closed and objectified means of expressions, symbols, orality, writing, dance etc.
Time	80-100 years, 3-4 generations horizon which runs through to the present	Mythic past and ancient time
Carriers	Nonspecific	A specialized carrier of tradition such as priest, Brahmin, Rabbi etc.

Table 1. 'Communicative' and 'cultural memory' (Assmann 2004: 56).

I shall argue that the emblem glyph was a title that subsumed a collective memory of a group, which originally resided in a particular settlement, or *ch'en*, and I further presume that such social units find their origin in residential plaza groups. The main sign of a given emblem glyph signals the place of origin for all individuals bearing this title and who claimed descent from a given ancestor who lived in the same site, and they reflect real or fictive blood relations. The founder of the *ch'en* may ultimately have claimed to be descended from an aspect of a deity in the mythic or absolute past. Any reference to territory that emblem glyphs may have had was of lesser importance and shifted in

the political landscape due to the migrations of the families who used them (see Martin 2005; Helmke & Awe 2008: 75-76). Therefore, the emblem glyph is one of the elements Assmann called the 'mediatory channels' of cultural memory. The emblem glyph is embedded in the monumental discourse of the public and private inscriptions in cities of the Lowlands, and it is one of the most important symbols of identity of the polities in the Classic Period.

In this chapter I have listed several examples of how the rulers employed emblem glyphs in multiple contexts as a cultural memory of their group. Before presenting the examples, I shall treat the antecedents for the conceptualization of the emblem glyph by previous scholars, and thereafter I shall present my interpretation of the emblem glyph. Thereafter, I shall present my idea about the formation of the plaza groups at Dos Pilas and Copan. Deep time ancestor cults are the topics that I will address afterwards. Lastly, I shall present three sites (Piedras Negras, Bonampak and Yaxchilan) which had double-emblem glyphs that were used by their rulers for a sufficient length of time and in sufficient texts, both locally and in foreign references, to analyze the pattern of their usage. As a result, it becomes possible to reconstruct the history of inter-house alliances by the means of the collective memory of certain groups inside a polity.

Antecedents

The political organization of the Classic Maya has been debated since the beginning of Maya studies and scholars still continue to discuss the size of polities, the behaviour of hegemonic states and whether the emblem glyph main sign referred to a polity, a city, or some other part of the settlement (e.g. Bíró 2011a). Heinrich Berlin (1958) identified emblem glyphs in Classic Period inscriptions when he postulated that they were emblematic for particular sites. In his original paper, Berlin did not specifically argue for any particular meaning, but he suggested three possibilities: the name of the city; the name(s) of the patron deity, or deities, of a particular city; or the name of the ruling dynasty of the city. He also discovered that apparently some cities had more than one emblem glyph, although he did not suggest any solution to explain this pattern.

Researchers after Berlin have discussed these three suggestions but have not proposed any new interpretation. Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960: 471) was "inclined to think that it refers to lineage or dynasty rather than to place", whereas Thomas Barthel suggested that it "seems to concern place-names as well as ethnic names" (Barthel 1968: 120). Joyce Marcus (1973: 913) argued that an emblem glyph refers to "the site, as well as the territory subject to it". David Kelley, however, argued that the main signs of emblem glyphs are place names (Kelley 1976: 215).

Later on, Peter Mathews & John Justeson (1984: 216) maintained that the main sign refers to "the political unit over which one site held dominion".[1] The later opinion of Mathews (1996: 26) was that the main signs of an emblem glyph referred to the city itself and the territory subject to it. Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube (1994) accepted that the main signs of emblem glyphs are toponyms referring to the polity of a given archaeological site where they occur. David Stuart and Stephen Houston (1994: 2-7) identified place names in the inscriptions, which were different from known emblem glyph main signs and they concluded that emblem glyphs stood for the names of Classic Maya states and that the royal seats instead had their proper names.

Subsequently, most epigraphers accepted the difference between an actual place name and the main signs of emblem glyphs, and this understanding was expressed by Linda Schele and Peter Mathews (1998: 23) as follows: "emblem glyphs named the kingdoms that dotted the political landscape, and within these kingdoms there were locations identified by place names".

This same conceptualisation of emblem glyph main signs is also found in more recent works (Martin & Grube 2008: 17), where main signs continue to be viewed as references to the name of a particular kingdom or polity. In a discussion about the political geography of Southern Campeche, Grube (2005: 98) discussed a difference between emblem glyphs and "toponymic titles" and thus revived an earlier idea of Houston's (1986) about "problematic emblem glyphs". Erik Boot (2005: 383-384) thought that emblem glyph main signs were indeed place names, but he has not specified his idea any further. He has identified at least one emblem glyph main sign that does not appear to refer to a particular kingdom or site, but to one particular region (Boot 2005: 511).

Martin (2005: 12) has dealt with emblem glyph main signs and tentatively concluded that "in essence, these emblem names seem to label royal houses whose connections to specific territories are less intrinsic than habitual". Much along these lines, Christophe Helmke and Jaime Awe (2008: 75) have stated: "los glifos emblema servían ante todo para exaltar el título de los miembros más destacados de las cortes reales. Es precisamente debido a que la mayoría de los linajes reales mayas residieron en el mismo lugar en el transcurso de la historia, que muchos emblemas *parecen* referirse a sitios específicos". More recently, Alexandre Tokovinine argued that emblem glyphs are "places of origin" and they refer to a smaller entity than the city itself (Tokovinine 2011, 2013; see also Helmke and Kupprat, this volume). Specifically, Tokovinine argued that:

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1 "Emblem Glyphs [were] functioning as royal titles (they invariably occur in royal name phrases) [...] The 'divine' interpretation of the prefix is still far from proven but is viewed favourably by many epigraphers. The main sign is viewed by most epigraphers as a place-name, referring either to the city itself or to the territory that it controlled or to both. And the 'lord' is precisely the title that we would expect to find in a royal name phrase" (Mathews 1996: 25).

> [...] there is no evidence to sustain the 'polity name' hypothesis. Instead, place names incorporated into the royal title should rather be interpreted as the most salient, highlighted features in the representations of the political landscape created by each Classic Maya regime. Such features do not necessarily correspond to the largest spatial entities within the political landscape. There may be little or no correspondence to the immediate physical landscape of Classic Maya sites as some of the place names in the 'emblem glyphs' are locations in deep time (Tokovinine 2011: 91).

For the sake of comparison, I have recently argued that:

> There is no evidence in the inscriptions that emblem glyphs functioned as polity names. They were specific places, whole sites or site areas, and indicated the origin of a given royal family [...] Therefore I propose that emblem glyph main signs are toponyms. They labelled royal houses and their connection to the ancestral origin place was very strong as they remained constant even if the family moved to another place. Through them, pieces of a Classic Period elite conception of territory are expressed in connection not only to an actual landscape but to places of origin intertwined with codes of legitimacy (Bíró 2012: 59-60).

The most recent proposal by Gronemeyer (2012: 13) is that of "the emblem glyph as an emic identifier for the elite groups governing polities", although this label remains difficult to conceive.

The concept of emblem glyph

The emblem glyph is a title that refers to several individuals, usually the king and his immediate family, in the glyphic texts. It is composed of the office *ajaw*, which indicates the title of the person, and later, from the 5th century onward, the adjective *k'uhul*, meaning 'holy, divine, sacred' was added before the main sign. I have previously argued that in the majority of the cases, the emblem glyph main signs were toponyms (Bíró 2012). They are formed in different ways, e.g. by using the suffixes *-il*, *-ul* and *-al* ('abundance of'; Pakb'ul, Mutul, Kanul, and so on); describing natural phenomena such as *ha'* 'water' (Pip Ha', K'ihn Ha', Popo' Ha', Wak Ha', Yax Ha', Ik' Ha' and Itz Ha', but see the arguments of Boot 2005: 383-384), *witz* 'hill, mountain' (K'an Witznal, Kat Witz, Hix Witz, Witz Nal), *tun* 'stone' (Lakamtun) and *chan* 'sky' (Pa'chan). Other phenomena tied to the cultural sphere include *nal* 'maize (field)' and *nah* 'house' (Bíró 2012; Tokovinine 2013).

Going by this rather short list, I concur with the hypotheses that the emblem glyph main signs were originally toponyms and that they referred to very specific places, such as mountains, rivers or just one part of a river, or buildings and other natural/artificial phenomena. They were the same as other toponymic titles and the data strongly support that there ultimately was no difference between complete emblem glyph main signs and toponymic titles. The rulers of Tikal, Calakmul, Piedras Negras, Yaxchilan, Tonina, Xukalnah, Ak'e, Naranjo, Copan etc. all used their emblem glyph main signs

as toponyms and without the *k'uhul* adjective from the Early Classic period onwards (Bíró 2012; Tokovinine 2013). At Tikal, Naranjo and Piedras Negras, it is probable that the emblem glyph main signs referred to a part of the site, whereas at Naranjo, Piedras Negras and Copan the main signs from the earliest periods specifically indicate concrete sites of royal centres, or the name of a building (Bíró 2011a; Tokovinine 2007, 2013).

Nevertheless, I believe that for a better understanding of the emblem glyph there is more work to be done regarding the conceptualization[2] of this title employed in several contexts. This concept belongs to one of the many political vocabularies that prevailed during the Classic Period and is one of the key concepts of the institution of kingship.

The investigation of political vocabularies is undertaken within several theoretical frameworks (Koselleck 2003; Richter 1986, 1987; Schmidt 1999; Skinner 2002). In the framework of a 'history of ideas', it is assumed that in human cultures there is a set of conceptualisations describing the relationship of social actors and the organisation of their respective actions. This set of concepts can be expressed by one or more lexemes (for example State, Nation State, Republic, Liberal Democracy and so on); however, not all concepts equate to a word, and vice versa.

Slightly different, but equally perceptive insights can be drawn from the German school of 'conceptual history' (see Koselleck 2003 for an application). Just as in the history of ideas, they make a distinction between words and concepts, and they maintain that every concept is represented by a word, but not every word carries a concept within itself (Koselleck 2003: 134). Reinhart Koselleck (2003: 134) noted that political concepts generalize and have multiple meanings (for example that the concept of State in the 20th century Europe was different from that in the 4th century Roman Empire).

Such an investigation into Classic Maya political vocabulary is difficult to undertake at present as there are problems in interpreting words and their political reference or in finding a meaningful way to comprehend the conceptualisations of the Classic Period elite. An important obstacle is the lack of dictionaries and more personal reflections by the elite themselves, which could have helped to disentangle the multiple meanings and possible changes within semantic fields. Simply put, Maya epigraphers first have to deal with the enormous task of selecting the Classic Period political vocabulary and then examining the multiple references of words in different contexts.

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2 Concepts are widely investigated and hotly debated; indeed, 'concept' is one of those words that scholars use successfully, even though they are not able to define it consensually. I use 'concept' here as a sort of abstraction which subsumes various specific instances under one unit of meaning and helps to form more abstractions in turn. The 'emblem glyph' is an etic concept that scholars use heuristically and whose function they reconstruct in different contexts and within a specific genre of monumental discourse, such as the stelae, lintels, ceramics etc.

Both Quentin Skinner (2002: 175-184) and Koselleck (2003: 121-145) have argued persuasively that actual words and their use – or their correspondence to concepts and changes within conceptual usage – reflect the social conditions in which a given language is embedded in various ways. Social and political conflicts can be examined by analysing the use of words and concepts. As Koselleck (2003: 132-133) has pointed out, there are at least three different classes of 'political concepts': first, those which are relatively stable and are used without much change; second, those which changed drastically in content, although they are referred to by similar words; and third, those which are totally new and also use new words (neologisms). These changes can reflect various social transformations, especially in the case of neologisms, or when major terms are re-analysed and put into use in very different contexts from the original ones.

I have argued that some of the emblem glyph main signs were preserved well into the Colonial era, but that the concept changed (the second class, above) and that it became the first element of ethnogenesis (see Assmann 2004: 142-158). There is evidence that some Classic Period emblem glyphs remained in use as the names of ethnic groups during the Early Colonial era: *Po'/Popo'* or *Popo' Ha'* were variants of the emblem glyph of Tonina in the Ocosingo Valley, whose inhabitants were called *poo uinicob* in a 17th century Chontal document (Ayala 1995: xx); *Lakamtun* was the emblem glyph of El Palmar near the seponymous river, which was also the home of the *lacantun uinicob* in the 17th century (Ayala 1995; Stuart 2007a); *Itza'* or *Itz Ha'* was the emblem glyph of Itzimte Sakluk, south of Lake Peten Itza in the Classic Period, and then it was mentioned in the Northern Yucatan in Spanish and Yukatec sources as *itza uinic* and *ch'ib'al* (patronym), and then, in modern times, it refers to an ethnic group Itzaj in the Lake Peten Itza area. Another emblem glyph, namely *Chatahn*, probably remained in use until the 18th century as a patronymic name mentioned as *ah chata* in the northeastern Peten (Boot 2005: 505-516).

While all these names occurred in the main signs of emblem glyphs in Classic Ch'olan texts, they came to refer to ethnic groups with different languages later: the *poo uinicob* were Tz'eltal speakers; the *lacantun uinicob* were Ch'ol speakers, and the *itza* spoke a Yukatekan language. At present, I do not know how to link a specific emblem glyph to any of the ethnic groups mentioned in the colonial sources; however, there might have been an ongoing process of ethnic development not well attested in Classic Period texts. Maybe some of the Classic Maya *k'uhul X ajaw* had become *ch'ibal*, and later the vassals who belonged to the family lineage turned into *winik*, the 'people of the Itza' *ch'ib'al',* although the same process might already have begun in the Early Classic period.

It is my belief that this is the elite group tied to the emblem-glyph-title, which is comparable to (but not identical with) the Postclassic and Colonial Yukatek *ch'ib'al*,

who were an exclusive socio-political group which resided in *cuchteel* or neighbourhood (Gabbert 2004; Okoshi Harada 2011; Restall 1997; Roys 1957). These groups were usually exogamous and their members had the same patronymic name (Xiu, Cupul, Canul etc.) The *ch'ib'al* were not localized and their members lived in several villages (*cah*) and they dwelt in one or more *cuchteel* within a village; however, there was always a centre or the most important town (*noh cah*) where the superior leader would reside. In an ideal situation, the members of the same *ch'ib'al* helped each other, although they could also belong to opposing war factions. Often, the commoners (*macehual*) and the nobles (*almehen*) belonged to the same *ch'ib'al*, albeit that the idea of the 'helping' ethos was usually more common among of the noble ones, i.e. at the level of the 'dynasty' (Gabbert 2004: 6). They had patron deities and claimed that their ancestors had come from several places, usually from foreign lands.

There is also another analogy to construct the communities in the Postclassic Period of the Guatemalan Highlands which were composed of the *amak* and *chinamit* (Braswell 2006; Carmack 1981; Fox 1988; Fox & Cook 1996; McAnany 1995). The *amak/chinamit* were settled by the minimal, principal and major lineages (*c'ajolaxel*) of the elite, which were divided by different mechanisms, such as factional competition and how they distributed the right of usufruct of the lands for the commoners who lived in the surrounding regions of the *chinamit*.

Ultimately, the Classic *ch'en* is compared to the *cuchteel* or the *amak/nimja* or the 'great house'. As a result of factional competition, members of the ruling family had often migrated to the outer regions and become a diaspora, taking the cult of their patron deities and their ancestors and the name of their *ch'en* with them. Thus, the emblem glyph was first and foremost a title used by a status-person (*ajaw* and *sajal*) who was claimed to be a unique ancestor coming from such a place.

The plaza groups and the emblem glyph: Dos Pilas and Copan

Sometimes, scholars make discoveries fortuitously, and the same is true for those working with archaeological and epigraphic data. Dos Pilas is located in the Petexbatun area, where an intrusive elite of Tikal had founded a settlement and where the kings later controlled a sizeable territory by mechanisms of warfare and marriage (Martin & Grube 2008; Guenter 2003; Houston 1993). Ruler 1 of Dos Pilas, B'ajlaj Chan K'awil had the Mutul emblem glyph with main sign of Tikal; however, he established himself in the Main Plaza of Dos Pilas (K4-L5; see Houston 1993: 18-19).[3] Apart from the court area, there were at least two groups at the site, which were named Murcielagos (M4-N5) and El Duende (O4-P5). The Main Plaza and Bat Cave had been constructed earlier, while

3 The father of B'ajlaj Chan K'awil was K'ihnich Muwan Jol II, the 23rd or 24th ruler of Tikal (Guenter 2003: 3).

the construction of El Duende began later, around AD 700. The Main Plaza has a toponym which is composed of the T369 ('Dragon') *Ha'al*[4] and El Duende's name is *K'ihn Ha' Nal* (Stuart & Houston 1994: 19-20, 84-88). At present, there is no inscription that mentions the name of the Murcielagos group. T369-*Ha'al* was built under the rulership of the first king, and consequently every new king erected one or more monuments in this area, while at El Duende most of the monuments had – unusually – been erected by one ruler, Itzamnaj K'awil (698-702).

Tokovinine (2013: 14-16) has argued that after AD 727, both toponyms referred to a single place, such as T367-*Ha'al K'ihn Nal Ha'* in local and foreign texts (in Cancuen). The Mutul toponym was not referred to as a *ch'en* at Dos Pilas and none of the inscriptions mention the original site of the ruler's ancestors.[5] In addition, the size of Dos Pilas was relatively small compared to other ancient sites situated in the Petexbatun, in the Northeast Peten or the Usumacinta region because those cities were founded before the Late Classic Period.[6] Although Dos Pilas is a more recent site, it is used as an analogy to analyse the foundation history of other cities in order to better understand the pattern of a new settlement in the Early Classic Period.[7]

As stipulated above, the monumental epicenter of Dos Pilas can be divided into three major areas, and two of them are mentioned in the texts. Yet, there is no evidence in the texts that the different areas were owned by non-royal nobles, while it is possible

4 A tentative reading was proposed by Helmke & Nielsen (2014).

5 In the lower register of Dos Pilas Stela 16, *Yax Mutul* is as an icon above the Turtle with a cave inside. The latter icon is referred to in several other sites' texts as *yohl ahkul* 'the heart of the Turtle Place' and it is connected to the ancestors. Therefore, Stela 16 symbolised the place of the ancestors of the rulers.

6 Another component of dynastic foundations which has rarely been mentioned is the 'numbered successor title' or *tz'akb'ul* (Grube 1988; Riese 1984, 1988; Schele 1992). Rulers and nobles of several cities used a count which indicated their position in a line of officeholders. Not every ruling family used the *tz'akb'ul* title, while nevertheless it is possible to differentiate between two groups. In AD 537, Tikal had its 21st ruler, in AD 546 Naranjo had its 35th ruler, in AD 618 Altar de Sacrificios its 36th ruler in power, and in Tres Islas the 19th ruler acceded in AD 415. Meanwhile, the 10th ruler of Copan acceded in AD 551 and the 10th ruler of Yaxchilan in AD 526. This means that roughly in the first half of the 6th century, Tikal and Naranjo had ruler lists twice as long as those of either Copan or Yaxchilan. In one group, the title indicates counts before ca. AD 300, and in the second one, they do not reach back any further than AD 300. Tikal, Naranjo, Altar de Sacrificios, Tamarindito and Tres Islas are in the first group and Copan and Yaxchilan in the second. According to the *tz'akb'ul* titles, the Northeast Peten and the Pasion regions saw a substantially earlier start of dynastic rule than the Usumacinta, the Southeast region or the Eastern Yucatan (Coba). This parallels the appearance of the earliest contemporary inscriptions, which cluster in the Northeast Peten and the Pasion region.

7 Another verb – T548-**yi** – recently suggested by Dmitri Beliaev and Albert Davletshin is **KAJ** (2002-2003: 12) and its meaning is 'to settle, reside' (Tokovinine 2013: 80-81). David Stuart (2004b) has previously hinted that this verb refers to a 'foundation' event of the site. However, this newly deciphered verb suggests that a ruler and/or his family settled at a site which they had not founded as a settlement *per se*, but that they had searched for an already existing site. This is proved by the archaeological data of several settlements.

that the recent foundation of the site would not have triggered a process where the royal lineage branched off into several sub-lineages which would then occupy different palatial groups. Furthermore, it is obvious from the Dos Pilas example that the emblem glyph was portable to other locations where the ruler could employ it as a tool for legitimacy.

In contrast to Dos Pilas, the rulers of Copan used the same mechanism to found a new site, however, the ruling dynasty and the non-royal elite had enough time to branch into several groups because of the time factor and thus they occupied several plaza groups. Nevertheless, the question in the Copan case is still whether the emblem glyph refers to a foreign toponym or to some local place name.

In the early 5th century a new ruler arrived at Copan, bringing with him K'awil, a symbol of power, from the *win-te' naah*, which maybe was one of the temples of Teotihuacan (Stuart 2000, 2004a; Fash et al. 2009). The founder, Yax K'uk' Mo', supposedly hailed from Caracol in the Maya Mountains, although he was presumably not a member of the ruling dynasty who utilised the emblem glyph of K'ahntu. The most important plaza group at the site was Ux Witz Ha' ('Three Mountains Water' – the toponym of Caracol). The new king settled in the Copan Valley and his new town was named Ux Wintik (or later Chan Wintik). Other scholars have already suggested that Ux Wintik was the name of the Acropolis, the central area of the site (Fash 1991; Schele & Freidel 1990; Stuart 2004a; Tokovinine 2013). There are enough examples to suggest that Ux Wintik was a *chan ch'en*[8] in texts like the emblem glyph of Copan (T756[528]-**pi-PUJ/pu**; Stuart & Houston 1994: 23-26).

Elisabeth Wagner (2006) has suggested that the settlement was divided in four divisions: the Principal Group, Las Sepulturas, Salamar and Comerdero. She has also suggested that each division was somehow associted to a cardinal direction. Barbara Fash (2005) has used iconographic and ethno-historical data to propose four similar divisions and she has compared them to the ethnographic divisions of settlements of Ch'orti or *sian otot*. Wagner (2006) has recognized that the 9N-8 group (on the basis of the text on the 9N-82 bench and that of Altar W) was a dwelling of the Koxop Lord in the 8th century, however, there is no evidence that all buildings of this plaza group were within Koxop (for example 8N-11).

Conversely, Mak'ab' Chanal (*ajk'uhun*), who dedicated the 9N-82 bench, claimed that one of his ancestors was the sixth ruler of Copan and that therefore this lineage had branched off from the ruling dynasty around the last decade of the 5th century (Bíró 2011b). Another plaza group, close to the *sacbe* leading from the Principal Group to the Copan Village, was named Bih Nah or the 'Road House' (10K-4 bench). The title

8 'Community', 'town', literally 'sky-cave' (Boot 2009: 46; Montgomery 2007).

of the leader at that group was a *k'uhul yax chahk wayab'*, maybe indicating his priestly office (Wagner 2006).

Another area was referred to in two monuments, namely on Altar K and Stela P (Bíró 2010). The former was dedicated in AD 682 by a non-royal noble and the other, *sajal*, came from the 'edge' of Yutuk (*ajti' yutuk*). The monument was close to Structure 6 in the western area of the Middle Plaza.

The other monument, the Stela P, was dedicated by K'ahk' Uti' Chan Yopat in AD 623 and described events that happened at that time and were crucial to creating a locality, even though it remained connected to the first ruler's foundation. The first episode narrated how the stela was erected and how the king engendered the blood for the gods (*ub'ah uch'ahb' ta k'uh*), lists the Paddlers, Great Father God, Elder Brother God, Four Lords, Nine K'awiil etc. The second episode is a magnificent narration about the engendering of gods at different places throughout the valley. The verse construction has several couples and even parallel sentences.

The first event repeats the engendering formula of the first episode. The gods are put in a parallel clause: the Paddlers with the Grandfather and Elder Brother, and then follow the Four Lords and Nine K'awil (and at the end maybe a triad of gods). After this clause, the image-formula (*ub'ah*, although the block is broken) is recounted again with the Paddlers and then the story goes on to describe different building events in each part of the settlement. It is very important that the first name was Yutuk (maybe designating Group 9 or the Copan Village), and that it is followed by Ux Wintik, finishing with the emblem main sign. I believe that the first two places (Yutuk and Ux Wintik) are settlement divisions, or neighbourhoods, within the T756[528]**-pi-PUJ/pu**.[9]

The next phrase again uses the image-formula and the king who had put in order and engendered sacrifice for several Proto-Nawatl gods, beginning with the epithets 'First Gods-First Lords' (in Classic Ch'olan) and followed by the gods Wakuxaj, Kilikum, Mapatz'in and K'alotz'i[n], and finally the place, Mala' Ux Ajal where the gods had come from (Bíró & Davletshin n.d.; Prager & Wagner 2008). The last phrase names the king, Yax K'uk' Mo' as the first ruler of Copan.

There is evidence from other inscriptions that Yax K'uk' Mo' may have travelled to Teotihuacan and there received the political objects of legitimacy, such as the effigy

9 There are two unique words in the corpus of Classic Maya inscriptions. They are composed of the roots *pat* and *ch'en* 'to build' and 'cave' with the third person singular ergative pronoun *u-* following two derivation suffixes: *-n-* 'intransitivizer' and *-aj* 'thematic suffix' (Lacadena 2004). Usually, the epigraphers identify this complex suffix *-n-aj* as non-CVC transitive derived passive, however the third ergative pronoun suggstes that the words are either transitive verbs, participles or nouns. However, Gronemeyer (2011: 323) has recently explained that both roots might be turned into applicative verbs (*pat-V and *ch'en-a), and at the end they became nominalized passives with the suffix -Vl: *u*-STEM-*n-aj*-Vl. The reconstructed forms would be translated as 'the built one of… ' and 'the thing-made-settlement of…'.

of Western K'awil. Then he arrived at Ux Wintik and transformed the Copan Valley settlement, which became one of the most important sites in the Classic Maya Lowlands (Andrews & Fash 2005; Bell, Canuto & Sharer 2004; Davletshin n.d.; Stuart 2004a).[10] In the text of Stela P it is told implicitly that Yax K'uk' Mo' brought the gods with him to found the site itself, and that the K'ahk' Uti' Chan Yopat performed the same event during his own reign, involving the remodelling of districts within the town and thus virtually became the new founder.

Recently, Tokovinine (2013: 64-65) has argued that the Copan emblem main sign was a name of the core area of the Principal Group, namely the region around Temple 11 where the dedication of the Holy T756[528]**-PUJ/pu** House, is mentioned in the text of sculpture CPN 3033. However, it is possible that the emblem main sign would indeed bear the name of an area wider than the Acropolis. I have suggested that the main sign of the emblem glyph may contain the morpheme is *ch'up* 'valley' and that the who title was to be understood as 'Holy Valley Lord' (Bíró 2011b: 305). There is evidence that stelae and altars at Copan were erected outside the settlement, which is unusual, and that "they define the conceptual borders of the Copan urban area, name specific locations within the Copanec landscape, and sacralize that landscape by connecting those physical locations with mythological places" (Carter 2008; see also Wagner 2000).

Therefore, there are epigraphic data pointing to the conclusion that while there generally existed several subdivisions of the settlement, there usually was one emblem glyph used by the king of the site.[11] However, the use of the emblem glyphs at Dos Pilas and Copan differed, at least at the onset. In both cases, an intrusive elite settled the cities; however, in the former case it was the founder who operated his original place emblem glyph, whereas in the second it was the new king who used a newly created emblem glyph. In the early inscriptions of Copan, Yax K'uk' Mo' utilized a simple Ux Witz Ha' toponym, and later his descendants created the cultural memory of a group and projected the emblem glyph back to the founder. Maybe the new emblem glyph

10 The reconstruction of the lexemes from Classic Nawatl: Wakuxaj **wak(tli)* 'Falcon'; Kilikum **kil(tic)+*kum(atz)* from K'iche'an proper 'Green Snake'; Mapatz'in **māpa(chin)+*tz'in(tli)* 'Lord Racoon'; K'alotz'in **tlālo(k)+'tz'in(tli)* 'Lord Tlālok'; Mala' **mal(li)+*tlah* 'Place of the Captives' and the last lexeme is a Classic Ch'olan Many-Cattail Place Lord (Bíró & Davletshin 2011).

11 There are other sites which have intra-toponyms. Usually, it is thought that the majority of place names are from outside the site, however there is data to suggest that sometimes such place names were intra- and not extra-toponyms. For example, I have proposed that B'akal (Palenque emblem glyph) was the name of a plateau criss-crossed by rivers such as Picota, Motiepa, Otolum, Piedras Bolas etc. Toktahn, Lakamha' (Otolum area), Sik'ab' (Group IV), K'an Tok (Temple XVI) and Uxte' K'uh (Temples XIX, XX and XXI) were the names of neighbourhoods within B'akal (Bíró 2012: 40-45). Indeed, from AD 431 to 496 two rulers of Palenque resided in the settlement of Toktahn and both used the title 'Holy Toktahn Lord'. Later Butz'aj Sak Chik settled on Lakamha' in AD 490 and later the kings dropped this title in the texts.

main sign referred to the valley or to the core area of the Acropolis, and the next generations decided to focus on the founder as *ochk'in kalomte'* who went to *Winte' Nah*, while they ignored or at least de-emphasized the original site of Yax K'uk' Mo' in their texts.

Deep time and ancestors

There are several examples in the Classic Maya texts where the current kings created a mythic history of the first ancestors in deep time (in terms of accession, other ceremonies and so on) and in consequence their place names seemed to already have existed in mythic times (Tokonivine 2013: 71-79). Piedras Negras Altar 1, dedicated in AD 692, mentions the same kind of events (period-ending ceremonies) which had happened in Yokib' (one of the two emblem glyphs of the city), and that the Holy Yokib' Ruler was the witness of the period ceremony in 4691 BC, 3114 BC, AD 297, AD 435, AD 514, AD 692 and AD 830 (Bíró 2011a: 54-55). At Copan, the emblem glyph main sign is mentioned in the text of Stela I, erected in AD 677. In that text, the current king and the ancestor realize the same event (the period-ending ceremony) at T756[528] (Schele & Looper 1996), but at different times. The first event before the period ceremony crucially occurred at Chih Ka'[12] and was initiated by K'ihnich Yajaw Ux Yop Hun, the mythical proto-king referred to in several texts from the Lowlands (Grube 2004). In every city where Yajaw Hun appears, he does so as the quasi-founder of the lineage, apart from the more distant ancestors and the 'real' founder. According to the archaeological and epigraphic data of this period of the settlement, Copan was a tiny village and there is no evidence that local society had a hierarchically distinct and superior king (Andrews & Fash 2005).

In one of the longest texts of Tikal, the Temple of the Inscriptions (Str. 6F-27), in a mythological story of several period-ending ceremonies the kings used the Mutul emblem glyph in the presence of the White Owl Ocelot (a mythical ancestor) (Helmke in press; Helmke & Nielsen 2013), in deep time (the first date is 1143 BC; Stuart 2007b), anachronistically attributing the place name of Tikal well into the Formative Period.

Often, these mythological texts did not mention the founder of the ruling family at a given site, but they referred to the (non-human) ancestors who bore the founder's emblem glyph. At Palenque, one of the ancestors dedicated the house used by the Holy B'akal Lord in 252 BC, although he was not the founder of the present dynasty (K'uk' B'alam lived in the 5th century AD; see also Helmke 2012: 95-100).

At Naranjo, there is more than one founder of the dynasty or *tz'akb'ul* number: the first ancestor was 'Square-nosed Beastie' and in several inscriptions the king had already

12 Possibly: "maguey grinder (place)". "[...] the geographic frame of reference for this 'maguey-grinder' place name still remains very unclear" (Stuart 2014).

been listed as the 35th in line in the 6th century, even though there was an ancestor whose *tz'akb'ul* number was in the 10ths in the early 6th century (Lopes 2005; Schele 1992; Tokovinine & Fialko 2007).[13] The first founder of the Tikal dynasty lived around the 1st century AD (by the *tz'akb'ul* number), although his predecessors were also mentioned in several texts of an earlier date.

In summary, there were several ancestors of each ruling family and later kings usually used to project them into the deep time with the emblem glyph main sign, depending on the wish of the rulers. Furthermore, one of the ancestors was claimed later by the successors as more important than others, and they counted their dynastic position in reference to him utilizing the *tz'akb'ul* title; nevertheless, these were mythological rulers and even supernatural entities sometimes became ancestors.

Women and their children

Many scholars have described the status of women in Classic Maya society (Ardren 2002; Claassen & Joyce 1997; Miller & Martin 2004; Joyce 2001). At Tikal and Palenque, women of nobility occasionally became the rulers of the site. Women used the same titles as men (preceded by ix-) such as *sajal*, *ajk'uhun*, *ti' sak hun*, *kalomte'*, *ajaw* and so on, although several war-related titles (such as *ajtok'*, *bah pakal*, *lakam*, *ebet* etc.) were never carried by a female person. Some mothers became the quasi-regents of the site because their sons were immature, for example Ix Sak K'uk' of Palenque or the Ixwak Jalam Chan of Dos Pilas, at Naranjo (Martin & Grube 2008).

Curiously, the foreign queens did not 'bequeath' their emblem glyphs to their offspring, except at Yacxchilan. After the clash of Naranjo and Caracol in AD 682, Ixwak Jalam Chan (Ajaw) from Dos Pilas arrived at Naranjo with her fellow companions and their patron deities and re-founded the dynasty (Bíró 2011a: 41; Martin & Grube 2008: 74-75). Although she was from Dos Pilas and the daughter of B'ajlaj Chan K'awil, she used the Mutul emblem glyph. Her stelae at Naranjo and later kings' monuments referred to her as the Mutul Queen (*ixmutul ajaw*), but her son did not inherit her Mutul emblem glyph. It was her and her forebears who gave prestige to the descendants, in contrast to the future ruler who never utilized her emblem glyph. There was no pattern of double emblem glyphs in the texts, pairing off the title of Dos Pilas with that of Naranjo.

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13 In 546, in the text of Altar 1, Aj Wosaj was the 35th ruler, yet in the 470s one of the kings had a 12th/13th successor title (Lopes 2005). If one counts the generation by 20 years and uses in the first (i.e. the longer) count, then the first king's accession would have happened in the 2nd century BC (AD 546 minus 35x20 = 154 BC), however if one employs the second count, the first ruler would have acceded in the 3rd century AD (470 minus 13/12x20 = AD 210/230).

Another example is the arrival of a foreign queen from Naman (La Florida) at Piedras Negras in AD 682 (Martin & Grube 2002: 74-75). Stela 8 mentioned the birth of Lady Winikhab' who used the emblem glyph of Naman or La Florida. She became the wife of the would-be king of Piedras Negras and later had her figure sculpted in stone at Stelae 1 and 3. The latter monument portrayed her and her daughter presumably sitting on a bench as members of a group performing the period-ending ceremony. Lady Winikhab' had used the emblem glyph of Naman as expected, but her daughter's emblem glyph then changed to the local one, that is Ix K'ihn Ajaw, which was used as one of the emblem glyphs of Piedras Negras (Jørgensen & Krempel 2014).

Presently, I do not know of any examples from the Classic Period texts that describe the bequeathal of the female emblem glyph to the descendants, with the exception of the Yaxchilan Y2 emblem glyph (Helmke 2012: 107-115). The queens in most cases operated their original emblem glyph instead. This process and pattern seemingly gave rise to the suggestion that the emblem glyph was a marker of identity and that the local emblem glyph was more important than the foreign one, even if the latter had more prestige in the historical situation that the local one.

Double emblem glyph: Piedras Negras, Bonampak and Yaxchilan

Piedras Negras

There are at least two emblem glyphs that were used by the rulers of the site and both occur in toponymic formulas with *ch'en* (Stuart 2004b; Stuart & Houston 1994: 31-33; Zender 2002: 170-176). The emblem glyphs are **K'UH-yo-ki-b'i-AJAW** and **K'IN-ni-AJAW,** while there are two more toponyms in the texts, namely T5-**TUN-ni** and **mu-k'i/ch'i-TUN-ni** (Figure 1).

The most frequent emblem glyph main sign is *yokib'*, a derived noun perhaps meaning 'canyon, entrance' (Stuart & Houston 1994: 31; Figure 1b). It is the only emblem glyph main sign (without the *k'uhul*) that occurred on Early Classic monuments in Piedras Negras and in Yaxchilan. Its first occurrence with the *k'uhul* adjective is found on Piedras Negras Stela 34, dated to AD 652.

Also, the use of *yokib'* as a direct toponym is restricted to the text of Piedras Negras Altar 1. The first example (in H2-I2) is a mythological ceremony (9.0.0.0.0 before the Creation date of 13.0.0.0.0) which took place in the Yokib' sky-cave (see the drawing in Stuart & Houston 1994: 34). The next occurrence is probably connected to a burial ritual, prior to which one Piedras Negras ruler, Yo'nal Ahkul, died (*ochb'ihaj*). The following funerary ceremony was overseen by a certain Uh B'ahlam who was in the company (*yitaj*) of other dignitaries. The date of death coincides with the period ending ceremony of 8.13.0.0.0 (AD 297) and the text ascertains that it happened in Yokib' (*uhtiy yokib' chan ch'en*; Houston et al. 2003: 225; Stuart & Houston 1994: 34). Thus,

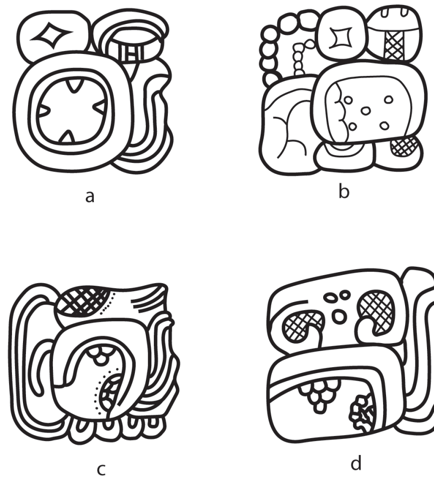

Figure 1. a: **K'IN-ni-AJAW**; b: **K'UH-yo-ki-b'i-AJAW-wa**; c: **mu-k'i/ch'i-TUN-ni-ji**; d: T5-**TUN-ni** (drawings by the author).

the monuments indicate that Yokib' was an emblem glyph main sign and a toponym. Until AD 608, the first monuments of Piedras Negras used *yokib'* as a place name; the **K'IN-ni** emblem is mentioned in later texts and projected back to the middle of the 6th century (Zender 2002: 170).

After a gap of almost five decades in the inscriptional record of Piedras Negras, Stela 25 was dedicated in AD 608, at the beginning of the Late Classic Period. The ruler's royal name K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahkul represents a continuation of the naming pattern of previous kings; however, he used only the **K'IN-ni-AJAW** emblem glyph, without the *k'uhul* adjective (Figure 1a). From this time onwards, all rulers of the site used both emblem glyphs in the narratives of contemporary and retrospective events, although **K'IN-ni-AJAW** was rarely combined with *k'uhul*. Moreover, this is the time period when the **K'IN-ni-a** or **K'IN-NAL** constructions began to show up in the inscriptions of other sites (Grube, Martin & Zender 2002: II-25; Zender 2002), but exclusively in the titles of nobles, such as *ch'ok*, *sajal*, and the 'carver' title. One of them was identified as a captive on the Palenque Hieroglyphic Stairway and called *ajk'ihn nal* in the 7th century, but most occurrences correspond to the 8th-century forms **K'IN-ni-a** and **AJ-K'IN-ni-a**. There is an indirect connection between this toponym and the rulers of Piedras Negras, namely that one of the captured *sajal* in Palenque was a subordinate of K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahkul II (Zender 2002: 175). There is an unprovenanced monument

that perhaps came originally from Chancal and which mentions an **AJ-K'IN-AJAW** with a non-royal title (the headband bird). The same expression might have been written on Piedras Negras Stela 18 in the name of ruler Tz'ak (Ha' K'in) Xok.

A third toponym appears frequently in the inscriptions of Piedras Negras and El Cayo (Stuart 2004b; Stuart 2007a; Figure 1d). It consists of the undeciphered T5 (Jaguar Paw) logogram and it ends with **TUN-ni**/*tun* 'stone', a perfect reference to Altar 4 of Piedras Negras, as was first shown by Stuart (2004b). The mentions of T5 Tun are dated very late: they occur on Piedras Negras Throne 1 (AD 785) and El Cayo Panel 1 (AD 775), and possibly also on Piedras Negras Stela 18 (Stuart 2004b). The first ruler referred to by the Jaguar Paw Stone was Yo'nal Ahkul III (AD 758-767) and two successive rulers, Tz'ak Xok (AD 767-780) and Yat Ahkul III (AD 781-808), mentioned it in their texts.

The fourth toponym, **mu-k'i**/*muk'*, is found only on Piedras Negras Stela 25 in AD 603 and is the name of the place of the inauguration event of K'inich Yo'nal Ahkul I (Figure 1c). Tokovinine (2013) has suggested that this is a phonetic reading of T5 or Jaguar Paw. Unfortunately, there is no evidence for this in the inscription at the moment.[14]

It follows that there are two emblem glyphs of Piedras Negras, one of them being based on a *ch'en* (*yokib'*), and that there are two toponyms, among them another *ch'en* (Jaguar Paw Stone). Recently, Tokovinine (2013) has argued that the Jaguar Paw Stone represented the name of the Piedras Negras itself and that Yokib' was an unidentified place of origin of the dynasty. There is evidence that one of the earlier rulers, Yat Ahkul I, settled at Jaguar Paw Stone around AD 450 (Stuart 2004b).

I have argued before that each toponym referred to one of the neighbourhoods of Piedras Negras (Bíró 2012: 51; Figure 2). The South Group was Yokib', close to the curve of the river and to the *bajo* areas (Nelson 2005) where the earliest monument was erected and which, according to the ceramic findings, was the earliest settlement within the site (in the Preclassic and Early Classic period; Houston et al. 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2003). The **mu-k'i/ch'i-TUN-ni** was only mentioned on Stela 26 in front of R-9, a huge pyramid in the South Group. Maybe Muk'/Much' Tun was the name of R-9, meaning either 'Big Stone' or 'Piled-up Stone(s)'.

14 On Stela 26 (block D1), there is the spelling **mu-k'i/ch'i-TUN-ni-ji**. ***Muk'*** in Greater Tzeltalan and Yucatekan is "fuerzas, grande" (Kaufman & Justeson 2003: 1392). *Much'* in Cholan and Yucatekan languages is 'pile up' (Kaufman & Norman 1984: 126).

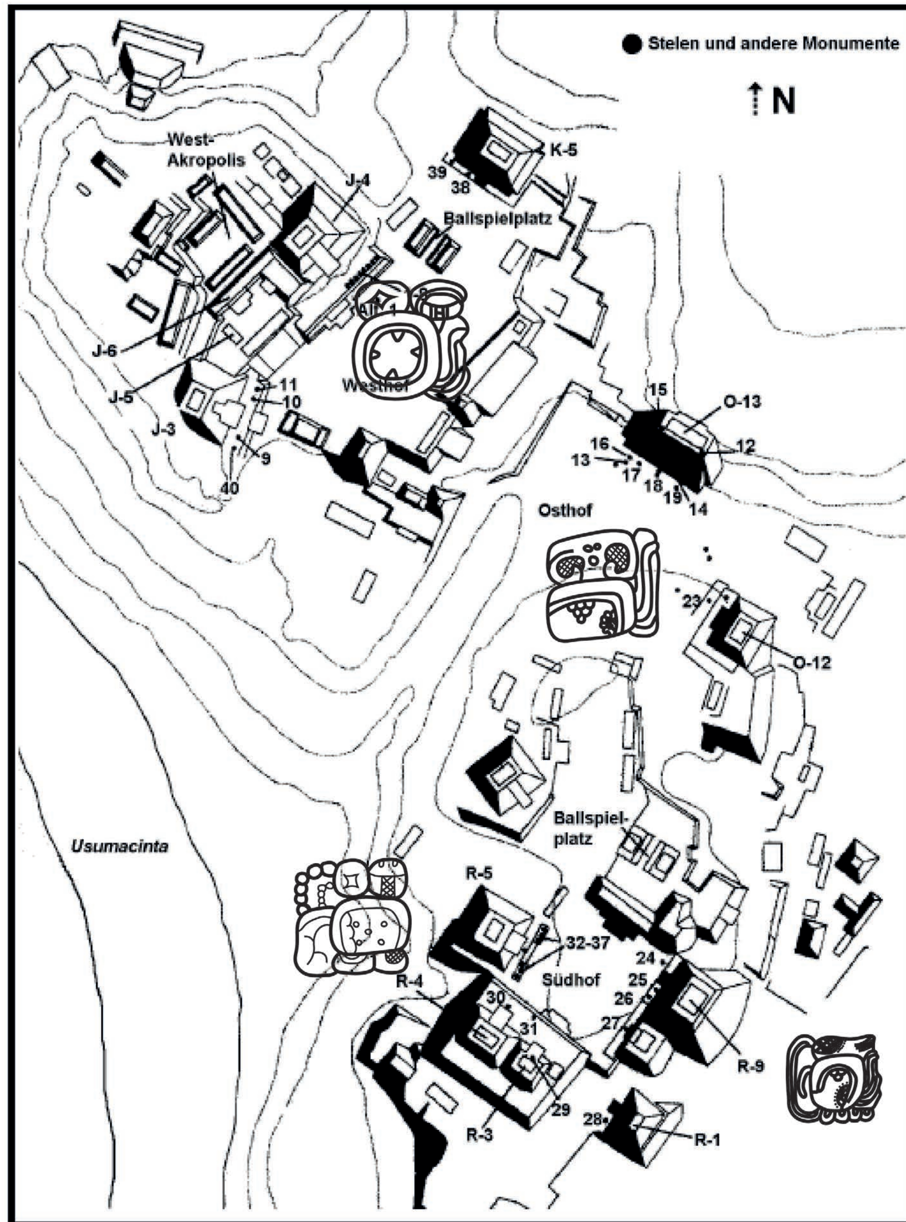

Figure 2. Piedras Negras Map with the neighbourhoods (modified from Teufel 2004: 15).

The West Group (the Acropolis and the surroundings of K-5) was close to another *bajo* area with an unusual number of sweat baths, and Zender (2002: 175-176) has suggested that the name of this area was K'ihn Ha', 'Hot or Warm Water'. I think that K'ihn Ha' was the name of the West Group where the Early and Late Classic palace was built.

Finally, Jaguar Paw Stone was the name of the East Group that was founded by Yat Ahkul I around AD 450, and one of the earliest buildings there was Ho' Janab' Witz (O-13) which was constructed around AD 514 (Tokovinine 2013: 75).

The East and South Groups had temple-mound structures, but the West Group was inhabited by a considerable amount of people. The kings did not erect monuments in the South Group after AD 600, while the West Group was ceremonially occupied from the Late Classic until the last ruler. After AD 600, the neighbourhood where the kings performed ceremonies shifted from the South Group to the West and East Groups, while the latter neighbourhood became the focus of ceremonies of the three last rulers after their father, Ruler 4, had been buried under the plaza floor in front of Str. O-13.

The history and development of the site suggest that Yokib' was the oldest sector, but that the West Group (K'ihn Ha') slowly became the most important neighbourhood, although the East Group was also a prominent ceremonial location, especially in the 8th century. Major destruction occurred again in Piedras Negras in AD 564, when the Pomona army razed several buildings and also erased the earlier inscriptions. After the period of calamity, the new king utilized the K'ihn Ajaw as a new beginning. However, he still used the ancient emblem glyph to continue the link to the deep past.

Bonampak

Bonampak is located in the Selva Lacandona, close to the Lacanha River and the Sierra Cojolita in Chiapas. Presently, there are several inscribed monuments at the site: four panels, five stelae, four lintels and the famous mural of Structure 1 (Arellano Hernández 1998; Mathews 1980). Lintel 4 (AD 603) and Panel 2 (ca. AD 605) were comissioned by Yajaw Chan Muwan I (AD 600-605), Panel 4 (AD 614) by Aj-? Nal (AD 605-614), Panel 5 (AD 648) by Winikhab' Tok' (AD 643-648) and Panel 1 (AD 692) by Ajixim K'ey (AD 683-692; Bíró 2007b). Later, after a gap of more than 70 years, Stelae 1, 2, 3, 5 and 15 and Lintels 1, 2 and 3 were produced under the reign of Yajaw Chan Muwan II (AD 776-790), and the murals were painted during the reign of the latest ruler, who acceded to the throne in AD 790 and dedicated the building in AD 791 (Bíró 2011a: 252-266; Houston 2012).

The rulers of Bonampak used two emblem glyphs, Xukalnah and Ak'e (Arellano Hernández 1998; Beliaev & Safronov 2004; Bíró 2007b, 2011a; Mathews 1980; Figure 3). The Ak'e emblem glyph is always written with two syllabograms, **a-k'e**; it is combined with the *ajaw* title and the *k'uhul* adjective in Bonampak (Figure 3a). The

spelling of Xukalnah is more varied, but in most cases it is written with the syllabograms **xu-ka-la** and the logogram **NAH** for 'house'. It stands with *k'uhul*, *ajaw*, and also with the agentive prefix *aj-* (Figure 3b). Neither of the emblem glyph main signs appear in a toponymic formula, nor are they used with *ch'en*.

After the work of Stuart (2007a), it is known that the name of the site was Vulture Hill (Usij Witz), the only toponym mentioned in the Bonampak texts (Figure 3c). The double emblem glyph pattern occurred after 776, while previously the rulers of Bonampak only used the Xukalnah emblem glyph. The double emblem glyph was utilised by the last three rulers.

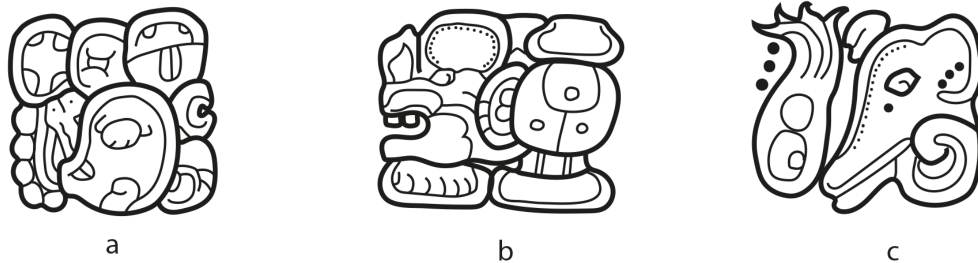

Figure 3. a: **K'UH-a-k'e-AJAW-wa**; b: **xu-ka-la-NAH**; c: **u-USIJ**[WITZ] (drawings by the author).

According to the seminal research by Beliaev & Safronov (2004), there are various other place names mentioned in the text of the Selva Lacandona area whose rulers used the Xukalnah Lord title: Xukalnah (Lacanha), B'ub'ul Ha' (probably Ojo de Agua), Saklakal, (Payal) Jukub' (probably La Casada), Knot-Site (probably Nuevo Jalisco), Ta' and Oxlahuntun (Bíró 2011a).[15] This complex political situation is very similar to that of Tikal and Dos Pilas, or to that of Palenque, Tortuguero and Comalcalco (see above).

15 The earliest period of the sites of the region is almost unknown because of the total lack of stratigraphical excavations in Bonampak or Plan de Ayutla; in other sites, nothing is known about the archaeological history, save what emerges from intermittent inspections and surface data collections. Therefore, any epigrapher venturing into the reconstruction of the elite portion of the history of the region faces all sorts of problems, and the resulting work is very speculative (Bíró 2011a). However, the importance of the Selva Lacandona area during the Classic Period should not be underestimated. The earliest texts are inscribed on the only monument from the 5th century in the entire region which was found by looters and dates to AD 498. One speculative hypothesis about the early history of the region has recently been proposed by Peter Mathews (personal communication 2005) who has suggested that the original inhabitants of the region were 'pushed' into the Selva Lacandona by intrusive elite and non-elite populations coming out of the Northeast Peten. Living in a border zone, they founded small settlements which later became the home of a vigorous artistic tradition as their rulers imitated their much wealthier neighbours of the Usumacinta River and beyond.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence to prove at which site the Xukalnah dynasty originally settled, but the first monuments located in Lacanha in AD 593 (Stela 7, AD 593) and in the surrounding villages of the same period (Ojo de Agua Stela 1, AD 588 and Brussel Stela, AD 593) were the first to refer to Xukalnah in their texts. Furthermore, there is evidence that the founder of the Xukalnah dynasty ruled around AD 400 (Ojo de Agua Stela 1, the seventh successor title; Bíró 2011a: 69). These lords had used the *yajawte'* title and they were either the vassals of Xukalnah or Ak'e (Bíró 2011a: 100-101). This title was one of the earliest non-royal offices used from the 5th century onward, and some of those who used it became prestigious captives in the texts of the Early Classic Yaxchilan lintels (Lintels 37 and 35, Ruler 8 to Ruler 10, ca. AD 480-537).

The first inscriptions mentioning the rulers of Ak'e were dedicated by a subordinate (*a'nab'*) named K'an Tatb'u Max in AD 498 and 521. This is in compliance with some early texts of Yaxchilan, where Ak'e is said to have been an ally and/or enemy of the 6th, 9th and 10th ruler. Combining the information of the Yaxchilan lintels with that of the monuments of K'an Tatb'u Max, it becomes possible to reconstruct a partial ruler list of Ak'e: Yaxun B'ahlam (pre-AD 454), K'ihnich Yat Ahkul (AD 498-521) and Knot B'ahlam (AD 537-572).

The Ak'e and Xukalnah emblem glyphs were not used as a double emblem glyph of the rulers of the Selva Lacandona until the AD 720s, but afterwards the Sak Tz'i' ruler employed them in his title sequence in AD 726 (Bíró 2005; 2011a).[16] The last monument on which a king used the independent Ak'e emblem was dedicated in AD 715 and from then on the Ak'e lord title was always put together with other emblem glyphs (Sak Tz'i' and Xukalnah).

My speculative take on this history is that after the main branch of Ak'e had become extinct, the other houses probably wanted to claim the empty throne, thus starting a conflict which eventually turned into factional wars, with the more powerful polities naturally exacerbating the conflicts. There were at least three houses which allegedly claimed the Ak'e lord title: Usij Witz (Bonampak), Knot-Site (Nuevo Jalisco?) and Payal Jukub' (La Cascada?). The Knot-Site was subordinate to Sak Tz'i', Usij Witz was a vassal of Yaxchilan, and Payal Jukub' was an enemy of Yaxchilan.

This war against the Sak Tz'i'-Knot-Site alliance culminated in AD 748 and 787 and one of the battles was represented in the mural of Room 2 in Bonampak. Before that, Yajaw Chan Muwan II (AD 776-790) had carefully selected and relocated the 7th century monuments and installed Panel 2 in front of his stela (Tovalín & Villareal 2002). It is crucial that his father Yajaw Chan Muwan I (AD 600-605) of Panel 2, who resided in Usij Witz, had the Holy Ak'e Lord title (*k'uhul ak'e ajaw*). Therefore, the Ak'e emblem glyph in

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16 This complex and confusing history not only relates to the local empowered house of Sak Tz'i', but also to other, more potent kingdoms such as Yaxchilan, Tonina and Piedras Negras (Bíró 2011a).

Bonampak came from the male ancestor, or at least Yajaw Chan Muwan II declared this to be the case in his carefully repositioned claim to the right to both of the emblem glyphs.

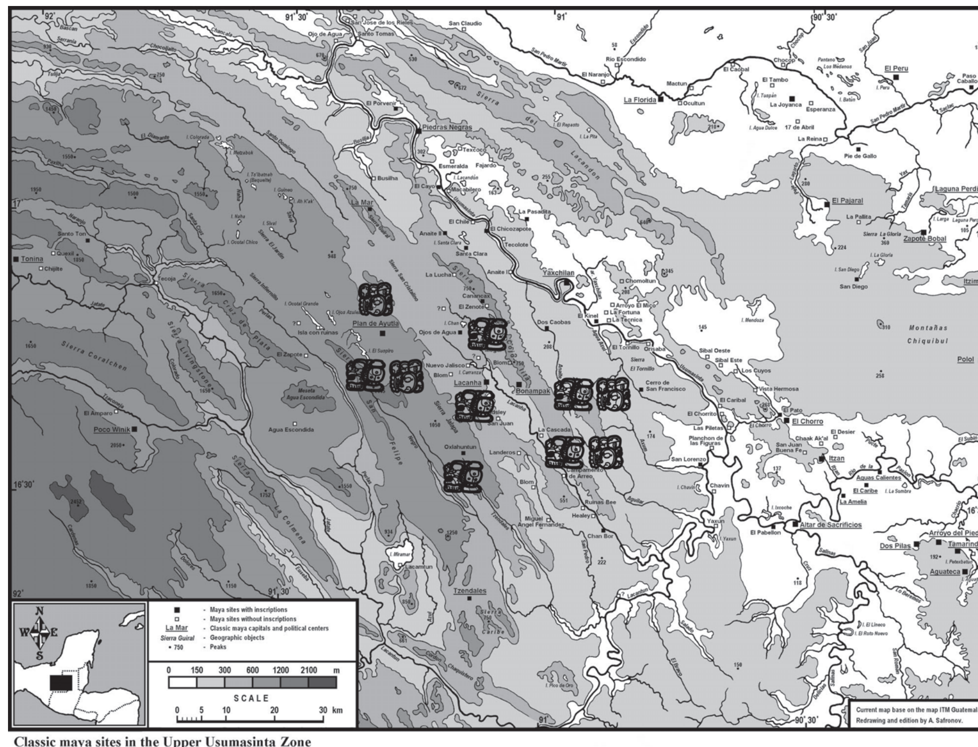

Figure 4. Map of the Western Region with the Ak'e and Xukalnaah emblem glyphs (modified from Safronov n.d.).

This pattern of the double emblem glyphs differed slightly from the Piedras Negras example, namely in Piedras Negras the double emblem glyph was created by the kings to found several neighbourhoods, while in Bonampak the kings had the right to use them because a forebear's father had one of the emblem glyphs. Perhaps the kings of Ak'e and their children married into other lineages. This criss-cross web of marriage would then trigger factional wars between the branches of the Ak'e family and many of the sub-lineages would fight about the inheritance of the ancestors' land (maybe Plan de Ayutla; Figure 4). In Bonampak, the emblem glyph emerged as a marker of identity among the elite who were in some way represented in the inscriptions of Bonampak and other sites, inscriptions that also indicate that one of the processes to create a double emblem glyph pattern was factional war. The king paid homage to the memory of the ancestors and he willingly invested in it, for example when he relocated a 150-year-old monument in front of his stela.

Yaxchilan

Yaxchilan is another site that had two emblem glyphs, one of which has been deciphered by Boot (2004) and Martin (2004) as **K'UH-PA'CHAN-AJAW**, while the other is the still undeciphered **K'UH-**T511**-ji-AJAW** (Figure 5). Many have dealt with the chronological and spatial distributions of the Yaxchilan emblem glyphs (Helmke 2012; Mathews 1997: 68; Schüren 1992). Mathews has concluded that the distribution of the emblem glyph main signs showed only two patterns and that Pa'chan was the only one mentioned in foreign sites, while T511**-ji** was connected to women.

Figure 5. a: **K'UH-PA'CHAN-AJAW-wa**; b: **K'UH-**T511**-AJAW** (drawings by the author).

Schüren (1992) went further in her investigation and proposed the existence of two separate sites, Pa'chan and T511**-ji**, suggesting that at least two women, Ix Pakal and Ix Chak Jolom from T511**-ji** had married into the royal family of Pa'chan. This resulted in the joining of the two polities during the reign of Itzamnaj B'ahlam III (AD 681-742), who in his inscriptions projected this political situation back into the past. Finally, she noted that T511**-ji** might have been the name of the unlocated Laxtunich (Schüren 1992: 37). Regarding the discussion above, it is highly unlikely that the emblem glyph of the queen was joined into the double emblem glyphs because it is most probable that it was the male ancestor who was key to developing this pattern.

As an alternative to these interpretations, there is now enough evidence to suggest that both emblem glyphs were used simultaneously at El Zotz in the 5th century, which points to the possible origin of that particular branch of the Yaxchilan dynasty (Bíró 2011a: 47-54; Houston 2008). Furthermore, Stuart (2007a: 31) has recently shown that there were two dynastic counts at Yaxchilan (as recorded on Dos Caobas Stela 1): one counting fifteen rulers from Yopat B'ahlam, who was a *k'uhul pa'chan ajaw*, and a second one counting more than twenty rulers from a *k'uhul* T511**-ji** *ajaw*. Interestingly, the two numbers are different, as are the forebears they refer to. Although this monu-

ment was made later in the Late Classic Period, the Yopat B'ahlam and the second ruler already had both emblem glyphs in the Hieroglyphic Stairway 1.

Nevertheless, the theory of the El Zotz origin makes it likely that neither Pa'chan nor T511-**ji** were place names referring to Yaxchilan or any other site in the region, but that they were toponyms in the Peten. According to Houston (2008), that was the place of origin of the family that had lived in Bejucal and subsequently resettled to El Zotz around AD 500. Currently there is one stela from Bejucal which mentions Chak Kab'koh Ahkul in AD 393, who was a vassal of Sihyaj K'ahk', the ostensible Teotihuacan general. His son, Sihyaj Chan Ahkul, was mentioned on the wooden lintel of El Zotz and an unprovenanced pyrite mirror dated ca. AD 450 (Bíró 2011a: 52-53).

Yopat B'ahlam, the dynastic founder of the Yaxchilan dynasty, ruled in the first half of the 4th century. At present, there is no evidence that he had moved out of the El Peten area; however, one of the branches of the family might have migrated to the Usumacinta River, bringing both emblem glyphs with them, as in the example of Dos Pilas. Pa'chan was not just a foreign title referring to the founder, but also the name of the new site., It is mentioned twice on Lintel 25 (*tahn ha' pa'chan and yohl tahnal tahn ha' pa'chan*) and it is referred to as the *kab'-ch'en* of Itzamnaj B'ahlam III.

Another interpretation has recently been put forward by Helmke (2012: 100-116) when he suggested that both emblem glyphs ultimately name mythological places. Pa'chan may have been the toponym of the origin at San Bartolo, and was subsequently used by different royal lineages a multiple sites in the central lowlands. The second undeciphered emblem glyph is mentioned in several texts as a mythological locality in the distant past, confirming the mythological quality of that toponym. As such, it is also possible that several ruling families used these mythological places to boost their power and that they were not related by blood in any way. Irrespective of whether these localities were deemed to be mythological or not, the kings of the Classic period utilized these in their texts the same way as other rulers of the Lowlands did; in other words, the main signs have functioned as place names creating the mark of the cultural memory and the identity of the groups.

There are also indications that Yaxchilan had its own sub-divisions with different toponyms. As Stuart pointed out, there is a third emblem glyph connected to one ruler of the city (Itzamnaj B'ahlam II) which can be read as *k'uhul muwan ajaw* also mentioned on an unprovenanced hieroglyphic stairway block possibly coming from El Chorro (Stuart 2007a: 39). On Yaxchilan Stela 4, a Muwan bird is topped with a Pa'chan glyph which probably indicates a specific place within Yaxchilan (Stuart 2007a: 4). A similar iconographic representation occurs on the back of Stela 7 and on Step III of Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, where a place name that probably reads Ahin Ha' indicates the scene of the event mentioned on the base of the monument.

At Yaxchilan, a complex pattern concerning the use of emblem glyph main signs emerges. The Yaxchilan emblem glyphs may originally have emerged in the central Peten, potentially in the El Zotz region or the San Bartolo area, but a migrating branch of royals has brought them to Yaxchilan later. In addition, there is some data to suggest that they referred to different royal families, and that Pa'chan was more important to the rulers of Yaxchilan. In the inscriptions of Yaxchilan designating various areas of the site, there are candidates for names of local places or the site itself; however, Pa'chan became the more encompassing toponym among several others for the Late Classic Period.

This pattern again differs slightly from the two examples above (Piedras Negras and Bonampak), but it is still difficult to determine where the place name came from and why both titles remained in vogue at Yaxchilan and El Zotz.

Conclusion

Considering the above discussion, I must acknowledge that the examples seemingly lead readers to believe that there was no historical evolution of the usage of the emblem glyph from the Early Classic to the Terminal Classic Period. The reason for this is that I have not collected every example, but I have listed a variety of cases from particular cities where the rulers operated the emblem glyphs in question.

Some developments can indeed be discerned from these examples: first, the kings transformed already existing (mythological) places into real places; later in the 5th century, some of them went to other regions, and during this time, they often added the *k'uhul* adjective to their glyphs, in the original territory and the newly founded kingdoms. In the Early Classic and, more frequently, in the Late Classic Period a process started in which the rulers – by conquest, alliance, marriage or ancient past history – absorbed one or more emblem glyphs into their nominal phrases. The question is why the pattern of the double emblem glyph was practised in the Western Region and the Petexbatun area (Machaquila and Cancuen) and why the non-royal nobles play a conspicuously unusual role in the discourse (Bíró 2011a; Jackson 2013).

Collective memory is inherently connected to collective identity or the belief in the existence of a we-consciousness (Assmann 2004: 151). Identity is strongly connected to politics, and political organisation. Classic Period Maya writing is therefore a repository of collective memories and collective identities, a form of organising and presenting the elite to themselves, to outsiders, and to other parts of the society.

The emblem glyph was *per se* one of the quintessential elements of the elite group, which was organised as a community of collective memory attached to specific spaces and times. The emblem glyph was a place name and it had a history in the past, the present and the future. It existed in mythical times and appeared together with the gods and past-kings in order to legitimate the later rulers.

A toponym/emblem glyph main sign can be asserted to have existed within one well-defined spatial category, the *ch'en* and its multiple variants combined with *kab'* and *chan*. It is hard to discern an evolving change in the conceptualisation of this particular entity and its reference is not very clear. I have argued elsewhere that all of its variants refer to inhabited places in a general sense, places inhabited not only by humans but also by non-human deities (Bíró 2007a, 2011a, 2012).

While *ch'en* certainly means a natural phenomenon with a semantic field of 'cave, pool' and thus refers to an empty or filled cavity, it went into the semantic construction of 'inhabited place'. It is important to make a difference between *chan/kab'-ch'en* and various suffixes such as *-ul* and *-il*, which form place names and probably carry a very general meaning of 'place'.

However, there is a more real concept that underlines this metaphorical principle, namely that of the origin of the rulers and also of the people, who ultimately came from a cave (Bassie-Sweet 1991, 1996; Brady & Prufer 2005; Prufer & Brady 2005).

I have argued that the *ch'en* was a community where the elite person had his/her court and conjured the god/ancestor (*k'uh*, *mam* and *wahy*), an *ajaw* who proclaims, fights and builds (*patnaj* and *ch'enaj* in Copan). This community usually consisted of one family and servants and was a segment of the polity. According to the texts, there were no small or big *ch'en* (**b'ikit ch'en* or **noh ch'en*), but only more additions such as *chan* or *kab'*. Of course, the settlement grew over time and it had several *ch'en*, possessed either by the ruling family, one of its branches, or non-royal nobles. To have a polity, it was necessary to have *ajawil/ajawlel*, a line of descent from of lords into which somebody could insert him/herself (*tz'akb'ul* title).

Every lord was connected to an inhabited built place or a cave (*ch'en*) where his/her ancestors dwelt, but not necessarily to the place where the actual lord resided. This is one of the most important characteristics of the concept of the Classic Period polity. The original *ch'en* is the name of the royal house, its origin place, which can easily be moved to other built places. Emblem glyphs are 'places of origin' which are transported across the landscape by the movement of a royal line. The most conspicuous examples of this process can be found in several cases, such as Tikal, Calakmul, Bonampak and Yaxchilan as well as elsewhere.

These 'transported' titles sometimes combined not just one, but two emblem glyphs used by the ruler, which is a result of the complex history of factional wars/or other mechanisms where the members of the family left (*lok'oyi*) the ancestral city (*ch'en*) to arrive (*huli*)/settle (*kajiyi?*) elsewhere and start a branch of the royal line and founded a new settlement (*ch'en*). This remembrance of politics was one of the most important tasks of the scribes and the priests who wrote up memory and proclaimed it to insiders and outsiders.

This matrix of *ch'en* and *ajawil/lel* (and the derivations) combined a spatial and an institutional concept of polity formation. It did not involve demarcation or territorialisation, but building plazas, temples and palaces in order to transform the landscape. Where buildings stood, humans formed a polity.

This migration or diaspora (spread-out from a place of origin) occurred from the Northeast Peten to the surrounding areas in the Early Classic period, first to the Western Region and the Southeast Region, and lastly to the Northern Yucatan. The first founders and their successors carved the *ch'en* out of the unordered spatial plane and the flow of time. The political strategy was to implement dynastic rule and for the non-royal and local nobles to become the companions of the king in the public transcript. More and more non-royal elite used the politically imbued expressions (*ila, kab'i, ichnal*) and transmitted possession (*yajaw, usajal* etc).

The rulers had obligations towards those living in the community and these sometimes could be quite onerous. They had to repair, build, and produce. What remains is more of a common belief than enforcement. This system was quite stable and attractive enough to expand continually, which resulted in the organization of an ever higher number of persons. There is no indication that the Southern Maya Lowlands became over-populated by the end of the 8th century. Rather, the 'side-effects' of this 'forest of kings and nobles' resulted in a situation where conflict upon conflict added to the change of climate. The frequency of conflicts did not increase; rather, it was the number of the participants that grew substantially. A more densely populated landscape did not leave as many opportunities for a strategy of hit-and-sack-then-recuperate, neither for the nobles (who recorded this particular tactic in their inscriptions), nor for the non-elite.

Even when the kings of Calakmul or Tikal had conquered several cities, they never prohibited the use of the emblem glyphs of the defeated kings, and in the Western Region the most powerful cities were left to use the toponym of the non-royals in their texts. Sometimes, after the defeat of the local ruler, the succeeding kings used the foreign emblem glyph, as it was the case in Seibal; however, in the latter case, a new arrival took up the original emblem glyph in the Terminal Classic and famously celebrated the period ending.

In this chapter, I have argued that the emblem glyph had been the most important identity marker of a group, and this could be the answer to why the people of the Classic Maya Lowlands were never mentioned in the inscriptions by the overarching ethnic self-name. Indubitably, there were regional names; but were they a marker of ethnic identity or of other (cultural?) features?

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Myth and Model. The Pattern of Migration, Settlement, and Reclamation of Land in Central Mexico and Oaxaca

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Abstract: A comparison of the documentation in the pre-Hispanic and early colonial pictorials and written texts from Central Mexico, Oaxaca and in between, shows parallels and a specific model for the settlement and the legitimation of land ownership.
Migration from a mythic place of origin is followed by choice of the new homeland, which is officially confirmed by the act of inauguration, i.e. a New Fire ceremony. Population growth leads to either the abandonment of a village or exodus of smaller groups, thus starting a new migration. The same procedure begins.
The Mixtecs started as early as in the Classic period to migrate to Teotihuacan and later to Mexico Tenochtitlan as immigrant workers. They were the first to leave their Mixtec homeland in the 1970ies traveling to the USA and Canada. Today, Mixtec communities can be found in Manhattan and all over California.

Keywords: migration; settlement; land ownership; Mixtec codices; pre-Hispanic and early colonial periods.

Resumen: Una comparación de la documentación en los textos pictóricos y escritos prehispánicos y coloniales tempranos del centro de México, Oaxaca y las regiones intermedias, muestra paralelos y revela un modelo específico para los procesos de asentamiento y la legitimación de la propiedad de la tierra.
La migración desde un lugar de origen mítico es seguida por la elección de un nuevo lugar de asentamiento, confirmada por un acto de inauguración, es decir, la ceremonia del Fuego Nuevo. El crecimiento de una población conduce al abandono de un pueblo o a un éxodo de grupos pequeños, iniciando así una nueva migración.
Los mixtecas comenzaron ya en el período Clásico a emigrar a Teotihuacán y luego a México Tenochtitlan como trabajadores inmigrantes. Fueron los primeros en abandonar su patria mixteca en los años 70 viajando a Estados Unidos y a Canadá. Hoy en día, comunidades mixtecas se pueden encontrar en Manhattan y en toda California.

Palabras clave: migración; asentamiento; propiedad de la tierra; códices mixtecos; periodo prehispánico y colonial temprano.

Migrations in (Meso-)America from different perspectives

Using selected examples of pre-Hispanic codices and early colonial *lienzos* and *mapas* from the Mixteca and Central Mexico, this contribution describes the model of a migration and settlement pattern that has been regularly recorded, as well as passed down in the oral traditions, in Mesoamerica since Postclassic and early colonial times. It has its

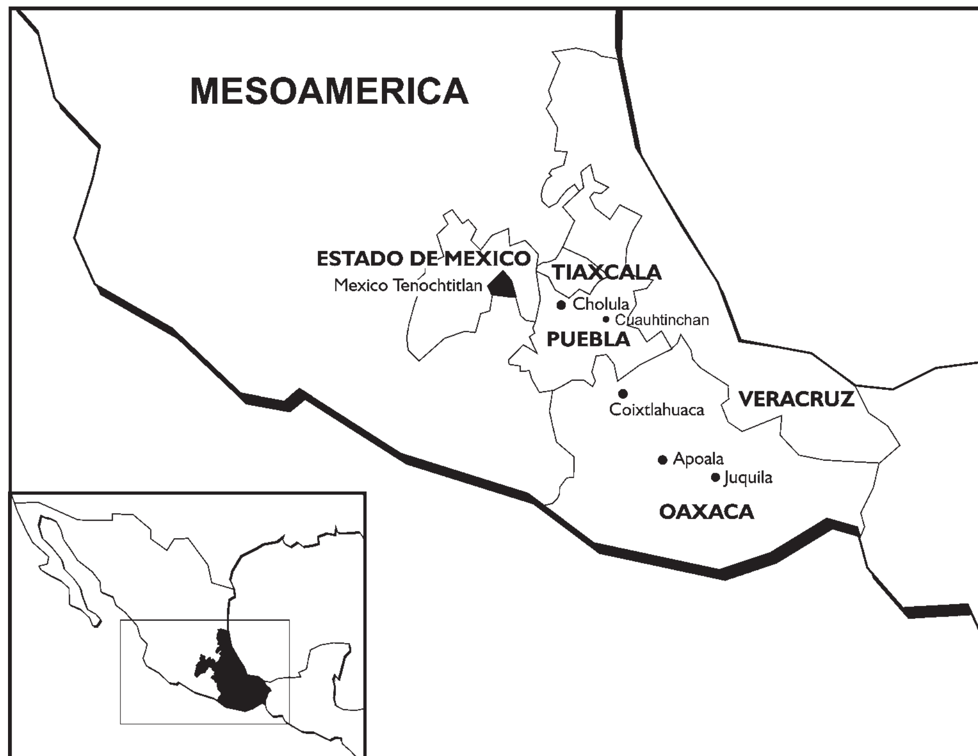

Figure 1. Map of Mesoamerica (drawing: Renate Sander).

roots far in the past. There can be no doubt that the life of the early inhabitants of the Americas was profoundly influenced by migration and settlement.
The mythology of migration begins with the earliest human settlement of the American continents. The hypothesis that the Americas (which are a European construct, too) were settled from Asia is not contested by any European scholar, even though there is some disagreement as to the time of settlement and the number of waves of migration. Most recently, genetic analyses of bone material have been particularly useful in corroborating that thesis (National Geographic Society 2014). However, there are many uncertainties both with regard to dates and the quantitative scope of settlement (Hey 2005). Another controversial issue is the intensity of Asiatic-American contacts in the millennia prior to the arrival of the Europeans in the Pacific (Fitzhugh & Crowell 1988).

The only ones who harbor doubts about the hypothesis of a migration from Asia to the Americas are Native Americans; referring to indigenous myths, they postulate

an origin of the indigenous peoples on the American continent itself. They feel vindicated by archaeological artifacts discovered in the southernmost part of the Americas, as well as by genetic evidence suggesting a rather recent migration from Asia to America.[1] Indigenous myths from the Pacific Coast mention big floods and a rise or lowering of the sea level; this is supported by some archaeological hypotheses (Fedje & Christensen 1999; Fladmark 1979; Gruhn 1994; McLaren 2008).

Another particularity of the settlement of the Americas, which supposedly took place in a north-south direction, invites reflection as well: The settlement of the American continents is said to have taken 'no longer than' 1,000 years (Yesner 2004: 202, 215). However, the most ancient skeleton finds suggest movements across the Americas, including migration in a south-north direction (Fitzhugh *et al.* 1999).[2]

The assessment of indigenous myths gives rise to tricky questions as well: What depth in time is preserved in traditions that have been passed down orally without having ever been recorded on any medium? To bolster the claims that several millennia are covered by oral traditions, myths are adduced which relate to real events, mentioning eruptions of volcanoes, the formation of craters, meteorite impacts, floods, etc. (geomythology). Examples include the Crater Lake, Oregon, in the myths of the Klamath people and meteorite impacts in Australia (Hamacher 2014; Piccardi & Mass 2007).

In Mesoamerica, it is difficult to provide evidence of migration in the Classic and Formative periods on the basis of archaeological sites and discoveries alone. Transregional and transcultural connections are evident from the Formative/Preclassic period onward. While the core region of early Olmec culture was on the Gulf Coast (Veracruz and Tabasco), there is evidence of Olmec influence in western Mesoamerica (Teopantecuanitlan, Guerrero) and Central Mexico (Tlatilco) (Diehl 2004).

Metal-processing technologies reached Mesoamerica from Peru and Columbia (earliest evidence: Second millennium BC) as well as from Central America (by the end of the first millennium AD). The Mixtec were masters not only of processing metal but also of iconographic advancement. For more than 1,000 years, they were renowned all over Mesoamerica for their goldsmithing skills (Jones 1985: 11-12).

As far as the Classic period (200-600 AD) is concerned, there is evidence of multiethnic quarters (the Zapotecs of the 'Oaxaca Barrio') in the metropolis of Teotihuacan in the central Mexican highlands. This tradition continued up to the arrival of the Spaniards, as becomes evident from Mixtec objects found in the Templo Mayor of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan (Figure 2). The influence of Teotihuacan (long-distance trade?) extended all the way to the Maya region.

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1 One example of many is the link "Origins" (2013): <http://drarchaeology.com/culthist/origins.htm> (27.08.2016); see also Christie 2009.

2 Includes a summary and suggestions for further reading.

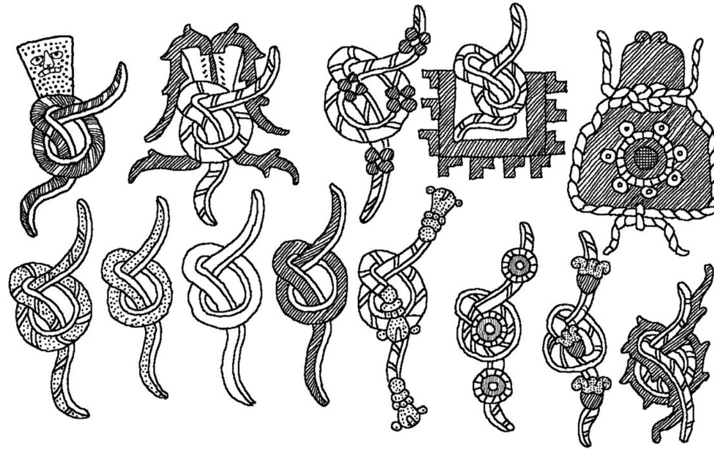

Figure 2. Codex Vindobonensis obverse 38. 13 place bindings represented by a knotted Mountain and 12 knots (drawing: Renate Sander).

After the decline of the Classic metropolis, the Nonoalca and Tolteca migrated to central Mexico and founded Tula in the 10th century (Prem 2008: 21-23). The histories of migration, which were not only passed on from memory in oral traditions but also recorded pictographically, set in with these migrations. The Chichimecs, who came from the north somewhat later, attached importance to recorded memory too, both with regard to migration and the establishment of settlements. In Oaxaca and the Maya region, the mythic origin is associated with subsequent migration as well.

However, people's residence at their new places of settlement is not without challenges; there are either internal conflicts or attacks by outsiders. After several generations, population growth leads to either the abandonment of the village or an exodus of smaller groups, thus initiating a new migration. The process repeats itself (König 2010: 125-133).

From the Postclassic onward, creation stories and migration stories were recorded in large parts of Mesoamerica.[3] But for what reason? And what was the purpose of these recordings? Can we comprehend, from the perspective of western 21st-century scholars, the motivations of indigenous Mesoamerican authors who had to adapt to a new situation in colonial times?

3 For summaries of the situation see Florescano 2006 and Pohl 2003a.

Pohl reminds us that "By and large, creation stories described the origins of the universe and in so doing accounted for the movements of peoples and their claims to land and property, [...] on the other hand were typically placed in post-creation times and blended factual accounts with mythic traditions" (Pohl 2003a: 61).

As has been stated by the Lakota scholar Vine Deloria, Jr.: "Native creation myths, in contrast to the Jewish/Christian account of Genesis, are not about what happened 'then', they are about what happened 'here'" (Deloria 1992: 78).

The 'here' was always related to the 'there': In the Postclassic, Mixtecs, Chochos, Nahua-speaking Chichimecs, and other ethnic migrants moved both from the north to the south and from the south to the north. There are accounts of this in pictographic records dated to the 12th century (Castañeda & Doesburg 2008; Wake 2007: 207). Cholula was a multiethnic center. The pre-Hispanic Mixtec codices mention alliances with the Zapotecs (Pohl 2003a). As becomes apparent from the archaeological record, the Mixtecs traditionally counted among the most mobile 'migrant laborers' (see above). They were also among the first to migrate to Mexico City around 1900, to the north of the republic from the 1940s onward, and to Canada in the 1970s (Durand, Massey & Charvet 2000; Durand, Massey & Zenteno 2001). Migrations in the region of Mesoamerica were, therefore, by no means complete when the early colonial period set in. Since the last third of the 20th century, there has again been large-scale migration in a south-north direction.

"In a sense, the story of ancient Mexican history is the story of people and their symbols moving from place to place" (Carrasco & Sessions 2007: 428). Hence, it is not surprising that the ancient theme of migration plays an eminently important role both in the pre-Hispanic codices of the Postclassic and the early colonial records such as the *lienzos* and *mapas*.

However, I am not concerned with the historical truth of the records but with the information they contain about migration and settlement as seen from the perspective of their authors and the latter's audiences. What were their motivations?

"Essentially Mesoamerican migrants searched for an environment with specific characteristics that comprised several symbolic levels" (Garcia-Zambrano 1994: 217-218). According to Garcia-Zambrano, the places chosen were supposed to remind people of important moments in the mythical creation of the world, "when the waters and the sky separated and the earth sprouted upwards" (Garcia-Zambrano 1994: 217-218). The framework for this was provided by the Mesoamerican concept of the world in the shape of a quincunx made up of the four cardinal points surrounding a center; there are numerous depictions of this in the codices and *lienzos*.[4] The tree of life, standing on a hill that was later

4 A well-known example is shown on the title page of the Codex Fejérváry Mayer.

symbolized by artificial, man-made pyramids, is rooted in the underworld and connected with the sky by its foliated branches. The concept of the Mesoamerican community is based on the notion of the 'water-filled mountain', called *altepetl* in Aztec. Sceneries featuring conspicuous mountains, caves, trees, rivers, or combinations of these lent themselves either as mythical points of departure of migrations or as the latter's final destinations.[5]

It was important to remember the mythical-historical origin, and to legitimize the *altepetl's* claim to land as well as the power, status, and rule of the elites. While there were regional differences, the basic pattern needed to be distinguishable cross-linguistically, both in oral tradition and in the records. The alleged 'discovery' of the seven caves of Chicomoztoc in various places in Mesoamerica is irrelevant for that pattern, as is the issue of authenticity: "These cavities, when ritually dedicated to the divinities, became the pulsating heart of the new town, providing the cosmogonic referents that legitimized the settlers' right for occupying that space and for the ruler's authority over that site" (Garcia-Zambrano 1994: 218).

The site chosen for the establishment of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan was mainly suited for that purpose because it had appropriate features: The eagle eating a snake was sitting perched on a cactus "growing over two caves from which water was issued". This was "part of a pattern found in numerous places which dates from the Preclassic all the way to the conquest" (Aguilar 2005: 83-84).

Creation and origin, migration and settlement – Sources, historical context and models

Zobrover summarizes current studies as follows:

> The intense Late Postclassic population movements [...] on an unprecedented scale in Mesoamerican history was accompanied by an equally substantial body of documentary and material records [...]. The 13th and 14th centuries [...] show an intense interaction between the Mixteca, the Valley of Oaxaca, and the Central Highlands [...] and an 'international' symbol set of a shared elite identity and religious ideology, while phoneticism was downplayed in these communication networks so to accommodate to these polyglot and multiethnic social landscapes (Zborover 2014).

Within the substantial body of documentary records, Boone distinguishes two categories of stories: "a) the story of origins, which leads to the founding of a polity; and b) the story of growth or continuity from the time of a polity's founding" (Boone 2000a: 28). The so-called 'migration stories' illustrate the departure from an 'ancient and mythical

5 Many studies attempt to establish the locations of mythical places that feature characteristics of existing landscapes; see, for example, the edited volumes by Brady & Prufer 2005; Carrasco & Sessions 2007; Christie 2009.

homeland', the arduous and dangerous journey, and eventually the establishment of a settlement in a place chosen by the migrants.

"How true are the Tolteca Chichimeca migration stories as history?", asked Pohl and looked for answers in all pictorial and written sources of groups speaking Nahuatl, Mixtec, Chocho-Popoloca, Zapotec, etc. (Pohl 2003a).[6]

Romero Frizzi explored the motivation behind the creation of the early colonial pictographic records in Latin script, and studied the decision-making processes: "What sort of relationship exists between a community's selected memory of events and its ideological orientation, between collective memory and the struggle for power?" (Romero Frizzi 2012: 91).

To get answers to these questions, Romero Frizzi not only consulted the codices, *lienzos*, and painted maps, but also the Latin-script records written by indigenous authors: Wills, land titles, baptismal records and – most specifically – the so-called primordial titles. She asks: Are we dealing with myths and/or historical traditions, real and/or fictional events, fragmentary and/or manipulated views depending on individual or collective memory? What mattered ultimately was defending the "autonomy of their domain (*altepetl*) and legitimize their political power" (Romero Frizzi 2012: 93).

On the basis of the existing studies, I will in the following describe a model that becomes apparent from the pictographic records – a language-independent basic pattern of documenting creation and origin, migration and settlement, which was used to legitimize land ownership and power structures. It is a Mesoamerican pattern revolving around the theme of migration in local variants and from various perspectives.[7] The stages of that basic pattern can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. The creation of earth and nature, decided upon and directed in the sky. A culture hero is entrusted with that task and descends to earth.
2. Human beings are born (emerge) in a mythical place on earth, either from a tree that is split open or from the maw of the bisexual earth monster. They then leave that place of birth.
3. Migration, stopovers, adventures and subplots.
4. Arrival at the chosen site, occupation and settlement of the place and its surroundings.
5. Rituals of legitimization and ceremonies of foundation.

6 The sources consulted by Pohl include Torquemada, the *Relaciones Geográficas*, and the *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca*; research on the historical backgrounds has been conducted by various authors (e.g., Ruiz Mendrano 2007).

7 The discussion in the present contribution does not include journeys that imply a return to the place of departure, such as sacred or ritual pilgrimages undertaken by either individuals or groups on some specific mission.

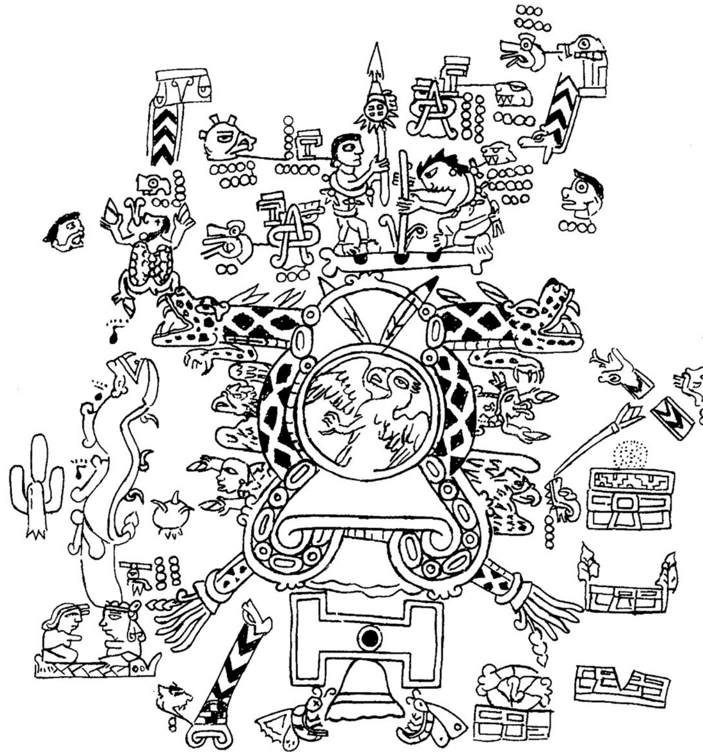

Figure 3. Lienzo de Tlapiltepec. Drilling the New Fire at 'Mountain of the knotted feathered serpent' (drawing: Renate Sander).

The question as to the templates for this pattern, particularly its oral versions, cannot be answered with certainty. However, we know from colonial sources and modern ethnographic records that the content of both the pre-Hispanic codices and the colonial *lienzos*, maps, itineraries, etc. was reproduced, or complemented, by a large oral repertoire: Calendar dates, origin myths, migration, settlement and the establishment of villages, prognoses, ceremonies, etc., were passed down *verbatim* orally. Lockhart confirms the existence of such oral traditions among the Nahua, and specific examples are analyzed by Megged (Lockhart *et al.* 2006; Megged 2010). Romero Frizzi (2012) studied Zapotec 'primordial titles'. Navarrete believes that while "the whole historical discourse was the result of the combination of the visual documents and the oral traditions", "the codices were full-fledged narratives and not merely mnemonic aides used as prompters for oral discourse" (Navarrete 2000a: 44).

In Postclassic pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica (ca. 1050-1520) – particularly in Central and South Mexico –, origins, genealogies, and historical events such as migrations were documented by means of largely language-independent graphic systems of communication based on pictographs. Pictographic records were very convenient in the large region where many languages were spoken. They enabled people to communicate about concepts such as world view, calendar, religion, and rituals. Unfortunately, only fourteen pre-Hispanic codices have survived. The *lienzos* and *mapas*, which have survived in larger numbers, were not made until after the conquest (Boone 2000a).

Doesberg complains that the key questions with regard to understanding these records often remain unasked: Why were these documents created? Each of them is undoubtedly rooted in the concrete context of a specific situation, making statements about topics that were relevant at the time it was made, such as the ascertainment of certain facts or conflicts about these. However, they are also part of processes and negotiations, and thus not static (Doesburg 2010: 97).

Using the example of the *Mapa de Cuahutinchan* (MC2), Carrasco describes the final destination of the migration, however, his interpretation doubtlessly applies to all other Mesoamerican records of migrations and settlement as well:

> [...] the chief purposes for painting this beautiful document were to remember on the one hand how they achieved 'a home in the world' while on the other hand they were mapping their defense of that home for their present and future generations (Carrasco & Sessions 2007: 2).

Cosmogeny and creation in the Codex Borgia: A time-based model

For a long time, researchers assumed that depictions of origin, migration, and settlement are only found in documents of 'profane' content. However, at least one of the 'sacred books', the Codex Borgia, has not only calendar-related, astronomical, ritual, and prognostic content but also addresses the creation of humankind (29-46) and the cardinal points (47-53). Elizabeth Boone concludes that this section is a narrative of creation:

> Many of the structural and iconographic elements that one would expect to find in a Mesoamerican cosmogony are present: scenes of birth, emergence, and organization and the nearly constant actions of Quetzalcoatl, who is supremely a creator god for both the Aztecs and Mixtecs. We can also expect a Mesoamerican genesis to be accomplished through a series of supernatural acts and rituals, which is what we see in the Borgia. [...] Although there is no clear-cut correlation with other creation stories, a number of scenes recall specific places and actions that do figure in creation stories recorded in the sixteenth century for the Aztecs, Mixtecs, and Maya (Boone 2007: 173, 174).

Boone notes that there are many concordances with the version in the Codex Vindobonensis (to be described below) which include fire drillings used to consecrate new settlements and temples; most importantly, they feature emergence and birth. Quetzalcoatl appears in many different manifestations (Boone 2007: 174).

Were codices of the category exemplified by the Codex Borgia a model, or matrix, for versions that had various geographical, ethnic, or linguistic origins?[8] The geographical provenance of the Codex Borgia is of significance, as the document is said to be from Cholula (Boone 2007: 227, 228), the important Postclassic center and site of the cult of Quetzalcoatl. Its special function in the history of migration in Mesoamerica will be discussed below.

The examples: Codex Vindobonensis from the Mixteca Alta[9]

The Codex Vindobonensis (also called Codex Vienna or Vienna Codex) is the most comprehensive pre-Hispanic source providing information on the beginning of time, the creation of the earth and people/Mixtecs, their living conditions, the establishment of religion and rule, settlement, and spatial expansion.[10] According to Romero Frizzi, the primordial titles of the early colonial period are based on models such as the Codex Vindobonensis. She believes that "each royal lineage must have possessed a sacred book that attested to and confirmed the foundation of its power and authority, its ties to sacred power, and its right over particular lands" (2012: 93). In her opinion, the Codex Vindobonensis is a foundational title. And indeed, it is striking

> [...] that the documents that have been classified as primordial titles share several features such as making explicit reference to a pueblo's founding, the establishment of its rights over particular lands, and the rights pertaining to its governing authorities" (Romero Frizzi 2012: 94).

Boone divides the Vindobonensis obverse into three sections:

> [...] the first takes place in the celestial realm (52-49), the second is dominated by the earthly actions of the supernatural hero 9 Wind and then by the prototypical priest-shaman 2 Dog (49-23), and the third explains how the gods organized the Mixteca world politically and territorially (Boone 2000a: 90r).

8 Susan Milbrath believes that pages 29-46 "[...] detail only one year of the eight-year Venus almanac, because the year highlighted is of considerable astronomical significance". However, according to Milbrath "it is possible that the mythology of creation she [Boone] explores is embedded in rituals of the festival calendar represented in the Codex Borgia" (Milbrath 2007).

9 Codex Vindobonensis is a screenfold made of 52 folded deerskin pages and today kept in the Austrian National Library, Vienna.

10 In comparison to the versions given, for example, in the Codices Nuttall and Bodley, much more importance is attached to the detailed account of the origins in the Codex Vindobonensis.

According to Boone, the first two parts show the distinct Mixtec version of the creation:

Codex Vindobonensis, Mixtec, obverse:

1. Beginnings in the sky, creation of the earth, creator couple 1 Deer and 1 Deer (52-51). The culture hero 9 Wind is born from a living rock (49).
2. The culture hero 9 Wind, equipped with all natural and cultural assets necessary to create the earth (more specifically, the Mixteca), descends from the sky to earth on a rope ladder (48). On his back he carries the sky and water (47).
3. 9 Wind founds 200 settlements. A date is given for each of these (47-38). A geographically correct sequence can be established for at least some of the villages that have been identified (Byland & Pohl 1994).
4. 13 place bindings are performed, enclosed by the date of 13 Rabbit, 12 Deer which is depicted twice. These bindings officially establish and legitimize the *altepetl* (38), (Figure 2).
5. In conversations with the powers of vegetation and earth, 9 Wind prepares for the birth of the first human couple, 1 Flower and 13 Flower, from a tree, which is said to have stood in the vicinity of Apoala in the Mixteca Alta (37). He is accompanied by 51 figures (ancestral couples?). More people, beings of nature, plants, animals, and rocks are created. All actions are directed by 9 Wind (35-34, Boone 2000a: 94).
6. On the pages that follow, 9 Wind and the 'prototypical priest-shaman' 2 Dog initiate ceremonies and ritual actions in Apoala, such as sacrifices, the first drilling of the New Fire (31), the construction of temples and steam baths, and piercing both their own ears and those of 44 other deities. Everyone is now given personal names. Three more ceremonies follow, pertaining to rain and the consumption of maize, pulque, and mushrooms. At the end, the sun rises (34-23).

Romero Frizzi points to the significance of the scene in which "[...] the Mixtec ancestors receive their second and symbolic name. This ritual of name changing takes place after Lord 9 Wind carries out the New Fire Ceremony and brings forth temples and steam baths" (Romero Frizzi 2012: 99).

There are similarities between 9 Wind and the Nahua culture hero Quetzalcoatl, and some of the places listed – such as the volcanoes Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl – are arguably located outside the Mixteca (39, Boone: 2000a: 93, 94). Nevertheless, pages 52-23 of the Codex Vindobonensis are about the specific creation story of the Mixtecs, which is embedded in the larger Mesoamerican context.

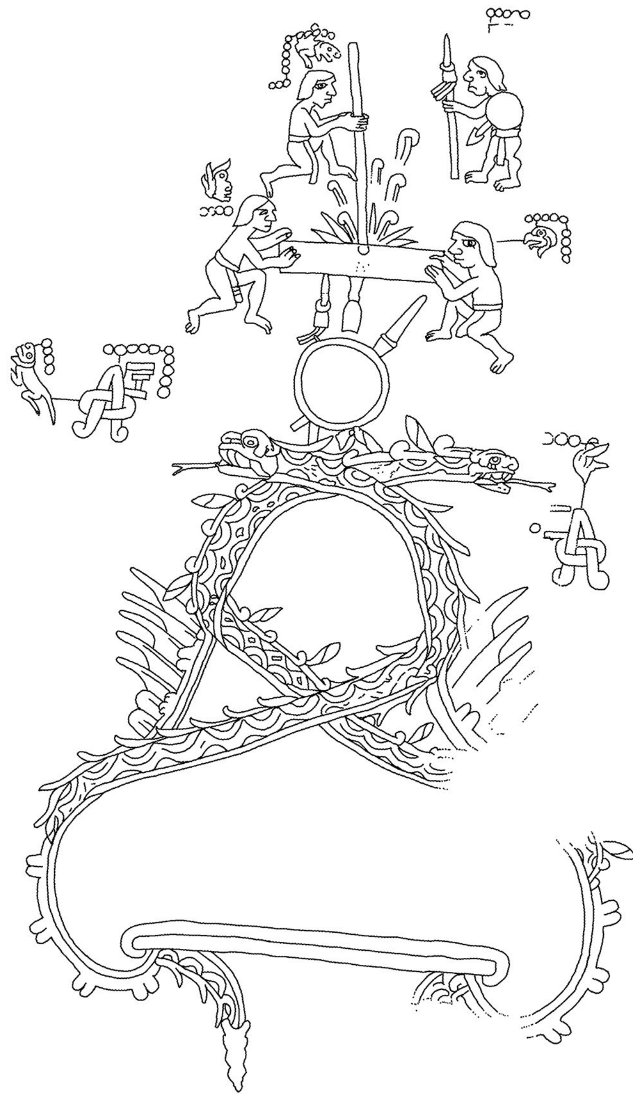

Figure 4. Lienzo Seler II (Coixtlahuaca II). Drilling the New Fire at 'Mountain of the knotted feathered serpents' (drawing: Renate Sander).

The third part, entitled "Ordering the Mixtec Land" by Boone, reflects the Mixtec version of migration, occupation of the land, appropriation, and legitimization. Legitimization is achieved by means of rituals that need to be performed – with variations only in details – whenever a village is founded. In the Codex Vindobonensis, the ritual is first depicted on page 32, and then repeats itself on nine other pages beginning with page 21 (pages 21, 18, 16, 14, 13, 11, 10, 5):

1. Symbolic calendar date, cradleboard with animal tail, binding of place, offerings.
2. Date 1 + year, 2 men with a tape measure, a stone with feet (foundation stone in motion), stone altar, 'bloody' steps, stepped pyramid, and a man tying a cord around a stone (measuring it?). Four different buildings follow, yet always in the same succession and with the same attributes: Eye, bird, blood, two bleeding cocoa beans.
3. Date, a man drilling fire, a man holding plants tied into paper.
4. Alternating mountain chains and place glyphs.

The migration, which takes place in nine stages, or two circumambulations of the four cardinal points around a center, as well as the occupation of places and establishment of settlements are legitimized by means of foundation rituals that are performed by authorized deities and priests.

The four concluding pages of the Codex Vindobonensis obverse (1-4) show the foundation of 16 additional polities (four on each page, Boone 2000a: 95). In terms of content and structure, these pages constitute a fourth part of the codex, depicting the status quo of 16 polities founded after the completion of the creation of the world, migration, settlement, and foundation ritual. This marks the transition to historical reality.[11] The quadripartite structure is important for an understanding of the Codex Vindobonensis: due to the narrow stripe format of the medium, simultaneous events need to be arranged sequentially, that is, behind each other. This is why some of the 200 place glyphs from the nine foundation – or two circumambulation – rituals appear several times (Boone 2000a: 94-95; Byland & Pohl 1994: 65).

The succession of nine fire drillings – after the first sunrise (23) and on the occasion of the village foundations –, which is depicted lineally on the stripes of leather, constitutes a separate category in the codex, because the fire drillings are directly related to the four cardinal points and the fifth point, the center (Jansen 1982 1: 245-268; Anders & Jansen 1988: 150). As is customary in Mesoamerica, the events of drilling must be read counterclockwise.[12] In the Codex Vindobonensis, the cardinal points are used to

11 As described in the other Mixtec codices.
12 Codex Borgia 49-52; Manuscrit Aubin 20.

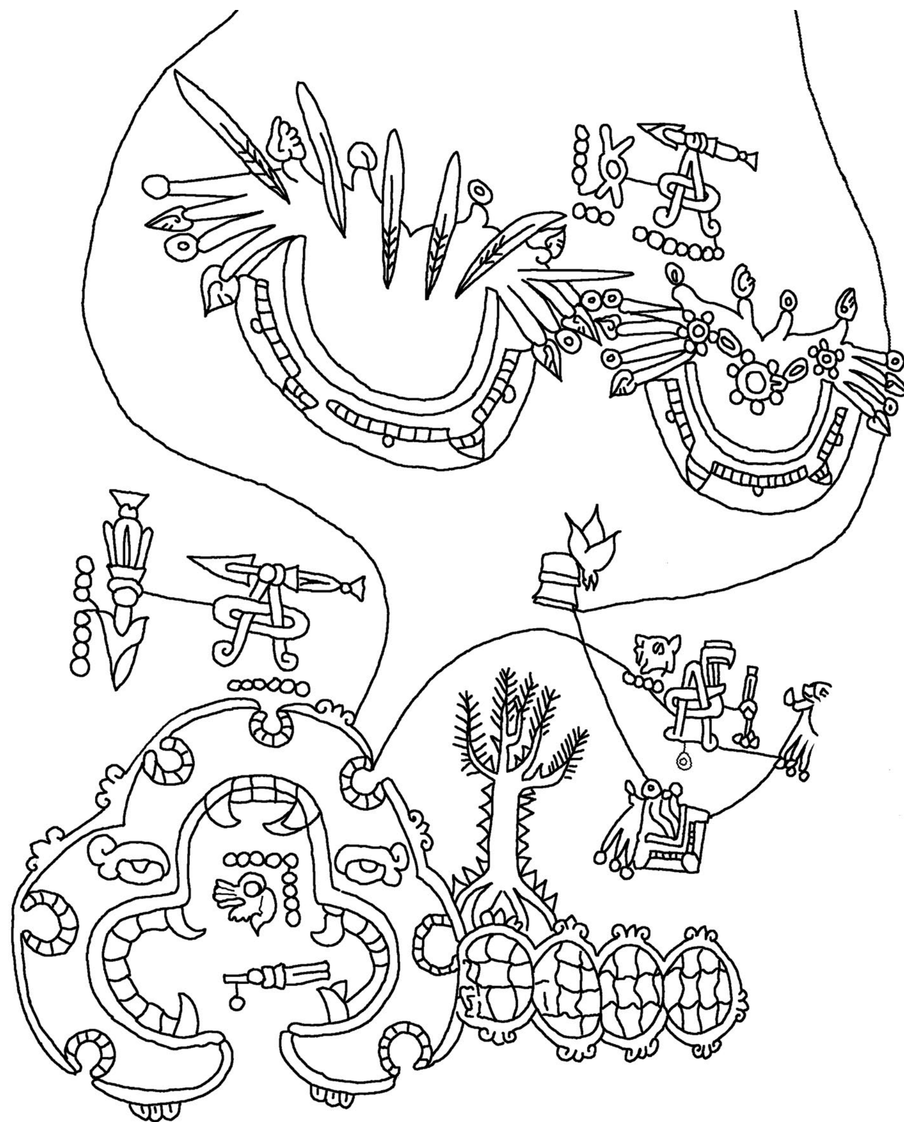

Figure 5. Lienzo de Tlapiltepec. The river 'feathers and jade' connected to 'seven caves' or Chicomoztoc represented as the Earth Monster (drawing: Renate Sander).

structure the land newly settled by the Mixtec ancestors, who migrate in all directions from their place of origin in Apoala (Jansen 1982 1: 276-277; Anders, Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 1992: 150-179; Wake 2007: 225).

On 52 pages, the Codex Vindobonensis obverse features a linear, horizontal, right-to-left movement of events and protagonists across time and space. This begins in the sky with the mythical, supernatural decision to initiate creation, which is carried out by the culture hero 9 Wind. The birth of first people from the tree near Apoala results in the 'historical' settlement of the Mixteca, undertaken in a joint effort by humans and gods (Boone 2000a: 94). The beginning of time and space is conceived of as an integrated whole.

A Zapotec example: A primordial title

Variants of the origin legends of various Mesoamerican peoples are recorded in Latin-script texts of the early colonial era. They include, for example, the Yucatec Chilam Balam de Mani and Fray Gregorio Garcia's summary of the Mixtec origin story as rendered in the Codex Vindobonensis (Restall *et al.* 2005: 177-184). These accounts are often combined with elements from the Old Testament such as the Deluge.

The structure of the Codex Vindobonensis as described above is discernible in the 17th-century Zapotec (Nexicho) *Memoria de Juquila*, which is still in the traditional pre-Hispanic style with "sentences that follow a repetitive rhythm" (Romero Frizzi 2012: 99). Written in the colonial period, it includes the account of a journey to Spain to "beseech mercy from his majesty the King", who is asked to appoint the priest Bartolome de Olmedo and the Alcalde Mayor Juan de Salina to serve in Juquila (Romero Frizzi 2012: 99). Otherwise, however, the 19 pages of the *Memoria de Juquila* reflect the matrix of the Codex Vindobonensis:

1. Appointment of four ancestral leaders and establishment of their right to govern the future pueblo. However, they are not authorized to occupy these positions by a pre-Hispanic deity such as 9 Wind.
2. Instead, the four ancestral leaders travel to Spain, beseeching the king to issue a royal decree on their behalf and to give them a (Catholic) priest as well as a political-judicial official who will administer justice in Juquila.
3. Return to their region of origin and beginning of a long migration journey, which is periodically interrupted by religious ceremonies.

4. Along the way: Baptism of the four ancestral leaders who are bestowed with new, Spanish names (see above, Codex Vindobonensis, remark by Romero Frizzi 2012: 93-94).
5. Founding of Juquila by Fray Bartolome de Olmedo, transformation of a sacred tree into a cross, marking of the boundaries.[13]

The comparison of just two manuscripts – a pre-Hispanic Mixtec codex and a colonial Zapotec text in a primordial title – already shows that records of migration, occupation of land, foundation of settlements, and legitimization of rulership are not merely about details of content, but rather about the basic structure of linear succession. This structure was evidently maintained for at least 500 years. The innovations that became necessary due to the Spanish conquest and Christian missionary work were integrated into that basic pattern; however, in that process, medium and format were changed and the linear layout was abandoned.[14]

Examples from the Coixtlahuaca Valley

The focus of the documents from this multiethnic region (Nahua-Mixtec-Chocho) is on records of the beginning and end of migration into the Coixtlahuaca Valley (Doesburg 2015). Even the large-format *lienzos* featuring long genealogical sequences (Tlapiltepec, Seler II) dispense with the biographical details known from pre-Hispanic codices of the Mixteca Alta. Instead, they focus on the New Fire drilling, which legitimized the (sacred) beginning of a migration and marked the establishment of a new settlement at the end of the migration (Figures 3 and 4). A symbolic, familiar type of depiction was chosen for that purpose: A mountain encoiled by two knotted feathered serpents ('Mountain of interlocked feathered serpents, MKFS; Lienzo de Tlapiltepec, Lienzo Seler II, Selden Roll, etc.). Contents of pre-Hispanic prototypes are transferred to the new medium, that is, the format of the *lienzo*. The resulting changes in their structure have far-reaching consequences: The simultaneity of events or processes such as the perambulation of the cardinal points, which in the codices is depicted across several pages, becomes visible at one glance on a single large-format medium. The chronological sequence, in contrast, is no longer unambiguous; an example of this is the stages of the migration route. In some documents, territory is shown enclosed by both a (jaguar-skin) boundary and boundaries set out in a row (e.g., Lienzo Seler II; Boone 2000a: 125). In the pre-Hispanic codices, horizontally aligned rows of place glyphs have various functions (Pohl 1994),

13 Romero Frizzi gives English translations of excerpts of the text (2010: 99-100), as well as the complete text in Zapotec (2003: 393-448).

14 Romero Frizzi points to the "cold and formal tone" of the Memoria de Juquila as compared to the "more emotional style" of other primordial titles and the latter's character as a "theatrical work" (2012: 102).

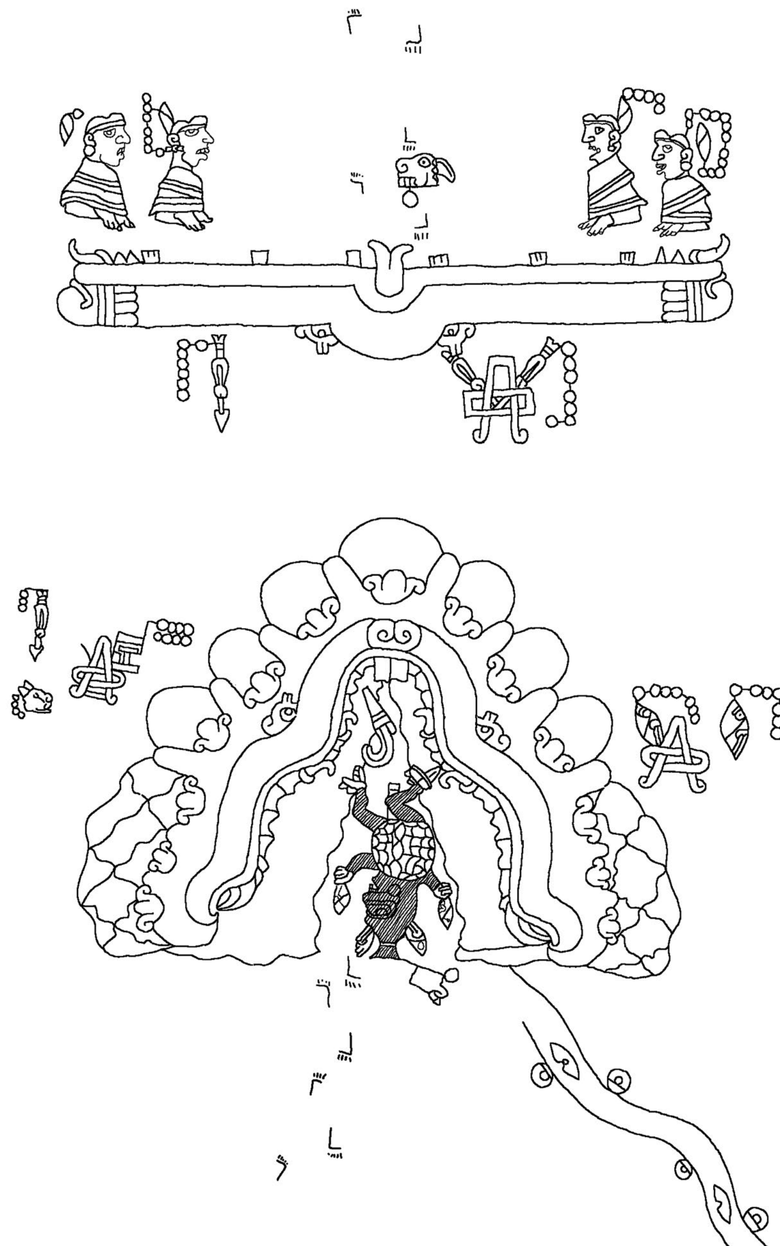

Figure 6. The Selden Roll. A *yahui* is born from the opened jaw of Chicomoztoc represented as the Earth Monster (drawing: Renate Sander).

but they are never used as markers of fixed boundary lines. The *lienzos* thus reveal the influence of European cartographic conventions.

Regional transitional documents were produced in the Coixtlahuaca Valley. Some of these integrate several versions of origin stories (Parmenter 1982: 38-44, 62). Version 1 corresponds to the origin myth of the Mixteca Alta as described above:

1. Descent of the deity or culture hero 9 Wind from the sky to earth.
2. Birth of the first humans from either the river 'Feathers and Jade' or the earth (Figure 5).[15]
3. 'Cult of 9 Wind' into which the priest or supernatural being Lord 2 Dog is actively involved. The cult aims to make the earth fertile and establish human rule.
4. Symbolic drilling of the New Fire at the MKFS as an act of legitimizing the foundation of the village. The MKFS is characterized by either a jewel (Codex Vindobonensis 38) or a quetzal bird (Lienzo de Tlapiltepec, Selden Roll), both having the meaning of 'precious'.

Version 2 differs from the codices of the Mixteca Alta with regard to the episode between the arrival of 9 Wind on earth and the New Fire drilling when the settlement is founded. It has some elements in common with the documents from Central Mexico:[16]

1. Beginnings in the sky.
2. Birth of the *yahui* priest from either the maw of the earth monster or Chicomoztoc, the cave with seven passages (Figure 6).[17]
3. Migration from Chicomoztoc. Four or more culture heroes/priests migrate from place to place, carrying the '9 Wind cult bundle' and other insignia.[18]
4. At the MKFS, the founding of the settlement is legitimized by means of the New Fire Ceremony. The iconography of that mountain shows two feathered serpents featuring attributes of Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca (quetzal bird, jewel, flint knife, jaguar, eagle [Selden Roll, Lienzo de Tlapiltepec]) as well as Mixcoatl's black eye mask and clouds (Figure 7).[19]

15 The birth-giving tree (near Apoala?) is only found in the pre-Hispanic codices of the Mixteca Alta.
16 For example, from Estado de México, Puebla, Tlaxcala, and Veracruz.
17 Lienzo de Tlapiltepec. The *yahui* is known from Mixtec sources. For its meaning see Rincon Mautner 2005: 123.
18 Selden Roll; in the Codex Egerton from the Mixteca Baja the migration is undertaken by six culture heroes.
19 In the act of creation he was the bringer of flint and fire. The Codex Egerton portrays him as the initiator of the migration; in that codex, the attributes of the place glyph – serpent, eagle, jaguar, flints – are arranged in a different manner.

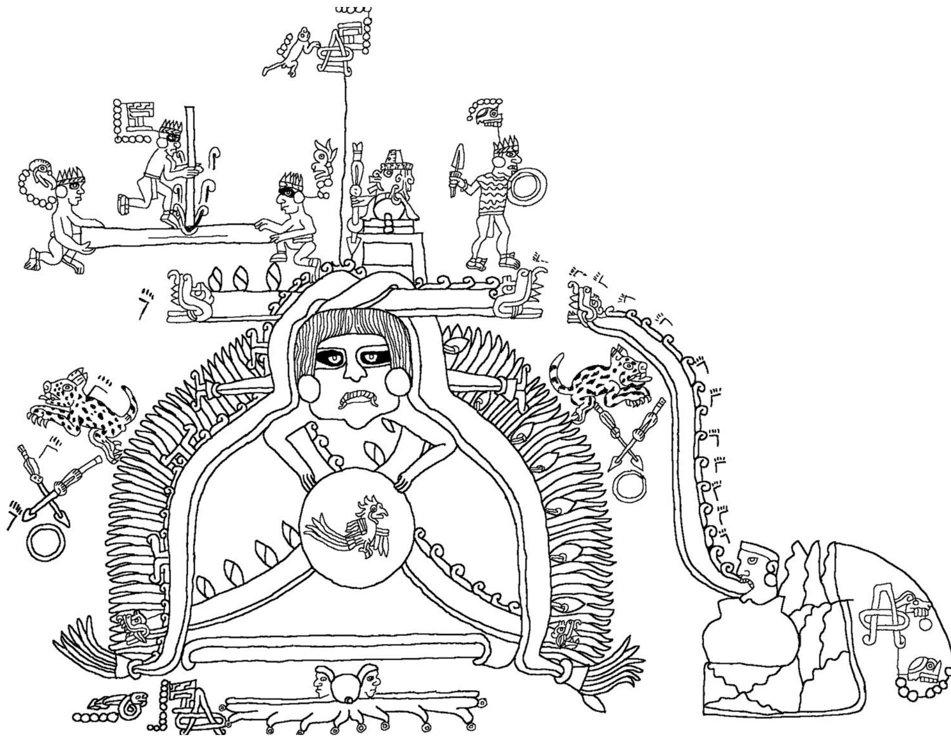

Figure 7. The Selden Roll. Drilling the Fire at 'Mountain of knotted feathered serpents' personified as Mixcoatl and Quetzal (drawing: Renate Sander).

5. MKFS is located in the immediate vicinity of 'Rock Mountain with Pot' and a nude figure bathing in the river.[20]
6. Additional elements establish a direct connection with the birth-giving cave of Chicomoztoc: Sun, moon, and *yahui* priest (Selden Roll; Lienzo Seler II; Lienzo de Tlapiltepec).
7. The cardinal points, which are marked as checkerboards (Figure 3), surround the central MKFS (Lienzo de Tlepiltepec; Selden Roll; Boone 2000: figs. 146, 158, note 11).

20 Known from the *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan 2* (MC2) and the *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca* (HTC) (Carrasco & Sessions 2007).

The task of putting both versions side by side on the traditional stripe format of the codices must have posed quite a challenge to the authors in the Coixtlahuaca Valley. The *lienzos* could be larger in size, and thus made it possible to depict more details and alternative versions of migration and the founding of settlements. Boone refers to them as "mixed genre" (Boone 2000a: 2). This is illustrated by a comparison of the Selden Roll, which is in the stripe format, with the Lienzos de Tlapiltepec and Seler II.

In alternating depictions, the Selden Roll very succinctly shows only parts of the two versions:

1. Like in the Codex Vindobonensis (48), the story begins with the creator couple 1 Deer and 1 Deer sitting in the sky.
2. In the year of 1 Reed, Day 1 Crocodile they dispatch the supernatural culture hero Lord 9 Wind. Flanked by Sun and Moon, he descends to earth; access is via Chicomoztoc.
3. A *yahui* (priest) carrying knives leaves the cave. On a special path (a band of stars and flint) in the sky/darkness he travels to his destination (Figure 6).
4. Four culture heroes, distinguished as Nahuatl speakers by their black face painting, crown, and costume (Anders, Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 1992: 189, nota 14), present themselves before 9 Wind, who is at the 'Place of the Ballcourt' and gives them his cult bundle. One of them returns to Chicomoztoc.
5. The 'migration' of the four men is actually a war expedition: Successively they conquer 'Place of the Jaguar', 'Place of the Eagle', and 'Place of the Parrot'.
6. After a conversation with 2 Mazatl, the four men pass by the river with the bathing figure named 6 Mazatl, and arrive at their destination after crossing a mountain pass (?).
7. On top of the MKFS is the cult bundle of 9 Wind. From this point on, the scenes are bordered by the four cardinal points. The combination with the checkerboard – the Mixtec symbol of the warpath – suggests that the new territory needs to be defended against outside enemies.
8. On the day 4 Lizard of the year 10 House the four migrants/culture heroes perform the New Fire Ceremony.[21]

At a glance, the Selden Roll succinctly shows the most important elements of Mesoamerican migration:

21 For a detailed interpretation of the route in the Selden Roll see Castañeda & Doesburg 2008: 179-182.

1. Origins in the sky.
2. Transformation at Chicomoztoc (Figure 6).
3. Receipt of the cult bundle from 9 Wind, beginning of historical time (ballcourt).
4. Alternative migration routes: One is warlike and based on conquest, the other is supernatural and taken by *yahui*.
5. New Fire Ceremony at the MKFS, the center at the intersection of the four cardinal points which is depicted as being 'alive' (Figure 7).

The principal actors are: The culture hero 9 Wind and *yahui* (both of them supernatural beings) as well as four bringers of culture (humans, priests (?) and Nahua-speaking).

In the case of the Lienzo de Tlapiltepec and Lienzo Seler II, large cotton cloths are used to simultaneously integrate both origin models. On the Lienzo de Tlapiltepec, which is comparable to a genealogical-historical codex, the scenes are depicted in the lower left quarter. On the Lienzo Seler II, Chicomoztoc appears in the lower right quarter. The latter *lienzo* also represents an attempt to depict a map. However, its authors did not attach much importance to the migration as such but rather to its outcome: The key event is the New Fire Ceremony at the MKFS, surrounded by 16 ruler couples and place glyphs (König 1984: 268). The number of 16 place glyphs corresponds to that in the last four pages, or the fourth part, of the Codex Vindobonensis obverse. All place glyphs are connected with the MKFS by fine lines, and one line goes directly to Chicomoztoc in the lower right quarter of the Lienzo Seler II.

What is hiding behind the MKFS depicted in a central position beneath the New Fire drilling? Is it a real place? What is the nature of the connection between the other places, particularly the main village Coixtlahuaca (Plain of the Serpent), and the MKFS? Are these places even dependent on the MKFS?

Boone points out that the MKFS is a "still unidentified but important location", which in any case "seems to represent the origin point for many polities in the area" (Boone 2000a: 152, 160).

If this is the case: Where would such a spiritual and political center, the site or source used to legitimize the founding of settlements, have been located? I will return to this question below.

Examples from Pre-Hispanic Central Mexico

The early colonial documents from this region, which represent individual variants of pre-Hispanic migration, settlement, and occupation of places as viewed from the perspective of the Cuauhtinchantlaca, have been excellently analyzed (see, among others, Boone 2000a; Carrasco & Sessions 2007; Leibsohn 2009). A comparison of these

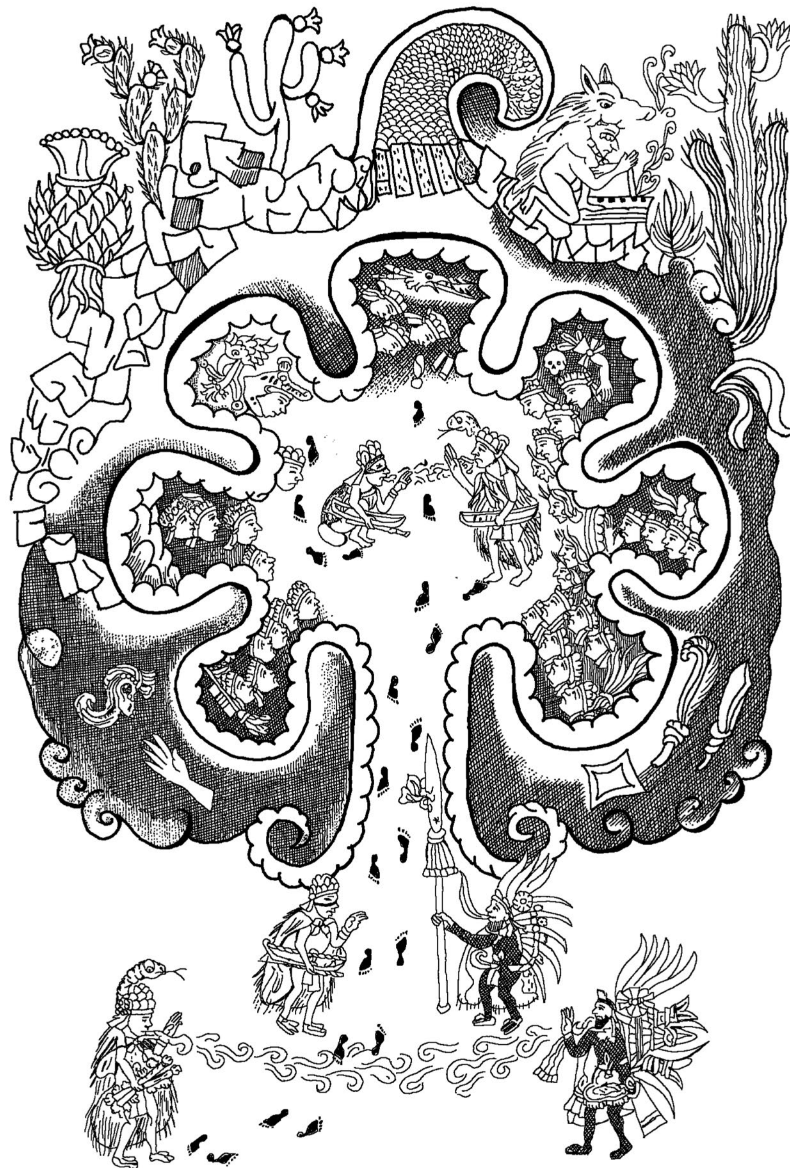

Figure 8. Historia Tolteca Chichimeca. Chicomoztoc represented as seven caves in a mountain in a dry and rocky area with abundant cactuses (drawing: Renate Sander).

documents with the Mixtec codices and *lienzos* is instructive. According to Carrasco & Sessions, there was an interethnic competition between the two regions of the Mixteca-Puebla "[...] to assert the sacred rights of ruling lineages vis à vis the territory occupied by the group" (2007: 12-13).

Prior to the arrival of the Mexica (Aztecs) in Central Mexico and the establishment of the Aztec empire, various multiethnic and multilingual city-states shared the power in Central Mexico. They all "claimed a common heritage through an origin myth in which the first Chichimeca tribal bands emerged from the seven caves of Chichimoztoc" (Pohl 1994: 143). The individual variants of the migration and settlement stories were recorded on various media from early colonial times onward, both pictographically and in Latin script. It is likely that their content is based on pre-Hispanic prototypes. Examples include the *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca* (HTC) and the *Mapas de Cuauhtinchan* (MC).[22] The migrations are complex, and their basic pattern differs from the pre-Hispanic Mixtec codices and *lienzos* in several respects: "The Mixtec Codices indicate that Oaxacan kings gained title by reckoning direct descent from various divine ancestors born from trees, caves, rivers, heavens and so forth." (Pohl 1994: 155) However, the *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca*, the *Mapas de Cuauhtinchan*, etc., are about 'elected' leaders – for example, the son of the mythical culture hero Camaxtli-Mixcoatl who emerges from Chicomoztoc in the beginning (Figure 8). "Emphasis [...] is on a legendary migration saga that led to the establishment of the principal Teccalli as political units and not on the patrilineal descent reckoning of individual kings" (Pohl 1994: 155).[23]

Nevertheless, David Carrasco's summary of what is shown on the MC2 applies to what appears on all documents of the Coixtlahuaca group:

> 1) the dynamic picture of emergence from Chicomoztoc and its associated New Fire Ceremony in the upper left corner, 2) the monumental city of Cholula [see Figure 9] just left of the vertical blue line in the center symbolizing the Atoyac River, and 3) the ritual settlement of Cuauhtinchan near the center of the right side of the map (Carrasco & Sessions 2007: 1).

Comparison with Lienzo Seler II: Carrasco's 1) corresponds to the fine line (part of which is destroyed) connecting Chicomoztoc on the right with the complete New Fire Ceremony in the center. Carrasco's 2) corresponds to the MKFS. The Lienzo Seler II, too, features a river at the foot of the mountain. Carrasco's 3) has a different structure in the Lienzo Seler II; this is not surprising, as the settlement shown is not Cuauhtinchan.

22 The *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca* (1547-1560) is kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France [Fonds Mexicain 46-58]. It contains Latin-script texts in Nahua language and illustrations in mixed pre-Hispanic and European style on European paper. The four *Mapas de Cuauhtinchan* are dated to ca. 1550 and are made of *amate* paper.

23 This may be due to the difference between the ancient patrilineal farmer society of the Mixtecs, symbolized by a tree or river giving birth, and matrilineal groups of hunters and gatherers symbolized by caves, animal-skin clothing, and hunting equipment.

Villages on a jaguar-skin border form a clearly defined boundary enclosing the central double place glyph of Coixtlahuaca. On the MC2, in contrast, the circumambulation still symbolizes a path, a route that has been completed. The migration has come to an end, and the boundaries have been established (Wake 2007: 206).

Comparison with Codex Vindobonensis: The events on the long, winding path in the left part of the MC2 correspond to pages 5-21 (or 31) of the Codex Vindobonensis: The arduous journey 'over the mountain and through the valley' and the ritual of founding a settlement, which is shown 1 + 9, or 2 x 4 times around the center. The labyrinth path has the function to illustrate

> [...] that they achieved their homeland and control over communal property through a series of renewal ritual ordeals as well as calculated boundary-making ritual that allowed them to negotiate with neighboring polities the spread of their own sacred vision of the world (Carrasco & Sessions 2007: 18).

In the pre-Hispanic Codex Vindobonensis, we obviously encounter the migration pattern "in a typical Mesoamerican way" (Carrasco & Sessions 2007: 430). In the early 16th century, this pattern was documented both in pictographic and Latin-script records not only in the Zapotec Memorias Primordiales (see above), but also in multiethnic Cuauhtinchan region of Central Mexico, which was then dominated by Nahuatl speakers (Wake 2007: 207). While the details vary over time and space, the pattern of migration and settlement foundation remains the same.

As in the Coixtlahuaca Valley, the codex/stripe format became replaced by new formats in the Cuauhtinchan region, because the indigenous authors in Central Mexico wanted to make a clear distinction between the depiction of the mythical-historical migration from Chicomoztoc to the site of eventual settlement (MC2, left) and the depiction of the territory that represented a 'cartographic' reality (MC2, right) according to the standards prevailing after conquest. The map and boundary integrated into the picture were an expression of progressiveness in a new era in which so much importance was attached to this new medium. The Lienzo Seler II, the MCs, and particularly the HTC (Leibsohn 2009) are striking examples of this; in different ways, they succeed in combining a Latin-script description and mixed indigenous-European pictographic illustrations.

Mexica and other examples from the Central Valleys

Not a single pre-Hispanic original has survived from the Valley of Mexico, in contrast to the Mixtec Codex Vindobonensis. All existing sources are from a time when the region was already under European influence, even those documents which correspond to pre-Hispanic models – on the one hand. On the other hand, not only the Aztec nobility but also Spanish missionaries were particularly eager to capture the pre-Hispanic world

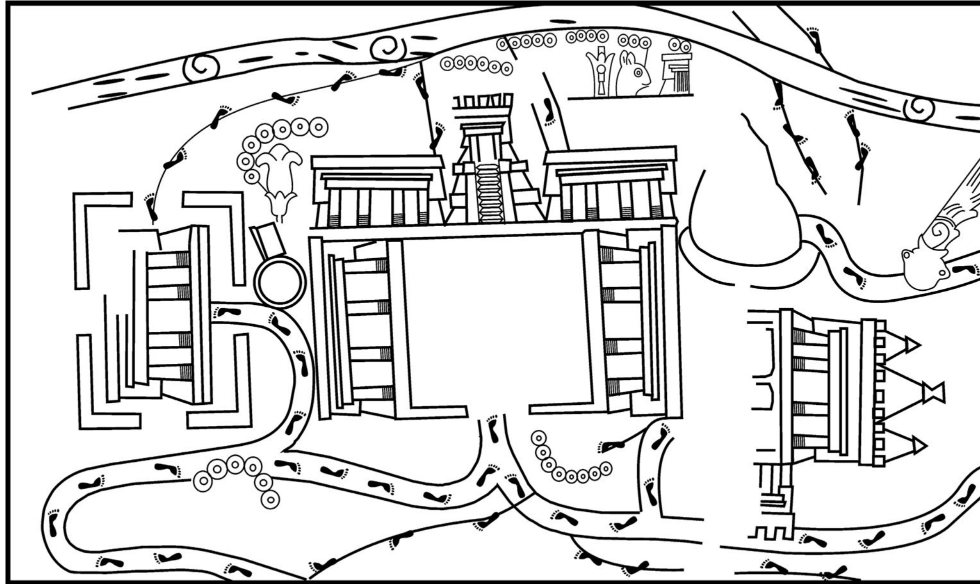

Figure 9. Mapa de Cuauhtinchan 2. The city center of Cholula (drawing: Renate Sander).

both in pictures and Latin script. The Codex Borbonicus is probably based on a specific pre-Hispanic document. However, Boone notes an important difference between the pre-Hispanic Mixtec codices and the Aztec documents of the colonial period: "The Codex Vienna shows how the supernaturals identified and named the location in the Mixteca; colonial pictorials and *títulos* from Central Mexico describe how the Nahua walked and identified their boundaries, now as a circuit around the territory" (Boone 2000b).[24]

The Codex Xolotl, a series of *mapas* showing the migrations of the Chichimecs and the establishment of their *altepetl* under their leader Xolotl, has the following structure:

1. Settlement and appropriation of foreign territory
2. Hunting grounds are made into arable land
3. Establishment of the polity and hereditary rulership (dynasty), as well as distribution of the new territory among Xolotl's relatives

Similar patterns are found in the Mapa Tlotzin and the Mapa Quinatzin (Florescano 2006).

24 The European ritual of circumambulation goes back to Roman times and the god Terminus. However, most authors assume that there was a pre-Hispanic counterclockwise ritual.

Apoala in the Mixteca Alta and Chicomoztoc in the Nahua-Mixtec-language region of Central Mexico play a key role in the history of migration and settlement. The same is true of Aztlan, the Aztecs' mythical place of origin, their migration to the inhospitable island in the middle of Lake Tetzcoco, and the establishment of their capital Tenochtitlán. There are many variants of that story. For purposes of legitimization, the Aztec newcomers needed to ensure that the mythology and history of the long-established local Chichimec polities faded into oblivion – a particularly drastic measure was the burning of books at the instigation of Itzcoatl – and that their own, new migration story found general acceptance in the Valley of Mexico. Hence, they basically retained the traditional Mesoamerican pattern of migration, settlement, and act of ritual legitimization (Navarrete 2000b: 314-315). Navarrete distinguishes the following patterns in the various versions of Mexica migration, which he calls "visual narratives":

> [the] most remarkable of these conventions is a set of lines or blocks marking distance and duration that unites the towns of Aztlan and Mexico-Tenochtitlan, the beginning and the end of the Mexica migration, and that appears in different guises in all the codices dealing with that historical event (Navarrete 2000a: 31).

Of the six pictographic documents dealing with the Mexica migration, the Codex Boturini (Tira de la Peregrinación) is the one that presents the model par excellence of the Mexica migration: Two types of connecting lines are used simultaneously to indicate a) the spatial distance between the place of origin (Aztlan) and the destination (Mexico-Tenochtitlan), and b) the duration of the journey: a) footsteps representing the spatial distance between place glyphs and b) a continuous line connecting year signs as the temporal markers of the route taken. Both lines are interconnected, because the footsteps always begin next to a year sign: "In this way, time and space are integrated into a single narrative of the journey of the Mexica from Aztlan (a given place at a given time) to Mexico (a different place at a later time)" (Navarrete 2000a: 31).

The other documents, too, use space- and timelines to create exemplary records of their migration histories, "uniting time and space into a single whole", regardless of their format and regardless of whether they are structured as so-called annals, 'maps', or text blocks in Latin script with pictographic elements (Navarrete 2000a: 35). This leads Navarrete to conclude that these documents "must have been used as visual narrative devices that provided a framework for the whole migration story" (Navarrete 2000a: 36).

The migration story of the Mexica, like that of other peoples, served only one purpose: the legitimization of their newly appropriated territory in the Valley of Mexico. Mexico-Tenochtitlan was the place promised by their divine leader Huitzilopochtli, and the final destination of their arduous migration after many stopovers such as Chicomoztoc, Coatepec and, eventually, Chapultepec (Navarrete 2000a, 2000b).

Metaphorical places and place glyphs of the Mesoamerican migrations

It is conspicuous that specific places or place glyphs seem to be obligatory elements of the history of migration and settlement. The most recent addition was Aztlan, the Mexica's place of origin. Pohl has proposed that

> [...] the Aztlan legend is metaphorical [...] [L]egends associated with particular geographical features, mountains, rivers, and so forth, were recounted by tribal chiefs as directional locators in the course of seasonal hunting and foraging migrations. In the interest of emphasizing an 'outsider's' divine right to rule, the stories were subsequently reconfigured to legitimize the establishment of Postclassic Tolteca-Chichimeca city-states, even though the political reality of the people employing the stories had little to do with the desert hunting strategies for which they were originally intended (Pohl 2003b).

The Mexica adopt familiar places known from the multiethnic documents from Central Mexico and the Coixtlahuaca Valley, particularly the 'Seven Caves' of Chicomoztoc and the 'serpent mountain' Coatepec.

In order to understand the basic pattern of the Mesoamerican migration model, is it important to localize the mythic place of origin? Is it supposed to be intentionally localizable in the first place? Or does the basic pattern allow for a variable manner of including the respective regional details of the origin myths?

The sequences on the pages of the pre-Hispanic, strip-shaped codices are strictly structured. In contrast, the depictions of mythical origin, migration, and acts of foundation and legitimization seem to be mixed with the geographical and historical reality of places, genealogies, and events on the *lienzos* from the Coixtlahuaca Valley. The documents from Puebla, on the other hand, show solutions with regard to a clear distinction between pre-Hispanic origins and post-conquest geographic reality (Carrasco & Sessions 2007).

Chicomoztoc and the 'serpent mountains' are iconographically conspicuous place glyphs in all documents:

Chicomoztoc – place of origin and transformation

Navarrete characterizes Chocomoztoc as a place that "[...] was mentioned in the histories of many different Mesoamerican peoples and was considered a place of origin and transformation in which migrating peoples acquired new identities" (Navarrete 2000a: 40). The importance of this place of origin, as well as of the processes of 'being born' or 'transformation into a new identity' that happen there, becomes evident from the wide distribution of origin caves in Mesoamerica and the similarities in their depiction from the Mixteca Alta (Codex Nuttall 1) to the Valley of Mexico. While there have been many efforts to establish the specific location of Chicomoztoc,

> [...] most modern authorities tend to consider Chicomoztoc to be a mythical rather than an actual place. Chicomoztoc represents the idea of the emergence of human beings from cavities in the body of the earth [...] As time passed, the guardians of the Mesoamerican tradition preserved their sense of identity and origin by re-creating Chicomoztoc at their sites [...] In this sense, all the chroniclers and historians are correct, because many Chicomoztoc existed in all parts of Mesoamerica (Aguilar *et al.* 2005: 83).

Coatepec – place of transition from myth to reality

Coatepec is the place where the mythical past ends and historical reality begins, such as the migration of a new ethnic group, the Mexica, with the new cult of Huitzilopochtli to the Valley of Mexico (Castañeda & Doesburg 2008: 165). Castañeda and van Doesburg use the Codex Azcatitlan and the Tira de la Peregrinación to analyze the 'concept of Coatepec' as to its functions. With the moment of their arrival in Coatepec, the Mexica enter history. They are now contemporaries of those currently in power.

The first sunrise in the history of humankind, which was now measurable by means of the calendar, happened in Coatepec. A New Fire Ceremony in commemoration of that first time was henceforth celebrated every 52 years. The New Fire Ceremony represents a fresh start and new beginning, and the Mexica chose Coatepec as the site of that event (Castañeda & Doesburg 2008: 169).[25]

Is it possible to locate Coatepec geographically? Or is the place glyph a symbolic depiction, an archetype that can be integrated into the landscape at will (Castañeda & Doesburg 2008: 172)? The Mexica located Coatepec in the vicinity of Tula, the place of transition from nomadic life in the wide expanses of the north to sedentarism in the Valley of Mexico where agriculture was practiced. The Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan was a symbolic replica of Coatepec – the important stopover in the Mexica's migration – and at the same time a site commemorating the birth of Huitzilopochtli and the death of his sister Coyolxauhqui, both of which also happened in Coatepec (López Luján 2005: 364, footnote 15 to chapter 4).[26]

It is not possible to establish the exact location of Coatepec. Alternatives to Tula have been suggested, some of them outside the core territory of the Mexica (Umberger 1996: 89-97). In the context of the pattern of migration, Coatepec is of importance as the indicator of a new beginning.

Are the MKFS and Coatepec identical? Castañeda and van Doesburg establish that connection. According to their interpretation, the place glyph and site of the New Fire Ceremony in the documents of the Coixtlahuaca group is Coatepec, and they argue that it was brought to the Coixtlahuaca Valley by migrants from the north: "Coatepec tiene principalmente connotaciones de frontera temporal. Marca el inicio de un

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25 The two authors give references on this from the relevant sources.

26 Referring, among other sources, to Tezozómoc, Sahagún, Seler, and plate 6 in the Codice Azcatitlan.

nuevo tiempo, de un nuevo amanecer, tanto en el centro de México como en el valle de Coixtlahuaca" (Castañeda & Doesburg 2008: 179-189). They further argue that marking the general function of a new beginning – be it an era, the establishment of new power structures, a new ruling dynasty, or the foundation of a new settlement at the end of migration – does not necessarily require the inclusion of all iconographic details (Castañeda & Doesburg 2008: 191).

Mountain of interlocked feathered serpents (MKFS)

The distinctive MKFS (Selden Roll, Lienzos Tlapiltepec y Seler II) or 'mountain of knotted cord' (Codex Vindobonensis: 38) is only found in Mixtec-Popolloca documents. The place glyph alludes to being 'bound', that is, occupied for settlement (Megged 2010: 184, 185). It is evidence of the act of legitimized appropriation at a powerful location. Rincon Mautner assumes that the Tolteca-Chichimeca tradition of the Great Goddess, who had once been tied up by the huge serpent bodies of the transformed deities Quetzalcoatl and Tetzcatlipoca[27] when the world was created, was of particular importance in the Coixtlahuaca Valley. It is this importance that is symbolized by the MKFS. The New Fire Ceremony was not only held to legitimize ownership of land (Rincon Mautner 2005: 123, 136); it was also held in a place that allowed for a re-enactment of the creation of the world. This is particularly apparent in the 'living' MKFS of the Selden Roll. According to Wake, the

> [...] toponym of the Realm of Entertwined Serpents of the Coixtlahuaca Valley [...] also marked Mixteca-Popolloca transition from sacred to real history [...] a symbol of the beginning of Coixtahuaca as a united Popolloca nation and not the federation's real geographical name (Wake 2007: 231).

The question of "Where?" and a hypothesis: Are MKFS and Cholula identical?

Did the authors in the Coixtlahuaca Valley actually position a purely symbolical place on their documents in such an oversize manner? Is MKFS or 'Mountain of knotted Quetzalcoatls' not a geographical name at all?[28] As a matter of fact, there exists a very real place which was dedicated to the cult of Quetzalcoatl and served as a site of legitimization with regard to claims to land ownership and power: Cholula with its artificial mountain (Aztec: Tlachihualtepetl), the largest pyramid of the world: "[...] the ancient city of Cholula was invested with the power to confer authority of rulership across Mesoamerica" (Wake 2007: 213). Indirectly, the same author gives an additional hint:

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27 He is sometimes also depicted with the attributes of Mixcoatl.
28 This also applies to variants featuring flint or clouds.

> Coixtlahuaca's sacred history essentially evokes Lord 7 Water Atonal's migration from the central area to the founding of the Realm of Entwined Serpents [...] But Lord 7 Water Atonal did not arrive in [...] Coixtahuaca from Chicomoztoc. By authority of Cholula, his ancestors had probably occupied, and ruled over, the area of Cuauhtinchan for many centuries (Wake 2007: 231).

The MKFS is certainly more than just a symbol of the "start of the lineage of those ancestors" (Wake 2007: 231). Boone describes the function of Cholula's depiction as a monumental city in the MC2 as follows: "Cholula functions as the pivot of the story, the link between the tour of the journey and the tableau of the founding, and it is the place where the Chichimecs are given permission to found new *altepetl*" (Boone 2000a: 177, 178). This description reflects the central position of the MKFS in the documents from the Coixtlahuaca Valley. However, remembrance both of the "permission to found new *altepetl*" and the symbol-laden establishment of the settlement is more important in this context than a true-to-life depiction of the settlement's layout as given in the MC2.

Not only in the early colonial documents from Puebla such as the HTC and the MC1-4, but also in the Mixtec codices there are many references to the extraordinary importance of Cholula (Brownstone 2015: 47-53), which was the destination of pilgrims and political leaders who came from far-away places to have their rule legitimized by means of the nose-piercing.[29] Cholula's importance as a hub of religion and trade has been compared to that of Rome, "as a place where status, identity, clothing and access to land were transformed" (Carrasco & Sessions 2007: 17).
Pohl refers to statements by Sahagún and Durán, according to whom

> Quetzalcoatl, son of the Chichimec warlord Camaxtli-Mixcoatl [...] by most accounts [...] established a new cult center at Cholula. [...] The odyssey of Quetzalcoatl was revered by more than a dozen different ethnic groups who claimed that the penitent hero had traveled through their kingdoms to establish his cult and mark the surrounding landscape with pictographs and other signs to commemorate his journey [...] At the time of the Conquest, the principal seat of Quetzalcoatl's cult was centered at Cholula (Pohl 2003a).

Being the major interethnic center in Puebla at the intersection of Central Mexico and the Mixteca, Cholula was the place where the establishment of new settlements after completed migration was legitimized by means of New Fire Ceremonies and re-enactments, comparable to the nose-piercing ceremony undergone by new rulers. This act needed to be recorded permanently. The function of Cholula in parts of Mesoamerica would thus have resembled the function ancient Rome had for the rulers of Europe. It is exclusively in this context that Cholula would be depicted as MKFS, similar to a

29 One example is the Mixtec warlord '8 Deer Jaguar Claw' (Byland & Pohl 1994).

crest stamped onto a document, to confirm the legitimization of the establishment of a settlement.

Coatepec was the site of the first sunrise (see above), and in the Codex Vindobonensis the sun is depicted rising above a large pyramid. These two examples, too, suggest a connection with Cholula.

Conclusion

In Postclassic Mesoamerica prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, people attached extraordinary importance to pictographic records and oral traditions of origin and migration which concluded with a generic legitimizing ceremony of foundation at the site chosen for settlement. The ribbon-shaped, linear sequences of place glyphs and calendar dates arranged in a symbolic structure represent space that needed to be traversed and time that went by until the final destination was reached. The 13- or 26-day duration of the journey, for example in the MC2, is evocative of the ritual character of migrations (Asselbergs 2007: 125; Wake 2007: 213).

> The fact that the pictographic documents belonging to, and narrating the history of, other Mesoamerican peoples, such as the Acolhua, Cuauhtinchantlaca, or Mixtec, use markedly different ways of representing space and time, while also managing to incorporate them into a single visual narrative discourse, points to a relationship between these genres and specific ethnic groups (Navarrete 2000a: 44).

Navarrete assumes that the chronotypes of the colonial documents are of pre-Hispanic origin, as "their deep coherence and systematic nature does not correspond to the piecemeal experimentation and adoption of European styles, forms, and conventions that took the sixteenth century". He has "not found any equivalent visual narrative devices in the Western tradition" (Navarrete 2000a: 44).

Maybe we will never be able to reconstruct the various courses of migration in Mesoamerica after the demise of the Classical centers according to Western concepts of historiography. This is due, among other things, to the fact that Mesoamerican authors recorded an ethnocentric tradition of their own (Wake 2007: 22-24; Brownstone 2015: 45-60). Nevertheless, the ideal basic elements are apparent in all indigenous records.

However, what were the reasons for that focus, and when did Mesoamericans begin to transfer the 'fixed points' of the narrative into a stringent dramaturgy, both pictographically and orally?

The HTC reveals that while land quarrels, the establishment of exact boundaries, and the documentation of these events already loomed large under Aztec rule (Wake 2007: 207), they became an even bigger issue after the Spanish conquest when there was a clash of two completely different systems of land use, and communication became vitally important. However, knowledge of a mythical place of origin and migration from

there did not matter to Spanish courts. More helpful was evidence of a long succession of ancestors, but only if there was a clear link to land ownership. Hence, there must have been other reasons for recording migration and settlement foundation in the Postclassic prior to the arrival of the Europeans.

The fact is that Mesoamerica witnessed a renaissance of settlement and emergent state-building following the demise of the Classical centers, which was probably caused by internal problems. There was a continuous movement of people for at least two centuries until the 11th century. Wherever people settled, they needed to safeguard themselves against other newcomers who might also lay claim to the territory. Such safeguard could be provided by a well-documented ceremony of foundation held on a specific date, either after a successfully concluded mission immediately after descent from the sky, or at least after a mystical, semi-divine birth on earth.

> O dicho de otro modo, la peregrinación en busca de la tierra prometida, la geografía y el tiempo que enmarcaban ese periplo, la delimitación del suelo, la fundación del pueblo y la proclamación del reino, más la lengua que dotaba de significado a esas acciones, no cobraban realidad si no iban acompañadas por las presencias numerosas que poblaban el mundo sobrenatural y por los ritos y ceremonias que las consagraban (Florescano 2006: n.p.).

What institution could have sanctioned the appropriation of land and claims to power in times of upheaval? The ancient centers of the Classic period had long ceased to exist. In Central Mexico, the Toltecs availed themselves of an existing power vacuum for some time. Then Tula, too, fell due to local rivalries and other reasons. This resulted in a diaspora "memorable, recordada por crónicas, cantos, mitos y un abanico de leyendas" (Florescano 2006: n.p.).

Actually, such a center existed in the Postclassic. It had existed continuously since the Classic period and 'reinvented' itself over and over again in the course of the centuries (Carrasco & Sessions 2007), even after events of destruction and devastation: From the 12th century onward, Cholula enjoyed undisputed recognition as an institution with a double function, legitimizing both individual rulers and newly founded settlements under the aegis of the cult of Ehécatl-Quetzalcoatl.[30]

Graña-Behrens has compared scenes from the pre-Hispanic Codex Borgia, which was probably made in Cholula as well, with scenes in the HTC and the MCs, and discovered a number of congruences. Some specific episodes in the MCs and the HTC may go back to images in the Codex Borgia. Were rites and myths transferred into historical contexts within the framework of memory, and reorganized in the interest of the colonial present?

30 After many years the Tolteca Chichimeca, who had migrated from Tula, eventually succeeded in defeating the old rulers of Cholula, the Olmeca-Xicalanca.

> On the whole, there are particular congruences between the history of the Chichimeca's tribal origin as depicted and transliterated in Latin characters in the HTCH and MC2, and sections in the pre-Hispanic Codex Borgia that possibly refer to a creation story (Graña-Behrens 2009: 202).

A complete picture begins to emerge from the jigsaw pieces of previous studies. The Mesoamerican history of creation, migration, and settlement occupies a central place in the various genres both of pre-Hispanic codices and early colonial documents, regardless of the other subjects for whose record the manuscripts were made such as divination, calendar, and the history of rulers and events.

In the present essay, my intention was to analyze the pattern, or model, underlying the history of origin, migration, and settlement, and to reconstruct the *longue durée* of records of this history, which seem to have their origin in the Early Postclassic and in the turmoil experienced by migrating groups.
Three basic models can be distinguished:

1. The pre-Hispanic codices of the Mixteca Alta focus on the story of the creation of the world, the beginnings in the sky and the ritual reclamation of the earth by supernatural powers before humans can be created. According to the codices, humans were born from mountains, rivers, or trees in the heart of the Mixteca Alta (Apoala). The first migration, as well as the first inspection and distribution of the land, are of a divine nature. After that, the story is about how the Mixteca was developed (Boone 2000a: 96-99). The beginning of historical time, marked by the first sunrise, is possibly associated with Cholula.
2. In the colonial documents from Puebla[31] and the Coixtlahuaca Valley, which feature the migrants from Chicomoztoc, an additional focus is on the history of the connection with the religious, political, and economic center of Cholula, the town with the huge pyramid modeled after a natural mountain in the shape of the MKFS. Like Jerusalem and Rome, however, Cholula did not need any self-promotion. Rulers who wished to legitimize their status as settlers and their new settlement as the final destination of the big migration referred to Cholula in their documents. The need to integrate several versions from the Mixteca and Central Mexico resulted in the creation of huge cotton cloths as a medium.[32]
3. In the descriptions of the Mexica and their Nahua-speaking neighbors from colonial times, the world is no longer created. It is encountered in a completed state, but people need to struggle for acceptance in order to assert themselves against

31 The only surviving pre-Hispanic document is the Codex Borgia.

32 According to Castañeda & Doesburg (2008: 186) it had become necessary to document different origins that resulted from marriage alliances.

> those who already inhabit the final destination of migration. The Aztecs make no secret of the fact that they came to the Valley of Mexico as nomadic hunters (archers clad in animal skins) and had first to become agriculturists. In the Mexica versions featuring the migrants from Aztlan, parts of the migration history of their neighbors are adapted, such as the transformation in Chicomoztoc and the fresh start in Coatepec. They arrive at their final destination at the chosen site in the Valley, and establish a new center of power based on the ancient tradition of migration.

Mesoamerican migration stories have the following aspects in common (Figure 10):

1. Birth from cleavages (caves, trees), end of mythic time.
2. Mission of four (+-) culture heroes/leaders.
3. Acts of transformation (bestowal of names, calendar counts, end of barbarism, begin of civilization).
4. Reference to the cardinal points (definition of territory).
5. New Fire Ceremonies (act of foundation).

The function of the symbol of the ballcourt in the Selden Roll, the Lienzo de Tlapiltepec, the HTC and other documents might mark a caesura: "separation of the space between the world of men and the world of gods [...] the separation of time into periods [...], ballcourts and ballgames are associated with boundaries" (Gillespie 1991: 339). However, further research is needed.

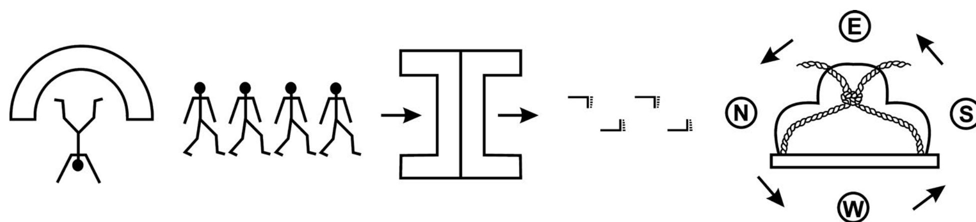

Figure 10. Diagram of the Mesoamerican migration story (drawing: Renate Sander).

Outlook: Routes to the north and back (?)

Millions of Mexicans have left their country to improve their living conditions by labor migration to the USA and Canada. They make the same experience as all other migrants in the world: The search for their own roots does only begin when their old home is irretrievably gone, having been replaced by a new homeland: Who am I? Where do I come from? Why did my ancestors leave their native land? What was it like there?

Formerly, the history of migration in Mesoamerica was of interest to a small community of researchers all over the world. This has changed in the course of the new migration of the 20th and 21st centuries. The subject has assumed a new dimension for the migrants themselves (Fields 2001).

What would their visual narrative look like? For example, would there be two lines, one connecting the Mixteca with Mexico City and another running from there to California across a broad boundary line? Would the narrative record journeys abroad and back home undertaken once or twice a year? And if the migrants were recorded, would there be more of them each time they leave the Mixteca? Do the migrants return, or will there eventually be no more travel movements because the Mixteca is devoid of people? What happens to the places of departure? Will they become sites of memory? It is up to future research to answer all these questions.

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Searching for the Sanctuary of Lady 9 Reed: Huajuapan, Ring of Stones

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Abstract: The Ñuu Dzaui (Mixtec) codices refer to a place-sign 'Ring of Stones', which, the context suggests, must be an important Postclassic site in the Mixteca Baja region (in the Mexican states of Oaxaca and Puebla). The Patron Deity of this place is Lady 9 Reed, who plays an active role in early Ñuu Dzaui history, particularly in the episode known as the 'War against the Stone Men'. She had various sanctuaries throughout the region, e.g. in Tonalá, where she was visited by the warrior king Lord 8 Deer 'Jaguar Claw' in AD 1097.
This article presents arguments for the identification of 'Ring of Stones' as ancient Huajuapan (in the Western part of the State of Oaxaca, Mexico) and examines some of the related archaeological remains.

Keywords: Mixtec codices; Mixtec archaeology; Mixtec religion; Mixtec toponyms; sacred landscape; pre-Hispanic period.

Resumen: Los códices de Ñuu Dzaui (la región mixteca) mencionan un signo toponímico 'Anillo de Piedras', que, según sugiere el contexto, tiene que ser un importante sitio post-clásico en la Mixteca Baja (en los Estados de Oaxaca y Puebla, México). La Deidad Patrona de este lugar es la Señora 9 Caña, que juega un papel protagónico en la historia temprana de Ñuu Dzaui, particularmente en el episodio de la 'Guerra contra los Hombres de Piedra'. Ella tuvo varios santuarios en la región, por ejemplo en Tonalá, donde la visitó el rey guerrero Señor 8 Venado 'Garra de Jaguar' en 1097 d.C..
Este artículo presenta argumentos para la identificación de 'Anillo de Piedras' como el antiguo Huajuapan (en la parte occidental del Estado de Oaxaca) y examina algunos de los restos arqueológicos relacionados.

Palabras clave: códices mixtecos; arqueología mixteca; religión mixteca; toponimia mixteca; paisaje sagrado; periodo prehispánico.

How can we identify places of power in precolonial Mesoamerica? How can we bring information from historical sources and oral traditions to bear upon the interpretation of archaeological sites? What were the context, structure and history of the ceremonial centre and cultural landscape, and what was the associated symbolism? What can we say about the sacred aspects of the landscape, about the presence of divine beings and ancestors? What about the construction of memory and about the ritual activities that took place there?

As an example of the different difficulties and possibilities in dealing with such questions, we will focus here on the pictorial manuscripts of Ñuu Dzaui, the Mixtec people, in Southern Mexico (the states of Oaxaca, Puebla, and Guerrero). These manuscripts – screenfold books (codices) or large pieces of cloth (*lienzos*) – are impressive examples of precolonial historiography. Their potential for understanding the Postclassic period is similar to that of the Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions for the Classic period.

The Ñuu Dzaui region is ecologically subdivided into three main areas: a) the cold highlands of the *Mixteca Alta* in the centre of the western part of the state of Oaxaca, b) the much lower, hot and eroded *Mixteca Baja* more to the west and continuing into the neighbouring states of Puebla and Guerrero, and c) the tropical lowlands along the coast of the Pacific Ocean in the states of Oaxaca and Guerrero: The *Mixteca de la Costa*. The region is rich in tangible and intangible cultural heritage, but suffers from depressing socio-economic conditions, so that many Mixtecs have migrated to other areas of Mexico and to the U.S.A.

In general, our research aims at connecting the contents of these painted sources to the archaeology and early colonial chronicles, as well as to the cultural landscapes and living tradition of the region. We try to read the Ñuu Dzaui scriptures and related art in terms of Ñuu Dzaui culture, in its historical and contemporary dimensions. An important effect of that approach is that the study of the archaeological remains may become less anonymous and may result in a historical narrative, which, in turn, is more informative and recognisable for the present-day population.

Here we will discuss the identification of several place signs that appear in the Ñuu Dzaui codices and their association with a specific female deity, Lady 9 Reed (Figure 1).[1]

1 This article is an outcome of the project *'Time in Intercultural Context'*, which is directed by Maarten Jansen in collaboration with Mixtec researcher Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez at the Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, The Netherlands, and funded by the European Research Council through an Advanced Grant in the context of the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 295434. Mexican archaeologist Iván Rivera also participates in this project, while being supported by an INAH Fellowship for his doctoral studies at Leiden University.

Figure 1. Map of the Mixteca showing the towns and villages discussed in the text.

Places in the Ñuu Dzaui codices

It was the Mexican archaeologist Alfonso Caso who made the decisive breakthrough in the interpretation of the Ñuu Dzaui (Mixtec) pictorial manuscripts. In his in-depth analysis of the early colonial Map of Teozacoalco (1949) he showed that two place signs on the Map of Teozacoalco were identified by Spanish glosses as important city-state capitals: 'Black Frieze' is Ñuu Tnoo, 'Black Town' (known in Nahuatl as Tilantongo), and 'Broken Town' is Chiyo Cahnu, 'Large Altar' (known in Nahuatl as Teozacoalco), both in the Mixteca Alta (Figure 2). The related personages were identified as the his-

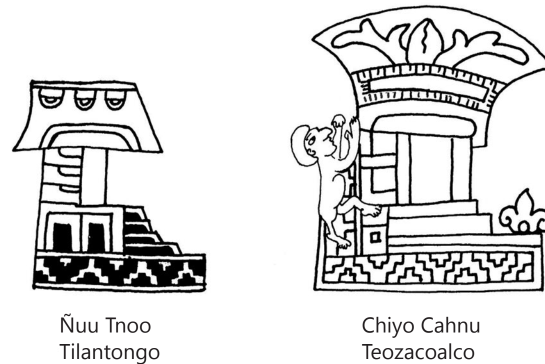

Figure 2. The Tilantongo and Teozacoalco glyphs in the Map of Teozacoalco (redrawn from Smith 1973a).

torical rulers of those places. The same personages occur in a specific corpus of codices and related documents, which therefore must all be historical in character and refer to the history of the different dynasties that were ruling the 'city-states' or 'village states' in the Ñuu Dzaui region during the Postclassic period (± AD 900-1521). These political units were called *yuvui tayu*, 'the mat(s), the throne(s)', in Dzaha Dzaui (the Mixtec language).

With his publications, Caso founded a scholarly specialisation devoted to the study of this corpus of pictorial manuscripts. Several researchers followed in his footsteps and continued his work with crucial contributions to the clarification of the different actions carried out by the individuals in the codices, the reconstruction of the chronology of events, the identification of more place signs, the connection of codices with archaeology and other aspects.[2] The Map of Teozacoalco enabled Alfonso Caso to identify the signs of several important 'city states' in the Mixteca Alta. Mary Elizabeth Smith has considerably broadened the amount of identified places. Her studies of early colonial codices contain place signs with glosses in Dzaha Dzaui, such as the Codex Ñuu Naha (Muro), and she has carried out specialised field research in the Mixteca de la Costa and in the Mixteca Baja.

2 For the history of the decipherment and the overall contents of the Ñuu Dzaui codices, see the handbook by Jansen & Pérez Jiménez (2011). We follow here the new nomenclature proposed there for the Ñuu Dzaui codices.

The analysis and identification of place-signs is crucial for reconstructing the geographical reality of the narratives and therefore plays an important role in the interpretation of the Ñuu Dzaui pictorial manuscripts. The first step is, obviously, to establish a possible correlation or fit between a sign painted in a pictorial manuscript and a place name in the region. Yet often this is not so easy as its sounds. On the one hand the painted sign may not be totally clear or straightforward, so that we are in doubt about what word is intended. This part is conditioned by what we know about the principles of Mesoamerican pictography, as documented in early colonial sources such as the Codex Mendoza, a tribute list of the Mexica empire that contains a large amount of Nahuatl place-signs with alphabetic transcriptions. On the basis of such works a 'pictographic dictionary' may be reconstructed (cf. Clark 1938; Nowotny 1959), which then may be applied to the pictorial manuscripts of Ñuu Dzaui. Of course we have to be aware of the difference between the languages involved (and their corresponding pictorial expressions).

On the other hand, the meaning of Ñuu Dzaui toponyms in the region may be difficult to establish with certainty. Dzaha Dzaui (Mixtec) – with its modern variants Sahin Sau, Sahan Savi, Daha Davi, etc. – is a tonal language. This means that words have specific tones and the tonal differences between otherwise identical words correlate with different meanings. Thus, we are often confronted with several possible meanings, depending on the tones of the words. There are many tonal languages in the world, but most researchers speak languages that are not tonal, which limits their perception of this phenomenon. Furthermore the tone in many words is not constant but may change according to the influence of the tone in a preceding word: A linguistic phenomenon known as *sandhi*. The rules of these changes are not yet fully understood (see Faraclas 1983 for a case study) and the dialect variability of the tones is insufficiently documented. The early colonial works on Dzaha Dzaui, such as the grammar by friar Antonio de los Reyes (1976) and the dictionary by friar Francisco de Alvarado (1962), both written in 1593), did not register tones nor *sandhi*. Modern speakers obviously notice the tonal aspect of the words and its implications for meaning (in fact they indulge in tonal punning), but – as the language is nowhere in the region a topic of formal teaching – they are not accustomed to carry out precise tonal analysis. The linguistic categories of high, middle and low tones do not always coincide with the way speakers differentiate between tones. The consequence of all this is that tonality may cause extra problems in establishing the etymology of a toponym.

Many places in Ñuu Dzaui are now known by a Nahuatl name (registered by the Spanish administration on the basis of information given by the Nahuatl – Dzaha Dzaui translators at the time). Friar Antonio de los Reyes in his grammar includes an appendix with a list of the major towns in the area, with their names in Nahuatl and Dzaha Dzaui. Additional information on the place names is provided by the work of the 19th century Oaxacan histo-

rian Manuel Martínez Gracida (1883) and subsequent inventories and studies. Sometimes the meanings of the names in both languages for a specific place may coincide (which may point to a coherent explanation); in other cases they may differ. Occasionally we may be able to reconstruct errors or misunderstandings in the translation process.

Obviously the meaning attributed to the toponym by the local inhabitants and the presence of specific oral traditions about it, are very relevant; still they may also be the result of a 'folk etymology', an *ad hoc* speculation or imagination. We also have to take into account the dialect variability of the Mixtec language (Josserand 1983). A complicating factor here is the lack of an in-depth study of the historical development of Dzaha Dzaui, so that it is not always clear how a word may have been affected by phonetic changes (for example Alvarado's *huahi*, 'house', today is *vehe* or *vehi*). There is always the possibility that toponyms, being conservative, may have preserved more archaic forms that do not correspond to the way the words would normally be used in the present-day language or that may have fallen into oblivion altogether.

Once we have a reasonable idea of the word(s) that can be expressed by a specific pictographic sign and start looking for the possible match with a place name, we note that many toponyms are repetitive: Names like 'Black Mountain', 'River of the Serpent', 'Mountain of the Birds', or 'Cave of the Jaguar' occur frequently throughout the region. We need additional information to define better to what specific place the pictorial sign refers. Are we looking at the name of an inhabited place, *i.e.* a 'city-state' (*yuvui tayu*), or at a very local name for a feature in the natural or cultural landscape? Archaeological information may help to establish whether certain places were inhabited and had special importance in the Postclassic period. Some of these places may be referred to in the scraps and pieces of precolonial history mentioned in early colonial sources. Specific identifications supplied by glosses, such as the ones that identify Ñuu Tnoo (Tilantongo) and Chiyo Cahnu (Teozacoalco), are of course of prime importance for the argument. Where individual place names may be common and repetitive, a cluster or coherent combination of such names is bound to be less common: Thus it is important to connect the place sign in question to other place signs. The association of a place sign with specific personages may help in the identification process. Finally, the place sign plays a role in dynastic history, so it must correspond to an underlying geographical 'logic' of the narrative.

All of these considerations together involve different disciplines: The iconographical analysis of signs and scenes, the archaeological information about specific places, the in-depth reading of historical sources, the linguistic study of etymology as well as of related oral traditions and customs. Fortunately, there have been noticeable advances in these fields, which enable us to continue the work carried out already by earlier researchers.

Archaeologists have clarified the chronological sequence and patterns of ancient habitation by carrying out a number of surveys and local excavations.[3] Some have paid special attention to the iconographical analysis of ancient visual art and writing system (e.g. Rivera Guzmán 2000, 2002, 2008). The early colonial documents about the Ñuu Dzaui world has become a topic of sustained historical research, with some specific attention on documents in Dzaha Dzaui, the Mixtec language, written with the Spanish alphabet. The study of the latter connects with studies of the dialect variants of present-day Mixtec (Sahin Sau, Sahan Savi, Daha Davi, etc.) and registration of oral literature in these variants, carried out by the protestant missionary linguists of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, as well as by academic linguists and a growing number of native speakers (e.g. Pérez Jiménez 2008; Caballero Morales 2008). Similarly, anthropological studies are nowadays enriched by an increasing participation of Ñuu Dzaui scholars (e.g. López García 2007; Julián Caballero 2009; Aguilar Sánchez 2014).

Religious and ritual dimensions

As our understanding of this subject matter advances, it becomes clear that the pictorial texts also express religious worldview and ritual practice, which, in turn, can be related to traditional concepts, experiences and mentalities that continue to be alive and important in the present-day indigenous communities. A key example is the notion of divine presence in the landscape. Earth itself is a living being: *Ñuhu*, the ancient word for 'Deity' in Dzaha Dzaui (Mixtec). In the codices this concept is painted as an animated stone and indeed nowadays it is often applied to rocky outcrops or boulders. In the Chalcatongo area the *Ñuhu* is invoked in Spanish terms as *San Cristobal, San Cristina, Santo Lugar* for the ceremonial cleansing and healing of traumatic experiences (*susto*); food and drink are offered to him/her for sowing and harvesting rituals. *Ndoso* (*ndodzo* in Alvarado's variant) is a similar term, which may also refer to ancient rulers and other powerful personages of the past (ancestors). Ancient archaeological sites are referred to as *vehe Ñuhu anaha*, which means 'house(s) (*vehe*) of God(s) (*Ñuhu*) of ancient times (*anaha*)'. Nowadays *vehe Ñuhu* is the normal word for 'church', but is clearly an ancient term, similar to the Nahuatl word *teocalli*. Caves are the dwelling place of Lord Rain, to whom people pray and make offerings in the beginning of the rainy season (around the time of the first passage of the Sun through the zenith, now centered on the day of the Holy Cross: May 3). Ponds are the resting places of the Plumed Serpent, *Koo Sau*, the Whirlwind and Bringer of Rain. At the same time the dream experience of transforming into animals or other natural beings and phenomena as *alter ego* or, with a Nahuatl term, *nahual*, connects the human person intimately with Nature. In the codices the

3 Important recent works are for example: Kowalewski *et al.* (2009) and Joyce (2010). See the recent review article by Pérez Rodríguez (2013).

nahual quality is often represented in the given names (containing references to jaguars, coyotes, serpents, wind, clouds, balls of lightning etc.).[4]

Codex Añute (Selden), preserved at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, gives a concrete illustration of the integration of historical and religious aspects. It is an early colonial document that recalls the origins and history of the dynasty in accordance with the concepts of precolonial historiography.[5] The main place sign consists of a town on a mountain with a mouth from which a white volute with dotted material comes forward. Alfonso Caso in his pioneering commentary (1964) did not yet have arguments for its identification and therefore designated this place sign with the code name 'Belching Mountain'. It was Mary Elizabeth Smith (1983) who demonstrated that this place sign must represent Añute, 'Place (*a-*) of Sand (*ñute*)', now the village of Magdalena Jaltepec, neighbour to Tilantongo, in the Mixteca Alta.[6] The first scene of the codex shows how arrows (*i.e.* the rays) of the Sun God and the Venus God, touch the top of the emblematic 'Mountain of Sand', which would give its name to the settlement of Añute. From that first sunlight the ancestral figure of the dynasty was born. In other words, the codex opens with stating that the dynasty goes back to the beginning of the present era, and with invoking the ancient deities Sun and Venus.

On p. 2, Lady 8 Rabbit, who descended from the First Ancestor, marries a Lord 2 Grass, who was born from a tree growing in the valley of Ñuu Ndecu (Achiutla).[7] Making use of homonymy in Dzaha Dzaui, the eye (*nuu*) painted on the tree (*yutnu*) identifies it as a ceiba or pochote (*yutnu nuu*). The calendar names of the founding couple were combined into one sacred date – Year 8 Rabbit, day 2 Grass – that appears as the sacred foundation date of the 'Mountain of Sand' (Añute) in a list of the primordial places of the Ñuu Dzaui world given by Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis).[8] We will come back to this fascinating list below.

4 For an introduction to *nahualism* and other aspects of Mesoamerican thought, see the classic monograph by López Austin (1980). Jansen (1982: ch. V) and Jansen & Pérez Jiménez (2013: ch. VI) discuss the Mixtec concepts; the course book by Pérez Jiménez (2008) offers insight in modern Mixtec orthography, grammar and relevant texts. Liana Ivette Jiménez Osorio and Emmanuel Posselt Santoyo are carrying out an in-depth research on the Houses of the Rain: see their article in Jansen & Raffa (2015).

5 Recent facsimile edition with commentary by Jansen & Pérez Jiménez (2013).

6 Cf. Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2011: 292-293.

7 Mexican historian Wigberto Jiménez Moreno identified the sign Town of Flames as Ñuu Ndecu, 'Burning Town', present-day San Miguel Achiutla, which was the major religious centre for the Ñuu Dzaui region (cf. Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2011: 303-305).

8 Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis), pp. 42 and 1 (Anders, Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 1992a). The numeration of the pages of Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis) stems from a time when the contents of the manuscript were not yet understood and are the consequence of reading the 52 pages as one would do with a European book, from left to right. In reality, as we now know, the reading order goes in the opposite direction, from right to left, so that p. 52 is the first one and p. 1 the last one.

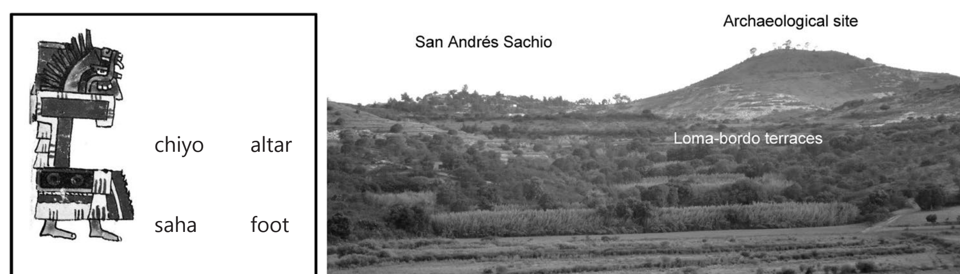

Figure 3. Sachio in the Codex Añute and the geographical position of the town (photo: Iván Rivera).

Codex Añute goes on with spelling out the ancient rituals carried out by the successive members of the dynasty, particularly those for the Sacred Bundle (a round bundle containing the Ñuhu sign), which were carried out in the ceremonial centre on top of the mountain of the town. The place is easy to identify: On top of the mountain that rises above the village of Añute (Jaltepec) is an important archaeological site with a clearly defined main temple mound. At the side is a small cavity, where till today offerings are made. Most probably this is the sanctuary of the Sacred Bundle.

Codex Añute (pp. 3-4) also mentions in detail several inauguration rituals carried out by the first prince, Lord 10 Reed, the son of the founding couple Lady 8 Rabbit and Lord 2 Grass, in order to become ruler of Añute. The first ritual was celebrated in a place that is represented as Altar with Feet, (Codex Añute, p. 3-II/III). Arguing that this place should be close to the main town, Smith has identified it as San Andrés Sachio, a neighbour of Añute (Jaltepec). Sachio means 'At the Foot (*saha*) of the Altar (*chiyo*)'. The village is indeed located at the foot of a mountain, on the top of which we distinguish the archaeological remains of a platform (very clearly visible in the profile of the mountain). The place name suggests that that platform was the basis of an altar (*chiyo*). Today the sacred and ceremonial character of the place is marked by a catholic chapel on the mountain top (Figure 3). All around it are the remains of recently constructed *pedimentos*, *i.e.* small houses and other structures of loose stones, branches, pine cones etc. as visual expressions of what pilgrims to the site pray for (good livelihood). Clearly this site, looking out over the Valley of Nochixtlan, is still a sacred place.

The image in the Codex Añute (Selden), p. 3, informs us that the temple of Sachio was dedicated to the Plumed Serpent, *i.e.* the Whirlwind, who appears as culture hero in the Ñuu Dzaui codices. It was here in the ceremonial centre of Sachio that the first prince of Añute (Jaltepec), Lord 10 Reed, still a young child, assisted at the ceremony in which Sacred Bundles were made of his mother and father, and in which offerings of counted

items were laid down in front of these. Seated in the temple he watched the acts carried out by the elderly priests. These took place in the Year 2 Flint (AD 936). A few years later, in the Year 5 Reed (AD 939), the young prince pronounced a ceremonial discourse in front of the nobles of the kingdom and its neighbours. These ritual activities were crucial steps in becoming ruler of Añute. The Codex Añute (Selden) itself was explicitly linked to those dynastic events. On its cover we see the Year 2 Flint, day 5 Reed. This 'title image' combines into one sacred date references to the Year 2 Flint and to the Year 5 Reed, *i.e.* to the first foundational rites of the dynasty. Given its position on the cover, this date most likely signals the ceremony for which the codex was prepared. Given the internal chronology of the manuscript, that date would correspond to 1560. Supposedly, the ceremony in question was similar to the ones referred to by the combined date, *i.e.* the preparation of a prince to become the new ruler of the mat and throne of Añute. Thus, we take it as the appropriate time for the ruler to designate and ritually prepare his successor. The last ruler mentioned in the dynastic sequence of the codex (p. 20) is Lord 10 Grass, probably identical with the ruler that historical documents refer to as Don Carlos de Villafañe: He was born in 1527 and married in 1546. His son (baptised as Don Ángel de Villafañe) must have been still a young boy in 1560. The ruler in office ordered the codex Añute to be made for this solemn occasion, in accordance with the ancient customs. So instructed, the painter occupied an older (presumably precolonial) manuscript as a base to reproduce the age-old genealogical record.[9] This choice suggests that the ruler and the painter belonged to a conservative faction, clinging to the precolonial values.

References to the Mixteca Baja in the codices

Mary Elizabeth Smith was able to define a corpus of manuscripts that come from the Mixteca Baja, including the Codex Ñuu Ñaña, also known as Codex Egerton, and the Roll of Yucu Nindavua (Huamelulpan), also known as the Codex Tulane.[10] Glosses in Codex Ñuu Ñaña (Egerton) made it possible for her to decipher among others the following place signs in the Mixteca Baja (Figure 4):

- Mountain of the Standing Conch as Yucu Ndaa Yee, 'Mountain (of the) Standing Conch', which is the Dzaha Dzaui name of San Pedro y San Pablo Tequixtepec (Smith 1973a: 76).
- Mountain of the Jewel as Yucu Yusi, *i.e.* Acatlan in the State of Puebla (Smith 1973a: 60-62).

9 Codex Añute is a palimpsest: On the reverse side remains of the earlier manuscript are visible under the later gypsum layer. At present, PhD candidates Ludo Snijders (Leiden University) and Tim Zaman (Technical University Delft), supported by a grant from the Netherlands' Foundation for Scientific research (NWO) and in cooperation with experts from the Bodleian Library, are applying non-invasive techniques to assess the composition of this earlier work.

10 Smith (1973 a and b); König (1979); Smith & Parmenter (1991).

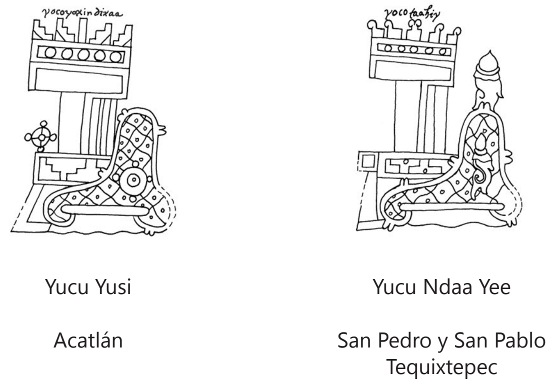

Figure 4. The place signs of San Pedro y San Pablo Tequixtepec and Acatlán in Codex Ñuu Ñaña (after Smith 1973a).

Figure 5. The list of identified communities in the Mixteca Baja that appear in Codex Yuta Tnoho (from Anders, Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 1992a).

Jansen and Pérez Jiménez (2011: 327-340) observed that these place signs also occur in the large listing of places in the Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis) (Figure 5). On pp. 44-43 there is the diagnostic sign 'Mountain of the Standing Conch': Yucu Ndaa Yee (Tequixtepec). It is preceded by the neighbouring 'Town of Feet': Ñuu Saha (Icxitlan) and followed by 'Mountain of the Standing Arrow', which must be Da Nduvua (Miltepec), another town in the neighbourhood. Signs correspond well with the toponyms. After this follows 'Mountain of Jade and Feathers', which most likely in this context is a variant of Yucu Yusi (Acatlan). The places identified already by Smith are names of city-states in the Mixteca Baja (Tequixtepec and Acatlan); they anchor therefore the whole cluster in that region. This is the point of departure to identify more places as well.

At the beginning of p. 44 we see a Mountain with a 'Ballcourt of Gravel' and a 'Ballcourt of Flames', which in this same area of the Mixteca Baja clearly corresponds to the toponym Yuhua Cuchi, which means precisely 'Ballcourt (*yuhua*) of Gravel (*cuchi*)'. The town is now known under its Nahuatl name Guaxolotitlan. The 'Burning Ballcourt' as part of the place signs may refer to an outstanding local landmark, the mountain peak known as 'Fire Stone' (*Piedra de Lumbre*). On the following page (p. 43) appears a mountain with a 'Town of Blood', combined with a 'Wooden Fence'. This combined sign has to correspond to the city-state with two capitals: Ñuu Niñe, 'Town of Heat', painted as Ñuu Neñe, 'Town of Blood', and Ñuu Nduyu, 'Place of the Fence', which are known today under their Nahuatl names Tonalá and Silacayoapan respectively.[11]

These places were important in primordial time. They receive here the celestial waters brought to Earth by Lord 9 Wind, the Ñuu Dzaui version of the Mexica deity Ehecatl-Quetzalcoatl, 'Wind - Plumed Serpent', *i.e.* the divine Whirlwind, nowadays known in Mixtec as the Rain Serpent (known as Koo Sau in Chalcatongo Mixtec).[12]

A selection of these primordial places is repeated on the final pages of the Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis). That part of the codex deals with the foundation of the dynasties that would be ruling the different 'city-states' of Ñuu Dzaui. The founders of

11 Jansen & Pérez Jiménez (2008) present these identifications in more detail, and review other interpretations in their handbook (2011: ch. 7).

12 Pérez Jiménez made this identification of Koo Sau in the codices (already reported in Jansen 1982; see also Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2007, 2011). On pp. 48-47 of Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis) this culture hero had come down from the Place of Heaven, which was the place where Lord 1 Deer, Lady 1 Deer and their son Lord 9 Wind were dwelling (pp. 52 and 48 of the same codex). This Place of Heaven can be identified with the *Lugar donde estaba el Cielo* of the creation narrative registered by friar Gregorio García, according to which it was located on a mountain close to Apoala. That made it possible to identify it as the mountain known as Cavua Caa Andevui (today: Kaua Kaandiui), which rises immediately to the East of Apoala and dominates the valley in which the village is situated.

the dynasties and the kingdoms are the Lords and Ladies that had been born from the Mother Ceiba in the Sacred Valley of Apoala (on pp. 37-35 of the same codex).[13]

Several of these place signs also occur together in Codex Tonindeye (Nuttall), pp. 3-4. Here they are mentioned in the context of the narrative about the primordial struggle or war of the Ñuu Dzaui Lords and Ladies that had been born from the sacred tree in Yuta Tnoho (Apoala) against the 'Stone Men'. This narrative is already mentioned by friar Antonio de los Reyes (1593: prologue) and can be related to Ñuu Dzaui narratives about earlier inhabitants of the region transforming into stones when the Sun rose for the first time.[14]

Thus it is to be concluded that (1) the various place-signs in this segment belong together both in a geographical and in a narrative context and (2) they played a major role in the time of origins.

The place sign of Huajuapan

What about the possible presence of the town of Huajuapan in these codices? Nowadays Huajuapan is a major district capital, actually the largest city in the whole Mixtec region. The ruins of the Cerro de las Minas demonstrate its importance in Classic times, while there are also important Postclassic remains (see below). The etymology of its name is not clear. The Nahuatl toponym Huajuapan can mean 'River (*apan*) of the huaje trees (*huaxitl*)' or 'River of the willows (*huexotl*)'.

The meaning of Huajuapan's Mixtec name has been even more difficult to uncover. Friar Antonio de los Reyes (1976) registers this name as Ñuu Dzai. The *ñuu* part translates as 'town'. But the word *dzai* does not occur in Alvarado's vocabulary.

At present the town's Mixtec name is locally pronounced as Ñuu Dee. Here we have to take into account the historical development of Dzaha Dzaui. In the dialect variant of the Huajuapan region the /dz/ sound of the Mixtec of Teposcolula, registered by the Dominican friars Francisco de Alvarado and Antonio de los Reyes, is realized as a /d/. Similarly the /ai/ and /ahi/ sounds become /ee/ and /ehe/ respectively (*huahi*, 'house' in Alvarado's vocabulary is here: *Vehe*). Thus the modern word *dee* indeed corresponds

13 Friar Antonio de los Reyes in the foreword to his grammar of the Mixtec language (1976) clarifies that the Mixtec name of Apoala is Yuta Tnoho, which basically means: 'River that plucks or pulls out' but connotes interpretations as 'River of the Lords' and 'River of the Histories or Lineages'. Caso already suggested that it corresponds to the sign of a river with a hand holding feathers (cf. Smith 1973a: 75). That place sign is the centre of an extraordinary landscape painting in Codex Tonindeye (Nuttall), p. 36. The different elements of this landscape correspond to the Valley of Apoala (Jansen 1982; Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2011). The 'River of the Hand Holding Feathers' (Apoala) occurs explicitly on p. 35 of the Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis) as part of the tree-birth scene.

14 Dyk (1959: 17) also registers such a narrative. There is a clear parallel with the description of the First Sunrise in the Popol Vuh (Tedlock 1985). See also Jansen (2015).

to the word *dzai* registered by the Dominican friars. Today the term Ñuu Dee is translated as 'Tierra de Valientes' but this is due to a misunderstanding: *Dee* (corresponding to ancient *dzai*) is confused with *ndee* (*ndai* or *nday* in Alvarado's vocabulary), which indeed means 'strong' and 'courageous'.[15] Nowadays *dee* and *ndee* may sound similar (only differentiated by initial nasalisation), but the corresponding terms *dzai* and *nday* in Alvarado's work show that they are really quite different words.

In San Juan Diquiyú, Huajuapan is called Ñuu Sehe, which is translated as 'Hidden Town' (*pueblo escondido*). The Mixtec of San Juan Diquiyú is a dialect variant, in which the /dz/ of Alvarado's vocabulary is realised as an /s/ and /ahi/ as /ehe/. Thus *sehe* in Diquiyú corresponds to *dzahi* in Alvarado's vocabulary, which indeed means indeed 'hidden', as well as 'to cover', 'to conceal' and 'to be absent'.[16]

Closer to Huajuapan itself is the village of Cacaloxtepec, which maintains the local Mixtec variant of that area, in which the /dz/ of Alvarado's vocabulary is realised as a /d/ and /ai/ as /ee/. Here Huajuapan is called Yuu Dee, which may be translated as 'Stone (*yuu*) that is Hidden (*dee*)'.

Both *sehe* in San Juan Diquiyú and *dee* in Cacaloxtepec mean 'hidden' and have the alternative meaning of 'ring': They are clearly the same term. The first form corresponds to *dzahi* in the vocabulary of Alvarado, the second to the *dzai* of friar Antonio de los Reyes: The glottal stop is clearly present in San Juan Diquiyú, but absent in Cacaloxtepec. In addition, the information from Cacaloxtepec suggests that the first part of Huajuapan's Mixtec name can be *ñuu* ('town') or *yuu* ('stone') – both words are phonetically close. The Cacaloxtepec version of Huajuapan's Mixtec name is presumably the closest to the name used in Huajuapan itself.[17]

In the cluster of place signs that refer to the Mixteca Baja in the Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis), p. 44 and p. 3, appears the 'Stone (*yuu*) Ring (*dzahi / dzai*)' as a beautifully designed toponymic hieroglyph, which clearly designates an important site in this very same region. We propose to identify this sign as Huajuapan: It fits the geographical context in a very convincing manner.

15 Cf. *iyo nday*, "fuerte ser" and *tay nday ini*, "animoso hombre, esforzado; atrevido; constante persona; magnánimo" (Alvarado 1962).

16 Cf. *yodzahindi*, "agazaparse escondiéndose; ausentarse; encubrir algo; encubrirse; esconderse; mudarse de un lugar a otro haciendo ausencia"; and *sa siyo dzahita*, "ausente andar, escondido".

17 The help of *maestro* Máximo Sánchez Ventura (from San Juan Diquiyú), local teacher of the Mixtec language, and of Mrs. Gabriela Encarnación (from Cacaloxtepec) was crucial in this analysis. See also the argument presented by Jansen & Pérez Jiménez (2011: 338). The dialect variant of Ñuu Ndeya (Chalcatongo) also realises the /dz/ of Alvarado's vocabulary generally as an /s/ and /ahi/ as /ehe/. Here 'ring' is *shrehe* and the stem for 'hidden' is *sehi*. The name for Huajuapan, however, is Ñuu Sajin, which does not yield a convincing translation in this variant: *sajin* es 'nephew', which is not a likely element in a toponym. In our opinion the term Ñuu Sajin clearly corresponds to Ñuu Dzahi in the orthography of Alvarado, but most likely is taken from a different variant (other place or time).

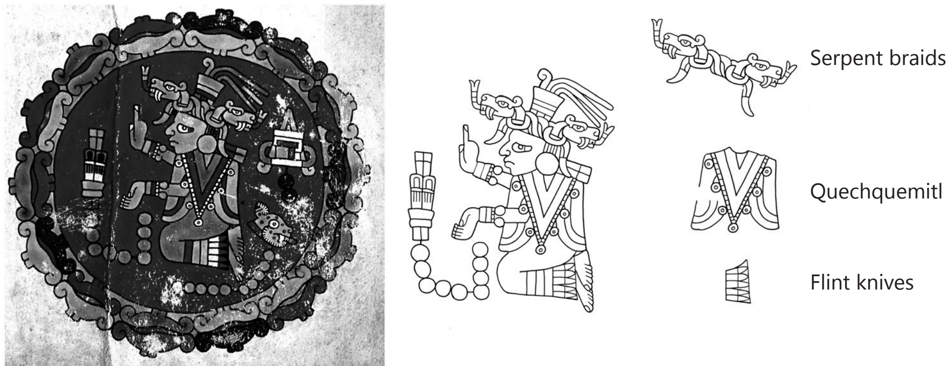

Figure 6. Lady 9 Reed in Codex Yuta Tnoho, p. 3 (drawings: Iván Rivera).

Figure 7. Lady 9 Reed in different Ñuu Dzaui codices (drawings: Iván Rivera).

The Patron Deity

The place sign 'Ring of Stones' in Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis), p. 3, contains the image of a seated Patron Deity: Lady 9 Reed (*Qhu Huiyu* in the Mixtec calendar idiom) (Figure 6). According to Mesoamerican symbolism, the number 9 of her calendar name connotes death, while Reed actually is an arrow or dart: Together they may refer to the fatal power of an arrow or dart. In this scene she is accompanied by a sacred date: Year 2 House, day 10 Jaguar, which is the day after that of her calendar name. She also appears leading a group of primordial personages, seated in front of the place sign of Yuta Tnoho (Apoala) in the same codex (p. 33). This Patron Deity figure is characterised by sets of flint knives that decorate the borders of her regalia (*quechquemitl* and skirt) and by serpents that are braided into her hair (Figure 7). The same element appears in her name sign in Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis), p. 28. The *quechquemitl* garment is called *dzico* in Dzaha Dzaui, while 'border' and 'girdle' are called *huatu*. Both *dzico* and *huatu* have also an abstract meaning: The first is used to express virtue, honor, fame; the second refers to beauty, grace, glory, and spiritual enjoyment. Together they form the couplet (difrasismo) *dzico huatu*, 'good' as a substantive. The location on the regalia seems to express this concept. The combination with flint knives (*yuchi*) names the Goddess as *Dzico Yuchi, Huatu Yuchi*, something like 'the Power and Glory of Knives'. This name suggests that she represents the power residing in the flint knife (seen as an animate being): A Goddess comparable to the Itzpapalotl Itzcueye 'Obsidian Butterfly, She of the Obsidian Skirt' of the Nahuatl speaking world, who also seems to represent the power residing in the obsidian arrowhead.[18] Braids are called *huatu* too, so Lady 9 Reed is also *Huatu Coo*, 'the (Power and) Glory of Serpents'.

The green painting of the lower half of her face and the green nose ornament are attributes of the Goddess Mayahuel (the Maguey Spirit).[19] Today the maguey is generally identified with the Virgin of the Remedies, also known as the Virgin of Juquila.

The Ñuu Dzaui codices show us also a similar lady with serpent braids and a skirt of knives, but often in a decapitated form. In several New Fire rituals of Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis) – from p. 22 onwards – she appears marching together with an opossum, holding knives and gourd bowls. They direct themselves towards maguey plants that then appear decapitated. Clearly the Goddess and the opossum represent the coupled action of cutting and scraping the maguey plant with the flint knives and take out the juice (*aguamiel*), represented as blood, in order to produce the alcoholic beverage

18 In Codex Yoalli Ehecatl (Borgia), p. 47, Lady 9 Reed is associated with arrowheads (decorating her person and her regalia).

19 Deities in the religious codices of the Teoamoxtli Group (also known as Borgia Group) are generally referred to with their Nahuatl names. Compare the representation in Codex Yoalli Ehecatl (Borgia), p. 68.

pulque.[20] In this context the 'Decapitated Lady' probably has to be understood as the 'Lady of Decapitation of the Maguey' (*i.e.* the Patron of cutting and scraping magueyes).

Codex Tonindeye (Nuttall), p. 3, and Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis), p. 3, situate this 'Decapitated Lady' in 'Ballcourt of Gravel and Fire', *i.e.* in Yuhua Cuchi (Guaxolotitlan). Her calendar name here is not 9 Reed, but 11 Serpent, so she is conceived as another individual, apparently an Founding Mother or Ancestor as avatar of the same power as Lady 9 Reed. It is interesting to notice that both Ladies seem to be mentioned as Sacred Bundles in the inquisition process against caciques of Yanhuitlan: Quequiyo (Qhu Huiyu, which may correspond to 9 Reed), called *el ídolo del pueblo*, *i.e.* a Patron Deity of the community, and Xiyo (Si Yo, which may correspond to Lady 11 Serpent).[21]

Next to Lady 11 Serpent in Codex Tonindeye (Nuttall), p. 3, is a temple, inside of which we see the opossum. As these two figures belong together is its likely that they – both carrying the bowls with knives and blood – were venerated as a unit in the central temple of the site.

Codex Tonindeye (Nuttall), p. 51 shows how Lord 8 Deer 'Jaguar Claw', the main hero of Ñuu Dzaui history, visits the Place of Blood (Ñuu Niñe) in order to make an offering to Lady 9 Reed. The parallel scene in Codex Iya Nacuaa I (Colombino), p. 10-I, situates the Lady 9 Reed inside a cave above a river. Local tradition in Tonalá identifies the Boquerón, the place where the Río Salado enters the valley, after passing through an impressive gorge, which is locally considered an enchanted place. On the cliff at one side, known as Cerro de las Flores, there are several abris with precolonial rock paintings. Several motifs are similar to those in the codices and therefore should be Postclassic. Clearly this area of religious meaning is the place of encounter between Lord 8 Deer and the Goddess. In fact, the rock paintings in the abris contain the same signs for 'war' and 'ritual' that appear in the scene of the encounter as painted in Codex Iya Nacuaa.

Local tradition has it that the Goddess of this place tried to free her beloved, the king of the neighbouring village of Tezoatlan, who was imprisoned and surrounded by an enormous snake. She cut off the snake's head with a blow of her machete and so the gorge of the Boquerón was formed: The body of the snake became the mountain range at one side of the gorge – including the Cerro de las Flores – and the head became a specific mountain, now known as Cerro de la Culebra. The narrative seems related to the image of Lady 9 Reed: Associated with the use of weapons and having knotted serpent braided in her hair. The impressive cliffs and abris of the Boquerón appear as her special dwelling place.

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20 See Jansen & Pérez Jiménez (2010) for Mixtec texts on the cutting and scraping of magueyes.

21 Probably due to tonal differences the calendar names in Dzaha Dzaui (Mixtec) may translate in different ways, but the possible correspondences of these names with 9 Reed and 11 Serpent seem most likely in view of the fact that these Ladies are documented as Deities in the codices (cf. Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2013: 148-150).

Another sanctuary of Lady 9 Reed was located in Ndisi Nuu (Tlaxiaco), a place represented as crossed beams with eyes. The sign of the crossed beams (sometimes crossed legs) expresses the verb *ndisi*, 'to lay crosswise' and the eye is read *nuu*. Together they form the term *ndisi nuu*, which may be translated as 'sharp sight' or 'well seen' (Spanish: *Buena vista*). It is in the main temple of that town that Lord 4 Wind (successor to Lord 8 Deer as powerful overlord in Ñuu Dzaui) offered *pulque*, cacao, ritual regalia, precious feathers and flowers to Lady 9 Reed.[22] This demonstrates once more that this Goddess was also venerated in the Mixteca Alta, where Ndisi Nuu (Tlaxiaco) is located.

The inquisitorial process against the native nobility of Yodzo Cahi (Yanhuitlan) describes Qhu Huiyu, 'Lady 9 Reed', as a Sacred Bundle that was venerated in a subterraneous sanctuary (maybe a tomb). We also find her represented on two carved jaguar bones (Number 203i and 174a) that form part of the treasure deposited in Tomb 7 at Monte Albán (Figure 8). On the first (Number 203i) she is shown being born from the Mother Ceiba tree, supposedly in the Valley of Yuta Tnoho (Apoala). On the second (Number 174a) she appears coming down from Heaven, wielding a club and attacking the Stone Men.

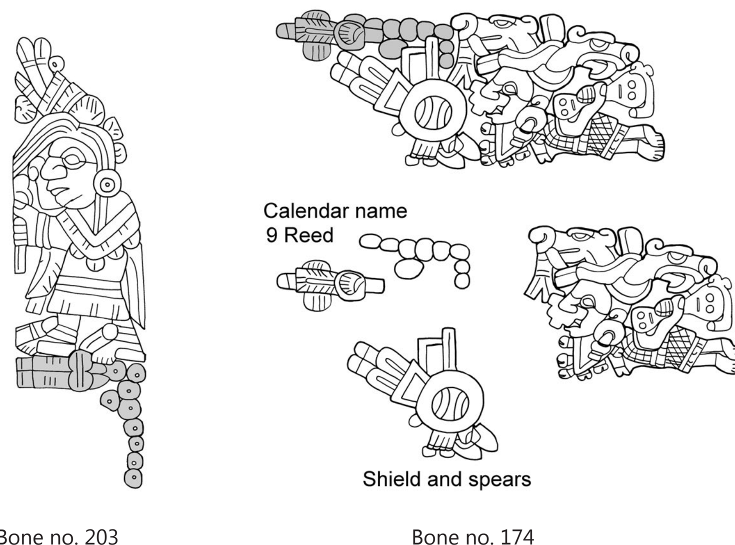

Figure 8. Lady 9 Reed on the carved bones of Tomb 7 at Monte Albán (drawings: Iván Rivera).

22 Codex Ñuu Tnoo – Ndisi Nuu (Bodley), p. 30-V (Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2005).

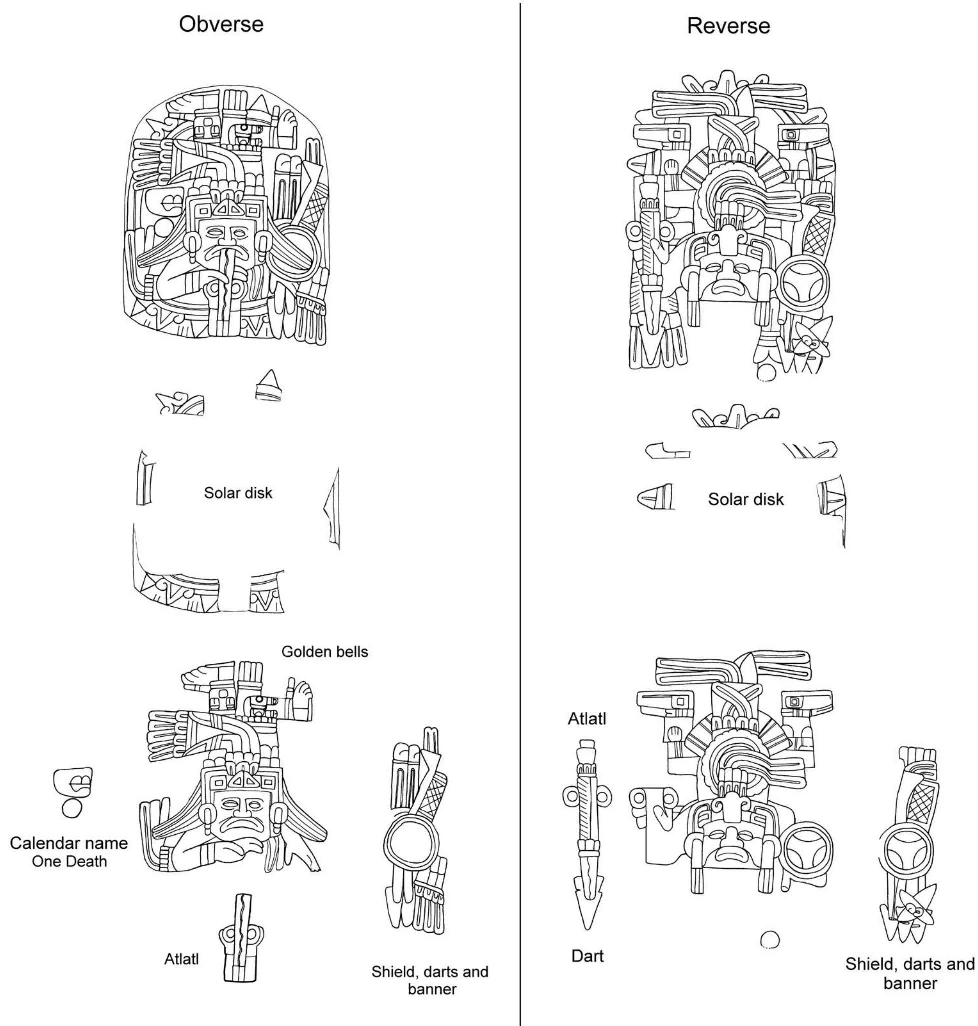

Figure 9. The decorated *atlatl* of the Ethnographic Museum in Rome showing the descending Sun with shields and darts (drawings: Iván Rivera).

In the creation or foundation narratives the representation of descending Deities or religious figures is relatively common. In Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis), p. 48, we see Lord 9 Wind 'Quetzalcoatl' descending from the Place of Heaven. In Codex Tonindeye (Nuttall), pp. 18-19 the same action is performed by Lord 12 Wind, a founding priest. The opening scene of Codex Añute (Selden), p. 1, as we mentioned earlier, shows the Sun God and the Venus God coming down from Heaven and throwing their arrows

(rays of light) to the top of the emblematic mountain of the village Añute (Jaltepec). An interesting parallel is the scene on one of the dart throwers (*atlatl*) in the Museo Etnográfico Luigi Pigorini of Rome, Italy (Figure 9). In this case the descending Sun God is represented within the sun disk, holding a shield and darts in his hands. His calendar name appears on the front side: Lord 1 Death. This name is registered as *yya camaha*, 'the sun as the Indians called him in heathen times' in the vocabulary of friar Francisco de Alvarado and occurs as Yoko Kamao in the ceremonial discourse of Ñuu Dzaui ritual specialists in the State of Guerrero (Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2011: 257-258).

The victory over the Stone Men is symbolically equivalent to the First Sunrise (when the earlier inhabitants turned into stone). Consequently we may interpret Lady 9 Reed's coming down from Heaven as a visual representation of her important role in setting up the world order of the Postclassic era.

This is consistent with her appearance as Patron Deity of major towns in the Mixteca Baja: According to the codex scenes discussed above, she dwelt in the Boquerón of Ñuu Niñe (Tonalá), had a temple in Yuhua Cuchi (Guaxolotitlan) and constituted the religious focal point of Ñuu Dzai / Yuu Dzahi (Huajuapan). This same area was the main locale where the war against the Stone Men took place, *i.e.* against those who would turn into stone at First Dawn. The rise of the Sun of the new (Postclassic) era meant that the Lords and Ladies who had been born from the Mother Ceiba in Yuta Tnoho (Apoala) took over the political and religious power in the whole Ñuu Dzaui (Mixtec) region. The Tree-Birth of the Founding Fathers and Mothers is followed by their victory over the Stone Men and by the New Sunrise. Placing this set of symbolic events in an archaeological context, we find that the beginning of the dynastic history narrated in the Ñuu Daui codices coincides with the passing of the Classic to the Postclassic era, which archaeologists would date around AD 900. The Stone Men represent the earlier inhabitants of the region (the 'first Mixtecs'), in other words: They correspond to the people of the Classic era, and according to the codices they were mainly associated with places (kingdoms) in the Mixteca Baja. It cannot be a coincidence that the Mixteca Baja indeed had been an area where during the Classic period a distinct phase of Ñuu Dzaui civilisation had flourished, called the 'Ñuiñe style' by archaeologists. Although a new political order and a new writing system had taken over in the early Postclassic period, the memory of that ancient impressive cultural phase was kept alive in the ritual commemoration of the symbolic origin events.

The Postclassic site of Huajuapan

In the Huajuapan Valley, as in the Mixteca Baja in general, several archaeological studies have shed light on the Preclassic and Classic periods, for example at the sites of Santa Teresa and Cerro de las Minas. In the first the existence of an early village dating to the Middle Preclassic (600 BC) was documented. The second, Cerro de las Minas, became one of the first cities in the Ñuu Dzaui (Mixtec) region and a centre of Ñuiñe culture in Classic times (Arriola & López 2009; Winter 1994). The Postclassic period in this region, however, has so far received less attention. The images of Lady 9 Reed as seated in the Ring of Stones, *i.e.* Huajuapan, and on the Mountain of Blood, *i.e.* Tonalá, in Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis), therefore, are a fascinating piece of evidence for the importance of this Goddess in the Mixteca Baja.

Searching for her sanctuaries, we can identify at least one with certainty and precision, namely the abris of Cerro de las Flores, next to the Boquerón gorge in Tonalá. But where is the Postclassic site of Huajuapan located? Several precolonial settlements of the Nuyoo phase (AD 900-1521) are scattered over the piedmont slopes around the valley. In Acatlima, to the west of Huajuapan, there are archaeological remains that belong to the Postclassic period: An unexplored mound as well as residential complexes and burials that have been rescued by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) in the area that currently is occupied by the Universidad Tecnológica de la Mixteca (UTM). Acatlima has several springs and permanent water sources that should have

Figure 10. Post-classic ceramics from Huajuapan de León, collection of the Museo Regional de Huajuapan (MUREH), Oaxaca (photo: Iván Rivera).

been attractive to the inhabitants. Findings of Postclassic objects in places as diverse as Colonia Reforma, Agua Dulce, La Estancia, Xochixtlapilco, El Molino, Vistahermosa and Cerro Ticoco indicate that during the Postclassic period the Huajuapan Valley there was already a dense population living in these areas (Figure 10).

The Postclassic site Cerro del Sombrerito, located east of Huajuapan, is the largest and is the best candidate to be considered the realm's capital in those days. Situated on a vast rocky plateau, Cerro del Sombrerito has the typical settlement pattern of the period: On the northern slope residential terraces starting near the Mixteco River, while on the highest part of the mountain, away from the residential section, we find an architectural complex of mounds, platforms and plazas. Its distinctive geographical feature is a large reddish rock formation that rises about twenty meters above the floor of the north plaza. It is a unique feature on the eastern side of the Valley of Huajuapan and clearly visible from several kilometres away (Figure 11). It is because of this curious elevation that the site is called *Cerro del Sombrerito*, *i.e.* 'Mountain of the Small Hat'.[23] This element might explain the red colour in the centre of the Ring of Stones, which we propose to identify as Postclassic Huajuapan. The place-sign then would represent the red rock as seen from above. On the top of the rock there are archaeological structures, which indicate that this formation itself was a centre of ritual activities. In the Ñuu Dzaui (Mixtec) worldview the rock would correspond to a Ñuhu or Ndodzo. Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis) suggests that the genius loci or inhabitant spirit was Lady 9 Reed, looking out from here over her domain. From here much of the landscape of the Mixteca Baja is fully visible: In the southwest we see the Cerro de la Costilla and the mountain of San Juan Diquiyú, the communities of Cacaloxtepec and the sierra of Monteverde, on the border with the Mixteca Alta and the neighbouring region of Tlaxiaco. In the same way, we distinguish the canyon of the Mixteco River and the Boquerón of Tonalá. To the north are the villages of Huajolotitlán, Camotlán and beyond those the high mountains of Cuyotepeji.

The archaeological site of Cerro del Sombrerito comprises two sets of monumental architecture (Figure 12). One is located on the southern edge of the plateau, with two mounds of black volcanic rock oriented northwest-southeast, and with a large, open plaza between the two structures. The scarcity of domestic ceramics on the surface suggests that this sector was merely ceremonial. Because of the space and height, it is possible that the ceremonies that took place in this plaza were observed from afar. The second group of structures is located in the northeast end; it consists of low platforms

23 Martínez Gracida (1883: s.v. Huajuapan) gives as the Mixtec name for this place: *Yucu sañohodzini-dzuchi*, in which *yucu* means 'mountain', *sa ñoho dzini* 'hat' (literally: 'what contains the head') and *dzuchi* 'small'. We notice that he did not use the local dialect variant, but the Tepozcolula Mixtec of the 16th Century as registered by Friar Francisco de Alvarado (1962). This suggests that the Mixtec name is a reconstruction, a translation of the Spanish name back into 'classic' Mixtec.

a

b

c

Figure 11. Different views of the archaeological site Cerro del Somberito. *a)* View from north to south. *b)* A mound in the northern plaza. *c)* The northern plaza and terraces (photos: Iván Rivera).

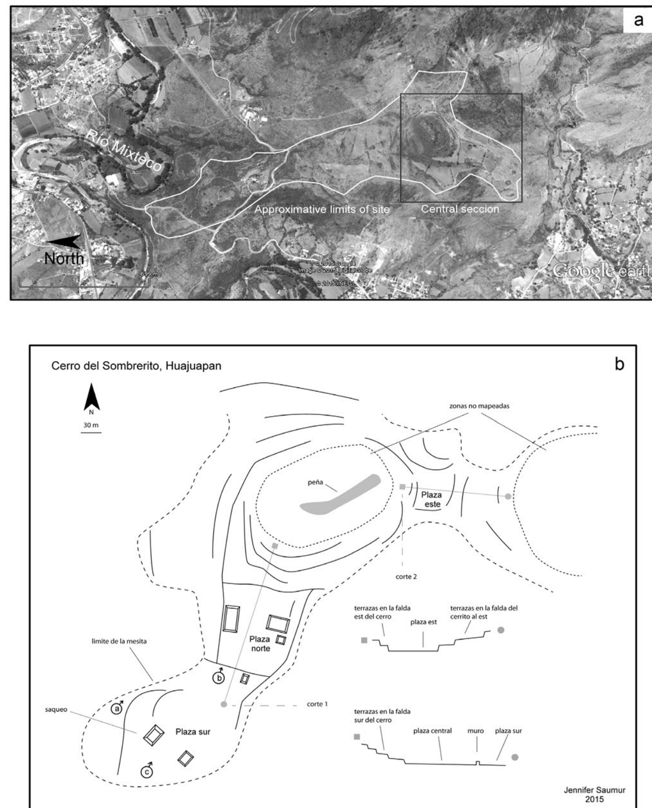

Figure 12. The archaeological site Cerro del Sombrerito. *a)* The location of the site, Google Earth (the mapped area is indicated with the red square). *b)* Plan of the central complex of the site. The circles with letters indicate where the photos in Figure 11 where taken (drawing: Jennifer Saumur).

arranged around a square, which is connected with the terraces of the large rock. The architectural pattern that we see in Cerro del Sombrerito is similar to that of other Postclassic sites in the Mixteca Baja. In the plan of the Postclassic centre of the Cerro de Tequixtepec in San Pedro and San Pablo Tequixtepec as well as in El Tempexquixtle, the old town of Camotlán, for example, we find comparable large squares surrounded by sets of mounds and platforms (Figure 13). This pattern contrasts with that of the Classic Ñuiñe centers where generally the mounds and plazas are oriented to follow the natural direction of the hills.

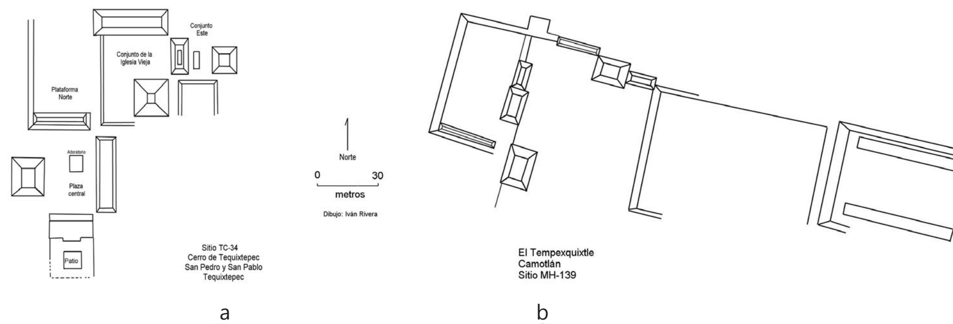

Figure 13. Comparison of the urban plan of two post-classic sites of the Mixteca Baja: *a)* Cerro de Tequixtepec. *b)* El Templexquixtle, Camotlán (drawings: Iván Rivera).

In this sector there is presence of ceramics of the Postclassic period (Nuyoo phase), but also of the Preclassic period (Ñudee phase) and the Classic period (Ñuiñe phase), which indicates an earlier occupation of the place.

The finding of stones engraved with glyphs in Ñuiñe style confirms that Cerro del Sombrerito was already a ceremonial centre before the beginning of the Postclassic period. Thanks to the documentation of the Oaxacan historian Manuel Martínez Gracida, we know that three slabs *(figuras y geroglifico en bajo relieve*) were taken from this place, apparently from a tomb.[24] The mayor of Huajuapan at the time (1831), Don Juan Ortiz, ordered that two of them would remain fixed in the porch of the town hall, the other was put in the corner of the atrium of the church. This arrangement is similar to what we have observed in many communities of the Mixteca, where the carved monuments discovered in archaeological sites were subsequently placed in walls of public buildings such as town halls, schools or churches. In this case the carved stones remained in the town hall until the creation of the Regional Museum of Huajuapan (1999) allowed them to be displayed in a dignified manner.

24 The measurements of these slabs are: 78 x 26 cms, 82 cms x 27 cms, and 76 cms x 26 cms. Martínez Gracida (1986: 280), described Cerro del Sombrerito, distrito de Huajuapan, in the following terms: "En 1831 casualmente y con el arado en trabajo, algunos labradores descubrieron restos de paredes y cimientos de edificios antiquísimos, que demostraban que aquel lugar había sido poblado. Uno de los cerdos de los labradores, escarbando en el suelo con el hocico, descubrió un subterráneo, que era nada menos que un sepulcro, del que se extrajeron cuatro anillos de oro, algunas cuentas del mismo metal, idolillos de pedernal, perlas, platos, vasos, conchas antiguas, etc. etc. Dos anillos fueron regalados al obispo de Puebla D. Francisco Pablo Vazquez y los otros fueron enviados a México, donde se dieron a conocer al público por medio de dibujos en el periódico científico 'El Museo Mexicano'. Eran de alhambre de oro, trabajo de filigrana; uno representa a un guerrero y otro a una dama".

It is likely that one of these blocks is identical with the one seen by the famous Flemish captain William Dupaix on his second voyage (1806) through New Spain: It was drawn by José Luciano Castañeda and reportedly came from a place called Loma Tallesto, located one league east of Huajuapan (Dupaix 1969: 101).[25] The *Diccionario de Autoridades de la Lengua Española* (1734) specifies that a league is "a regular hour's walk" (*lo que regularmente se anda en una hora*); that is indeed the walking distance from the centre of Huajuapan to the Cerro del Sombrerito. The monument shows a calendar name, placed on top of a U-shaped base – a characteristic element of the Ñuiñe style. We cannot identify the numerical coefficient. The day sign has the form of three pointed leaves. It is similar to the day sign generally interpreted as Rain ('glyph C'), but it may also represent the first sprouting corn, called *huiyu* in Dzaha Dzaui (Mixtec). In the special calendar idiom of the Postclassic period this word came to designate the day sign Reed. On the monument, the day holds a pointed device with a spiral (Figure 14): A person identified by his calendar name is carrying out a specific action of historical importance. It is noteworthy that the thumb's nail of the hand in the sign is quite long, which may indicate a special power or office.

The other two monuments reported by Martínez Gracida are more difficult to identify in the known corpus but we should mention one slab that because of its iconography seems relevant for the subject matter of this study. This is a carved disk that was set in the garden of the town hall in Huajuapan, but in the early 1960's was transferred to Mexico City to be part of the Oaxaca room in the National Museum of Anthropology (Figure 15). There are no reliable reports about its origin, so it may come from any of the Ñuiñe centres in Huajuapan: Cerro de las Minas, Cerro del Sombrerito or some other site. The image depicts a jaguar lord wearing a feather headdress and having a forked tongue, recalling the representation of jaguars in Teotihuacan. Possibly the image registers the lord's given name: Feathered Jaguar. The lord, furthermore, has a calendar name (placed under his mouth): 2 C, *i.e.* 2 Rain – perhaps the same as the name registered on the stone from Loma Tallesto? He stands on a precolonial altar or platform with stairs, which merges with a mountain sign. Apparently the lord is ascending to the throne and

25 According to Dupaix: "[...] hay una piedra la que se ve tendida en el suelo, de calidad sólida, de grano fino y azulada: su configuración es prismática, y en uno de sus lados, está gravado de relieve en su plano un escudo circular y orlado, y en su campo un címbolo desconocido, por la parte posterior nace una mano con algo del brazo y empuña una especie de arma ofensiva sea dardo o lanza, con ciertos adornos que la acompañan: este escudo (arma defensiva de tanto uso entre la nación [indiana {deleted} mejicana] esculpido con destreza en ésta piedra con los geroglíficos (expresados con fuerza en él y con él) parece que aluden a algún hecho valeroso o que fue adoptado de alguna Provincia belicosa, por insignia de sus armas. " (Dupaix 1969: 101). Dupaix is the first scholar to identify the signs of the hand and arm in this writing system, as well as the inscription's historical character in general. See also the comments on this monument in Moser (1977: 28).

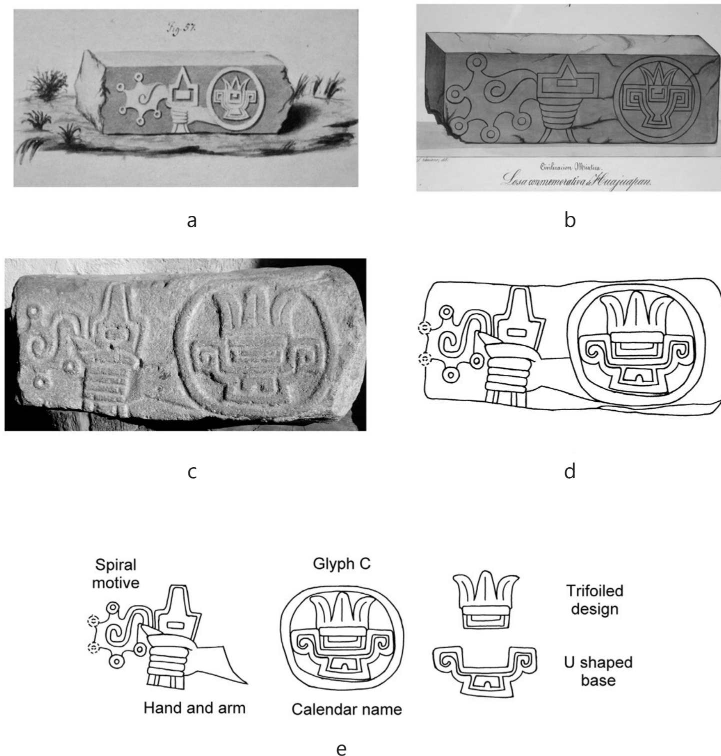

Figure 14. Monument 1 from Loma Tallesto / Cerro del Sombrerito. *a)* Drawing form Dupaix (1969). *b)* Drawing from Soriano in the work of Martínez Gracida 1910. *c)* The monument today in the MUREH (photo: Iván Rivera). *d)* y *e)* Analytical drawing of the inscription (drawing: Iván Rivera).

taking possession of the kingdom ('our mountain', *i.e.* 'our place'). Below the platform roots are depicted, a convention that occurs frequently on ñuiñe monuments with place names and which may indicate the founding ('planting') of the town. Most interesting is the very form of monument: A stone disc with a frame, which recalls the representation of the place where Lady 9 Reed is seated according to Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis). The round monument most likely was located on the top of an 'altar platform' (*chiyo*), like the one depicted in the relief scene itself. The surface shows intensive wear, which suggests frequent use. Most likely the altar functioned in enthronement rituals and other dynastic events. The descendant rulers may have celebrated such rituals standing on the image and so connecting to their Ancestor.

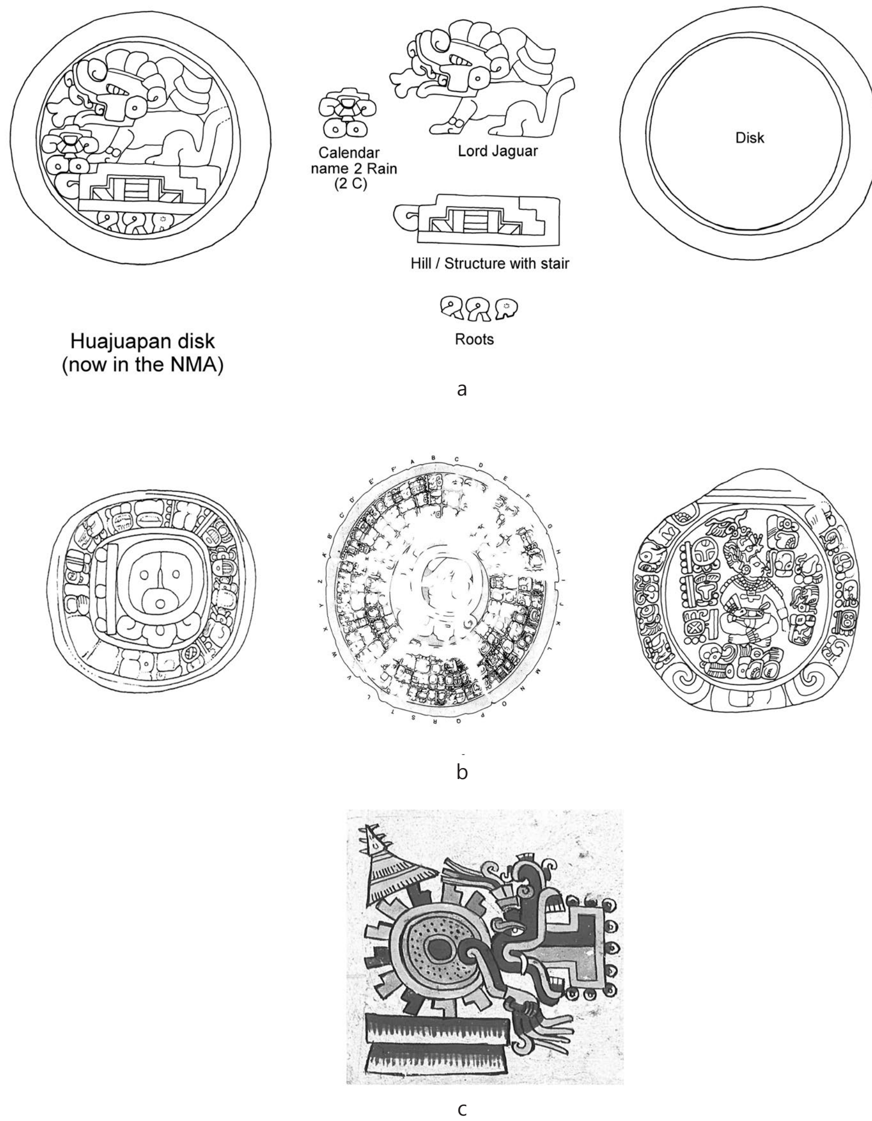

Figure 15. The Disk of Huajuapan (drawing: Iván Rivera). *a)* Monument analysis (drawings: Iván Rivera). *b)* Maya altars, from left to right: Altar 30 Tikal, Caracol Altar 21, Altar L Quiriguá (after Schele & Freidel 1990). *c)* Altar in the codex Tonindeye 15.

There is a similarity between this monument and the altars with reliefs from the Maya area, which also show lords in rituals of taking possession or ascending to the throne, often accompanied by inscriptions and dates (e.g. Schele & Freidel 1990). Such an altar is represented in Codex Tonindeye (Nuttall), p. 15, where a disc (as seen form above) is placed on top of a platform (in profile) – the combination with the image of a Fire Serpent qualifies the structure as a *locale* of *nahual* power and trance. We may link these round monuments on the one hand to the ancient Olmec 'altars' or 'thrones', and on the other to the famous Mexica 'Calendar Stone' or 'Throne of Moctezuma'. The first seem to connect dynastic rituals to *nahual* powers and caves as *locales* of Ancestors as well as of origin and fertility (Coe *et al.* 1995). The second refer to the earlier creations and the rising of the new (Fifth) Sun as a symbolic and ideological expression of a new rule and a new epoch (Matos Moctezuma *et al.* 2010).

Final consideration

Combining the different indications from the codices with the archaeological information, we see unfolding before us a cultural landscape of religious value. The sacred sphere is created through the connection of impressive natural features, understood as manifestations and/or seats of Divine Forces, with monuments that link the enthronement of rulers and other rituals to the time of First Sunrise and Founding Ancestors. Human settlements, with their ceremonial centres, are embedded in this special space.

The impressive panorama of the canyon that links Huajuapan, Tonalá and Tlaxiaco offers a visual connection between Cerro del Sombrerito (Figure 16) and other sanctuaries of Lady 9 Reed. The presence of this Goddess gives meaning to these places and also creates a narrative and conceptual connection with the foundation narrative of Yuta Tnoho (Apoala) and the dynastic drama of Lord 8 Deer 'Jaguar Claw'. Calendar names and dates in the codices and, before those, in the Ñuiñe inscriptions, fill the space with specific references to Time and Ancestors, calling for ritual commemoration and veneration.

This complex web of intersections and relations between the human world and the sphere of Ancestors, Deities and *nahuales*, was to a large extent destroyed by colonialism. Yet, though in a transformed way, this web has survived: The many churches, chapels, caves, houses of the Rain and other ritual places, as well as the many feast days of Patron Saints and other important moments of the year still maintain a coherent, syncretic spatial-temporal organisation of the landscape.

Western archaeology tends to focus on the secular (even economic) power of rulers and its legitimation through art, ritual and 'propaganda'. Often these notions do not take into account the living Mesoamerican culture and mentality, and consequently tend to project modern issues of western society onto the precolonial past. Mesoamerican

Figure 16. The Red Rock at Cerro del Sombrerito (photo: Iván Rivera) and the place sign of Huajuapan in Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis), p. 44.).

symbolism and historiography pay more attention to how the rulers were conditioned by their ritual obligations and by the context of a sacred landscape. The visit paid to Lady 9 Reed by Lord 8 Deer 'Jaguar Claw' in Tonalá, for example, shows how specific places such as the Cerro de las Flores, and probably the whole Boquerón gorge, were places of ritual encounter with the ancient powers of the Founding Deities and Ancestors. This dimension of memory and timeless religious value has implications for ritual respect, morality and identity – in the past and in the present. It is through the combination of iconographical analysis with archaeological and historical data as well as with the living intangible heritage of the Indigenous Peoples that we may begin to uncover – at least partly and tentatively – this layer of profound meaning and emotional experience. Here archaeological and iconographical studies, obviously with the full participation of Indigenous experts, may offer important elements for a more integral and decolonial understanding of Mesoamerican art as well as for the revitalisation of its cultural landscape.

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see Smith 1973b and Jansen 1994.

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see Jansen 1994.

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The Ascension of Mount Coatepetl by Coyolxauhqui and the Centzon Huitznahua: A Temple Made of Words

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Abstract: Mount Coatepetl, the holy mountain of the Mexica, and the mythical plot that refers the birth of their main god Huitzilopochtli, have been carved in stone and reproduced in the architectonic features of the Templo Mayor of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. One of the oral versions of the myth, transcribed in Sahagun's *Historia General* (Codex Florentino, book III, chapter 1) which could have been the narrative basis for the edification of the temple, constitutes also a temple, a temple made of words and phrases, of sounds and rhythms. Beyond the semantic content of what is said, the formal structure of the text helps to visualize the temple by shaping with words what has been made in stone and remind the different stages in the gestation of the god, stages that define relevant aspects of the architecture of the temple.
Through a structural analysis of the Nahuatl text, we will show how the image of the temple is 'stamped' in the verbal account of the birth of Huitzilopochtli, or how the structure of the text shapes the architecture of the temple. We will consider, in very general terms, the relation between words and pictures in pre-Hispanic Nahuatl culture.

Keywords: architecture; formal structure; Nahuatl; Mexica; Huitzilopochtli; Coatepetl; Templo Mayor; Mexico-Tenochtitlan; pre-Hipanic period.

Resumen: El monte Coatepetl, la montaña sagrada de los mexica, y la trama mítica que narra el nacimiento de su dios tutelar: Huitzilopochtli, han sido tallados en la piedra y reproducidos en la configuración arquitectónica del Templo Mayor de México-Tenochtitlan. Una de las versiones orales del mito, transcrita en la *Historia General* de Sahagún (Códice Florentino, libro III, capítulo1) que bien podría haber sido el fundamento narrativo para la edificación del templo, constituye también un templo, un templo hecho de palabras y frases, de sonidos y ritmos. Más allá de los contenidos semánticos de lo que se dice, la estructura formal del texto ayuda a visualizar el templo, formaliza con palabras lo que fue tallado en la piedra y recuerda las etapas de la gestación del dios, las cuales definen aspectos relevantes de la arquitectura del templo.
Mediante el análisis estructural del texto náhuatl, mostraremos cómo la imagen del templo está 'estampada' en el relato verbal del nacimiento de Huitzilopochtli, o cómo la estructura del texto configura la arquitectura del templo. Consideraremos primero, en términos muy generales, la relación entre la palabra y la imagen en la cultura náhuatl prehispánica.

Palabras clave: arquitectura; estructura formal; náhuatl; mexica; Huitzilopochtli; Coatepetl; Templo Mayor; México-Tenochtitlan; periodo prehispánico.

The foundation of Mexico-Tenochtitlan is the apotheotic culmination of a long nomadic wandering that began, according to verbal and pictographic accounts, in a mythical place of origin: Aztlan, situated also mythically as well as historically in the North (*Mictlampa*), in a vast and arid region referred as *Teotlalpan* 'the holy land'.[1] The journey terminated in the lacustre valley of Anahuac, in the precise place where a prickled pear cactus (*tunal*) portentously grew from a seed which was nothing but the sacrificed heart of Copil, the son of the moon[2] and on which an eagle descended to make its nest.

History and myth converge in what became retrospectively an initiatic and cyclic itinerary from an originary island to a 'promised land', surrounded by water, where a temple, *axis mundi* of a new world, was going to be edified.

The different places where the Aztecs stayed, on their way from Aztlan to Tenochtitlan, had a mythical, geographic or geopolitical importance in what has been called a 'pilgrimage'. They all constitute 'stages' in a formative process. Some places, however, acquired a specific function in this process. Such is the case of Mount Coatepetl, situated by most of the sources near Tula (Tollan), the city of the Toltecs.

According to the myth, Mount Coatepetl is the place where Huitzilopochtli, the main god of the Aztecs, was born thus becoming a neuralgic place for the Aztecs. This mountain, mythically situated somewhere between Aztlan and Tenochtitlan was to be virtually brought to the very heart of the Aztec ceremonial center, in architectural terms, becoming the Great Temple but it was mentioned also in the texts that refer the birth of the god.

Many oral sources, transcribed after the Conquest, or pictorial stories kept in codices relate the mythical vicissitudes of Huitzilopochtli's birth. One of the most important texts is probably the Nahuatl version contained in Sahagun's *Historia General* (Sahagún 1979, book III, chapter 1). This version constitutes a temple made of words and phrases which transforms Huitzilopochtlis's deeds in an architectonic mental image.

Mount Coatepetl, the place referred in the myth, is also the oral text which had to be interiorized not to say 'somatized' by the members of the community in order to feel (more than to know) all the sequences leading to the birth of their god. Beyond the semantic content of what is said, the formal structure of the text would help to perform such an interiorization by shaping with words what had been built in stone: The Great Temple of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, and remind the different stages in the gestation of the god.

Through a structural analysis of the Nahuatl text, we will show how the image of the temple is 'stamped' in the verbal account of the birth of Huitzilopochtli, or how the structure of the text shapes the architecture of the temple. We will first consider, in very general terms, the relation between words and pictures in pre-Hispanic Nahuatl culture.

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1 *Teotlalpan* 'the holy land'; *Mictlampa* 'the North', literally 'toward the place of the dead'.

2 Alvarado Tezozómoc 1992): 43.

Orality and pictography

Beside the metaphors, metonymies and all the stylistic effects produced by the oral text, which can be classified as 'images', the pictographic writing has probably helped to place the image as the 'measure of all things' in the nahuatl cognitive apprehension of the world. As a matter fact, orality and pictographic writing had a complementary relation before the Conquest even though the semiology of picture was not subordinated to words as the alphabet is. The image could be 'read', and its contents verbally expressed, but it also produced meaning through lines, colours, position, size, and a compositive syntax which was illegible in verbal terms but visually significant.

After the Conquest, the painters, *tlahcuiloqueh*, were influenced by the presence of what we might call the 'alphabetic spirit' and we observe a change in the semiology of pictorial texts, with a recrudescence of phonetic glyphs. We can schematize this as follows:

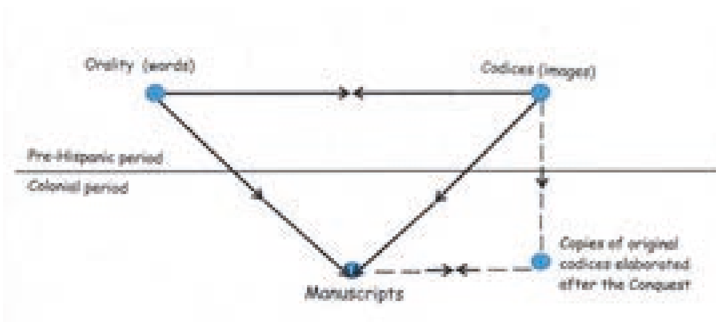

Figure 1. The word, the image and the alphabet.

The text we will analyse 'lies' in a manuscript and has lost a substantial part of its oral expression in the alphabetical version of the *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España* or Codex Florentino (Sahagún 1540-1585)(Figure 2). The verbal core of the myth, however, seems to have accurately been transcribed and makes possible a structural analysis.

On the other hand, oral and pictographic versions of the myth coexisted, before the Conquest, generating a mutual influence of pictures on words and vice versa in both oral and pictorial texts. We will adduce the pictographic version of the birth of Huitzilopochtli contained in the Codex Boturini in order to situate what occurred on Mount Coatepetl in the mythical context of the *Peregrinación*, to show the metaphorical significance of pictures and how the temple could have been sketched through a compositive syntax.

Libro. 3.º

dicho vitzilobuchtli tomaron la que
se solia vsar, y hazer en aquella
dicha sierra, que se nombra Co
atepec.

intla naquj, qujnoaltemovia,
oaltepeoa in centzonvitznaoa,
Coatepetl icpac. auh inoquj
xitico intlalchi, in tlatzintlan,
man ieic qujntoca, qujniaiaoa
lochti in Coatepetl, nappa
tlatlaiaoalochti, inqujniaiaoa
lochti, ocnen quioaloiuhtivia, ocnē
oaloioviaia, oalmochimal vitectiuia,
tle vel quichiuhque, aoctlevel axque,
aocmovel quitzacuilique, çanquj
meviti in Vitzilobuchtli: qujncen
ti, velqujnpopolo, vel quimixtlati
qujnpoctlantili. auh inça aocmove
qujncaoaia inovel incentech mo
cenca quitlatlauhtiaia, quilhuja
maixqujch. auh in Vitzilobucht
amo ic moiolcevi, cacenca intechmo
tlapalo inqujntocac. auh çaques
quitoton inixpanpa coaque,
pa quisque vmpa itztiaque
tlampa, iehica cavmpa itztiaque,
incentzonvicnaoa, inoquisqujnti
matitlampa quisque in Vitzilobuc
auh inieiuhquj inoqujnmjcti, ino
lelquis qujncuili injntlatquj,
chichioal inanecuiotl, qujmotlat
ti. qujmaxcati, qujmotonalti.
qujmotlavizti. auh in Vitzilob
nomjtoaia tetzavitl, iehica caça

Figure 2. The alphabetic version of the myth in the Codex Florentino (Sahagún 1540-1585: Book 3, fol. 3v).

A mythographic version of Huitzilopochtli's birth

There are many oral and pictographic versions of the birth of Huitzilopochtli. The Codex Boturini provides one which permits to appreciate the semiological difference between the anecdotic legibility of the pictorial text and its illegible but highly significant mythographic composition (Figure 3).

The anecdotic reading

Plate I (a)

> The Aztecs were living on an island called Aztlan and were periodically going to a cave (*oztotl*), situated in Mount Colhuacan, to offer *acxoyatl* branches to their god. In the year 1-Flint, they definitely departed, and went to Colhuacan.

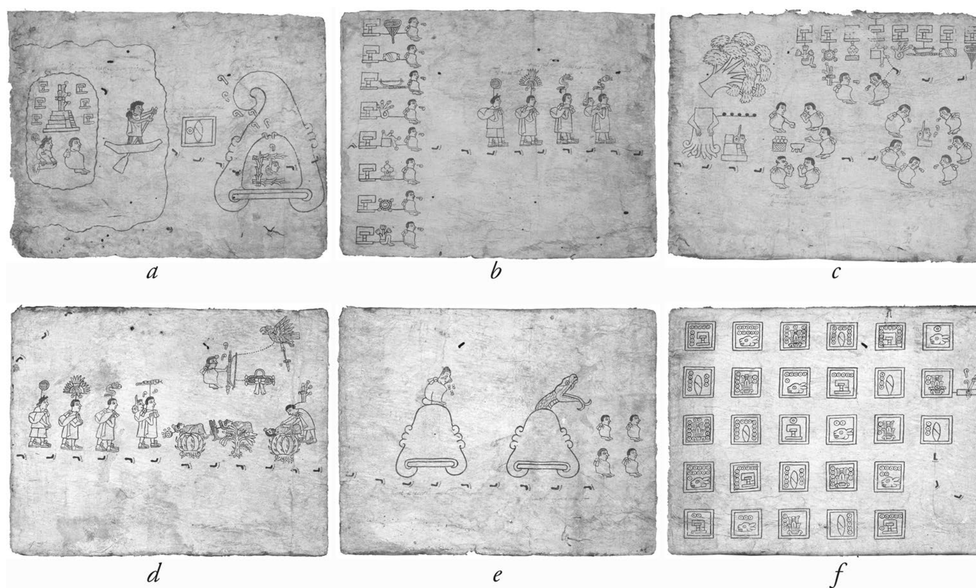

Figure 3. The pictorial sequence in the Codex Boturini (2015).

Plate II (b)

From Colhuacan, the same year, they began their migration towards the mythical place of their future sedentarization. In Colhuacan, with the Aztecs, lived seven other tribes: the Huexotzincas, the Chalcas, the Xochimilcas, the Malinalcas, the Chichimecas (or Tlahuicas), the Tepanecas and the Matlatzincas. The Aztecs carried Huitzilopochtli's image (or bones) in a *tlaquimilolli*, a sacred bundle. Those who carried the god were: Tezcacoatl, Cuauhcoatl, Apanecatl and Chimalma(n). They are situated in the middle of the plate, on an horizontal axis of progression.

Plate III (c)

The migrants arrived to a place called Cuahuitl Itzintla ('at the foot of the tree'), built their earth temple and put their god Huitzilopochtli on the top of it. They were about to eat when the huge tree, which was providing a shadow for them, suddenly broke. Huitzilopochtli addressed his people (the Aztecs) and told them they had to separate from the other tribes and go on their own. The tribes were sad. The Aztecs remained a long time at the foot the tree.

Plate IV (d)

The Aztecs went on, and somewhere in *Teotlalpan* 'the sacred land' (the holy plains of the north, *Mictlampa*), the selenic Mimixcoa portentously appeared on their way. Their names are Xiuhnel, Mimich and Teoxahualli. Huitzilopochtli told the Aztecs that these Mimixcoa would be their first sacrificial victims, and that from now on their name wouldn't be Aztecs anymore but Mexica. The image shows the Mimixcoa being sacrificed.

Plate V (e)

The Mexica then went to Cuexteca Ichocayan and Coatl Ycamac. According to the corresponding text of Codex Aubin, during their stay in Coatl Ycamac, the fire drill 'fell' on Mount Coatepetl (Figure 4).

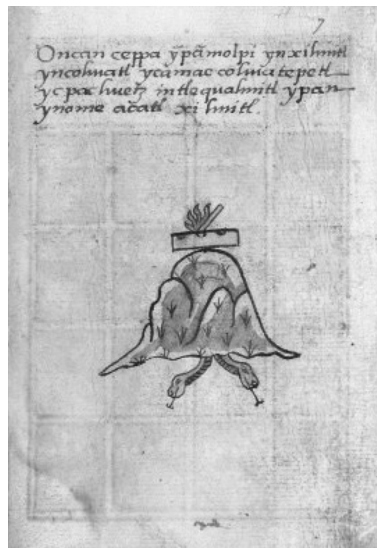

Figure 4. The fire drill fell on Mount Coatepetl, Codex Aubin (1576: fol. 7r).

Plate VI

The sixth plate shows the number of years corresponding to the first five plates and the date the fire drill 'fell' on Mount Coatepetl: 2-Acatl '2-Reed', indeed the first 'New Fire' since the departure from Aztlan.

A mythographic reading of the pictorial text

Beyond the legible pictorial account we briefly related, a syntax of symbolic paradigms 'produces' the gestation and birth of Huitzilopochtli and outlines the temple. We will simply enumerate some of these paradigms:[3]

- The insularity and whiteness of Aztlan, the crossing of water, the presence of the god in a cave (*oztotl*).[4]
- The cave in the womb of the mountain (Colhuacan) and the spiral at its peak (Plate I).
- The perfect orthogonality of the eight tribes and the four bearers of the god (*teomamaqueh*), who are visually pulling the tribes in the vacuous no man's land of *Teotlalpan* (Plate II).
- The rupture of the tree and the separation of the Aztecs from the other tribes (Plate III).
- The encounter of the four heliac Aztec *teomamaqueh* with the three selenic Mimixcoa. The sacrifice of the two men: Xiuhnel and Mimich, and of the woman, their elder sister Teoxahualli, the exact equivalent of Coyolxauhqui in the mythical context we will analyse.
- According to Codex Aubin, the new name and the new status of the Aztecs, now called Mexica, are a result of the narrative pictorial construction (Figure 5). The birth of Huitzilopochtli coincides with the vision of what will be his temple. In plate IV of Codex Boturini the composition is providing that vision:
  The birth of Huitzilopochtli, not pictorially referred but apprehensible in the squared configuration of the bearers of the god, the absences of the woman, of the god, of the sacred bundle, and the descent of the fire drill (*xiuhcoatl*), 'the serpent of fire' (Plates V and VI).

3 For further information, see Johansson 2004a: 150-152
4 In náhuatl *oztotl* is 'cave'; *otztic* means 'pregnant'.

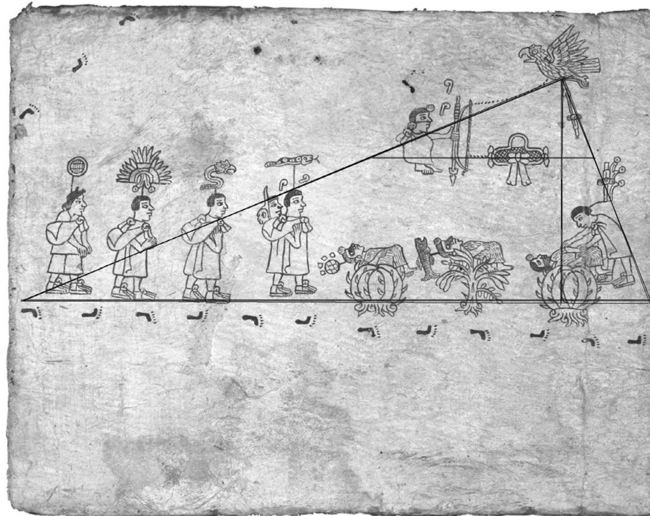

Figure 5. The temple outlined, Codex Boturini (2015).

The image in a verbal text

The verbal production of meaning is mainly realized through language, that is to say words, a grammatical syntax of linguistic units, phrases and narrative mechanisms with a mythological or simply descriptive function. In most of Nahuatl oral accounts, however, the words seem to be weaved on a linguistic canvas or to be painted with colorful verbal strokes so that what they refer could be 'seen', could be felt, more than understood.

According to cognitive features inherent to Nahuatl culture, what is to be known has to be felt.[5] What is verbally communicated should reach one's heart to be fully apprehended. The expression *teyollo ipan yauh in tlahtolli* "the speech (or the word) goes to one's heart"[6] clearly manifests this fact. Let's just mention, as an example, the visual apprehension of the departure from Iztapalapa of the Spanish troops, described by a Native witness whose oral relation was later transcribed by Sahagún in his *Historia*….

> *Auh njman ie ic oalolinj in ie ic oalcalaqujzque njcan Mexico; njman ie ic mocecencaoa, moiauchichioa; moolpia, vel qujilpia in iniautlatquj: njman ie iehoantin in in cavallos: njman ie ic motetecpana, mocuecuetilia, movivipana, mocecepantilia.*
> *Auh nauhteme in cavallos in iacattivitze, in attovitze, in teiacantivitze, in teiacaconotivitze, in te in teiacana; mocuecueptivi, ommocuecueptivi, onteixnamjctivi, havic tlachixtivi,*

5 *(Tla)mati* in nahuatl means 'to know' as well as 'to feel'.
6 Sahagún 1979, book iv, chapter 32; Johansson 2004b: 221.

> *nanacaztlachixtivitze, noviampa onjtztivi in cacaltzalan, tlaixtotocativitze, onacotlachixtivi in tlapanco:*[7]
>
> And thereupon they moved forth in order already to enter here into Mexico; thereupon they attired themselves, they arrayed themselves for war. They girt themselves; they bound on well their battle dress. Then their horses: thereupon they were, each one, disposed, arranged in rows, placed in order, put in line.
> And four horse[men] came ahead; they came first, they came leading the others, they came constituting the vanguard of the others; they led the others. They went continually turning about; they went turning about repeatedly. They went facing the people. They went looking hither and thither; they came scanning every side, they went looking everywhere among the groups of houses, they came examining things. They went looking up at the roof terraces.[8]

The text, with the rhythmical repetition of words, synonyms, is painting the scene more than describing it.

In the text we analyze in this article, the narrative sequence corresponding to the climbing of Mount Coatepetl and Huitzilopochtli's birth is outlining with words the architecture of the temple, a temple verbally sketched and then interiorized by the community during a ritual performance.

The notion of 'temple'

As we all know, in ancient Rome the temple (*templum*) was the imaginary square the *augur* was tracing with his stick in the sky. He remained seated during hours, observing what might occur in the space he had circumscribed and which became a sacred space: a temple, as well as all that was contained or occurring within that space.

When we mention the temple, we usually think of something 'built': A shrine, a church, whatever might be the shape of the edification. However the space-time of a dance is also a temple, as well as the ritual itself. An altered level of conscience produced by the consumption of hallucinogens is also a temple. A pictorial book and what it contains is a temple. The oral enunciation of a myth is a temple.

In Mesoamerica nature was a vast temple and each one of its geophysical manifestations a shrine. The deities and the places they inhabited seem to have converged in one notion. In the Yucatec Maya language, for example, *k'u* means both 'temple' and 'god'. The Nahuatl words for 'temple': *teocalli*, literally 'the house of the god', or *teopan* 'the place of the god' also suggest a fusion between what might have been a divinity and the space-time she or he occupied.

The Great Temple (*Templo Mayor*) of Mexico-Tenochtitlan was a huge and magnificent building, according to testimonies of the Spanish conquerors who could see it in 1519. It was the *axis mundi* of the Aztec community and the stone representation of

7 Sahagún 1979, book xii, chapter 15.
8 Translation: Sahagún 1970-1981, book xii, chapter 15: 39.

the idea they had of the world and of the mythical deeds corresponding to the birth of Huitzilopochtli at Mount Coatepetl. As it is well known, the Great Temple is the image of Mount Coatepetl, and its architectonic features were not only related to the cosmology of the Mexicas but more precisely to the mythical tribulations of his gestation in his mother's earthy womb, the antagonistic ascension of his kins: Coyolxauhqui and the Centzon Huitznahua and, ultimately, to his birth on the top of Mount Coatepetl.

Now, if the Great Temple is a stone made expression of these mythical tribulations, the verbal text which refers to them must also be considered as a temple, a temple made of words: verbal pieces made of sounds, disposed to form phrases, rhythmical sentences with a semantic referential content, subtle connotations and metaphors that produce a sense.

The construction of a text has been compared by Sahagun's informants, to the construction of a wall:

> *In ma iuh tepantli ooalmochiuhtia tlatolli,*[9] *achchi, achchitoton ooalmotlalitia, ooalmozalotia, cequi vel omozazalo otzotzop,otzotzonma, yn itlamian vel omotlamamacac, omotlaaquili, omotlatlaqualti, omoteiolloti, omotetzicueoalloti, tetzicueoaltica, teiollotica, ynic vel ooalzoquicoallotia tlatlatoltica, auh cequi zan omococoton, omocócototz, concotonqui, cocotontica, cocotocatica, cocoiontica xixipuchauhtica, xixipuchauhtoc, amo centlachixtoc, xixiquipiltic, xixiquipiliuhtoc, cocomotztic, cocomotzauhtoc.*[10]

> Like a wall is the account constructed. Little, a little at a time, was it laid on and joined. In part it was well joined, constructed, and leveled off. When finished it was ordered, completed, and made good in all parts. It was given a core of rock, and filled with small stones; with small stones [set it] a core of rock, and chinked with clay. [So] with the separate words. But in part they were only broken, reduced to fragments, in pieces, dismembered, with holes; with unevennesses and breaks; no regarded as complete; with interruptions; bruised, altered, and changed.[11]

The temple is going to be sketched with words, as the account is being built as a wall.

The mythological structure of the text

The narrative account of Huitzilopochtli's birth is rather extensive. We will only consider the very core of the story, the part which refers to the ascension of the mountain by Coyolxauhqui (the moon to be) and the Centzon Huitznahua, 'the four hundred southerners' (the stars).

In order to kill their mother, who had conceived by putting at her waist a ball of feathers which had descended upon her from heaven, Coyolxauhqui and the Centzon Huitznahua undertook the ascension to the top of Mount Coatepetl.

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9 'The account [or the speech] is to be built as a wall'.
10 Sahagún 1979, book IV, chapter 39.
11 Translation: Sahagún 1970-1981, book IV: 132.

The text

Niman ie ic vi, tetecpantihui, tlatlamantitihui, tlaieiecotihui, momamantihui, teiacana in Coyolxauhqui.
Auh in Quahuitl icac, niman ie ic motlalotitleco, in quinonotzaz in Huitzilopochtli. Quilhui ca ie huitze.
Niman quito in Huitzilopochtli, huel xontlachie ¿can ie huitze?
niman ie ic conilhuia in Quahuitl icac: ca ie tzompantitlan,
ie no ceppa quioalilhuia in Huitzilopochtli, ¿can ie huitze?
niman conilhui ca ie coaxalpan huitze,
ie no ceppa quioalilhui in Huitzilopochtli in Quahuitl icac: tla xontlachie ¿can ie huitze? niman ic conilhui ca ie apetlac,
ie no ceppa quioalilhui, ¿can ie huitze?
niman conilhui in Quahuitl icac: ca ie tlatlacapan iatihuitze.
Auh in Huitzilopochtli: ie no ceppa quioalilhui, in Quahuitl icac, quilhui tla xontlachia ¿can ie huitze?
niman ic conilhui in Quahuitl icac, ca iequene oalpanhuetzi, iequene oalaci teiacantihuitz in Coyolxauhqui.
Auh in Huitzilopochtli: niman ic oallacat.[12]

Then they go. They all go in order. They go in rows. They go wielding [their weapons]. They advance crouching. Coyolxauhqui leads them.
And Quahuitl icac then ran up to warn Huitzilopochtli. He said to him: "There they come".
Then Huitzilopochtli said: "Watch carefully, where do they come?"
Then Quauitl icac tells him: "Now they are at Tzompantitlan".
Again Huitzilopochtli tells him: "Where do they come?"
Then he said to him: "They arrived at Coaxalpan".
Once more Huitzilopochtli told Quahuitl icac: "Please, look where do they come?"
Then he told him: "Now they are at Apetlac".
Once again [Huitzilopochtli] told him: "Where do they come?"
Then Quahuitl icac told him: "Now they are coming along the slope".
And Huitzilopochtli again told Quahuitl icac, he said to him: "Watch carefully, where do they come?"
Then Quahuitl icac told him: "Now they are bursting forth; now they arrived here. Coyolxauhqui leads them".
And Huitzilopochtli then was born.[13]

A mythological reading of the text

Coatlicue was sweeping, performing penance of the top of Mount Coatepetl. She was 'taking care of the sweeping' (*quimocuitlahuiaya in tlachpanalli*).

The sweeping could be a metaphor of the wind that sweeps the land before the rainy season, transports the pollen and enables the fecundation of the plants, specifically maize. In a domestic context, it probably alludes to the woman awaiting pregnancy, or

12 Sahagún 1979, book III, chapter 1.
13 Translation: Patrick Johansson.

being pregnant, who takes care of the sweeping among other domestic tasks: *Ma oc itlan xonaquj in ochpanoaztli*[14] 'Now get into the sweeping'.[15]

As Coatlicue was sweeping, a ball of feathers descended upon her. She picked it up, put it on her bosom (*ixillan contlali*) and got pregnant (*otztic in Coatlicue*).

Coatlicue (the earth) was fecundated by an anonymous celestial agent. In anecdotic terms Coatlicue was on the top of Mount Coatepetl. Actually she was the Coatepetl, she was the mountain, she was the earth.

Humiliated by the fact their mother was pregnant and no one would appear to be the father of what was in her womb, the Huiznahua and Coyolxauhqui got angry and decided to kill their mother and the baby to be born.

From within, Huitzilopochtli comforted his mother and told her no to be afraid.

Coyolxauhqui and the Huitznahua decided to ascend to the top of the mountain to kill their mother and the unborn baby.

According to the Nahuatl cultural context, pregnancy was a combat against tenebrous antagonistic forces that opposed the birth of a child. The pregnant woman (*otztic*) was considered as a warrior (*yaocihuatl*). If she conceived, she was victorious, and had a prisoner: her child. The *titicih*, the midwives would shout victory cries.

If she died during her pregnancy or in childbirth, she was considered a warrior who had died in battle. She became a *mocihuaquetzqui*, and would go to the involutive part of *Tonatiuh ichan* 'the house of the sun', taking the sun from the zenith to *Cihuatlampa*, the west, the place where the sun sets.

Coatlicue won the battle thanks to her son Huitzilopochtli and to one of the Huitznahua: Quahuitl icac who informed Huitzilopochtli about the progression of his enemies.

When Coyolxauhqui and her brothers the Centzon Huitznahua arrived at the top of the mountain, Huitzilopochtli was born (*hualpanhuetzi*).

Huitzilopochtli pierced his elder sister, Coyolxauhqui, decapitated her, put her head at the edge of the mountain and let her body (*itlac* 'her trunk') fall below; he scattered the Centzon Huitznahua, and pursued them down below and around the mountain.

The phrastic architecture of the temple in the text

Coyolxauhqui and the Huitznahua prepare for the ascension:

> *Niman ie ic vi, tetecpantihui, tlatlamantitihui, tlaieiecotihui, momamantihui, teiacana in Coyolxauhqui.*
>
> Then they go. They all go in order. They go in rows. They go wielding (their weapons). They advance crouching. Coyolxauhqui leads them.

14 Sahagún 1979, book VI, chapter 25.
15 *I. e.* 'Take very much care of the sweeping'.

Besides the vivid description they provide, the four verbs used, *tetecpantihui*, *tlatlamantihui*, *tlayeyecotihui* and *momamantihui* with the duplication of the syllables *tetec-*, *tlatla-*, *yeye-* and *maman-*, form a four sided figure: a verbal square (*nacace* in Nahuatl) which could visually express to the four cardinal regions, allude to the squared basement of a pyramid, and perhaps to the squared constellation known as *tianquiztli* 'the market place' (Figure 6). *Tianquiztli* is also the name of a constellation evoked in a ritual of the month Ochpaniztli corresponding to the myth.[16] *Tianquizpan* 'the market place banner' which the godess Toci wears as a paper crown, actually represents the Pegasus constellation that appears with the Pleiades (*miec*) and the fire drill (Gemini) (*mamalhuaztli*), at midnight, in the middle of the sky (*nepantla*) in a ceremony linked to Huitzilopochtli's birth, and referred to in the Codices Matritenses de la Real Biblioteca de Madrid.[17] The three constellations: *tianquiztli*, *miec*, and *mamalhuaztli*, their apparitions in the middle of the sky (*nepantla*), their descent (*mopiloto*) and the fleeing of the stars (*hualcholoa*) at dawn (*tlatlalchipahua*), are probably related to the myth here considered.

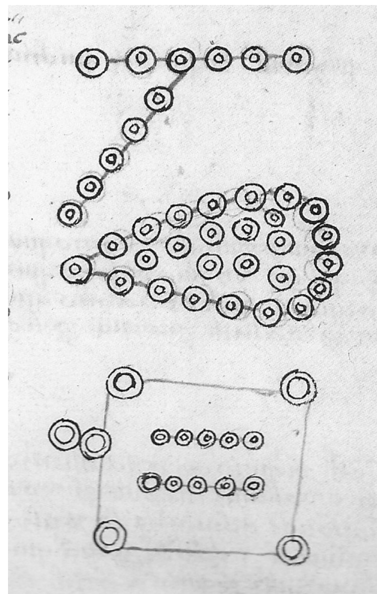


Figure 6. The constellations *tianquiztli, miec and mamalhuaztli* (Codices Matritenses 1558-1585: fol. 282r. © Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid).

16 Sahagún 1970-1981: 121; Sahagún 1979, book II, chapter 30.

17 Códices Matritenses 1558-1585: fol. 282r.

It is also important to point out that *tetecpantihui* which suggests the Huitznahua warriors were moving forward 'in order', might also indicate they were organized in groups of twenty. *Tecpantli* in nahuatl, refers that quantity of items and is an equivalent of *cempohualli* 'one count'. *Tetecpantihui* would mean 'they go by groups of twenty' as well as 'they go in rows'. In the vigesimal context of Aztec arithmetics, the 'four hundred southerners' were actually twenty groups of twenty warriors. The verb *tlatlamantihui* also entrails a similar dilogical feature. It indicates that the Centzon Huitznahua were advancing 'in rows' but it also means each group was a whole (*tlamantli*) in terms not precised in the narration. This squared formation of stars was led by the moon to be: Coyolxauhqui.[18]

Quahuitl icac

While the four hundred warriors led by Coyolxauhqui were preparing for the ascension of Mount Coatepetl, a Huitznahua named Quahuitl icac, literally 'the tree that stands' [erected], who actually 'stands on both sides', or 'who delivers information to both sides' [19] (*necoc quitlalitinenca itlatol*) ran up to inform Huitzilopochtli about what was going on:

> *Auh in Quahuitl icac, niman ie ic motlalotitleco, in quinonotzaz in Huitzilopochtli quilhui: ca ie huitze.*
>
> And Quauitl icac then ran up to warn Huitzilopochtli. He said to him:
> "Here they come".

Quahuitl icac is Huitzilopochtli's helper (*itepalehuicauh*), his elder brother (*itiacauh*). During the ceremonial running of Panquetzaliztli he is dressed like the god Paynal, with stripes of chalk on his body (*motiçahuahuan*) and holds in his arms the image of the god he was given in Nonoalco.

Quahuitl icac is the *axis* around which the narration will be articulated and the Great Temple verbally constructed. A canonical scheme question/answer will thus shape the temple.

The verbal shaping of the temple

1.

Question:

> *Niman quito in Huitzilopochtli, huel xontlachie can ie huitze?*
>
> Then Huitzilopochtli said: "Watch carefully, where do they come?"

18 Coyolxauhqui is not the moon yet. She will become it after being beheaded by Huitzilopochtli. Her head will actually be the selenic luminary, and her dismembered body the land for agriculture.

19 Sahagún 1970-1981, book III: 2.

Answer:

> *Niman ie ic conilhuia in Quahuitl icac: ca ie Tzonpantitlan,*
>
> Then Quauitl icac tells him: "Now they are at *Tzompantitlan*".

It is rather difficult to situate *Tzompantitlan* in the context of the ascension here referred. In the ceremonial center of Mexico-Tenochtitlan it was the place where there was the *tzompantli* 'skull rack', on the ground yard, at the foot of the Great Temple.

It was also the place where the image made of wood of the *pochtecas* who had died in an expedition far from home was buried.

According to Olmos (Siméon 1977: 733), it was where warriors were given the devices corresponding to their rank. The expression *niquetza itzompanco* 'I raise someone in his *tzompantli*' could allude to this.

In the ritual context of the month Ochpaniztli, closely related to Huitzilopochtli's birth, it was the place where the high priest wearing Toci's flayed skin and representing the goddess, tramped upon her drum (*conicça in ihuehueuh*).[20]

The *tzompancuahuitl* or *tzompantli* is also the name of a tree (*Erythrina coralloides*), called *colorín* in Spanish.

In a pictorial context, the image of the *tzompantli*, related to the god of dawn Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli could be significant to identify this first stage in the climbing of Mount Coatepetl and the corresponding level of the Great Temple.

Tzompantitlan could have been nothing else but the ground, the earth, *Tepetl itzintla*, the fundament of the hill, the place where the *tzompantli*, the 'skull rack' stood, which emerged from within the earth (Figure 7).

Tzompantitlan is the first stage of the ascension and probably the ground level of the *Templo Mayor*.

tzompantitlan

20 Sahagún 1970-1981: 23; Sahagún 1979, book II, chapter 30.

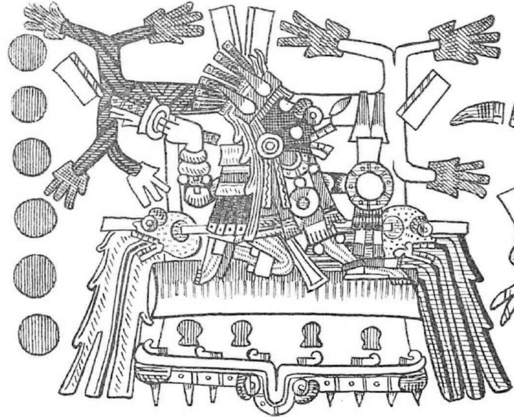


Figure 7. Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli the god of dawn and the *tzompantli*, the skull rack (Codex Borgia. Seler 1904: Pl. 19).

2.
Question:

Ie no ceppa quioalilhuia in Huitzilopochtli: can ie huitze?

Again Huitzilopochtli tells him: "Where do they come?"

Answer:

Niman conilhui ca ie coaxalpan huitze,

Then he [Quauitl icac] told him: "Now they are at Coaxalpan".

Coaxalpan is quoted by Sahagún's informants. It is the first landing of the temple. Referring the action of a high priest in the month Ochpaniztli, an informant said:

Auh in ie iuhqui, in oxxinachpixoa nima ie ic vi in motlatizque. Niman ie ic oaltemo in tizatl yhuan ihuitl, quauhxicaltica mani, in ipac Huitzilopochtli. Auh in quioaltemohuia tizatl, tlenamacac. In oc axitico tlatzintlan, mec quimana in uncan Coaxalpan[21]

And when this was done, when they had scattered the seed, thereupon they went to hide themselves away. Thereupon came down the [white] chalk and [white] feathers; they lay in a wooden vessel above [in the temple of] Uizilopochtli. And he who brought down the chalk was the fire priest. When he had come reaching the bottom, then he placed it there at *Coaxalpan*.[22]

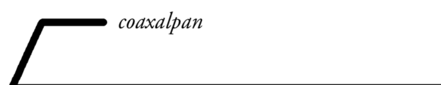
21 Sahagún 1979, book II, chapter 30: 125.

22 Sahagún 1970-1981, book II: 125. The English version translates *coaxalpan* as 'on the landing' avoiding the specific name of this landing.

The translation of the Spanish version of Sahagún is as follows:

> Then, a priest descended from the top of the *cu* [temple] of Huitzilopochtli [...] he put it [a small wooden box full of chalk] in a place called *Coaxalpan*. Which was a space between the stairs of the *cu* and the lower yard, to which space one ascended by four or five steps, or six.[23]

Coaxalpan is the second level of *Templo Mayor*.



3.
Question:

> *Ie no ceppa quioalilhui in Huitzilopochtli in Quahuitl icac: tla xontlachie: can ie huitze?*
>
> Once more Huitzilopochtli told Quauitl icac: "Please look, where do they come?"

Answer:

> *Niman ic conilhui ca ie apetlac,*
>
> Then he told him: "Now (they are) at Apetlac".

Apetlac is often quoted in Sahagún's *Historia*, in Nahuatl and Spanish versions. Describing a sequence of the rituals of the month Panquetzaliztli, corresponding precisely to Huitzilopochtli's birth, an informant said:

> *Auh in oquizato painalton. Niman ie ic temanalo, tetecpanalo in ispan Huitzilopochtli, in oncan apetlac, nappa in quinteucallaiaoalochtiaia. Auh in ontlaiaoaloque. Ie no ceppa quintecpana, ceceiaca quinmana. Niman ie ic tleco in painalton, in iicpac Huitzilopochtli.*[24]
>
> And when Painalton emerged, then [the bathed slaves] were placed in order, in rows, before Huitzilopochtli; there at Apetlac four times did they take them in procession around the temple. And when they had been taken around it, once again they put them in file; they placed them one by one in order. Then Painalton ascends to the top [of the temple of] Huitzilopochtli.[25]
>
> *In otemoco tlatzintla in oncan itlaquaia Huitzilopochtli, quisnamictimoquetza in tonatiuh. Niman ie ic coniiaoa in iscopa, nauhcampaisti iuh quichioa.*[26]
>
> When he had come down [to the pyramid base], where the banquet table of Huitzilopochtli was, he stood facing the sun. Then he gestured toward it; to all four directions he did this.[27]

23 Sahagún 1989: 135 (44).
24 Sahagún 1979, book IX, chapter 14.
25 Translation Patrick Johansson.
26 Sahagún 1979, book IX, chapter 14.
27 Sahagún 1979, book IX, chapter 14.

Sahagún's version:

> When they went up by the stairs of the *cu* [temple], they took ahead of them all four prisoners, hands and feet tied whom they had tied in the landing of the *cu* called *apetlac*, which is where the stairs begin.[28]

Apetlac is the second landing of the temple.

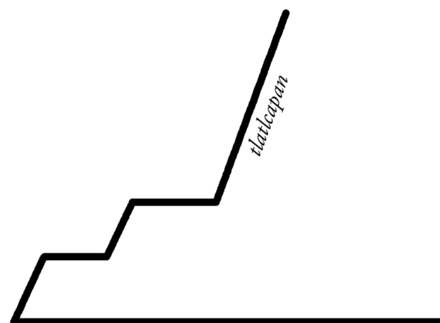
4.
Question:

> *Ie no ceppa quioalilhui: can ie huitze?*
>
> Once again [Huitzilopochtli] told him: "Where do they come?"

Answer:

> *Niman conilhui in Quahuitl icac: ca ie Tlatlacapan iatihuitze,*
>
> Then Quauitl icac told him: "Now they are coming along the slope".

Tlatlacapan is the intensive form of *tlacapan* 'the slope'. The duplication of the radical *tla* in the substantive term, suggests the steep aspect of the slope and the verbal dynamism of the ascension. The sources don't mention any part of the Great Temple with this name, but it is most probable that it corresponds to the very abrupt stairway that led to the top of the pyramid, from the *apetlac* landing.



28 Sahagún 1989: 141-142 (29).

5.
Question:

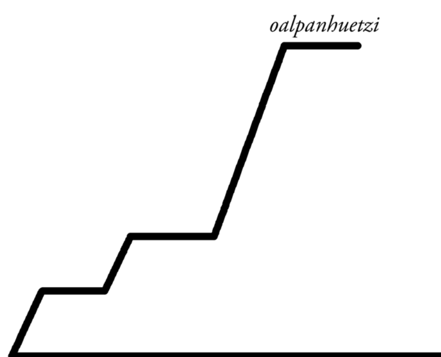
Auh in Huitzilopochtli: ie no ceppa quioalilhui, in Quahuitl icac. Quilhui tla xontlachia: can ie huitze?

And Huitzilopochtli once more told Quauitl icac; he told him: "Watch carefully where do they come?"

Answer:

Niman ic conilhui in Quahuitl icac, ca iequene oalpanhuetzi, iequene teiacatihuiz in Coyolxauhqui.

Then Quahuitl icac told him: "Now they are bursting forth; now they are arriving here. Coyolxauhqui leads them".



After climbing the steep slope (*tlatlacapan*) that led to the top Coatepetl, Coyolxauhqui and the Cenzton Huiznahua 'emerged' on the top of the mount. The nahuatl term *hualpanhuetzi* 'to emerge' is the word which is used when the baby is coming out of his (or her) mother's womb, in childbirth.

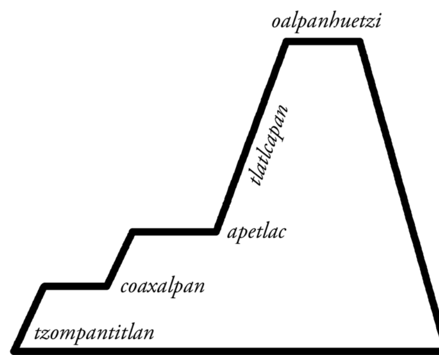
In that precise moment, Huitzilopochtli was born (*auh in Huitzilopochtli niman ic oallacat*). Then someone called Tochancalqui to set fire to the *xiuhcoatl* ('the turquoise serpent) that Huitzilopochtli was holding. Huitzilopochtli pierced his elder sister (*quixil in Coyolxauhqui*), cut her head (*quetchcotontihuetz in itzontecon*), put it at the edge of Coatepetl (*on mocauh in itempa Coatepetl*), and let her body fall below, all along the stairs (*auh in itlac tlatzintlan huetzico*).

The ascension of Coatepetl by Coyolxauhqui and the Cenzton Huiznahua defined the different levels of the Great Temple as well as the different stages in Coatlicue's pregnancy. The place where Huitzilopochtli 'emerged' (*hualpanhuetzi*) is in fact *Tlacazouhcan*, literally 'the place where people are bored' or 'where people are extended

(on the sacrificial stone) with open arms'. As a matter of fact, *zohua* (*çoua*) in nahuatl means 'to open', 'to extend', 'to bore'. *Çohuatl* is also a variant of *cihuatl* 'woman'. The metaphorical expression *tepan nicçoa in cueitl, in huipilli* 'I give a wife to someone'[29] could weave an intrincated tissue of mythological threads.

Auh Huitzilopochtli: niman ic oallacat.

And Huitzilopochtli then was born.



The head of Coyolxauhqui would be the moon, standing at the edge of Coatepetl, and in the urban context of the Great Temple, on the top, near Huitzilopochtli. The dismembered parts of her body, might represent the earth to be cultivated and would be associated each one with a cardinal region.

As for the Centzon Huitznahua, they were scattered from the top of Coatepetl and pursued around the mountain. Four times did he chase them around the mountain, and those who could escape fled toward the South.

The Great Temple of Mexico-Tenochtitlan is the ceremonial urban version of Mount Coatepetl, of what happened there in *illo tempore* and was periodically re-enacted in the space-time of the corresponding rituals. The myth of Huitzilopochtli's birth on Coatepetl was the fundament of the temple, but beyond the action verbally referred, the narrative structure of the text contributed to shape a temple made of words. It is probable that the temple verbally sketched had preceded the pyramid, and that the stages in the ascension of Mount Coatepetl by Coyolxauhqui and the Centzon Huitznahua had defined what was going to be its 'archi-tectonic' features before it was built in stone. Whatever might have been the case, the image of the Great Temple was stamped in the verbal account and printed in the Mexicas' minds and hearts.

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29 Olmos, quoted by Siméon (1977: 114).

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History, Tradition, Myth and Territory in a Nahua Village (Guerrero, Mexico)

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To my dear and courageous friend, Modesto Vázquez Salgado (†)
We all miss you very much.

Abstract: In this chapter I will try to show, by considering one contemporary case in the State of Guerrero, the Nahua community of Atliaca, how indigenous *pueblos* maintain the tradition of using local history to negotiate the protection of their land and native culture with the Mexican state. This process is especially evident in the case of Atliaca and the recovery that it made of its land and historical documents after a long struggle. In this case the history that is recovered, or resurrected, is one in which the *pueblo* maintains communal lands. The town of Atliaca, is home to a multitude of intersecting traditions and rituals as well as tales about local caves and spell. The *pueblo's* inhabitants thus move in two worlds, combining – sometimes successfully – aspects of their traditional culture with new cultural elements introduced from without. Furthermore, they effect this combination dynamically, but without amalgamating the traditional and non-traditional. Rather, they move back and forth between the two depending upon the circumstances at hand.

Keywords: local history; tradition; territory, Nahua; Guerrero; Mexico; 20th-21st century.

Resumen: En este capítulo voy a mostrar cómo los pueblos indígenas mantienen la tradición de usar la historia local para negociar la protección de su tierra y su cultura nativa con el Estado mexicano. Considero un caso contemporáneo en el Estado de Guerrero, la comunidad nahua de Atliaca. La recuperación que hizo de sus tierras y de los documentos históricos después de una larga lucha es muy evidente. En este caso, la historia que se recupera o resucita, es aquella en la que el pueblo mantiene tierras comunales. La ciudad de Atliaca es el hogar de una multitud de tradiciones y rituales interconectados, así como de relatos sobre las cuevas y hechizos locales. Los habitantes del pueblo se mueven en dos mundos, combinando –a veces con éxito– aspectos de su cultura tradicional con nuevos elementos culturales introducidos desde afuera. Además, efectúan esta combinación dinámicamente, pero sin amalgamar lo tradicional con lo no tradicional. Más bien, se mueven de un lado a otro dependiendo de las circunstancias a la mano.

Palabras clave: historia local; tradición; territorio; nahua; Guerrero; México; siglo XX-XXI.

1 I thank Daniel Graña-Behrens for his kind invitation to submit this work. I also thank Adolfo de Paz for his wonderful invitation in 2003 to be part of his Anthropology School Project. Last but not least, I thank young English translator Alister Mcreadie for his invaluable aid in translating and correcting my Spanish text to English.

Introduction

The formulations of the past that indigenous groups elaborate serve as a resource for undertaking social action in the present (Hill 1988: 9). In this way, when an indigenous *pueblo* conveys information in their historical accounts that does not correspond to rigid historical 'truth', it is demonstrating how historical knowledge is used to create a moral continuity between the past and the present (Hill 1988: 66, 76; Ruiz Medrano 2014). For example, in observing the Nasa from Colombia, Rappaport offers an insight that could be applied to indigenous people from Mexico, or even to indigenous peoples across Latin America more broadly: "[...] to be a good Nasa historian, one must have more than a grasp of the past: one must also be capable of articulating past and present in order to change the future" (Rappaport 1990: 195).

Consequently, all of the information about their past, about the image they held of their own history, that Mexico's indigenous peoples set down in their written, oral and painted tradition: *Techialoyan* codices, primordial titles, painted maps, and other pictographic and written documents, constitutes a process of negotiation. It is not something fixed and frozen in texts, but something fluid, that must be studied in its social, political, and historical specificity (Ruiz Medrano 2011, 2013). In the act of recovering their history, the indigenous *pueblos* have certain members who play a predominant role. Their leaders, for example, serve as the principal repository of the *pueblo's* collective memory, its history, and folklore. The memories or stories which they transmit are shaped by present-day concerns (Abercrombie 1998: xxiv, 85, 200-201).

To succeed in preserving their past and transmitting it into the present, indigenous communities have had to resist the colonial and national states alike, both of which consciously attempted (and, in the case of some national states, may still attempt) to redesign and mold the indigenous past as part of their strategies of colonization and domination. (Abercrombie 1998: 16) Clearly, "colonialism produces not only a contention of societies and cultures but also a conflict of history" (Abercrombie 1998: 18), although books and the culture of written law have been and continue to be highly valued by the indigenous, oral tradition has been and continues to be deeply respected by them as well (Abercrombie 1998: 117). The oral tradition enables the indigenous communities to recount their past in a dynamic and fluid way; it entails a continuous process of creative and collective transformation.

The art of memory requires not only remembering but also what has been called "structured forgetting" (Salomon 1982). Thus, both Salomon and Abercrombie have argued that the contradiction, in seeking to reduce oral narrative to writing, lies in the reality of two irreconcilable notions of time and history. The Spaniards' perception of historical time as linear and unitary, and as a sequence lacking any repetition of events, makes it impossible for them to absorb and comprehend the distinctly different

perception of historical time found in the Andes, where the validity of a sequence of episodes in a narrative does not require that it fit neatly into a single master narrative (Abercrombie 1998: 195).

This argument is equally valid for the indigenous peoples of Mexico. In Mexico as in the Andes, the historical land titles, for example, are held onto and transmitted among indigenous authorities and families from generation to generation, because they serve to protect the land which, in turn, harbors the memory of the *pueblo* founded by their ancestors and, as such, must be safeguarded for future generations. Each boundary marker of the indigenous lands likewise helps protect them and helps preserve historical memory. In keeping with this tradition, marking off the boundaries of a *pueblo's* lands has been and remains today a ritualized act in which the *pueblo* as a whole was and is fully engaged. When indigenous *pueblos* take up arms to defend their lands it is not a sign of their descent into irrational violence but of their determination to protect a history and identity which must be passed on to future generations (Abercrombie 1998: 287-288, 290; Ruiz Medrano 2011; Ruiz Medrano, Barrera Gutiérrez & Barrera Gutiérrez 2012).

Atliaca: A Nahua village in the mountains of Guerrero

Atliaca (Figure 1) is the largest Nahua village in the mountainous region of the state of Guerrero referred to as *La Montaña* ('The Mountain'). I stayed there for several short seasons of fieldwork during a period of a little over two years, between 2003 and 2005. According to the 2005 census, Atliaca at the time had a population of 7,439 inhabitants.[2] Almost 70 % of them spoke Spanish as a second language; the area is mainly Nahuatl speaking, and belongs to the mestizo[3] municipality of Tixtla. The village is small, with traditional architecture. They have a school, electricity, and a shelter for indigenous children from the surroundings, although it is more often used for children from Atliaca itself.[4] The community has had serious problems with drainage and drinking water, in 2002 four children died from drinking water from the faucet that was contaminated with fecal matter (Habana 2002).

2 Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística, Censo 2005. I believe that Atliaca's inhabitants could number almost 9,000 people. It's important to notice that Mexican Government National Census have many errors, especially because they center on political programs and not on an exhaustive data recollection.

3 In Colonial times this term generally referred to people of mixed race. But since probably the 19th century and until recent decades, it mostly defines indigenous people that can't or won't speak their indigenous native language.

4 The field information contained in this article was mostly provided to me by Maestro Modesto Vázquez Salgado (†), to whom I am deeply grateful for the time he spent talking with me throughout 2003, 2004 and part of 2005.

Figure 1. Atliaca, State of Guerrero, Mexico (photo: courtesy of Adolfo de Paz).

Most of the local people work in the fields. They have common land that is used in particular for growing maize. However, a number of them work in the brickworks, also located on communal land, where they make bricks from black clay. This industry began in around 1979, when the National Indigenous Institute (INI) sent consultants to Atliaca to teach residents the trade. The brickworks employ local people, and the bricks are sold for a good price in several different locations, including Chilpancingo, the capital of the state of Guerrero. Although clay reserves are fast running out, manufacturing bricks currently provides a decent income for the village, which means that the people of Atliaca no longer have to emigrate to other places like Zumpango, where they used to go to pick tomatoes, Huitzuco or Iguala, where they would travel for the fall harvest, or Tepecua and Tazmala, where people also used to go to find work (all located in present day State of Guerrero).

Atliaca has a large *cabildo* or local government house that accommodates the local authorities, who govern according to indigenous laws and are elected on a yearly basis. The village is steeped in tradition. For example, it is famous locally because it has a deep cave located on its land called Oztotempan, where every May 3rd a ritual for rain petition is held, as in many towns all over Mexico (*Día de la Santa Cruz*, Holly Cross Day). In the case of Atliaca's ritual, people come from more than thirty nearby communities to take part in an extraordinary ceremony that lasts all night long. On this occasion, the

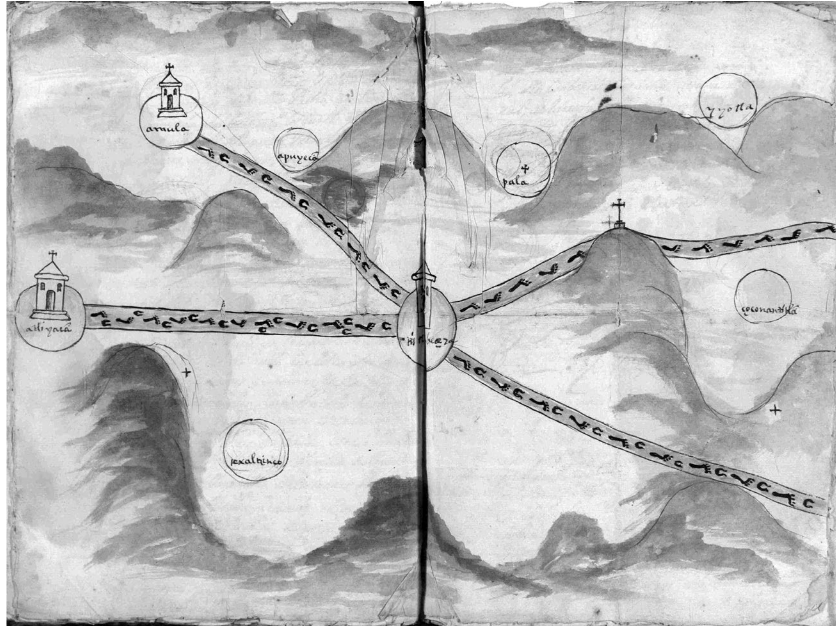

Figure 2. Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico, (AGN), Map No. 1884. Date: 1619 (Ruiz Medrano 2011: 220, fig. 4.3; © Archivo General de la Nación).

local people throw enormous offerings into the depths of the cave, while also praying and sacrificing animals (Sepúlveda 1973).[5]

As the inhabitants of Atliaca explained to me, giants live at the bottom of the cavern and that is why the offerings they throw in must be so large. Around the wide rim of the cave, twelve crosses have been raised, each by a different local village. The crosses are part of a long-standing tradition, as is worship at the Oztotempan cave itself, which is probably pre-Hispanic in origin. The village of Atliaca is known to have been founded in pre-Hispanic times. During the colonial period, it was represented as a rural settlement belonging to Tixtla on a map from the beginning of the 17th century (Figure 2) (Ruiz Medrano 2011: 220).

I was told of an unusual incident that took place a few years ago. A group of evangelist Nahua from the same village of Atliaca set out one night and tore up all the crosses around the Oztotempan cave in protest at what they considered 'idolatry'. This act – sacrilegious in the eyes of the rest of the local indigenous population – almost cost the protesters their lives; The people of Atliaca attempted to lynch them, and they were forced to flee the village for a time.

5 Unfortunately, this extraordinary petition ceremony has been poorly documented.

At the start of my fieldwork in Atliaca, in November of 2003, I undertook an activity with the Nahua children at the village shelter. For an afternoon, I had them draw on large sheets of paper with colored pencils and crayons. My idea was to have the drawings framed and hang them on the walls of the shelter's auditorium. At the end of the afternoon, the children showed me their indigenous manuscript paintings, and among them were two depictions of Oztotempan drawn by two little Nahua girls aged between eight and ten years, Karla and Miriam (Figures 3 and 4).

As can be seen in the figures, both drawings show the crosses around the mouth of the cave, and one of them has an enthusiastically written caption explaining the tradition of the Oztotempan *fiesta*. Clearly recognizable in the drawings is a style typical of the Mesoamerican pictography tradition, with a depiction of the *tepetl* or 'mountain' and the representation of *atl* or 'water'. A comparison of the drawings with an indigenous pictographic map from the end of the 16th century, from a village relatively close to Atliaca called Tlalcosautitlán (Figure 5) is sufficient for these similarities to be noted. The style of the drawings, especially the element of water, can be observed to be very alike. However, the most interesting part of all this was that shortly after I had seen the drawings, I was told that both girls, Karla and Miriam, were the daughters of some of the evangelical locals who had pulled down the crosses a few years earlier.

This case demonstrated that, under cultural conditions in which a new religion was being adopted, there was simultaneously a tacit recognition of more traditional cultural practices, which had not been eradicated by the new religious culture. In this instance there is in fact a parallel recognition of the cultural traditions implicit in the day-to-day collective imagination.

The people of Atliaca without doubt have a great deal of interest in their local history and traditions, as illustrated by the case of Karla and Miriam. In the village in April of 2003, I met Don Xavier, who earns a living by fixing wind instruments that he finds in dumps and at scrap-metal markets. With dedication and hard work, Javier restores these instruments impeccably, and he plays his tubas and trumpets with great enthusiasm once they are repaired.

Don Xavier confided in me that he had in his possession some ancient codices relating to the history of Atliaca, which he guarded jealously. When I expressed my curiosity he enigmatically produced several contemporary reproductions of Mayan codices of a very common kind, which he assured me he had inherited from his grandparents. He explained that they were very old and that they narrated the pre-Hispanic history of Atliaca (Figure 6), and he confidently informed me that he could read them because his grandparents had taught him how. Don Javier explained that the codices showed the route that the ancestors of Atliaca had travelled. He also said that there had never been

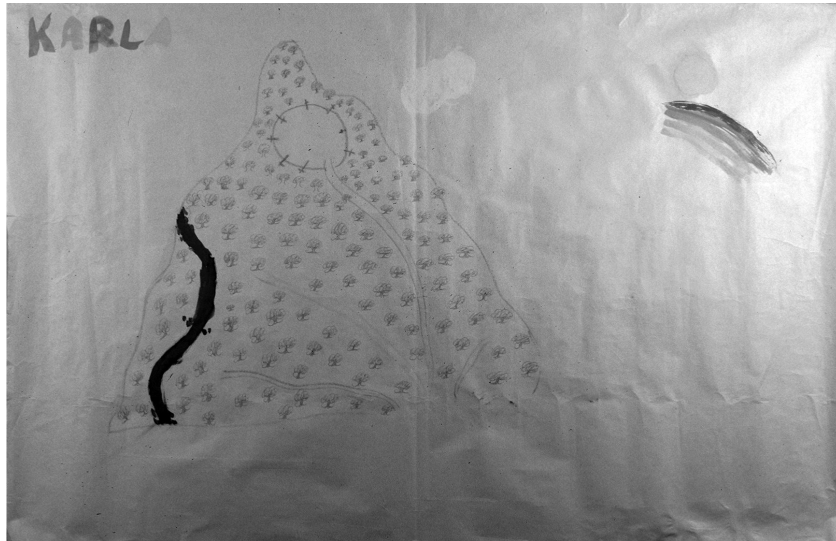

Figure 3. Drawing by Karla, Atliaca, November 2003
(photo: courtesy of Adolfo de Paz).

Figure 4. Drawing by Miriam, Atliaca, November 2003
(photo: courtesy of Adolfo de Paz).

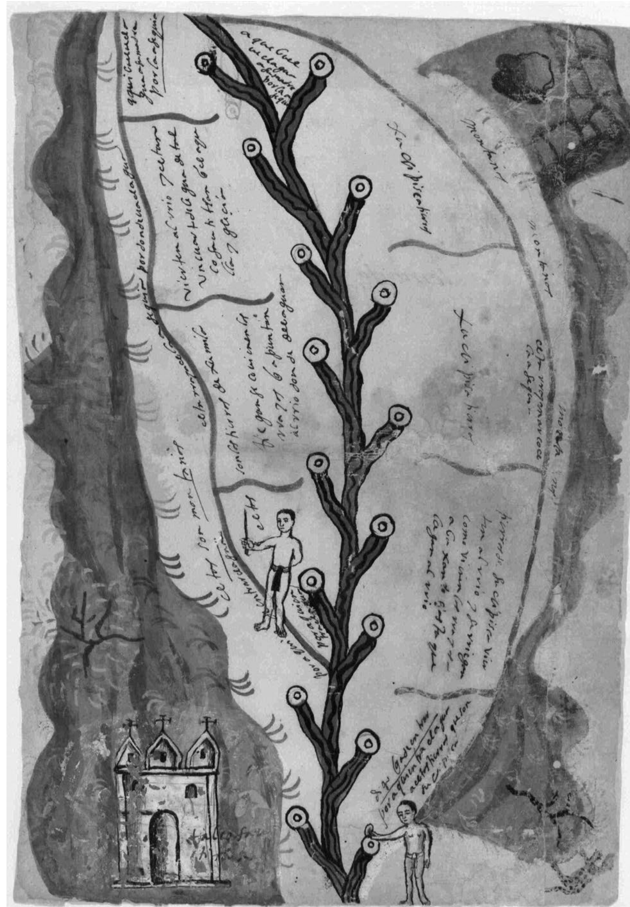

Figure 5. Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico, (AGN), Map No. 1803. Date: 1587 (Ruiz Medrano 2011: 223, fig. 4.6; © Archivo General de la Nación).

any Spanish people in his village, and that he had been taught the Spanish language by *gringos* (US American people).

In a sense, Don Xavier is right. Research carried out 15 years ago shows that Atliaca, among other villages in *La Montaña* in Guerrero, was founded following a migration of people from Xochimilco (in the Central Valley of Mexico), possibly dating to before the Spanish conquest and the final wave of which probably occurred in the 17th century. What is interesting is that Javier reconstructed this tradition and explained it using a contemporary reproduction of a Mayan codex.

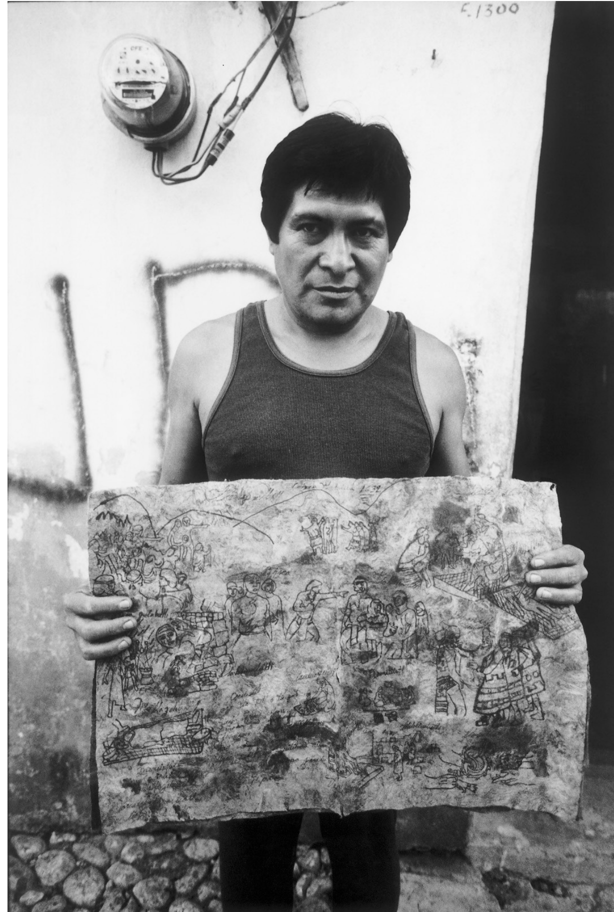

Figure 6. Don Xavier with the map, Atlica, April 2003 (photo: courtesy of Adolfo de Paz).

In relation to other cultural traditions that have survived, the people of Atliaca believe in *caballeritos*, from the Spanish word for little knights or horseman, who fly through the night sky and can sometimes be seen in the form of comets. These figures are completely benevolent and defend people from other beings who are considered wicked, and who are constantly trying to bring discord to the lives of ordinary people. Traditions of this kind are based on long time ago oral traditions, but on occasion it is possible to trace the history of some of them through historical documentation.

The people of Atliaca recall the legend of a bridge, probably from late Colonial time, on the road out of the village. Like the village church tower, the mortar that holds these structures together is said to be made of human blood. The concept, which is very widespread among Mesoamerican peoples, is rooted in the notion that the stones of pre-Hispanic temples were cemented in place with the blood of human sacrificial victims. For example, in the *Relaciones Geográficas* from the end of the 16th century (geographical accounts) of Tlaxcala it is stated that the stones of the pyramid complex at Cholula were held together with the blood of children: "They would kill children of two and three years, and using their blood mixed with lime in the manner of *zulaque*,[6] they would render the fountains that flowed [...]" (Relaciones Geográficas 1984: Tomo 1, 250). Interestingly, in the Andes its ancient population also believed that blood, provided through human sacrifice, was an indispensable element to guarantee the durability and strength of cult stone buildings. For example, Dean mentions that

> [...] on the second siq'i of Antisuyu was the quarry called Curovilca, and says that 'they sacrificed to it so that it might not give out, and so that the buildings built of stone from it might not fall' (*Sacrificábanle por que no se acabase ni se cayesen los edificios que dellas se hacían*) (Dean 2010: 206, n.118).

But let's go back to our case; on the bridge at Atliaca, a supernatural being appears to nighttime travelers, normally in the form of an attractive woman who uses her beauty to lure unsuspecting men. When they come close, she seduces them and has sexual relations with them; when the sex act reaches completion, the temptress immediately turns into a horribly deformed being, takes the man's semen, strikes him in the face with it, raises it to the night sky, and then tosses it into a fire. The terrified victim is forced to flee and, as the legend goes, any unlucky soul who has the poor judgment to allow himself to be seduced will die three days later.

When I asked the people who told me this story why the semen was raised to the sky, they responded that the being did this to venerate its 'god'. I was also told that the being was neither man nor woman, but was a kind of sorcerer that took energy from human semen. While the legend has elements that could be considered as belonging to Western evil beings, such as the *incubus*, and its origins may lie in the traditional European concept of witchcraft, including the witches' coven (Ginzburg 2004), what is notable in this case is that there is a document from the Inquisition in the 17th century that recounts the same story for the same region of Atliaca.

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6 *Zulaque*: A paste generally made with tow fibers, lime, oil, and ground slag or glass, used to seal the joints of conduits in water pipes and for other waterworks.

On February 19th, 1663, a prosecutor received a letter that had been delivered to the inquisitorial courts from Tixtla, which as previously mentioned is the capital of the municipality where Atliaca is located, and is around 15 kilometers distant. A note was made in the margin of the letter that says "this notice is vague and pertains to Indians that are not subject to the tribunal". The report stated that:

> There are some Indians that take the form of women and therein skulk among the shadows in all the states, and speaking with them [with men] [using pretexts] of love draw them to carnal excess in the belief that they are women, and in this act they take the semen in their hand and strike the man about the face with it and return to their male form, and those who [illegible] die within three or four days with no cure whatsoever, and with this diabolical invention seven or eight Spaniards, *mestizos* and *mulattos* have died, and others who did not indulge in such excess are witness to it and have remained alive.[7]

Curiously, at the end of the letter the inquisitorial authorities noted the following:

> It [this notice] is also vague like the previous one, as it does not state how this is known or whom it was heard from, and the accuser is now deceased and therefore cannot be questioned.[8]

Could the person who reported the matter have become a victim of the nighttime sorcerers that people claim are at large around the village of Atliaca?

The letter in question is clearly referring to the same narrative that is currently told in Atliaca, albeit with one or two notable modifications. The most important of these is that today, the account in Atliaca revolves around a supernatural being, while in the report of the 17th century it is claimed that there are Indigenous men who disguise themselves as women to debase Spanish, *mestizo* and *mulatto* men. As this was a matter involving indigenous people, and because the accuser, a Spaniard, had died shortly afterward, the Inquisition declined to take action.

The accusation is clear: The victims are Spaniards, *mestizos* and *mulattos*. In colonial times, Atliaca was placed under the jurisdiction of the neighboring city of Tixtla, populated mostly by *criollo* cattle ranchers of Spanish descent, many of whom had *mulatto* workers that the indigenous people undoubtedly feared. Nowadays there is a traditional dance in Tixtla referred to as Tlacololeros, in which men dance with their faces painted black, with monkey skins symbolizing wildness on their hats, and with long whips in their hands that they crack hard against the ground as they dance frenetically. This is obviously a reference to the black foremen employed by white landowners, and the terrifying

7 My parentheses, Archivo General de la Nación, México (from now on AGN), *Ramo de Inquisición*, Vol. 513, Expediente 5.
8 AGN, *Ramo de Inquisición*, Vol.513, Expediente 5.

whips they used. *Criollo* (Europeans born in Spanish America) and *mestizo* ranchers without doubt caused untold damage to the lands of nearby indigenous settlements.

The Nahua people of Atliaca in fact probably managed to survive intact because their village was a way station and place of rest for the merchants and mule trains that travelled from Mexico City to Acapulco, due to its location just off the road. This may have allowed Atliaca to persist as an independent village, albeit at odds with the *criollos* and *mestizos* who inhabited, and continue to inhabit, Tixtla. From the early 17th century some of the indigenous people from Atliaca and the surroundings probably adopted a kind of defense mechanism whereby they would terrorize the local *criollos*, mestizos and *mulattos* by dressing up as women and, possibly, committing the acts that they are accused of in the letter. Over time, this mechanism became part of the village's story-telling tradition, and the indigenous people were naturally replaced in their role by a supernatural being. Whatever the case, the oral tradition of Atliaca is remarkably similar to the accusation filed in the 17th century.

The letter in question also mentions some beliefs that are still held by the people currently living in Atliaca, including a belief in shape-shifting *nahualli* [9] (Martínez González 2011). For example, the letter states:

> [...] that the earth and animals talk, and men become animals and birds of all types that they call *nahual*, and it is said that in this form they have done much evil to many people in all states, and in all of them it is said that both men and women may take this form, even though the ministers have attempted to solve this.[10]

I have often been told in Atliaca that people are *nanahualtin*. One of the villagers that spoke to me most often about this subject was Maestro Modesto Vázquez Salgado. He was once visiting the house of a friend in the village and noticed that his host had nothing to offer him to eat; the host, however, promptly left the house and returned with a chicken. The following day, his friend's neighbor was heard complaining that an animal had entered his chicken coop and stolen a bird. Maestro Modesto laughed and told me that his friend had turned himself into an animal to get dinner.

Similarly, for the last two years it has been forbidden for the church in Atliaca to open before five o'clock in the morning. Up until recently, the church would fill up with candles and offerings that often meant that villagers were trying to 'harm' (or put a spell on) one of their neighbors. This led the village authorities to keep the church and its graveyard closed until the aforementioned hour. Due to the responsibility they

9 The term 'nahualism' refers to common practices and beliefs associated by two different concepts that convey into the term *nahualli* (pl. *nanahualtin*). Those *nahualli* can both signify, depending on the context, what specialists named *man-nahualli*, an anthropomorphic being capable by will to transform its shape; and can also often define an person animal *alter ego* sharing the same destiny by birth.

10 AGN, *Ramo de Inquisición*, Vol. 513, Expediente 5.

bear, even the village authorities sometimes fear that someone might try to do them harm. One of the most common curses is putting worms or *ocuilin* in the food. It was explained to me that this was common at fiestas; when the time comes to eat; the victim – sometimes one of the village leaders themselves – is served a dish of hot beans, but realizes that something is moving on the plate. When he notices the worms or *ocuilin*, the hapless victim looks around him and can generally identify the perpetrator, who will be another party-goer eating casually nearby. The rest of the guests then force this person, with threats and insults, to use his power to remove the maggots from the plate and the communal pot that everyone else will eat from.

In Atliaca, traditions such as those I have mentioned and many, many more exist together with local tales of caverns and spells, not to mention the giants that everyone says live at the bottom of the Oztotempan pit and who receive in offering the enormous baskets of food that are tossed in, often together with live turkeys. Alongside the myths and the stories, the people of Atliaca use cellular telephones, iPad and internet. They have local authorities whose concern it is to establish rules governing ownership of the village's sources of employment: basically the brickworks and family-run transportation businesses with trucks for haulage or passenger buses. They have also taken on local landowners in court, and have ultimately had them removed from their ancestral lands (Ruiz Medrano 2011; Ruiz Medrano, Barrera Gutiérrez & Barrera Gutiérrez 2012).

They bring together, often successfully, traditional cultural aspects with innovative ones. This is done dynamically, but rather than mixing the elements in question together, they alternate back and forth from one to the other as required by the circumstances. Four years ago, shortly before the election for the governor of Guerrero, I was taking an evening stroll through the village with my friend Maestro Modesto. I noticed that outside the village hall, whose windows had been thrown open, several men were sharing out hoes, spades and sacks of cement. Modesto chuckled next to me, and I asked him what he was laughing at. He explained that the people from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)[11] in Chilpancingo were gearing up for the election and had brought the tools and cement to the village hall "[...] so that we vote for the PRI". I asked him what he thought people in the village would do, and he replied that the people from the PRI thought that they could buy votes with these gifts because they were convinced that the villagers were "ignorant peasants, but we'll see". A week later, I found out that in

11 The political party that ruled Mexico for more than 70 years is now (2014) on power again. For almost the last 30 years the PRI has been a conservative party that pursues neoliberal policies amidst incredible corruption and violence.

Atliaca, 98 % of the population had voted for the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD),[12] but that they had kept the hoes, spades and sacks of cement that the PRI had given them to buy their votes anyway.

This situation is illustrative of the way in which the Nahua inhabitants of Atliaca combine their traditions and beliefs with the changing landscape of the outside world. The decision to break with a long history of political patronage that favored the PRI and to support a different political party is part of a newly achieved autonomy in electoral preferences, which are no longer tied to the small gifts that used to buy votes. This has been considerably influenced by a recent change of mentality among the villagers of Atliaca, caused by a long struggle against a local landowner who tried to take possession of their best lands.

Atliaca and his historical territory

The importance of land for indigenous communities, and its links to ancient documents, property deeds and local history, informs the complex negotiations that indigenous people undertake with the State in defense of their property. These negotiations require them to have an understanding of official legality, as well as to interpret from their own cultural viewpoint the messages, programs, documents and agrarian laws that have been, and continue to be, produced by the state (Ruiz Medrano 2011, 2013) and in which indigenous peoples have assigned the importance of a modern mythology to official seals, notarizations and property deeds themselves (Nuijten 2004: 209; Ruiz Medrano 2011, 2012, 2013; Ruiz Medrano, Barrera Gutiérrez & Barrera Gutiérrez 2012).

The ability of indigenous people to uphold cultural elements of their own in the most adverse legal circumstances, sometimes with great success, depends on their enormous skill for negotiation and a remarkable ideological flexibility (Ducey 1999: 127; Ruiz Medrano 2011, 2012, 2013; Ruiz Medrano, Barrera Gutiérrez & Barrera Gutiérrez 2012).

The people of Atliaca currently have official recognition for 13,592 hectares of common land. However, beginning in 1975 and up until a short time ago, a local mestizo cattle rancher and manufacturer and seller of mescal (an alcohol beverage produce out

12 The PRD party rose at the beginning a left flag, but it's the same as the PRI. In Guerrero from 1988 to 1994 dozens of peasant where killed by the government, most of them where leaders that militate in the PRD. At present day the PRD – along with the PRI – are held responsible for the assassinations of many indigenous leaders and authorities from towns all over Guerrero, and especially for the world known disappearance and killing of the 43 indigenous students from the School of Ayotzinapa. The school, created more than eighty years ago to form rural elementary teachers, is only steps away of Atliaca. Needless to say that many generations of Atliacans have studied at Ayotzinapa.

of agave plant), Mister F.,[13] had staked a claim to 1,100 hectares of land (of the 13,592) within the district of Atliaca, belonging to a community called Xicatepetl. Mister F. had strong political backing from the PRI, which was the governing party in the state of Guerrero at that time; the rancher was related to one of the PRI's members of congress. Given the dire corruption at all levels of government that exists in many parts of Mexico, especially in states like Guerrero, and in light of the political and financial might wielded by the rancher, the prospect that the inhabitants of Atliaca would be able to successfully defend their 1,100 hectares of land looked extremely slim. The lands in question are located in a fertile area, on a hillside that produces abundant wood and palm fronds.

In 1975, and for the next 20 years, F. would send his cows to graze on the Atliaca land, against the will of the local people. He had approximately 200 head of cattle, and they caused serious damage to the peasants' crops. Mr. F. also invited other cattle ranchers whom he was friendly with to send their herds to graze on the villagers' land. This created a situation of grave conflict between the inhabitants of Atliaca and the rancher. His cows would overrun corrals and fields, destroying the maize; "we [the peasants of Atliaca] could no longer plant there because of the cows, and there was a huge argument about it and we decided we would rather not work the land".[14]

Mr. F. gave legal justification for his theft by arguing that the people of Atliaca were smallholders working private land, and that he had bought it from its legitimate owners. The villagers and their leaders argued that this was common land that had been ratified by law, but they lacked the documentation to prove this. Atliaca had in fact been trying to have the common land belonging to the village officially recognized for many years. In 1915, the General Archive of the Nation (AGN) reported on the search for the original property deeds corresponding to the village of Atliaca.[15] In 1935 the Department of Agriculture submitted a new request to the AGN for a search to be carried out for Atliaca's historical documents.[16] And in the year 1940, the agricultural authorities issued a historical-manuscript report concerning the ancestral property deeds of Atliaca.[17] This demonstrated that back in 1915, the village of Atliaca had formally requested official recognition of its common land; all that remained to be done was to find the authorities' resolution issued in response to this request (Ruiz Medrano 2013).

Given the situation, Maestro Modesto Vázquez Salgado decided to support the village authorities in defending their land. Mr. F., in his attempt to consolidate his claim as rightful owner of the land, persuaded the state authorities to issue arrest warrants

13 For the safety of actors involve in this dispute, I only mention the *mestizo* who stole the lands by its initial name.
14 My parentheses. Interview with Modesto Vázquez Salgado, fall 2003.
15 AGN, *Archivo de Buscas y Traslado de Tierras* 45, expediente 10, year 1915.
16 AGN, *Archivo de Buscas y Traslado de Tierras* 65, expediente 101, year 1935.
17 Archivo General Agrario, expediente 9777; year of 1940.

against Modesto and several other villagers from Atliaca. When Modesto found out that there was warrant for his arrest, he decided to study law so that he could defend himself and his village in the state courts. He immediately applied to the Faculty of Law at the Autonomous University of the State of Guerrero, and began studying while also working as a bilingual teacher. Initially, Modesto travelled back and forth constantly between the rural school he had been assigned to, close to the city of Chilapa, and the state capital Chilpancingo, where the university was located. To make his studies more affordable, he eventually decided to rent a small room together with some other students.

> [...] so that's where I would work at night, and I was keen to know how I could defend myself on the day of my court date, so I didn't mind the lack of sleep. I had to find the elements I needed to defend myself and respond [to the accusations], because it's scary having an arrest warrant.[18]

Some of the villagers were PRI supporters, and they tried to convince the people of Atliaca that the rancher was right and that the village had no common land, that it was all private property and the rancher had bought the land legally. However, in 1973 one of the village leaders, a man named Severino Iglesias, had found documents in the home of an elderly man that proved that Atliaca had had common land assigned to it. The documents contained a presidential decree and the definitive map of common lands assigned in 1956. The decree was signed by President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952-1958). The papers were wrapped up in a nylon bag and hung from the ceiling of the old man's house inside a small container. Aided by these documents, the Atliaca authorities and Modesto began to investigate and to communicate their legal findings at the village meetings in Atliaca. They confirmed that since the colonial period, Atliaca had always been a village with common land, rather than smallholdings.

Their arguments convinced the locals, and the village began to organize; they met regularly to decide what steps should be taken. The Atliaca authorities, accompanied by the majority of the villagers, began to protest with placards outside the offices of the Agrarian Tribunal in Chilpancingo. They brought together more than 400 people from Atliaca, including men, women and children, to claim their rights over the land that the rancher wanted to take away from them. The community also hired lawyers to defend their case. The trial, from the moment that the documents were found that proved that the land surrounding Atliaca was commonly owned dragged on for almost thirty years.

Throughout that time, Modesto acted as advisor to the village authorities. From time to time, he had to explain the difference between common land and smallholdings to people at village meetings. On more than one occasion, worried peasants from Atliaca told him that they did not want to be 'communists' and Modesto had to explain to them

18 Interview with Modesto Vázquez Salgado, summer 2004.

that common land was synonymous not with communism but with working together to cultivate and take care of the land, as they had done since ancient times.[19]

It was undoubtedly of fundamental importance for the village to have the documents attesting its grant of common land dating back to 1956. The long years of holding out and waiting finally paid off when, on December 27th, 2004, the courts ruled in favor of Atliaca and the village was able to recover its land. The Mexican judicial authorities ordered the rancher to vacate the land belonging to the village, but despite the damages he caused to the villagers over many years he was not required to pay them any compensation. Locals like Modesto simply say that

> [...] it was enough for him to give back the land. The rest was water under the bridge. They didn't take matters any further, they didn't ask him for any more, because he's a landowner and he has social status, so things just stayed the way they are now.[20]

When the village authorities returned home with the favorable ruling, the whole of Atliaca organized a procession to welcome them and accompany them from the village entrance to their offices at the town hall. At the suggestion of the community leaders, a cow was bought and the victory was celebrated with a great banquet and music. With the festivities over, the boundaries of the land belonging to Atliaca were redrawn with the support of a topographic engineer from the offices of the Institute of Geography and Statistics. Some of the older inhabitants of Atliaca, who were the most familiar with the old marker stones and village limits, acted as guides on field trips to different parts of the 13,592 hectares.

After Atliaca obtained official recognition of its commons and recovered the disputed land, the villagers decided to work together to plant magueys and trees. In Modesto's opinion, since the struggle for their land took place, the people of the village have become more aware of the importance of cooperating with one another to be successful in negotiations with the state.

Modesto, until his dead some years ago, continued working as a bilingual teacher and voluntary 'advisor' to the village authorities. Many evenings he usually kept meeting up with them to discuss matters outside the church, and on Saturdays he always used to visit the office of the *Comisaría de Tierras* (Town house of land commissary), a meeting point for several of the older inhabitants of Atliaca and holdover from the now defunct council of elders, to talk over village issues and reach agreements in the interests of the village inhabitants and future generations.

Without doubt, their knowledge of local history and their unity in the face of adversity allowed the villagers to achieve something of true benefit for the people of Atliaca.

19 Interview with Modesto Vázquez Salgado, summer 2004.
20 Interview with Modesto Vázquez Salgado, spring 2005.

For years, outsiders had taken advantage of the fact that the local inhabitants had 'forgotten' that they lived in a village with common lands, to the extent that some of these lands had been acquired as private property. The efforts by Maestro Modesto to make the people of Atliaca aware of the importance of knowing their rights, and especially to educate himself so that he would be in a better position to negotiate with the Mexican state, were ultimately successful. Modesto's professional training, first as a teacher and then as a lawyer, was the result of his realization that he would need to find external resources to allow him to create better conditions for himself and the inhabitants of his village. Certainly as part of this process, Modesto learned increasingly sophisticated tools to negotiate with the state, and finally, after many years of negotiations in court, the inhabitants and authorities of Atliaca were able to recover their land and consolidate their historical territory.

Conclusions

I have tried to show how contemporary indigenous people from a small Nahua traditional town attempt to defend their communal land and territory by employing historical documents and their traditions, elements that provide them with a cohesive social tissue and strengths their local network. I believe that this approach demonstrates the *pueblo's* effective capacity for negotiation, since it relies on using material and symbolic elements and resources which have no prima facie relevance for the Mexican state. For Atliaca, on the other hand, local history and tradition is of the highest importance, since it demonstrates – as nothing else can – the *pueblo's* antiquity as a community and its concomitant right to possess its communal lands. The logic behind these sometimes subtle connections is not always apparent to the state, and even less to a state whose leaders are increasingly insensitive to the claims lodged by indigenous communities. All the same, many indigenous authorities and their people are keenly aware of the importance of their own history and attempt to bring the documentary evidence of it to the attention of the government (Ruiz Medrano 2011, 2013; Ruiz Medrano, Barrera Gutiérrez & Barrera Gutiérrez 2012). Moreover, neither the disinterest nor the puzzlement which this type of evidence and argument evokes in state bureaucrats has led the *pueblos* to stop presenting it. The sense of connection to a rich historical past undoubtedly serves to reinforce community identity and to inspire the defense of communally-worked land.

Of course, the indigenous population is not always successful in recovering local community history; there are undoubtedly many *pueblos* that lack a clear awareness of their historical past. Yet there are just as many *pueblos* that have an interest in reconstituting and knowing their history as a way both of strengthening their sense of identity and of meeting the challenge of maintaining themselves as an indigenous community in a rapidly changing world. Finally, this strategy of recovering and deepening historical

consciousness evidences great cultural vitality on the part of many *pueblos*. They realize that to know their past helps equip them to build a better present and future for themselves and their children.

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Materiality and Community in the Mixteca

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Abstract: Observers have long lamented the fractured political terrain of rural Central Mexico. Oaxaca, for example, has about 4 % of the country's population but almost 25 % of its municipalities. The fissioning that occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries was predated by a construction boom. Churches, parish houses, cemeteries and, later on, schools and communal buildings were built at an unprecedented rate. These efforts were often understood by outsiders as expression of faith or of a desire for progress. This chapter suggests that insiders viewed the construction – and occasional destruction – of buildings as contentious social and political claims.

Keywords: church construction; social and political claims; Mixteca; Mexico; 19th - 20th centuries.

Resumen: Mucho tiempo se ha lamentado el terreno político fracturado del Centro de México rural. Oaxaca, por ejemplo, cuenta con el 4 % de la población del país pero más de 25 % de sus municipalidades. La fisura que ocurrió en el siglo diecinueve y veinte fue anticipada por un auge constructivo. Iglesias, parroquias, cementerios y más tarde, escuelas y casas comunales fueron construidos a un ritmo sin precedente. Estos esfuerzos fueron entendidos por gente externa muchas veces como de una expresión de creencia o de un deseo por el progreso. Esta contribución sugiere que la gente misma vio las construcciones y ocasionalmente las destrucciones de edificios más bien como contenciosos reclamos sociales y políticos.

Palabras clave: construcción de iglesias; reclamos políticos y sociales, Mixteca, México, siglos IX - XX.

Introduction

In the late 1870s people began building a new church in Santiago Nuyoo, a small, Mixtec-speaking community in the Southern Mexican state of Oaxaca. Their goal was to replace an earlier adobe church with one that would have walls of stone, brick and mortar, and construct a vaulted ceiling for it instead of putting on a thatch roof. According to oral history the women of the town, early in the morning, before beginning their usual daily labors, would go down to the river banks and fill baskets with sand. It was still dark, and they would have to lug the baskets up a canyon to the work site. They each made two exhausting trips so that the builders would have enough sand for the day's work. An architect, stone masons and skilled carpenters led the project. People in the town performed the manual labor, and raised the cash needed to pay the salaries of the men brought in from the outside. During the church construction Nuyootecos

liquidated a great deal of collectively held assets; the *mayordomos* contributed 1,818 pesos between 1879 and 1883 by selling animals owned by the *Cofradía del Rosario* and draining the cash held the wooden chests where each *mayordomía* stored its valuables.[1]

The Nuyootecos were not the only ones who built a church in the region in the 1800s. In fact, over one hundred churches were constructed in rural settlements of the Mixteca in the fifty years between 1830 and 1880. This went on despite a series of armed conflicts that wracked Mexico beginning in the 1850s, and that crippled the region's economy. Not all of these churches were built on the grand scale of the Nuyooteco church, and the people in smaller settlements generally lacked the resources to use anything other than traditional materials like adobe and thatch. However, there were many that were like the Nuyoo church, in that they represented an enormous investment of labor and resources by townspeople. When asked to evaluate the cost of these constructions, towns reported that the church was worth many times the value of all other public constructions – municipal buildings, jails, schools – added together. For example, the people from Miltepec, in Huajuapan, reported spending 2,000 pesos on their church, completed in 1846, compared to 123 pesos on the municipal offices, jail, cemetery and the rectory they constructed between 1861 and 1882. The people of Sabanillo reported that the chapel they built in 1876 cost 800 pesos, while the municipal building, jail, and cemetery together were worth 38 pesos (Memoria Constitucional 1883: 4-17). To give an added sense of the scale of the investment, at the time they built their church, all the land of Sabanillo was worth 2,000 pesos.[2]

What was driving this extensive and expensive program of church construction? There is no single answer. It was, first and foremost, an act of piety. It also takes place during a time when Liberal and Conservatives were competing for power, and church construction can be seen as one of a number of popular expressions of support for the Catholic Church. But if these were the sole explanations, one would expect the distribution of church construction to be fairly uniform across the Mixteca. It was not. Of the 118 churches and chapels built in the fifty year period between 1830 and 1880, 96 of them went up in just two districts: Silacayoapan and Huajuapan. In the districts bordering these two, Tlaxiaco, where Nuyoo is located, saw 12 churches built, five were built in Teposcolula, four in Juxtlahuaca, one in Coixtlahuaca, and none in Nochixtlán.[3]

1 "Todo lo que se paga por los albañiles que van a fabricar el templo del presente pueblo" (dated January 19, 1880, but accounts run from 1879 to 1883) (Archivo del Maestro Eliazar Perez, Santiago Nuyoo).

2 The price is mentioned in a report by Fernando Mancilla to the Agrarian Delegate in 1937 (Archivo del Registro Agrario Nacional, Delegación Oaxaca, San Jose Sabanillo, 23/252).

3 Memoria Constitucional (1883). The information on the Huajuapan district is supplemented by: *Noticia de los edificios públicos que tiene cada poblado, hacienda y rancho con expresión de matera en que están construido y época de su fundación*, July 20, 1897 (Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca, Gobierno de los Distritos, Huajuapan, Leg. 55 exp. 2).

When examining the distribution of new churches erected in the 19th century Mixteca one can hold constant a number of factors that one might think would be important in explaining the phenomenon. Although the makeup of the districts changed somewhat over the course of the 19th century, the number of towns and hamlets in these places stayed pretty much the same, so the large number of churches built in 19th century Huajuapan and Silacayoapan was not simply because there were more settlements in these districts. Also towns outside district capitals in the Mixteca were mostly indigenous, catholic, and made up of farmers. This is not to say that populations were completely homogeneous, but when comparing one district to another one really can't pinpoint any major divergence in ethnicity, occupation or religious affiliation that might explain the differences in church construction. One could reasonably argue that there some historical developments that distinguish districts from one another and that might account for at least some of the difference in church construction. Coixtlahuaca, Teposcolula, and Nochixtlán were early centers of evangelization, and some splendid colonial churches were built around the colonial administrative centers of these districts in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. There was therefore no need, in some cases, to upgrade adobe and thatch church buildings with ones constructed by skilled architects and masons. However, this explanation can only be taken so far. In the coastal region of the Mixteca, many of the indigenous communities that were even more distant from early colonial centers of evangelization continued to use their old adobe and thatch churches in the 19th century without feeling the need to invest the time, effort and resources in building new places of worship like the one that went up in Nuyoo.

Another explanation for the high number of new churches built in Huajuapan and Silacayoapan is the earthquake that struck the region in 1864 and toppled at least some towns' churches. Such was the case of Yodoyuxi, in Huajuapan, whose people began rebuilding their church in 1865. But again, this is only a partial explanation for sub regional differences in church construction. If we remove from the calculations all the churches begun five years after 1864 (twelve in Huajuapan, one in Silacayoapan) the large differences in church building between districts remains. Clearly, something is happening in Silacayoapan and Huajuapan at this time that is not happening in the other districts. To come to a more complete understanding of why churches were being built where they were in the 19th century Mixteca, it will be important, as the editor to this volume proposes, to examine how they "are embedded within a process of communication that shapes and reshapes their meaning"[4] and the specific local reasons why at this point in time people in Huajuapan and Silacayoapan were so intent on altering their landscape by creating newly powerful buildings.

4 Graña-Behrens in this volume, page 9.

19th century churches and the materialization of interests

In the 19th century, as is largely true today, local settlements were responsible for the building and maintenance of their churches; to put this another way, churches in the Mixteca were built by communities, and part of what people were therefore doing when they put up a new church was saying something about themselves and the town or hamlet where they lived. The idea that the community is inseparably linked to its church is an old one in Mexico – Hamman (2011: 60-61, 465-484), for example discusses how, in the infamous Inquisition trail of Yanhuitlán, held in the 1540s, testimony on the state of the church – its lack of upkeep and ornaments – was taken as direct evidence of the moral state of the Yanhuitlán leaders who were on trial. Due to their size, visibility and permanence, the churches built in the 19th century were particularly effective in materializing communities.[5] Even today, a century and a half later, these churches remain the biggest and most impressive buildings in most towns. During the Mexican revolution, when towns were constantly besieged, local people would barricade the plaza and use the church as a final bastion. Zapata's insurgents sometimes made incursions from Guerrero into Western Oaxaca and Southern Puebla but even when his forces numbered in the many hundreds of men, they had a great deal of difficulty taking fortified churches since they lacked artillery and they were not able to maintain the long siege necessary to starve out the defenders.

In the case of Nuyoo, the building of the church occurred soon after the miraculous appearance of a saint, named Misericordia, on December 8, 1873 in the doorway of the old church. December 8 is the feast of the Virgin de la Concepción, which just happens to be the patron Saint of Nuyoo's hated rival, Santa Maria Yucuhiti. Yucuhiti center is just a short walk from Nuyoo center and the two have been at loggerheads since colonial times. Patronal *fiestas* are occasions for feasting, and they attract large crowds who come for the ceremonies and to shop in the market which is held at the same time. The people of Yucuhiti, who to this day are openly skeptical about the miraculous arrival of Misericordia, saw it as an attempt by Nuyootecos to steal a major regional feast from them. Some even hold that Nuyooteco leaders went out and bought the saint and it was them who placed it in the doorway of the old church for an unsuspecting sexton to find it on his way to ring the church bell for matins. Sometime between the 1790s and 1840s the people of Yucuhiti had moved their center from a location some five or six kilometers from Nuyoo center near the border between the two communities (Monaghan 1995: 270-275). They themselves finished building a fairly impressive church in 1844 that cost as much as the Nuyoo church (Memoria Constitucional 1883: 4-56). Locating settle-

5 This is a general point made for landscapes by Earle (2001).

ments along borders to prevent encroachment on one's territory is a longstanding tactic in the Mixteca, designed to make it easier to monitor adjacent enemy communities.

The Nuyooteco church was meant to be the equal, if not a grander affair than the 1844 Yucuhiti Church. When it was completed, with Miseracordia enshrined inside, it immediately began to draw pilgrims. A Dominican friar, Bernardo Lopez, sought to defuse things between Nuyoo and Yucuhiti by persuading Nuyootecos to celebrate the feast of Misericorda on the First Friday of Lent, rather than on the day of Yucuhiti's patronal feast (the *mayordomo* of Misericordia continues to celebrate a small fiesta on December 8 to this day [Monaghan 1995: 273-275]). First Friday in Nuyoo soon became one of the major fiestas in the region. While Lopez' intervention resolved the issue raised by competing fiestas, tensions continued to simmer. On three occasions between 1872 and 1876 Yucuhiti was raided by government troops (Monaghan 1990: 368-369, 375-377). Many men were taken away in a forced levy, houses were burned, and the 1844 church was looted and set on fire. It is not completely clear what role Nuyootecos played in these raids, but oral history and some documentary evidence indicate that Nuyooteco were active participants. A bell from the Yucuhiti church was carried off and set in the chapel of a Nuyoo hamlet. So just as Nuyootecos began building their church and claiming the status of a miraculous site, that of their rival was conveniently destroyed. Following this the people of Yucuhiti began to rebuild, moving their village center a bit better protected site further to the north, but still near enough to the border so they could keep a close eye on Nuyoo.

The construction of a church like the one the Nuyootecos had built in the 19th century thus gave form to interests, provoked claims and counterclaims, and created, for Nuyoo, a kind of distinction, which would give them a leg up in their ongoing struggle with Yucuhiti. The moves and countermoves by which people in the two towns seek to position themselves by building things continues today, although it has other landscape-altering expressions. To give one example, in the 1970s, a road was being built through the region. According to people in Yucuhiti, the initial design for the road project, which was funded with state and federal money with local people doing much of the labor, was radically, and secretly, altered. Instead of coming directly from the town of Ocotepec, which had a road connection to the main highway, through Yucuhiti territory and then down to Yucuhiti center with a trunk road onto Nuyoo center, it instead was rerouted, so that it made a circuitous detour through Nuyoo. Looking at the differences between the existing road and the one that everyone said had been initially planned, including people from Nuyoo, one can see the new plan added many kilometers to the project. Moreover, the actual road was designed so that it did not enter Yucuhiti territory at all. Instead it climbed a hill and passed through the isolated Nuyoo hamlet of Yosonicaje (where the bell from Yucuhiti is). After crossing Yosonicaje

it then descended the side of a mountain in a hair-raising series of switchbacks, and then into Nuyoo center. Numerous fatalities have occurred on this switchback, with several pick-up trucks and small trucks going over the edge. It was such a difficult climb for vehicles that one could make the ascent faster on foot. The switchback portion alone took years to build, and war then regularly washed out or was covered by landslides. Yet Nuyoo had managed to get a road, and exclude Yucuhiti (years later a new road was built along the original route, which dramatically cut the travel time to Ocotepec).

The communication of political, economic and social messages through landscape-altering construction projects has of course been going on in the Mixteca since Precolumbian times. As one can see the scale of these different projects and the way they materialized interests not only remade the landscape, but had continuing consequences for how the Nuyootecos would relate both to their neighbors and to one another. On the one hand, because markets follow roads (when the road was being built in the 1970s and early 1980s a weekly market would be held on lots adjacent to the worksite, and were moved steadily towards Nuyoo as construction advanced) by keeping the road in Nuyoo, the Nuyootecos were able to control commerce in the area, and the Nuyoo Sunday market soon eclipsed anything held in Yucuhiti center. On the other hand the other hand the liquidation of the *mayordomía* funds and other assets to build the Nuyoo church was an important part of the process whereby fiesta sponsorship shifted from a collective to a household responsibility, which in turn led to the expansion of a system of reciprocal gift exchange (Monaghan 1990, 1996).

Landscapes and dematerialization

Graña-Behrens points out how what is forgotten in social memory, and what is erased from the past, is crucial for both sustaining a particular historical memory and for understanding it.[6] Although my paper does not deal with memory *per se*, an analogous, materialized process is the intentional removal of elements from a landscape. Since at least the 19th century in the Mixteca the destruction of a rival's church could be a major political aim. As we saw, the Nuyootecos probably had a hand in the looting and burning of Yucuhiti's church in the 1870s, and about 50 years later men from Nuyoo overran Nopalera, Nuyoo's neighbor to the south, defacing its church and looting it of its ornaments, including an image of Saint Sebastian that is now on an altar in Nuyoo's church. Capturing a church and then destroying it was significant on several levels: it marked the end of a battle, and it 'dematerializes' a rival.

6 Graña-Behrens in this volume.

Yet such destructive acts are an extreme response. A much more common and regular political tactic has nothing to do with destroying buildings. Rather it has to do with preventing things from being built in the first place. To choose another example from Nuyoo, this time from the 1990s, a controversy arose in the town center over the efforts of one of its hamlets (*agencias*) to establish a cemetery. This hamlet was a good two hours walk from the cemetery in Nuyoo center over mountainous terrain. Carrying a body for burial all that way was not easy, and on the face of it the cemetery looked like a reasonable idea. But there were intense feelings about the issue and it became clear that there was a lot more going on than a simple proposal to ease the burden on grieving family members by providing them with convenient access to a burial plot. People in the center understood the attempt to establish a cemetery as a ploy to change the hamlet's relationship with the center (and part of a struggle between a young leader in the hamlet and Nuyoo's established *cacique*). It was discussed in the center as part of a series of moves by the hamlet that would eventually lead to its independence. Burying ones dead together is an act of solidarity, so to begin burying your dead apart had a significance that all could understand. In the end the cemetery project did not go forward (partly through maneuvers by the *cacique* which resulted in the denial of proper permits) and the young leader was diminished by the defeat of the project. Preventing landscape modification can be as politically significant as the modification itself, so it one should be aware of what is missing in a landscape along with what is there.

Church construction in19th century Huajuapan and Silacayoapan

In Mexico, ever since the colonial period, if not before, the path to raising a settlement's political status began with the construction of a church. As it was succinctly put in the late 19th century by Manuel Martínez Gracida when discussing the situation of San Miguel Allende in Huajuapan, "once they were able to finish their church, they went to Mexico to ask for a title to be a town (pueblo) which they were granted in 1778" (Martínez Gracida 1883). Another case which shows how closely political status was linked to the physical building of the town church is that of San Juan Ixcaquixtla, in the Puebla portion of the Mixteca. In 1783 people from that town requested that the viceregal government may grant them the status of *pueblo*, and allow them to have a separate political existence from the ancient town of Tepeji de la Seda, of which they were a dependent. However unlike in San Miguel Allende their petition was denied in 1791. In taking their decision the viceregal authorities relied on reports they had received and that portrayed Ixcaquixtla as an undeveloped settlement, lacking the basic characteristics of a town. One particularly negative report was from a local priest, a Father Benetiz, who declared in a letter to the authorities that Ixcaquixtla had no church to speak of, which showed he said, that they were weak Christians, and explained why they are so given

over to vice. He went on to say they also lacked individuals who had the capacity for self-governing, while other reports mentioned that Ixcaquixtla was often at odds with its neighbors.[7]

The people of Ixcaquixtla did not give up. The first thing they did, of course, was start building a church. They also went out and purchased *ornamentos* – decorations and the sacred paraphernalia used in the cult. These included bells, linen, and vestments for the priest, a chalice, a church organ and doors with locks and keys. Twenty years after they first petitioned to raise their status the First Regidor Pedro Josef Carino and the Scribe Josef Mariano wrote again to the Viceroy to affirm that: "We have, Senor Viceroy, a most beautiful church, and even though it is not completed, due to the hard times of the recent years and the scarcity of corn, we have great hopes to finish it shortly".[8]

They went on to assert they had the capacity for self-government, and if the church was not proof enough, that they paid tribute in an organized way and celebrated annual elections of officials, had built themselves a town hall and held a weekly market. They had witnesses to testify their industrious nature and tranquility. They also reported that many were learning Spanish. Finally they compared themselves to their rival Coyotepeque. Coyotepeque may be an independent pueblo, they explained, but its chapel is so tiny that not everyone can fit inside, while Ixcaquixtla, with a larger population, would soon have a church with plenty of room. They also told the viceroy that the priest who opposed the earlier petition, Father Benetiz, was not disinterested; his testimony had been influenced by Coyotepeque, whose people built him a new rectory in 1783.[9]

While the struggle between political entities of the same status to grow at the expense of one another as illustrated in the Nuyoo-Yucuhiti and Ixcaquixtla-Coyotepeque cases is an important long-term political dynamic in rural areas of Oaxaca, Western Guerrero and Southern Puebla, an equally important dynamic in evidence in Ixcaquixtla is the struggle of subordinate settlements to achieve independence from larger political entities. As for the latter, what Nader (1990: 6-7) has written about Habsburg Spain very much holds true in the Mixteca: The real tension in this society was between municipalities, and especially between towns and their own subject villages. City and town councils usually administered their municipal territory to the advantage of their own citizens and to the disadvantage of the villagers, who resented the town's legal authority and economic control over them.

What Nader adds is that centralized political authority, i.e., the Habsburg rulers, ceded the initiative to town formation by turning the process "into a cash transaction" (1990: 7). In other words, one could purchase a royal license to become autonomous

7 INAH Microfilm collection, Serie Puebla, Roll 46.
8 INAH Microfilm collection, Serie Puebla, Roll 46.
9 INAH Microfilm collection, Serie Puebla, Roll 46.

(as Ixcaquixtla did, once its petition was approved). This kind of decentralization of authority was not seen in negative terms; rulers took pride in the number of autonomous municipalities they created and administered (Nader 1990: 6-8).

'Municipalization' if we may call it that, has been carried out to an extreme degree in the Mixteca. The greater Mixteca has about 300 municipalities, which represent about 12 % of the total number of municipalities in Mexico. The average population size for a municipality in Mexico is about 50,000, but there are only a few municipalities in the Mixteca that have anywhere near this number of people living in them. The Mixteca in fact has the distinction of having the least populous municipalities in the entire country – with quite a few having less than a thousand people. If we go by the average size of municipalities in Mexico, the Mixteca should have about 20 of them, rather than the 300 it does have.

Churches and communal land in Huajuapan and Silacayoapan

In addition to demonstrating a capacity for self-governance, the building of a church is also closely linked to territorial control and land ownership. We have already seen that churches could be located at strategic sites to prevent encroachments on community territory. But having a church could itself be key to the establishment of a communal territory. Unlike the districts of Nochixtlán, Teposcolula, and Tlaxiaco, Huajuapan and Silacayopan stand out because the land holding villages of the type once described by Wolf as 'closed corporate communities' – that is communities that had a legal title to a common property (although plots within the territory may have been individually owned, and bought and sold among community members) – were rare in the first part of the 19th century. Instead the kind of land-holding arrangement that dominated the area (and this was true of parts of the Mixteca Poblana, the districts of Acatlan and Tepeji, and some of Juxtlahuaca and the Coast) was the entailed estate of the native nobility, or the *cacicazgo*.

At the time of Mexican Independence, in the 1820s, there were, by my count, 71 different *cacicazgos* in the greater Mixteca (Monaghan n.d.). Some of the *cacique* families could trace their descent back to the 16th century or even earlier, and many of the pictorial manuscripts or codices that are extant were kept by these families to prove property claims. Although there is evidence that all people living in a *cacicazgo*, not just the nobles, had a claim to the land (Menegues Bornemann 2009: 92-104) it was also true that in early 19th century liberal legislation *caciques* were declared the owners of the *cacicazgo* property, so claims by those outside the noble family were usually ignored. Moreover, there were settlements that were not ancient communities with customary relations to a noble house, but were rather recently founded, something sometimes

encouraged by holders of an entailment who sought to bring people onto their property in order to increase their rental income.

Not only did many of the settlements in Huajuapan and Silacayoapan lack land, they also held an inferior political status. As late as 1883 only about one quarter of the towns in Huajuapan were independent municipalities, while about three quarters of those in Tlaxiaco were.

There were two ways settlements could come to acquire land. Beginning in the 16th century the Spanish colonial government provided recognized towns with a minimum land base, called the *fundo legal*. Although the precise definitions changed over time, the *fundo legal* was by late colonial time 600 square *varas* (a *vara* is about equivalent to a yard). This was designed to serve as a site for houses, public buildings and gardens and in small settlements would also contain farm plots. An *ejido*, which was usually larger than *fundo legal* and contained farmlands, pastures and forest land, might also be entitled by the crown. Settlements that did not have a *fundo legal* or *ejido* could petition the government for such a grant. An example is the town of Tamazola in Silacayoapan, which in 1809 was granted its *fundo legal*.[10] After the colony ended the policy of granting towns a *fundo legal* and/or title to *ejidos* never had been formally overturned, as far as I can tell, until towns were prohibited from holding real estate by the 1856 *ley Lerdo*. However the right to a *fundo legal* was reinstated in the 1860s during the rule of Maximilian I, so that well into the second half of the 19th century settlements in the Mixteca petitioned the government for grants of a *fundo legal* or the protection of *ejidos* despite what Liberal had to say about the matter.

To have a *fundo legal*, one needed to have a church. Not only was the church the materialization of a political status and capacity for self-governance, but the church building itself was the reference point for measuring the 600 square *varas* of the *fundo legal*. The rule was that the grant of land would be laid out by measuring 600 *varas* in each direction from the town church. If a settlement did not have a church, not only did it demonstrate incapacity for self-governance and an inferior political status, but it did not even have the appropriate symbolic landscape for a *fundo legal*.

In Huajuapan and Silacayaopan the problem many settlements faced was that their *fundo legal* had to be taken from the estate of a *cacique*, since the settlements were on land of the *cacicazgo*. Tamazola's 1809 grant of a *fundo legal* was expropriated from the *cacicazgo* of Don Francisco de Mendoza y Terrazas y Montezuma. Perhaps not surprisingly, he bitterly opposed giving it away.[11] For *caciques*, such an action meant both a loss of land and a loss of revenue, since *caciques* rented house sites to the people living on their *cacicazgos* or received other traditional payments in recognition of the

10 Archivo del Registro Agrario Nacional, Delegación Oaxaca, Tamazola, 23/2777.
11 Archivo General de la Nación, Ramo de Tierras 1404 exp. 8.

cacique's dominion (in Don Francisco's case, he claimed he would lose 100 pesos annually). Given the close connection between land ownership and the existence of a church, it is perhaps not surprising that some *caciques* tried to prevent settlements from erecting them. In 1851, for example, the people of Santa Catarina Estancia complained that their *cacica*, Doña Isabel Navarrette, had made it difficult for them to build a church, even though they claimed they were given a site for it by a third party so that it was not going to be built on her land. They did eventually manage to put up a small adobe and thatch chapel in 1855 (Memoria Constitucional 1883: 4-19). For her part, in her rental contract with them, Doña Isabel inserted a clause which reads as follows: "The renters hereby promise that they will never seek a property judgment, right of possession, claim of dispossession or any other legal action against the renter or her successors with regard to the land that they use [...]".[12]

It was not only *caciques* and their tenants who were suspicious of one another's motives in building a church. Non-*cacique* landowners were similarly opposed to settlements who attempted to put up public buildings. An early 20th century case involved a property called Chapultepec, on the border between Puebla and Oaxaca. Chapultepec had been purchased in 1907 by a man named Porfirio Vidals.[13] It had a small settlement of tenants and workers on it. In 1917, with the coming of the Revolution, the people of Chapultepec solicited a town site and *ejido* from the Agrarian Reform administration. Like the people of Ixcaquixtla they made the point that they had built themselves a church and therefore should be considered a town eligible for a grant of land. When he became aware of the petition, the landowner, Vidals, wrote to the Local Agrarian Commission for the area, telling them that no reasonable person would call Chapultepec a town; rather they were employees who had been invited in to work on his *hacienda* (at the time, people living on *haciendas* were not eligible for the program). He went on to say the church they had built was no great thing, thrown up without much labor, and was barely standing. He ends his letter with a rhetorical question: If Chapultepec was an independent town, then why they didn't build anything else besides the flimsy church, like a jail or town hall?[14] One of the petitioners, José Bazán Ramírez later answered Vidals' question. Chapultepec may not have a town hall, a jail or other public buildings, he wrote, because whenever the people of Chapultepec tried to build one the administrator of the estate, Quirino Crespo, ordered the project halted. Vidals, he added, even tried to stop them from repairing their chapel.[15]

12 Archivo Jucial de Oaxaca, Huajuapan civil leg. 53 exp. 9.

13 Archivo del Registro Agrario Nacional, Delegación Puebla, Chapultepec, 23/233.

14 Porfirio Vidals to Comisión Local Agraria, Puebla, Oct. 5, 1918 (Archivo del Registro Agrario Nacional, Delegación Puebla, Chapultepec 23/233).

15 Jose Bazan Ramirez to Comision Local Agraria, Puebla, Nov. 6, 1918 (Archivo del Registro Agrario Nacional, Delegación Puebla, Chapultepec 23/233).

While there were numerous cases of towns in Huajuapan and Silacayoapan petitioning for a *fundo legal* in the 19th century, few were successful. A much more common method for acquiring land was by simply buying it. Between 1830 and the end of the 19th century, 52 communities in Huajuapan managed to purchase what for the most part had been *cacicazgo* land, while 31 did so in Silacayoapan. This land became available as a result of legislation decreed by the by the Spanish Cortes in 1820 (and published in Mexico August 7, 1823) which phased out the entail. The law stated that holders of an entailment were free to dispose of up to one half of the property. The other half would go to the successor of the entailment. In the next generation, the holder of the entail was free to dispose of all the remaining property. The overall effect this had was to release a steady stream of property into the market in Huajuapan and Silacayoapan over the next 80 years, as *caciques*, their heirs and their other children steadily liquidated their holdings (although there were some *cacique* families who continued to own what had been *cacicazgo* land into the second half of the 20th century). Groups of former tenants, settlements on what had been the *cacicazgo*, and the people of nearby towns were among the most active buyers, usually pooling their money to purchase the land in the name of the group (Monaghan 1990). In Huajuapan, I have data on 40 communities that purchased land and built churches. Twelve achieved both within a ten year period, and 25 did so within a 25 year period. Only three took more than 50 years to buy property and build a church.[16]

Conclusion: The land-holding village, a modernist project?

We have seen that over the course of the 19th century that the spate of church building in Huajuapan and Silacayoapan correlates with a broad transformation of the area, as it underwent both municipalization and a dramatic increase in the number of land-holding towns. It is tempting to see the process whereby formerly landless settlements built churches, acquired land and achieved town status as a kind of return to the culture area norm of indigenous people living in ethnically based, politically independent, corporate communities. Although their church was built in colonial times, the town of San Mateo Nejapan in Silacayoapan would be an illustrative example. In the early 19th century they owned no land at all.[17] Then in 1839 they purchased somewhere in the neighborhood of 7000 hectares from their *cacica*, Doña Isabel Mendoza. They did not take possession

16 Memoria Constitucional 1883; the information on the Huajuapan district is supplemented by: *Noticia de los edificios públicos que tiene cada poblado, haciendas y ranchos con expressión de matera en que están construido y época de su fundación*, July 20, 1897 (Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca, Gobierno de los Distritos, Huajuapan, Leg. 55 exp. 2).

17 *Exposición que el tercer gobernador del estado hace en cumplimiento de articulo 83 de la constitución*, July 2, 1832 (INAH microfilm collection, serie Martínez Gracida, roll 11).

until 1851, presumably when they finished paying what they owed her.[18] About a hundred years later they received a visit from representatives of the Agrarian Reform Administration, who came to survey Nejapan. What they found that 190 heads of households in Nejapan were in possession of 6,566 hectares of land, for which a communal title was issued in 1969.[19]

Certainly when the Agrarian engineers and topographers arrived in the 20th century, Nejapan looked to them just like any other corporate community in rural Mexico – there is not a single mention at all in the Agrarian files of them having been tributaries of a *cacique* (*terrasguerros*) or living on a *cacicazgo*. However, I don't believe that people in places like Nejapan, were simply buying land to make themselves into a traditional place. I have struggled with what to call it, but the thing that seems to fit the situation best is call what that they were building not a traditional community, but a modern one.

Admittedly it is hard to see rural Mixtec people as undertaking a modernist project in the 19th century. In many places of the Mixteca no Spanish was spoken, people continued to till the land with traditional methods, and they were about as far away from European centers of urbanization, industrialization and intellectual life as one could be in Central and Southern Mexico. Yet premises of the ontological, political and social order were being questioned in all levels of Mexican society in the 19th century (Guardino 2005: 275-291) and as we have seen there is ample evidence that Mixtec people were debating the nature of the *cacicazgo*, the role of landlords, the Spanish and Criollo power structure, traditional privileges and many of the issues raised on a broader level by Liberal philosophers and activists.

It is equally hard to understand how the land-holding village could be an exercise in modernism. The land-holding village has been understood to have come into existence in the colonial era, not substantially altered for centuries, so that ethnologists of the region could "[...] regard the present-day Indian community as a direct descendant of the reconstructed community of the 17th century" (Wolf 1959: 214). The truth of the matter is that land-holding villages were not created in the colonial period in many areas of the Mixteca, and in the 19th century most of the ones that emerged came not through a grant bestowed from on high, but through the hard work and savings of people who pooled their money to buy the land from their *caciques* and other landowners. In places like Nejapan, people were in effect starting from scratch, and creating something that had not existed before. But how, it might be asked, is this modern? We now understand that different varieties of modernity arose in the 19th century, which, while having the West as a kind of reference point, are greatly influenced by specific cultural traditions

18 *Expediente sobre reparto de terrenos del pueblo de Nejapan, 1891* (Archivo Judicial de Oaxaca, civil Silacayoapan paquete 1).

19 *Periódico Oficial del Estado de Oaxaca* 47, Nov. 22 (1969): 534-538.

and historical experiences (Eisenstadt 2000: 2-4). As a way of concluding, I would like to suggest three areas where I think places like Nejapan became modern, in the rural Mexican context.

First, under liberalism, becoming a property owner was a mark of progress. Buying part of a *cacicazgo* and going from being a accumulation of *terrazguerros* to people who worked their own lands was transformative. For example, after buying land from the guardian of the children of Sabino Aja in 1855, the people of Asunción in Huajuapan began to call themselves not just *vecinos*, but *vecinos particulares*, or 'property-owning citizens'.[20]

The second way we see a local version of modernity at work in the 19th century is the way people who have bought land contrast their present situation with the way their life was on a *cacicazgo*. Although the process of municipalization had been going on since colonial times, this did not always eliminate the *caciques'* influence over local affairs. *Caciques* in Huajuapan in particular continued to hold high political offices in local communities through the first half of the 19th century, and their control over land gave them enormous power. The *síndico* of Tepelmeme, Blas Cruz, when he found out that the Pacheco family was attempting to assert rights to former *cacicazgo* property, wrote that the *cacicazgo*, was "the scourge of our race that has caused so many misfortunes to the pueblos of the Mixteca" (Actas Relativas 1906: 19). In the bitter dispute between the people of Acaquizapan and their *cacica* María Josefa Jiménez, a lawyer from the city of Puebla named Pedro Antonio Villareal, hired by Acaquizapan called the Jimenezes in 1833 "aristocratic tyrants" who had subverted the democratic republic of Anahuac. He also compared them to *ecomenderos* and Spanish colonizers who kept their subjects in a state of vassalage, treating them as if they were beasts of burden. Although his letter stands out for its shrillness (he also called *caciques* "drunks," "pirates," "criminals" and "confidence men")[21] the idea that the *caciques* were unfortunate holdovers from an earlier, and more backward era, shows up a number of times in the context of disputes where people in the Mixteca complain about being caught in feudal relationships. The town officials of Acaquizapan, although not as insulting as Villareal, do use some of the same language in their complaints.[22] They clearly state that the *cacicazgo* was part of an institutional order whose time has come and gone and the new era was one where people would live in independent communities that controlled their own land. Thus after identifying themselves as little more than 'slaves' the authorities of Francisco Ibarra

20 *Expediente sobre reparto en adjudicación de los terrenos de Tlacotepec*, Aug. 22, 1890 (Archivo Judicial Oaxaca, civil, Juxtlahuaca, paquete de varios años).

21 Aug. 26, 1833 (Archivo Judicial de Oaxaca, Huajuapan civil, leg. 6 exp. 13).

22 *Tomás Martín et al. to Juez*, Aug. 26, 1833 (Archivo Judicial de Oaxaca, Huajuapan, civil, leg. 6 exp. 13), see also Archivo del Estado de Oaxaca, Repartos y Ajudicaciónes, leg. 12, exp. 6, where in 1869 the people of Cuyotepeji relate progress to the dissolution of *cacicazgo* lands.

Ramos ask: "How can a pueblo be grand and free when it has to kneel to serve the *cacique*-owner so that he will give them a piece of land, attending him with a thousand services [...]?"[23]

Finally, we see a local modernity materialized. Not only did people in Huajuapan and Silacayoapan begin building new churches, preferably with stone rather than adobe walls and a vaulted ceiling rather than a thatched roof, but they also began to build things in their towns that had not been seen before. Towns would turn public squares from open green space into paved plazas, with geometrically aligned planters, benches and the like. In more prosperous towns, clock towers were built, with all the implications that modernistic measurement of time brings with it. A surprising number of towns built bandstands. This was the period when the famous Oaxacan orchestras became established, which would sometimes play in the kiosks on the public squares. The brass instruments for the orchestras represented another significant investment, and the polkas they boomed out contrasted sharply with the light airs traditionally played on fiddles and flutes, giving modernity, not only a new look, but its own sound.

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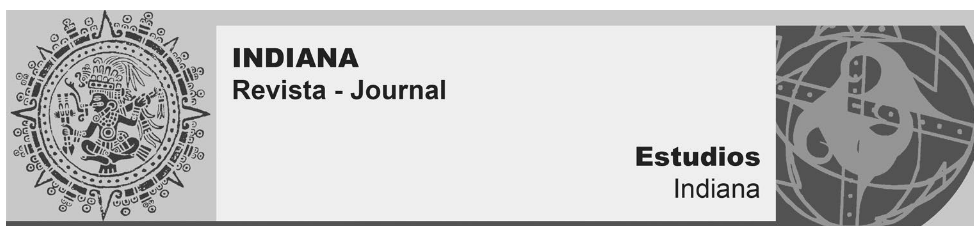

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De la misma colección:

Estudios Indiana 8
Sudamérica y sus mundos audibles. Cosmologías y prácticas sonoras de los pueblos indígenas. Bernd Brabec de Mori, Matthias Lewy, Miguel A. García (eds.), Berlin 2015, 277 pp., ISBN 978-3-7861-2757-4.

El presente volumen reúne una serie de trabajos que se refieren a distintos aspectos de la percepción y producción del sonido entre los pueblos indígenas de Latinoamérica. Las discusiones referidas tanto a las tierras bajas, como a los Andes y a Mesoamérica, abordan cuestiones relacionadas con la ontología, el animismo, el perspectivismo, las formas de interacción entre humanos y no-humanos y los condicionamientos de la percepción de la otredad, entre otras.

Estudios Indiana 7
Las agencias de lo indígena en la larga era de globalización. Microperspectivas de su producción y representación desde la época colonial temprana hasta el presente.
Romy Köhler, Anne Ebert (eds.), Berlin 2015, 287 pp., ISBN 978-3-7861-2738-3.

Esta colección de ensayos presenta trabajos de jóvenes investigadores de diferentes disciplinas que analizan diversos actores y sus prácticas creativas que posibilitan a la (re)configuración de espacios sociales, culturales y políticos en y a partir de las Américas. Partiendo de perspectivas desarrolladas en el marco del *spatial turn* en las ciencias sociales e humanísticas, los artículos se enfocan a la (re)producción de espacios sociales y culturales en, con y entorno a Latinoamérica. Prestando particular atención a los conceptos de etnicidad e indigenidad que diferentes grupos de actores definen, asumen o adscriben a otros, las siguientes preguntas guiarán el libro: ¿Cómo se constituyen, transforman, reestructuran o pierden significado las demarcaciones culturales, sociales y geográficas? ¿Y cuáles son los actores que influyen en ello?

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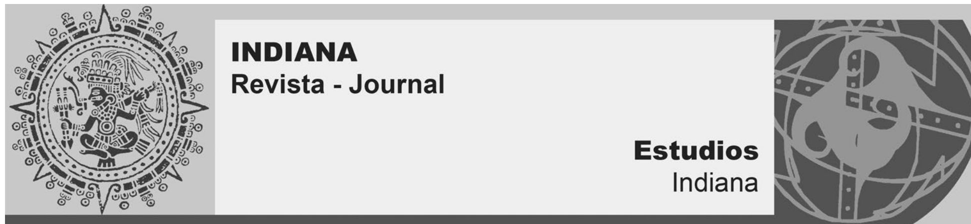

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Estudios Indiana 6
Textiles ralámuli. Hilos, caminos y el tejido de la vida.
Sabina Aguilera, Berlin 2014, 220 pp., ISBN 978-3-7861-2729-1.

A partir de las relaciones que el textil establece con el resto del todo social, esta investigación apunta a explicar una percepción del mundo según los tarahumara o ralámuli. La investigación propone que el tejer y el textil tarahumara no son únicamente una fabricación material, sino el resultado de una participación en conjunto con el entorno, una manifestación y memoria del origen, momento en el cual se le dio forma al mundo.

Estudios Indiana 5
“Para quê serve o conhecimento se eu não posso dividi-lo?” / “Was nützt alles Wissen, wenn man es nicht teilen kann?” Gedenkschrift für Erwin Heinrich Frank.
Birgit Krekeler, Eva König, Stefan Neumann, Hans-Dieter Ölschleger (Hrsg.), Berlin 2013, 408 pp., ISBN: 978-3-7861-2687-4.

Die Gedenkschrift für Erwin Heinrich Frank (1950-2008) spiegelt in 16 Beiträgen von Freunden und Kollegen die Bandbreite seiner Interessen in der Untersuchung des Verhältnisses Mensch – Kultur – Umwelt aus der Perspektive der Ethnologie Südamerikas wider.

Estudios Indiana 4
MONGELELUCHI ZUNGU. Los textos araucanos documentados por Roberto Lehmann-Nitsche.
Marisa Malvestitti, Berlin 2012, 336 pp., ISBN: 978-3-7861-2663-8.

Entre 1899 y 1926 Roberto Lehmann-Nitsche, antropólogo alemán que desarrolló su actividad profesional en el Museo de La Plata, recopiló distintos tipos de textos que le fueron transmitidos, de modo oral o escrito, por veintiséis interlocutores mapuche. El archivo reunido, inédito en su mayor parte hasta el presente, comprende relatos, cuentos, canciones y cartas en mapuzungun, además de fotografías y otros textos que permiten recobrar aspectos de la práctica etnográfica del recopilador, así como de las historias de vida personal y comunitaria de que quienes con él interactuaron.

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Mónica Quijada (ed.), Berlin 2011, 388 pp., ISBN: 978-3-7861-2651-5.

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Das kulturelle Gedächtnis Mesoamerikas im Kulturvergleich zum Alten China. Rituale im Spiegel von Schrift und Mündlichkeit
Daniel Graña-Behrens (Hrsg.), Berlin 2009, 252 pp., ISBN: 978-3-7861-2600-3.

Estudios Indiana 1
Indiegegenwart. Indigene Realitäten im südamerikanischen Tiefland.
Merle Amelung, Claudia Uzcátegui, Niels Oliver Walkowski, Markus Zander (Hrsg.), Berlin 2008, 272 pp., ISBN: 978-3-7861-2575-4.

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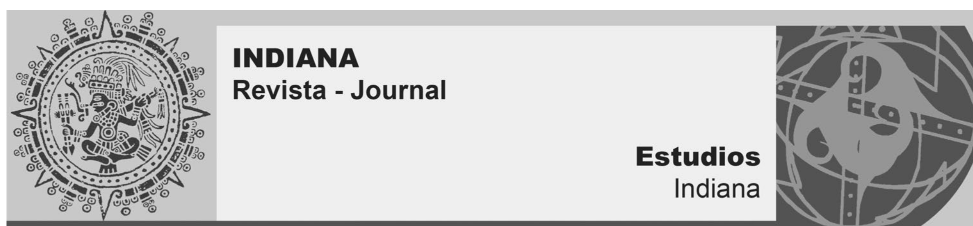

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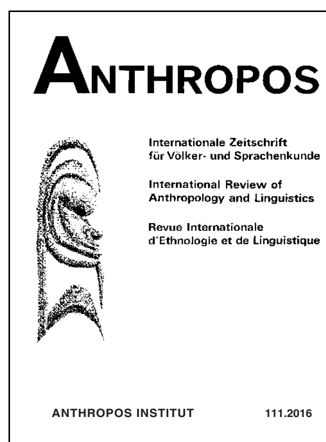

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