



Popular Tradition

Cultural Expressions of the Xinca Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa

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Introduction:

The collection and dissemination of the information gathered here is of great interest to the Center for Folklore Studies of the University of San Carlos of Guatemala, which, transcending the traditional conception of popular culture as culture itself, carries out analysis and interpretations based on the real conditions of existence that reproduce the life of the societies that generate them.

One of the objectives of the first bulletin on the subject presented today is to make known how a massive sector of Jutiapanec peasants organized in the Xinca Indigenous Community¹, work daily not only for their economic improvements, but also for the recognition of their own cultural, spiritual and material manifestations.

While it is true that the conservation of the communal lands that by ancestral right belong to the Xinca Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa is the fundamental axis that unites the families that comprise it, it also gives rise to a sociocultural complexity where the axiological worlds (sometimes included, other times excluded and other times more opposed) coexist and remain as expressions of identity and belonging. One of the celebrations, in this case the most important, dedicated to the patron saint of Saint Christopher, reveals how the indigenous community is, in some way, immersed in what is known as, and considered, the "urban Ladino world."

Finally, the content is limited to presenting information from oral sources and is complemented by a preliminary description of the current status of the community's historical archives. This first phase will

be integrated with other studies that incorporate elements such as location, history, organization, economy, politics, identity, worldview, etc.

For the benefit of readers, the original wording and spelling have been respected in the quotes from historical documents. Likewise, the oral information provided by the interviewees includes everyday words typical of the region.



1. Headquarters of the Xinca Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa. Located at 3rd Avenue 4-34, Zone 1, City of Jutiapa.

The Xinca Indigenous Community

In Guatemala, the Xinca people have their origins in Mesoamerican cultures. Their habitable areas, since before the Spanish incorporation, are located in the geographic area that currently comprises the department of Santa Rosa, the eastern section of the department of Escuintla, the north and south of Jutiapa, and probably the border with El Salvador (Tovar, 123).

¹Regarding this culture, the reader is suggested to consult: Memoria de los pueblos. La Comunidad Xinca by Hugo Fidel Sacor Q. Instituto de Antropología e Historia. Serie Estudios Monográficos No. 1. Guatemala: 2006.

In Jutiapa, the organization of the Xinca population emerged centuries ago (as evidenced in the Community Statutes and important documents in its archives). For several years, the group's headquarters (or meeting point) has remained at what is currently known as 3rd Avenue 4-34, Zone 1, City of Jutiapa.²

Regarding the Xinca Indigenous Community of the department of Jutiapa, we can indicate that, according to the Statutes and the approval agreement, it owns six properties registered in its name in the Third Real Property Registry.

At the request of Mr. Adán Manrique Ríos (as representative of the Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa), the statutes were approved and the legal status was recognized.³ This achievement took place during a brief period in history, a political scenario that at the national level was a succession of liberal dictatorships, which, while not entirely exceptional, included the presidency of General Lázaro Chacón.

Recent studies have confirmed that, during this brief period, there was a relative push for educational and cultural projects. During this period, some ideas took shape that were later implemented in the following years, specifically during the so-called Revolutionary Decade.⁴



2. Modifications to the facilities of the headquarters of the Xinca Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa.

²For various purposes, the headquarters (building) offers some advantages such as its location in the center of the urban area of the municipality of Jutiapa, its belonging to the community's heritage, and its role as the meeting point for the Board of Directors. (Contreras Grijalva; 26)

³It should be noted that, at the request of Mr. Adán Manrique Ríos, the approval of the statutes and recognition of the legal personality of the Xinca Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa was achieved. This is merely a formal requirement, since this action, like many others, is a collective achievement.

⁴In this regard, the thesis under construction (Bachelor's Degree in History) by Regina Fuentes Oliva, "The social and political project during the government of Lázaro Chacón through a fragment of social networks," provides novel ideas that explain the context.

As a result of the efforts made by Mr. Manrique Ríos at the request of the interested parties, on June 4, 1930, the President of the Republic, General Lázaro Chacón, agreed to approve the fifty-seven articles that comprise the Statutes and recognized the legal personality of the Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa. With this action, he not only granted the land to the peasant group, but also promoted a space for the recognition, reproduction, and dissemination of their culture.

According to its statutes: "The Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa is a group of people united by racial ties and common interests, associated for the exploitation of their property, for the intensification of agriculture by introducing new farming systems, for the development of industry and for the cultural improvement of its members. It will also work for the sanitation of homes and the adoption of new ways of life." (Statutes of the Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa: 1)



3. Facade of the Church of the Municipality of Jutiapa, Department of Jutiapa. According to Father José Matías Caballero (in charge of the parish of San Cristóbal del Pueblo de Jutiapa in 1711), its construction began in the late 17th century.

For the management and administration of its lands, as well as for compliance with the bylaws and its legal representation, it has a Board of Directors. This organization is made up of five principal members and five alternates⁵, two secretaries, and a treasurer, all elected by majority vote of the community members in a direct election process. Each term of office lasts five years.⁶

The Board of Directors' responsibilities include, among others, the following: ensuring the preservation of the community's properties and increasing them, and maintaining a general registry of co-owners. Harmony and balance among members is achieved - largely due to provisions that allow access and payment for the right to possession of their lands to be valued according to the capacities of the co-owners recognized as commoners (Statutes of the Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa: 3-5)

For the intensification of agriculture, the Community formally contemplates: the adoption of modern cultivation systems, seeking the incorporation of machinery that multiplies and intensifies production and management to the Ministry of Agriculture for the advice of specialized technicians in the region. For the development and improvement of the livestock industry, it established the import of stallions for the service of its members. As an incentive to the work of its members, the Community plans annual exhibitions of agricultural and livestock products, awarding prizes to the best (Statutes of the Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa: 11, 12).

Recovery, conservation, and dissemination of popular culture.

According to the statutes, the Indigenous Community would implement a library and reading room in its offices. A school was also planned for elementary and complementary education for its members. The staff would be appointed by mutual agreement with the then-current Departmental Political Leadership and would enjoy the same salaries as teachers hired by the State. (Statutes of the Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa: 11)

⁵Each member serves as Director for a term of three months. Statutes of the Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa. Article 11. p. 3.

⁶Interested readers may consult: Statutes of the Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa. Articles 2-10.

An important part of the unity and identity of the community members has been their religious manifestations. In this regard, some documents from the period provide valuable information, confirming that in earlier years another form of social organization was built on the basis of brotherhoods.

A brotherhood of singular importance was that of San Nicolás Tolentino.

"This Brotherhood has a capital of one hundred and thirty-three pesos in cash and fourteen head of cattle, both of which are in the hands of the stewards. Its obligations are as follows: masses, one of them, and functions, among others, one dedicated to the Saint with the alms collected" (Book of the Brotherhood of San Nicolás Tolentino:1).

In 1922 a document from the same brotherhood reproduces -among other data- its inventory:

"On this date, through the steward Don Norberto Lopez and Rufino Ramires, I hand over to the incoming stewards Don Josemaria Ramires and Don Santos Godoy. The patron Saint Nicholas in good condition with a wooden cross and a discipline and a small Saint Nicholas of demands, a box in good condition and a dove and golden glow, its box with its corresponding stained glass window. 1 a rose-colored veil in good condition, 2 two red and white curtains, one in good condition and the other in poor condition, a box to store decorations, a Peace, an ornate black tablecloth in poor condition, a small light blue veil in good condition, some decorations in good condition, 15 fifteen silver reales of quartillos, a blue and white curtain. In the Community Hall on March 9, 1922 (...)" (Book of the Brotherhood of San Nicolás Tolentino, 1922 without folio)

Community Historical Archives The Community currently has an archive with documents dating back to approximately the mid-19th century. According to the Acting Director, Mr. Luis Méndez Martínez, the documentation has been moved and located in different spaces within the current headquarters.

The documentation includes:

Books of ordinary and extraordinary sessions of the Community

Transactions between co-owners

Confirmation of possession of communal lands

Exclusive book for minutes of sales contracts, donations and recognitions of the co-owners of communal properties

Mobile minutes of the communal co-owners

Cash books authorized by the Political Headquarters of the Department of Jutiapa and the Departmental Revenue Administration of Jutiapa, they record:

Payments for cattle grazing on communal lands
Pasture leases

Loans for house purchases

Purchases of wheat crops

Payments to enable representatives to serve on commissions in the Peñón

Wood licenses

For miscellaneous expenses

For different celebrations: for example, the expenses of July 14 for the review of San Cristóbal (Cash Book 1910: 30-32) and for the celebrations of San Juan. (Cash Book 1911: No folio)

Of deeds of sale of communal lands:

Enabled for the control of land commissioners of said community (1960s)

Of change of Boards of Directors (positions of representatives of the Community)

Of inventories

Minutes of Board of Directors sessions

Control of leases

Knowledge of transactions

Transactions of co-owners

Books of citations, news, utensils and belongings

Of votes

Of tenants

⁷The Challenge is an interlude in the great dance of Moors and Christians. García Escobar, Carlos René. Interview: 14-03-2006.

⁸The name Cristóbal means "bearer of Christ," according to legend "after his conversion, he carried Christ in four ways: on his back, on a certain occasion when he walked with Him on his shoulders; in his body, through mortification; in his soul, through devotion; and in his mouth, through the confession and preaching of his doctrine." Santiago de la Vorágine: 405.

Trials

Ordinary Session

Community Minutes

Property Investigation and Litigation Processes

Brotherhoods

Constitutions of the Republic

Recent Documentation:

The archive contains documents from the general census of co-owners conducted in 1997, which record the number of co-owners, ownership, land possession, and payment of 6 per thousand. It also contains maps locating the community's lands and various photographs.



4. Part of the Historical Archive of the Xinca Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa. The documentation dates back to approximately the mid-19th century.

The Festival of San Cristóbal

The most significant festival held by the Xinca Indigenous Community is dedicated to the patron saint, Saint Christopher. The activities begin on July 14 and end on the 25th of the same month. A Festivities Committee is formed to organize the festival, which is responsible for carrying out the various activities. By tradition (although with some variations), the activities have been and are as follows: Day 14. The festivities begin with the review of the Moros (Moors). Their dance, accompanied by the image of Saint Christopher, begins at 8:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the Indigenous Community. Then, to the music of whistles and drums, they parade through the main streets of the city, informing the people that the festival has begun. The route has some symbolic stops at houses where the image is received (the reception of the Patron Saint is called "entrance").

Day 15. Inauguration. With the participation of the president of the Xinca Indigenous Community, representatives of the celebration committee, and town authorities, the festivities are formally inaugurated at 3:00 p.m. at the Indigenous Community headquarters. During this activity, attendees enjoy an atmosphere accompanied by traditional music with violins (replaced in recent years by disco music) and the burning of fireworks. The headquarters is decorated with pacaya leaves, strings, balloons, borders, and reeds, the latter of which are of great importance as they identify the iconography of the Patron Saint Christopher. At approximately 5:00 p.m., the image leaves in procession, accompanied by music sung by local percussion and string groups, with fireworks announcing the image's passage at every corner. The houses that host the festival erect highly artistic altars with special curtains, candles, coconut branches, pacaya leaves, and other natural and artificial

ornaments. The 23rd. The mask unveiling takes place, an activity that may vary according to the guidelines of each festival committee. According to Don Pedro Ramírez Girón (in charge of the Moorish dance), in previous years the Royal Rehearsal was held that night, where the gracious dancers (dance figures) would prepare a special meal for the mayor and other dignitaries.⁷

Day 24. "The Meeting." At 8:00 a.m. at the entrance to the city (currently the Volunteer Fire Station), members of the indigenous community, the celebration committee, departmental authorities, and numerous participants (mostly on horseback) gather to begin the cavalcade procession of the image of San Cristóbal, which is taken to the village of El Barrial. At approximately 3:00 p.m., the so-called Meeting of the Images takes place. This event involves San Cristóbal and the Virgin, known as the Virgen del Jícaro, because she belongs to the village of the same name. In years prior to the act of the Encounter it was called "the kiss", this is and was the moment when the images approach simulating an embrace and the Moors crossed their swords making a venial bow to the

the images⁸. According to Mr. Pedro Ramírez Girón "when the virgin came from Asunción Mita, the encounter took place in the village of Acequia, in other times also in Buena Vista and in recent years in Barrial. It was joyful because the Moors, accompanied by the military zone band, danced with the girls from the audience⁹.

Together, the images, accompanied by music (sometimes marimba, drum, and shawm), return to the headquarters of the Indigenous Community, where an important celebration takes place. The Moors, dressed in their best costumes, dance, lunch is served, and local music is enjoyed. Day 25. The Challenge. Very early in the morning, as is customary, the celebration committee and the Moors carry out the act known as The Challenge¹⁰ in the atrium of the Parish Church of San Cristóbal. According to popular belief, this consists of asking Christ the King for his blessing to win the battle between Moors and Christians. After the duel is over and the Christians are victorious, the doors of the church are opened and the attendees enter, praying and singing to San Cristóbal and the Virgin. The morning's activities conclude with a special mass in honor of the patron saint.



5. Church Atrium. Adjacent (on the sides) are the House and the Parish Hall, the stage where the Moors frequently dance.

⁷Oral interview with Pedro Ramírez Girón: Jutiapa, 01-02-2020

¹⁰El Desafío is an interlude to the great dance of Moors and Christians. García Escobar, Carlos René

¹¹Interview: 03-14-2006 (Oral interview with Olga Velásquez de Castañaza: Jutiapa, 01-31-2006)

In the afternoon, at the headquarters of the Indigenous Community, the rosary is prayed to Saint Christopher and the Virgin. As usual, each attendee is offered cake and hot chocolate. On the 30th, members of the Indigenous Community and the celebration committee return the image of the Virgin to the Church of the Jícaro Grande Village. According to Don Pedro Ramírez, this activity has also been carried out on August 1st.

The Entradas (The Entrances)

As established in the preceding section, Entradas (The Entrances) refers to the act of carrying (from one place to another) and receiving (within a family that has previously requested or been offered) the presence of the image of Saint Christopher. These begin on the 15th and end on July 23rd, for a total of nine. The entries are of singular importance, since through these activities there is a direct incorporation of urban social sectors (who consider themselves non-Xinca) into the rural indigenous community that shares their culture.

Some individuals and families from Jutiapa have traditionally received the image. We can mention the ladies Soledad Bracamonte, Julieta Fernández, and the family of the couple Salvador Contreras and Rosa Anita López de Contreras. In their home located on 6 de Septiembre Street, this family received the image for

decades, which represented for them "a moment of companionship with the Patron Saint Cristobal."¹² According to Professor Gloria Marina Contreras de Tejada, the steward was in charge of directing each Entrance, and the entire neighborhood was invited. According to her experience, an Entrance, in addition to joy and celebration, implied a moment of spiritual communion through prayer, creation, and respect for a sacred space where each year the altar that guarded the Patron Saint was artistically erected in a different way. In addition to curtains, flowers, and candles, decorations such as moons, stars, and ships were placed, associated with the legendary passage of Saint Christopher through water.¹³

13 After the prayer, refreshments were served: punch or coffee, accompanied by corn bread, marquezote (made with egg whites, which vendors place between quezadilla and torta), zalporas, virriñaques (made with zalpor corn), and other variations of the typical Jutiapanec bakery. Before the image left, the owners of the house would leave alms, there would be dancing, a cane would be distributed per person (these gave a special color because they were adorned with a small border flag embedded in the tip and represented part of the iconography that identifies Saint Christopher). Finally, forming an orderly fence, the procession would leave. The procession was accompanied by music that could be a band or groups of violins, accordions, bandoleons, and other string instruments, including the drum and the shawm.¹⁴



6. Anda of the Patron Saint Saint Christopher. This is the image that goes out in procession (cavalcade) to perform "The Encounter"

¹²Interview: 03-14-2006 (Oral interview Olga Velásquez de Castañaza: Jutiapa, 01-31-2006)

¹³Interview: 03-14-2006 (Oral interview Olga Velásquez de Castañaza: Jutiapa, 01-31-2006)

¹⁴Interview: 03-14-2006 (Oral interview Olga Velásquez de Castañaza: Jutiapa, 01-31-2006)

The Legend

A variety of legends about Saint Cristobal¹⁵ remain in the imagination of Jutiapa society. Inevitably, with oral transmission, some have disappeared, others are on the way to disappear, and although not very few, still others are changing (degenerating or strengthening). The wealth of those that remain is worthy of specialized study. Among those still passed down through generations, we find those that refer to the figure of the patron saint, Saint Cristobal, who, adapted to the particularity of Jutiapa, along with the different social sectors, is the protagonist of unique events in the specific geographical settings: Cerro de la Cruz, Culma Volcano, Jutiapa City, etc. One of the popular versions about the Patron Saint Cristobal is the following: "The story of the Patron Saint Cristobal tells us that he was a giant named Ufero who made his living transporting people from one side to the other of the Jordan River. He lived on the banks of the river, in a hut that he built himself. One day, a child approached him asking him to take him to the other side. Ufero, observing him carefully, replied: carrying you is carrying nothing, when I have carried very heavy people, but come on.

Taking the child on his shoulder, Ufero began the journey, but halfway across the river, the child mysteriously grew heavier until Ufero was almost sinking. He then fearfully said, "You're too heavy, I can't hold you anymore." To this, the child replied, "Ufero, if you only knew who you're carrying." To this, Ufero asked, "Who?" "The Savior of the World." "The Child God," he replied. "And from this moment on, I baptize and sanctify you with the name of Saint Cristobal, and so that you may quickly get out of the river, lean on this branch of the coconut tree." Although the original legend is more extensive, the above is the best-known and most reproduced fragment in the Jutiapanec society's imagination. Referring to one of the most widely circulated texts in the literary world, "The Golden Legend," we can list some of the points of convergence that prevail between the society's imagination and the legend.

Saint Cristobal was a giant (of colossal stature and enormous strength) "of Canaanite origin, in his adulthood he reached twelve cubits in height; due to his corpulence and his giant appearance he inspired terror in those who saw him"; upon being baptized he adopted the name Cristobal. In the Jutiapanec imagination his previous name was Ufero, in the legend Reprobo. He lived on the banks of a river, he built a cabin that served as his lodging and prepared a pole to lean on when crossing the current. The Child

for his help to cross the current. In response to the request, Saint Christopher accepted. Upon crossing the channel, the child gained weight. After crossing the river, the Child told him that he was Christ the King. (Santiago de la VoráGINE: 405)



7. This image of the patron saint, Saint Christopher, remains at the side of the main altar in the Parish Church of the Municipality of Jutiapa.

The Golden Legend depicts the scene as follows: Cristobal "...went in search of the river. When he arrived, he explored its banks, located the dangerous place (...) built a cabin next to it to serve as lodging, prepared a sturdy pole to use as a staff to lean on while crossing the current, and immediately began transporting several people from one bank to the other every day.

¹⁵The name Cristobal means bearer of Christ, according to legend. "after his conversion, he carried Christ in four ways: on his back, on a certain occasion when he walked with Him on his back; in his body, through mortification; in his soul, through devotion; and in his mouth, through the confession and preaching of his doctrine." "Santiago de la VoráGINE:405.

On one occasion, while resting in his cabin, he heard someone calling him from outside. The voice that reached him sounded like a child's. (...) It was asking for his help to cross the stream: it was a little boy. Cristóbal approached him, lifted him from the ground, placed him comfortably on his shoulders, took the pole that served as his walking stick in his hands, and stepped into the water. Suddenly, the level of the riverbed began to rise steadily, and at the same time, the boy's weight increased, as if his body had ceased to be made of flesh and turned into lead. With each step he took, the flow of the water visibly increased, and the load he carried on his sturdy shoulders grew heavier. When he reached the middle of the riverbed, he thought he could not bear the weight of the child or the force of the current for a moment longer. Filled with anguish, and fearing that he would not be able to escape alive from the difficult situation in which he found himself, he made a supreme effort and, summoning superhuman strength from his exhausted energies, managed to reach the other shore. He placed the boy on the ground and, completely exhausted, exclaimed: "Oh, little one! What a terrible danger we have been in! What a predicament you have put me in! Have I felt a weight on my shoulders greater than if I carried the whole world on them!"

Cristobal, commented the child. "You have just spoken a great truth; do not be surprised that you felt that weight because, as you have so rightly said, on your shoulders you carried the whole world and the Creator of that world. I am Christ, your King." (...) I will give you proof that what I am telling you is true: when you cross the stream again to reach the other bank, once you have reached the door of your cabin, stick the pole you use to cross the river into the ground next to it; tomorrow, when you get up, the pole will be green and full of fruit. As soon as he said this, the little one suddenly disappeared." (Santiago de la Vorágine: 407).

The Moors and Christians Don Pedro Ramírez Girón, originally from the village of Las Tunas, Jutiapa, has participated in the Moorish dance for approximately 61 years. On several occasions, he has been the main leader and teacher of the new members. As was customary, being very young when he entered military service, Don Pedro promised San Cristóbal that if he passed safely, he would serve him. As it turned out, in 1945 he participated as a soldier for the first time. Initially, he recalls, "within the indigenous community, Don Juan Velásquez organized and taught the roles of the armies: Moor and Christian. There were about six or seven different stories, all of which were familiar to Don Juan."¹⁶



8. "The Moors and Christians." Group of dancers from Jutiapa. Photograph by Don Pedro Ramírez Girón (1996)

¹⁶Oral interview with Pedro Ramírez Girón: Jutiapa, 01-02-2006

Among the participants as Moors, we can mention: Felipe Méndez and Ignacio Méndez, from María Montañas; Simón Méndez and Jeronimo López; Sabino Méndez, Ernesto Pérez, and José García from the village of El Barrial; Valerio Vivas (Virgin River); from Jutiapa, Hilario Martínez, José Martínez (also known as Chepe Moro), Javier Ramos (Gracejo), Aquilino Villanueva, and the spouses Andrea Grijalva (steward) and Martín López. From the village of Las Tunas: Pedro Méndez Ramírez, Felicitó Olivares, Pilar Méndez, Juan Ramírez Mateo, Cruz Mateo, Toribio Mateo, Celestino Mateo from Cerro Gordo; Adolfo Díaz, Juan Trigueros, Silvestre Gudiel, and José García (El Barrial). After the death of Don Juan Velásquez, Don Pedro Ramírez Girón took over the leadership of the group of Moors. He began training new members, gathering them a few days before the festivities to teach them the peculiarities of the dance.

Speech by Charles IV to the Christians against the Moors.

Below is one of the best-known and most frequently used fragments of the dialogue between Charles IV and Anarón, from the Historia Famosa. The following characters participate in the performance: Mirrango, King Charles IV, Alexander, Octavio, Clenardo, Pánfilo, Don Alonso, Anarón, Ambassador Bivoraes, Tarife, Rabbi, Quinciano, Caramelo and Rendón.¹⁷

Today in the name of the sacred,
omnipotent creator,
with courage and as we implore
your favor,
because this heart beats
with joy,
because the occasion has arrived
for me to see the King, Anarón.
He and all his nation,
that dying for Jesus Christ,
in whom this soul he infused,
will be for me greater glory.
Dying for the faith of God
in the baptismal font,
this grace indoctrinated me.
Believing in the gospels

that Jesus Christ left,
confessing the mysteries
that the church taught me,
and so we will remain strong.
I warn you from today
to prepare your weapons
and raise the banner.
If you listen to me attentively,
today you know my intention:
to destroy the arrogance
of seeing yourself infamous, Anarón.
ALL CHRISTIANS SAY:
in defense of your law,
we will go to your side, Lord.
We are all surrendered
until we die or win.

"LONG LIVE THE PATRON SAINT CRISTOBAL"



9. Masks and swords of yesteryear, used by the Jutiapanec Moors for decades.

Dancers, dances, and costumes

Each performance requires a different number of dancers (most of the participants are bricklayers or bricklayer's assistants), generally ranging between 14 and 16 members. The mayordomo gathers them and promises to provide them—depending on the time—with a meal or snack. The dances have been and are performed to the accompaniment of the drummer and the shawm; for several years, they were sung by Mr. Crecencio Vivas (originally from the village of El Barreal) and Mr. Vicente Alejandro, respectively.

¹⁷(Oral interview with Pedro Ramírez Girón: Jutiapa, February 1, 2006)

The colorful costumes worn by the Moors are the property of the Indigenous Community. Each one consists of a shirt, shorts, a bartola or cape, a vest, an apron, and stockings. According to Don Pedro Ramírez, "some time ago the costumes were a gift from the then representative,

Ruth Chicas Rendón de Sosa."¹⁸ An important part of the attire are the swords and masks. Previously, these were loaned or rented from various owners, one of whom was Mr. Gabino Ordóñez. Currently, the Community has its own masks and swords.



10. Part of the attire (vest, shorts, bartola, apron, masks, and swords) of the Moorish dancers of Jutiapa.

¹⁸(Oral interview with Pedro Ramírez Girón: Jutiapa, February 1, 2006)

Election of the Aldeana Bonita.

The program of festivities in honor of San Cristóbal includes the election of the Xinca Queen (previously called the Beautiful Villager, Flower of the Field, etc.). This activity is not scheduled for a specific day; it generally takes place on the first or second Saturday of July. With many variations, this election was formerly held in the kiosk located in the Jutiapa City Park; currently, it is held in rural areas (municipal parks and other venues).

Participants must meet two fundamental requirements:

be over 15 years old (a very significant age in the life of rural women) and be originally from a rural area. Their participation has several phases: in the main ceremony, they wear and model the traditional Xinca costume, answer questions prepared by a jury (who have no ties to the indigenous community or the festival committee), share a lunch on the same day prior to the election, and finally, riding horses, they join the procession on the 24th. In recent years, the election has been extended to include the Xinca Queen, Miss Sympathy, and Miss Sports.¹⁹



11. "El Cuartelón." Popularly known by that expression, this beautiful building is part of the Historic Center and the cultural heritage of Jutiapa society.

¹⁹(Oral interview with Olga Velásquez de Castañaza: Jutiapa, January 31, 2006)

The Fair

Another activity that forms part of the festivities is the patron saint's fair of San Cristóbal. Traditionally, this activity has taken place in the streets surrounding the park, and although it is a small fair, its sales include amusement games,

toys, piggy banks, preserves, a wide variety of sweets, food, drinks, regional fruits, etc. In fact, the fair market sales begin at the same time as the Entradas (Friday), although the most important days continue to be July 24 and 25.



12. To one side of the church, in front of the Parish House, is the recently inaugurated Plaza de la Paz (Peace Square).

Interviewees:

Luis Méndez Martínez, Acting Director of the Xinca Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa. Olga Velásquez de Castañaza, Celebration Committee for the Patron Saint of San Cristóbal Festival. Pedro Ramírez Girón (Don Pedro worked for many years at the Salomón Carrillo Ramírez National Federation School in the Municipality of Jutiapa and has been in

charge of the Moros dance for decades). Ana Maribel García Retana (Coordinator of the Women's Commission, Xinca Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa). Baudilio López (Treasurer of the Xinca Indigenous Community of the Municipality of Jutiapa). Gloria Marina Contreras de Tejada (Teacher who worked at the Salomón Carrillo Ramírez National Federation School).



13. These architectural spaces encapsulate a fusion of the real and the mystical. The celebration of Saint Cristobal, bearer of Christ, merges (within blurred boundaries) with the spirit of the people.





14. The artistic arrangement of physical spaces is expressed in the urban center of Jutiapa. These buildings (popular heritage) constitute important and valuable historical sources.



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