First notes on the music of the Ma‘Muun Dance of Santa Cruz Verapaz

MATTHIAS STÓCKLI

The following notes represent an initial approach to the music that accompanies the Ma’Muun Dance in the local tradition of Santa Cruz Verapaz (A.V.), which is currently experiencing a kind of revitalization and revaluation. They do not aim to correspond either ethnographically or analytically to this cultural and musical tradition beyond a superficial level. In fact, their objective is no more than to simply demonstrate that this is not an idiosyncratic local musical practice, but one that shares certain important structural features with other broader musical traditions.

The confirmation of a certain diffusion or "density" of this practice seems necessary, not only because the tradition of the Ma'Muun Dance of Santa Cruz Verapaz is apparently undergoing a phase of reconstruction, but also, and above all, because the basis for comparisons of the music from instrumental ensembles like the one associated with this dance is already very limited.

Apart from the music of the Ma'Muun Dance, recorded in its entirety by the undersigned on April 9, 2005, and once again on video on May 28 of the same year by Carlos René García Escobar and Jairo Cholotío Corea, only two additional examples are consulted here for comparative purposes: the music of the Rabinal Achí in a version recorded in January 1999 by García Escobar, and merely a fragment of a musical piece from a largely unknown tradition. This piece was recorded in 1972 in Venustiano Carranza, Chiapas, during the San Bartolo festival (Alderson 1975: side 1/4 2). The three examples represent indigenous traditions —Poqomchí, Achi, and Tzotzil, respectively— of instrumental ensembles composed of several trumpets and one or two wooden or drumhead drums.

The following section first presents some musicological data regarding the Ma'Muun Dance, which will then be compared with data from the other two traditions.

1 See also in Carlos René García Escobar, 2005.
2 On the first date, the dance was performed to mark the official handover of new costumes, masks, and musical instruments by ADESCA (Contribution to Cultural Decentralization). On the second date, it was performed during another visit by ADESCA representatives. In what follows, we refer to these two performances of the dance as Version 1 and Version 2, respectively.

THE MUSIC OF THE MA'MUUN DANCE

The Ensemble

The instrumental ensemble that accompanies the Ma'Muun Dance consists of a tun, which is a wooden drum played with two relatively thick wooden drumsticks, and two metal trumpets. The current tun, which has already replaced the old tun made from a single hollowed-out log, was recently assembled from several staves. Regarding the trumpets, there are currently two sets in use: in Version 1, the two old trumpets were played, both without valves and of different sizes, while in Version 2, an old trumpet was combined with one of the two newly acquired trumpets, both now equipped with three valves and of the same size.

In Version 2, the larger trumpet played the musical part that the smaller trumpet had performed in Version 1, while the new trumpet took over the part previously played by the larger trumpet. However, not only did the instruments change or switch roles from one version to the other, but the musicians did as well. Additionally, for unknown reasons, only two musicians were present in Version 2, so the drummer occasionally took on the part of the larger trumpet, briefly leaving his position at the tun to the owner and representative of the dance. We believe that these changes were largely responsible for the musical differences between the two versions.

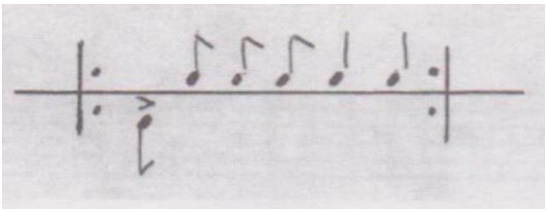
Musical Structure

In general terms, the music of the Ma'Muun Dance can be described as a continuum created by the superposition of short, repeated rhythmic and melodic patterns from the tun and one of the trumpets, to which the second trumpet occasionally adds another melodic layer. This continuous sound is only completely

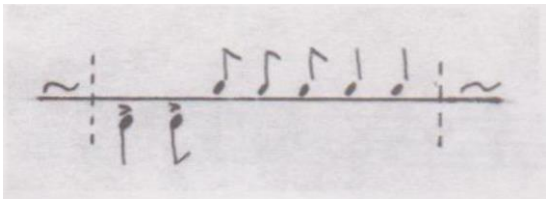
***28/05/2005.** The group of dancers and musicians. The set of modern trumpets is visible on the left, while the two old trumpets are on the right of the tun.*

interrupted during the dancers' speeches, something that happened just once, and briefly, in both Version 1 and Version 2.

The rhythmic pattern that the tun repeats with slight variations throughout almost the entire dance is as follows:

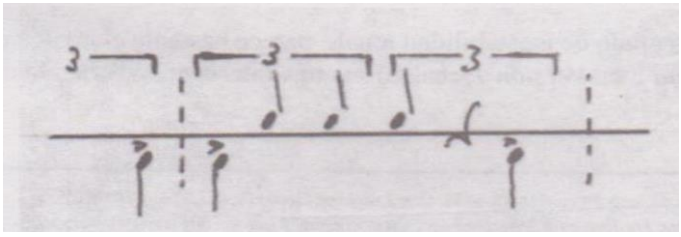


In Version 1, the main alteration of this pattern consisted of the occasional addition of an accented beat:



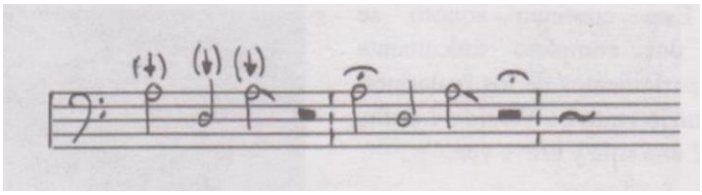
28/05/2005. The two musicians during the performance. The modern trumpet (Trumpet 1) is on the left, and the large old trumpet (Trumpet 2) is on the right.

In Version 2, the tun frequently changed from the basic rhythmic pattern to a formula of two triplets, without causing a change in the basic meter. In Version 1, a change of this kind occurred only once toward the end of the dance.

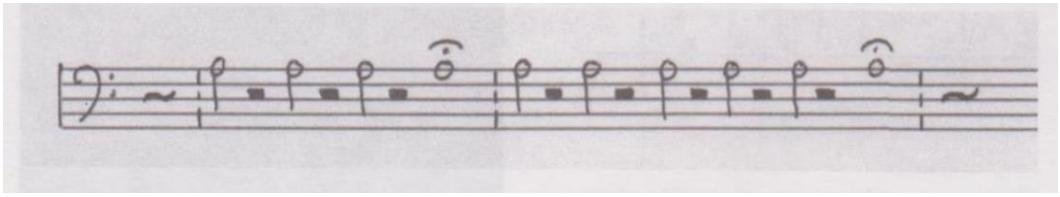


3 One of the elements that the two variants of the basic rhythmic pattern have in common is the succession of two accented tones and the lower timbre (Transcriptions 2 and 3).

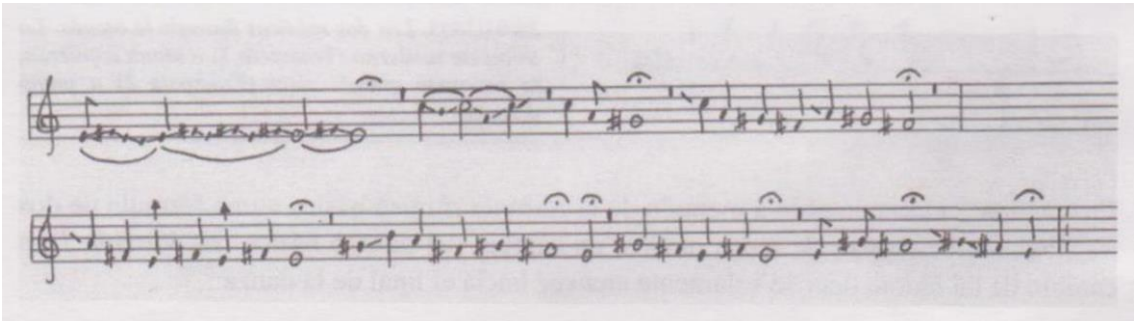
In Version 1, the large trumpet (hereafter referred to as Trumpet 1) performed the following melodic pattern in the interval of a fifth:



This same part was performed in Version 2, as we have already mentioned, by one of the modern trumpets with valves. However, the melodic movement was further reduced, generally limiting itself to the repetition of a single tone:



To this rhythmic-melodic continuum of the tun and Trumpet 1, the small trumpet (hereafter referred to as Trumpet 2) occasionally contributes with a broader and more extended melodic movement:



Despite a high degree of tonal instability, it seems quite clear that the musician who played Trumpet 2 in Version 1 performed his three interventions following the same melodic-tonal pattern.

4 Indeed, the musician who played this trumpet in Version 2 did not use the valves (see photo).
5 The terms Trumpet 1 and Trumpet 2 refer to specific functions that the two trumpets fulfill in the realization of the polyphonic structure, but they do not imply a musical hierarchy. These terms are used throughout this article in this functional sense.
6 The following is the transcription of the first of three total interventions of Trumpet 2 in Version 1.
7 It is worth noting that the instrument playing this part was a valve-less trumpet in both versions.
8 This same part in Version 2 is barely comprehensible (and therefore comparable), likely due to technical issues— the recording was made from a certain distance using a video camera with an integrated microphone— and possibly also due to the manner of performance itself.

The connection of rhythmic and melodic patterns and phrases with a constant tempo and fixed meter is relatively loose across all three voices. However, there are gradual differences: while Trumpet 2 enjoys the most freedom in this regard, the tun is the voice that most consistently adheres throughout the dance to a flexible yet almost always perceptible tempo and meter. Trumpet 1 holds an intermediary position, though it leans more toward the tun's metrical behavior.

The superposition of the three voices is organized in a similarly loose manner, but in this respect as well, the tun and Trumpet 1 seem more closely linked, referencing—albeit always very flexibly—a common meter, or at least exhibiting the repetitive behavior common to both. In fact, the reference to a common metrical base becomes clearer in Version 2, where the sequences of identical tones in Trumpet 1 often marked the same time span as a repetition of the tun's rhythmic pattern.

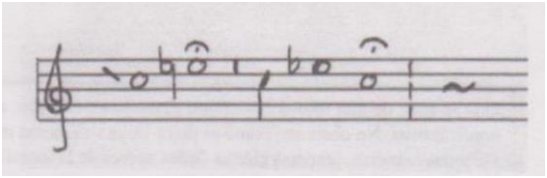
As for the entry and duration of Trumpet 2's interventions, these are primarily coordinated with certain events in the dance's plot, specifically with a particular choreographic movement repeated several times during a performance.

COMPARISON

The Music of the Rabinal Achí Dance

Similar to the Ma'Muun Dance, the accompanying ensemble of the Rabinal Achí consists of two metal trumpets, without valves and of different sizes, and a tun made from a single piece of wood and played with drumsticks with one end wrapped in rubber.

The ensemble is also generally organized in a very similar manner: the tun continuously executes a rhythmic-melodic pattern—indeed, several patterns were played throughout the recorded dance; one trumpet (Trumpet 1) repeats the interval of a fifth (D—G in the recorded version), placing more emphasis on the upper tone of the interval; the other trumpet (Trumpet 2) intervenes sporadically with a more extensive melodic phrase. However, unlike in the Ma'Muun Dance, Trumpet 2 executed in the studied version a less extensive and more formalized sequence of tones, limiting itself to the interval of a major/minor third.



Finally, in this tradition as well, the coordination of the three musical layers is done in an overall loose manner: not strictly aligned with a regular pulse and common fixed meter, but instead marking larger temporal phases whose duration is mainly determined by the plot and choreography. The Rabinal Achí has much more elaborate dialogues than the

9. These are the moments when the two Guacamayas grab Quiché Vinac and turn around with him (see also in García Escobar 2005).

10. Unlike the new tun from Santa Cruz Verapaz, the tun recorded in 1999 in Rabinal was capable of producing several distinct pitched tones.

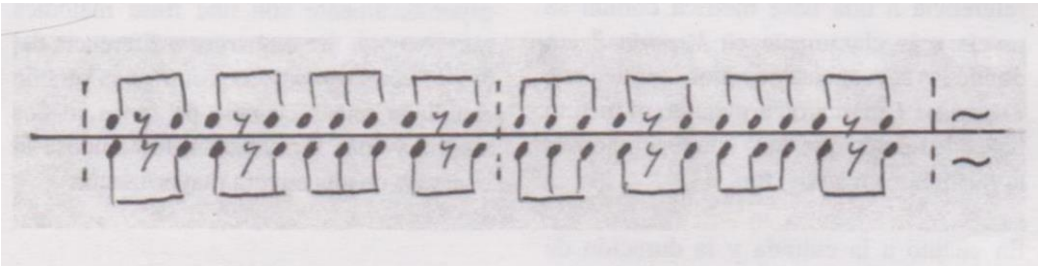
Ma'Muun (currently); the structure of these is marked, among other things, precisely by the superposition of all three musical voices, that is, by the melodic contributions of Trumpet 2 to the more continuous sonic texture created by the tun and Trumpet 1. Moreover, during the main phase of the dialogues, which in the studied performance of the dance lasted more than 70 minutes, the instrumental ensemble was limited to brief interventions by all three instruments, played at specific moments and representing a kind of punctuation. These interventions, though brief, followed the same polyphonic pattern we have just outlined.

The Piece from a Tzotzil Musical Tradition (Chiapas)

The Chiapanecan piece included here for comparative purposes was performed by three trumpet-like instruments and two drums. According to the photo on the album cover (Alderson 1975), which shows part of the ensemble in action, it involved double-headed drums of different sizes, played with drumsticks without rubber tips, and two metal trumpets resembling trombones. The third wind instrument is not shown in the photo; however, based on listening to the piece and Alderson's notes (ibid. 1), it was also a trumpet-like instrument.

Although more instruments are involved in its performance, the general polyphonic structure of the piece is, once again, similar to that of the other two traditions studied:

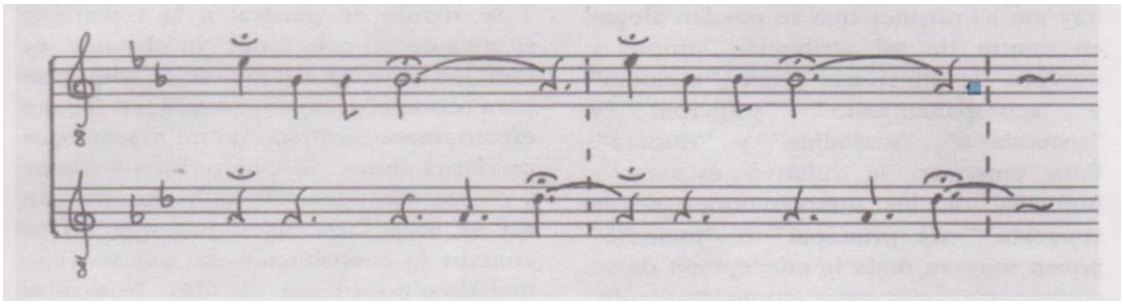
The two drums continuously play the following rhythmic pattern, with some variations:



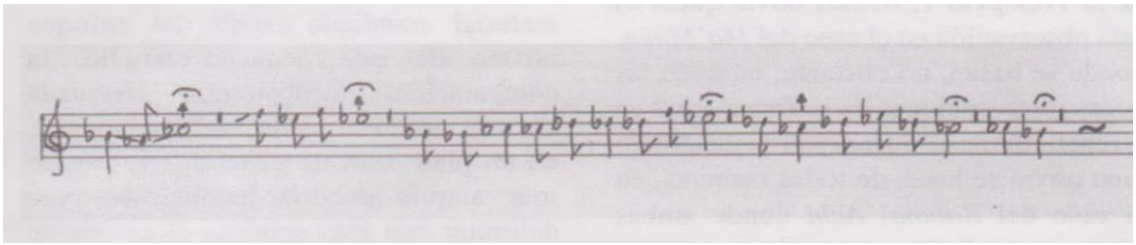
11 It is an assumption that the photo shows the ensemble recorded on the album; indeed, there are no written indications confirming this. However, since the album includes only one recording of this type of ensemble, it is likely the case.

12 Nevertheless, we have certain doubts about the exact identification of the type of trumpets played in this piece: Alderson simply describes them as "three long trumpets without valves" (ibid. 2), as if they were all of the same type and size. The photo on the album cover, which we have tentatively interpreted as representing the ensemble recorded on the album, shows two instruments that are indeed long and without valves. They appear to be more or less the same size and, in the recorded piece, they played in the same register. Although they resemble simple modern trombones, that is, trombones with a movable slide and no valves, the position of both musicians' hands and, once again, listening to the piece, seem to indicate that the two instruments were not equipped with a movable slide, or, if they were, the slide remained in a fixed position while being played. As for the third trumpet, represented only acoustically, it can be heard playing in a noticeably higher register than the other two instruments, but apparently also without the use of valves or a movable slide. Thus, either it was playing the higher harmonics of a natural scale based on a fundamental tone of roughly the same pitch as the other two trumpets, or it was a shorter trumpet. Perhaps it was a trumpet of the type depicted in another photo included in the booklet of volume 2 of the album (Alderson 1977: 2), a type that closely resembles the valve-less trumpets played in the musical traditions of Ma'Muun and Rabinal Achí.

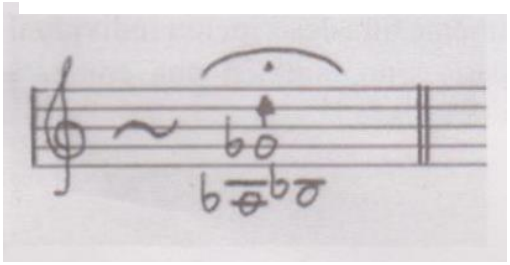
The two trombone-like trumpets share a melodic formula that is based on the varied repetition of two fourths, separated by a major second:



The third trumpet does not enter until the end of the piece; it does so through a melodic movement that is, once again, broader:



The piece ends, after an elaborate cadence in which all the melodic voices (and the drums) participate, with the following triad:



As we currently lack further information about this music, aside from the fact that it was played during the San Bartolo festival, we are completely unaware of the modes of interaction between the music and possible contexts (choreography, procession, etc.), which in the other two traditions to some extent determine the temporal and polyphonic structure of the music.

CONCLUSION

The comparison of the music of the Baile de Ma'Muun with two other traditions of ensembles composed of more than one trumpet and one or two drums demonstrates that it shares with them a form of three-layered polyphony organized in a very similar way.

There is a certain temptation to interpret the specific relationship between these three strata conventionally as a main melodic stratum on one side and an ostinato accompaniment on the other, consisting of a rhythmic part and a

melodic-rhythmic part. However, there are several reasons that can be argued against such a simple and univocal attribution of functions like "melody" and "accompaniment," "main" and "secondary," "melodic" and "rhythmic."

To begin with, the relative scarcity and brevity of the interventions of the supposed "main voice" or "melody" seriously call into question the conception of its counterpart as mere accompaniment. Moreover, the melodic behavior of Trumpet 2 is not always fundamentally distinct from that of Trumpet 1 in all its aspects. This observation may be less obvious in the case of Ma'Muun, where the few interventions of Trumpet 2 are also based on the repetition of the same melodic pattern; however, it becomes quite evident in the case of Rabinal Achí, where both trumpets limit themselves to repeating - and varying to a certain extent - a single short melodic formula each, whose main difference, apart from the distinct melodic interval, is that the formula of Trumpet 2 consists of two parts, while that of Trumpet 1 is generally simple.

Finally, the functional distinction between "rhythmic" and "melodic-rhythmic" applies well to the case where parchment drums are used, but not automatically to the cases where the tun is played, an instrument that typically facilitates the production of several distinct pitch heights, at least two of which are also of defined heights, and that lends itself to the production of a melodic type similar to that produced in at least one of the trumpets of the ensemble.

On the other hand, it is also worth remembering that in Version 2 of the Ma'Muun dance, the melodic movement of Trumpet 1 was generally reduced to the rhythmic repetition of a single tone. Nevertheless, it is also true that the newly acquired tun to accompany that dance was not, in fact, manufactured in such a way as to produce distinct and even less defined sound heights; the fact that it is still played perhaps indicates that the contribution of the tun to the melodic-polifonic interplay of the trumpets is not conceived as an absolutely indispensable element.

Due to the limitations of both the studied material and the very approach of this small study, the musicological comparison carried out in this article has necessarily remained quite general. A broader study should enable us to delineate more sharply the range of possibilities for the organization of the various musical parameters in each of the traditions, thereby facilitating not only a more substantiated individual description but also a more detailed comparison.

13. Apparently, the old tun would still be available and playable if necessary.

14. For example, we have not explicitly referred here to the issue of tonality, which obviously has certain particularities in each of the traditions: what is the tonal conception on which the vertical organization of the different melodic strata is based? To what extent do the tonal relationships, as demonstrated by the examples presented here, represent the rule or mandatory conception of the tonal interplay in the ensemble? Is there a tonal conception common to the three traditions that corresponds to the similarities in the overall organization of the different strata?

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Bronzes and Crystals of Good Friday. The Urns of the Holy Burial in Guatemala

FERNANDO URQUIZÚ

The concept described by the word *urn* in some of its definitions states: "Glass box used to store, while keeping them visible, certain objects: to preserve relics." (Larousse, 1950, p. 970)

The introduction of this type of objects in the Holy Burial processions in Guatemala was carried out by the Spaniards during the Christian evangelization process from 1524 to 1821 through the Catholic Church, which governed the reproduction of ideas and whose policies emanated from the city of Santiago de Guatemala, the former capital of the kingdom, from where it spread to the most remote towns. This led to an evolution in the style of the urns, which varied over time, reflecting the need for splendor in the Good Friday commemorations, leading some even to disappear. This circumstance was further influenced by other factors such as natural disasters, the desire for changes in these types of objects, and the need to adapt the Christian gospel among other forms of teaching.
Here, we will refer to the urns from some of the country's processions to typify their evolution up to the present day, in a sequence where we will attempt to reconstruct their history in national art, based on the analysis of documentation that will demonstrate the temporary existence of others that have disappeared, supported by documentary evidence and comparative analysis with New Spanish art from Mexico. In this way, we will be able to fully establish their evolution and social function in the region, up to their current role. This is because in Guatemala, the persistence of urban processions has lasted longer than in Mexico, but all their manifestations needed to change drastically to remain in the taste and devotion of the faithful, from where they successfully projected themselves to the rest of the world, even prompting the revival of these traditions in other parts of Latin America..

The oldest urn found to date in Guatemala is located in the first chapel on the North side, which belongs to the *Señor Sepultado* of the Church of San Francisco in the capital. The movement suggested by its lines and type of ornamentation places it in a transitional style from late Baroque to Neoclassical, which dominated some spheres of art in the emerging republic in the mid-19th century, when the Franciscan temple was inaugurated on February 22, 1851 (1981: Rodas, 28). However, the image it holds is evidently much older, making it likely that this urn replaced an older one destroyed during the 1773 earthquake in

the old city of Santiago. (See illustration No. 1)

It is possible that the oldest urn was similar to the one that existed in the town of San Juan Comalapa, a town located 96 kilometers west of the capital, where photographs of the old urn used in the Good Friday Holy Burial procession each year were found. According to a report by the local Social Studies teacher, Bernabé Tuc Tuc, he explained that the urn is traditionally called *Mokan* (throne of the deceased) in the local Cakchiquel language. It remained in the town's Calvary temple, from where it was transported on the night of Holy Thursday to the house of the Chief Steward of the Holy Burial brotherhood to prepare it for the Good Friday procession. During this time, special ceremonies called *Chajinik* (urn vigil) were held. (See illustrations No. 2 and 3)

These types of ceremonies still survive in other towns in the country, such as the specific case of Cobán, in the northern part of the country, where the urn remains in the house of the chief steward of the *Señor Sepultado* and is kept under vigil before the Good Friday procession. (See illustrations No. 4 and 5)

One particularly interesting aspect is that the urn shown in the photographs from Comalapa, dating from the second half of the 20th century (probably before the 1976 San Gilberto earthquake), has no parallel with any other existing in the country. It more closely resembles the one that holds the image of the *Señor Sepultado* from the temple of San Miguel Arcángel in Huejotzingo, Puebla, Mexico. The evidence becomes even more striking when the murals of this church are associated with other processions from San Juan Comalapa, such as that of *Jesús*

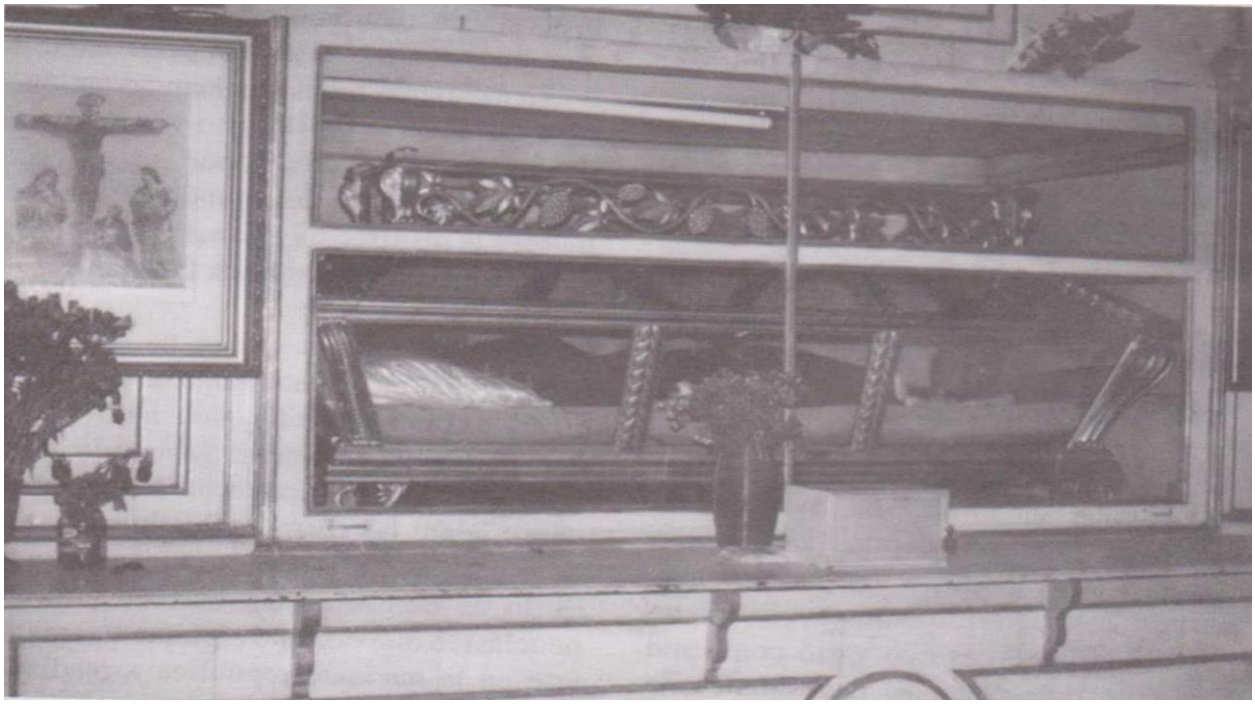


Illustration No. 1. Urn of the Señor Sepultado from the Church of San Francisco in Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción. Probably made at the end of the 18th century or the first half of the 20th century. (Photograph by Guillermo Vásquez).

Illustrations No. 2 and 3. Urn from San Juan Comalapa, "Mokan" (Throne of the deceased in the Cakchiquel language), in the 1970s. This urn has no parallel in Guatemala, but can be stylistically associated with the one from Huejotzingo in Mexico. (Anonymous Photograph).

Illustrations No. 4 and 5. Preparations for the "Urn Vigil" ceremony and the "Urn of the Señor Sepultado" from the Cathedral of Cobán, Alta Verapaz. (Photographs by Maria de la Luz Tercero de Reyes and Josefina del Carmen Ponce Guay).

Nazareno, where features appear that can be incorporated into these manifestations. The key difference is that the insignias carried by the penitents there are borne by indigenous people of the locality here in Guatemala. (See illustrations No. 6 and 7)

It is evident that the procession ritual must have been very similar in the Mesoamerican world, due to the affiliation in the teaching of the doctrine by the Franciscan friars who were in charge of both towns, even though they did not belong to the same province. However, both ultimately stemmed from the spiritual conquest process of New Spain, from where the monasteries of the provinces of Mexico, Texcoco, Tlaxcala, and Huejotzingo began to be founded.
Thus, the foundation of the convent of the Most Holy Name of Jesus was established from Mexico with the same evangelization program, as demonstrated by the similarity of the murals in the monastery of San Francisco el Grande in what is now Antigua Guatemala. Similar murals also appear, depicting some of the first twelve missionaries, such as St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Bernardine, St. Thomas, and St. Anthony of Padua, represented in a very similar way to the murals of Huejotzingo. Unfortunately, the iconography of the Passion of Christ is only evident in the monastery of Guatemala in the southeast dome of the cloister, where there are four weeping angels in stucco holding the *Arma Christi* in their hands, which can be associated with the shield of a niche for a retablo in the same place. This niche contains the Passion shield depicted as in the Huejotzingo murals, with five wounds on a cloth.

This evidence leads us to conclude that the use of the same artistic resources was both ornamental and didactic. Unfortunately, we do not have much material evidence from the 16th century, as the murals preserved in San Francisco el Grande in Antigua Guatemala do not provide further details on the subject at hand. However, based on the previously mentioned information, we can associate the dependency of the San Juan Comalapa convent on San Francisco el Grande, from which we can infer the complete similarity in the ceremonial practices and artistic objects with those of the distant town of Huejotzingo.

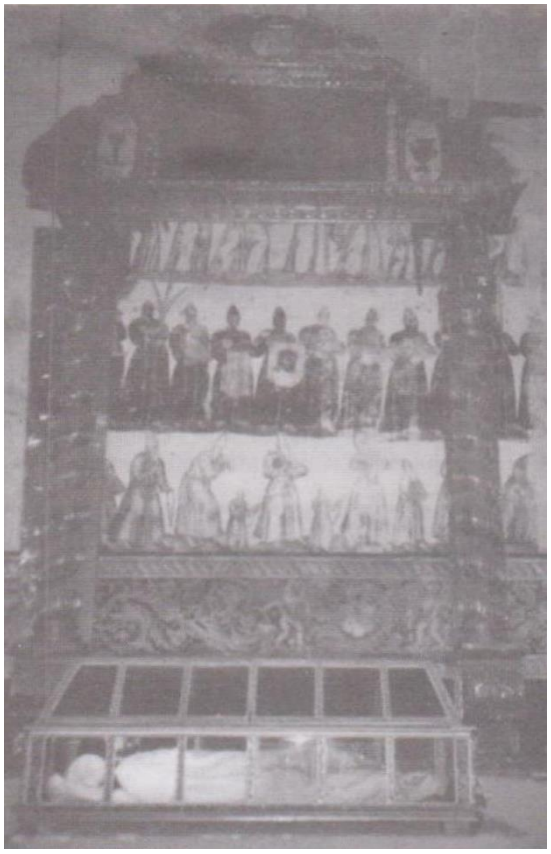


Illustration No. 6. Urn of the Señor Sepultado from the temple of San Miguel Arcángel, Huejotzingo, Mexico, which has a strong influence on the urn from the distant town of San Juan Comalapa. The mural painting in the background clearly shows the similarity in the organization of processions in the New World. (Photograph by Fernando Urquizú).

Illustration No. 7. Procession of Jesús Nazareno from San Juan Comalapa. It shows the relationship in the organization of the procession with the mural from Huejotzingo, Mexico. (Anonymous Photograph).

The similarity in the rituals becomes more evident when examining the data provided by (Vásquez Ahumada and Piña Loredo: 2000, 3), when they analyze and compare the murals of Huejotzingo with some chronicles written in the 16th century in New Spain that address the Franciscan cult of the Passion of Christ. This resemblance can be extended to other religious orders when contrasted with other versions, such as the Dominican one by (Dávila Padilla: 1955, 561 to 171), which brings us closer to the idea of unity in worship among the religious orders of the ancient kingdoms of New Spain and Guatemala.
In his account of the Good Friday ceremonies carried out by various Passion brotherhoods in several churches in Mexico City in the 16th century, Dávila Padilla references several elements of the paraphernalia that still exist in the processions of our country. Specifically, in relation to the topic we are addressing, the urn of the *Señor Sepultado* from the Santo Domingo temple in Puebla, Mexico, is quite similar to that of the *Señor Sepultado* of San Miguel de Huejotzingo and the ancient one that existed in San Juan Comalapa in Guatemala, with the only difference being that this one is covered in silver. This makes it familiar to the ancient urn of the *Señor Sepultado* from Santo Domingo in Guatemala, which, according to written sources, had a silver and tortoiseshell urn in what is now Antigua Guatemala. (Fernández Concha: 1906, 23) (See illustration No. 8)

Illustration No. 8. Urn of the Señor Sepultado from the temple of Santo Domingo in Puebla, Mexico. (Photograph by Fernando Urquizú).

The examination and comparison of this evidence also explain the presence of other urns within the country, although very modified. One such case is the urn of the *Santo Entierro* in Cobán, which relates to those previously described but differs in that the crossbars dividing the glass panels have been removed to create one long panel that provides better visibility for the image placed inside. This may have been done when replacing the urn, maintaining the same pattern but modified.

This allows us to express an idea of what the first urns of the processions in the city of Santiago de Guatemala were like; they were mortuary boxes whose walls and ceilings were framed with relatively small transparent glass, evidence that aligns with the limited use of this material due to its scarcity in the region, stemming from the difficulties in handling and transporting it.

A fundamental factor in explaining the development of this type of luxury artwork, specifically the urns for the *Santo Entierro* in the area, is to understand a complicated intertwining of Renaissance ceremonies that shifted to Baroque practices with the advent of the Counter-Reformation supported by the Council of Trent. These ceremonies were reproduced in all the towns of the New World with the attendance of local authorities, both indigenous and Spanish, taking on in some towns the characteristics of sacramental acts reminiscent of medieval practices that were performed live with the use of images, depending on the case. The development of such ceremonies and pious acts was supported by the *Concilium Mexicanum Provincile MI*— the Third Mexican Council, which concluded on October 16, 1585, and was the first Mexican council to receive approval of its declarations from the

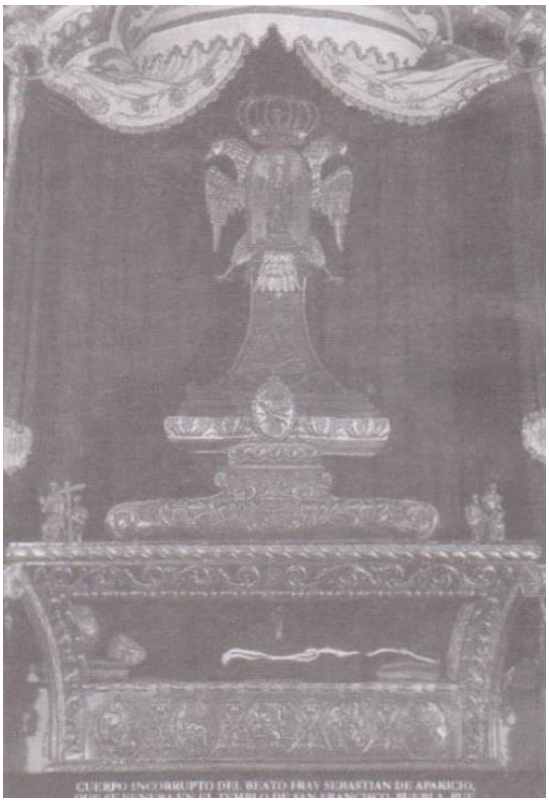


Illustration No. 9. Urn of Blessed Sebastián de Aparicio from the Temple of San Francisco, Puebla, Mexico, which brings us closer to the materials and techniques of the tomb commissioned to Master Cristóbal de Melo on September 1, 1687, in the city of Santiago de Guatemala. (Devotional print obtained at the Temple of San Francisco in the city of Puebla, Mexico).

Apostolic See in Rome on October 27, 1589. This council was convened and presided over by Don Pedro Moya de Contreras, Archbishop of Mexico, and included the bishops of the archdiocese, among whom was the Bishopric of Guatemala.

In this conclave, special forms were adopted for teaching the Gospel to the peoples of Mesoamerica in the New World, which explains the accuracy of the rituals, ceremonies, and the perfect adaptation of the teaching to the different peoples in the area according to their customs. The relevance of its conclusions even extended to 1770, when the

Archbishopric of Santiago de Guatemala was established, separating from that of New Spain. (Estrada Monroy, Volume I, 1972: 176 to 178)

The same unity in worship allowed for special agreements, such as those issued in the city of Santiago de Guatemala since 1595, between Franciscan and Dominican priests. As Jesús Fernández states (1906: 20), the most important procession of the Holy Burial became, since then, that of Santo Domingo, which would have contracted "with a tomb two varas and a third long, one wide, and the height proportionate, to be made of wood and tortoiseshell, with the necessary moldings, which shall be covered and adorned with hammered silver... leaving the openings free, which shall be covered with stained glass." This work was contracted to the master artisan and assembler, Sergeant Cristóbal de Melo, on September 1, 1687. According to documentation originally cited by historian Joaquín Pardo (1984: 82) and taken up by Federico Alfredo Phral Redondo (1997: 16, 17), several authors of the book *Historical Notes of the Brotherhood of the Lord Sepultado of the Temple of Santo Domingo* refer to the existence of another book titled *History of the Convent of Santo Domingo de Guatemala,* written by Brother Augusto Acuña in 1922. He mentions that when Captain Alonso Gil Moreno was the Major Domo, a retable was built in which the Lord was venerated in Antigua Guatemala, as well as a "tortoiseshell urn with very notable silver decorations" (1992: 124). This urn may also have resembled the one shown in Illustration 8. Unfortunately, in our country, there is no longer any tomb or urn that presents the wealth cited in both sources, although there is a complete retable of chased silver, like that of the Most Holy Sacrament in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Nueva Guatemala, in the South chapel of the temple's transept. It is worth noting that there is documentary evidence of the existence of more retables of this type in the same Church of Santo Domingo in the 17th century, as referred by the friar (Tomas Gage, 1950, p.19), who details the great sumptuousness in the use of these materials and techniques in the making of the image and chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary, so it is not surprising to find a magnificent tomb and urn for the Good Friday procession of that temple, where the political and economic power groups of the former kingdom, grouped in the brotherhoods of Spaniards of the Rosary and Our Lady of Solitude, would take advantage of the sacred parade to showcase their social position.

Illustration No. 10. Wooden urn in Baroque style, gilded and decorated with mirrors, still standing in the town of San Manuel de Colohete in the former Province of Lempira, Republic of Honduras, previously part of the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala. (Illustration taken from the book ON THE ROUTES OF SILVER AND THE RING by Mario Felipe Martínez, published by the Honduran Savings Financial Group, Honduras 2000, p. 15).

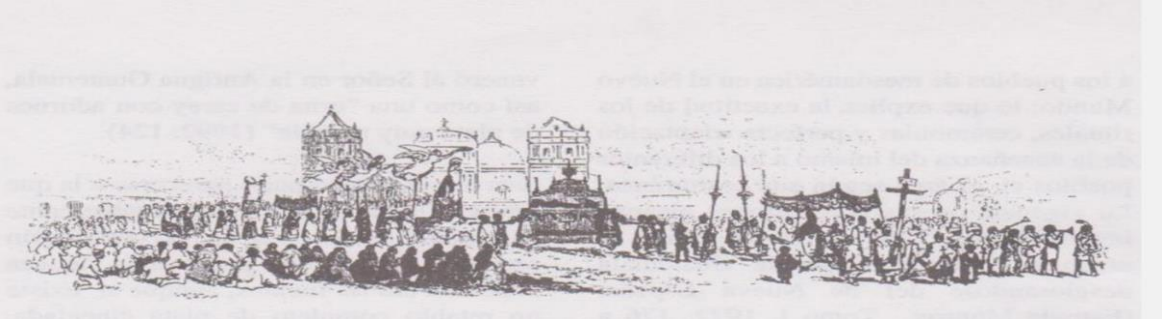


Illustration No. 1H. Engraving showing the Hispanic-influenced cult represented in the procession of the Santo Entierro in León, Nicaragua, in 1852, published by historian Luis Luján in his work La Semana Santa Tradicional en Guatemala (1982, p. 160). This plate features an urn in neogothic style, which brings us closer to the old traditions, still shining in those times when the air of opulence of the ancient kingdom was still felt even in the mid-19th century.

To illustrate to the audience what an impressive sepulcher or urn made of chased silver might have looked like, albeit on a smaller scale, we can take as a reference, with due caution, the Sepulcher of Blessed Sebastián de Aparicio from the church of San Francisco in the city of Puebla, Mexico (see illustration 8), considering the quality of silverwork from the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala showcased in the room dedicated to this art at the Franz Meyer Museum in Mexico City.

In a discussion about the topic with Honduran art historian Dr. Mario Felipe Martínez, he mentioned the existence of a wooden urn gilded with gold and decorated with mirrors, still standing, in the town of San Manuel de Colohete, formerly part of Gracias a Dios. (Martínez Castillo, 2000, pp. 9-15) (see illustration 10). This urn features a front shield with a double-headed eagle emblematic of the Order of Preachers of St. Francis, making it similar to the opulent urn of Blessed Sebastián de Aparicio, which also displays the same shield but separated from it. The current province of Lempira, Republic of Honduras, was previously part of the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala and was incorporated into Christianity largely by Franciscan priests, from which we can again associate a symbolic exchange in art that acted as a didactic element to unify ideas, as in this case, of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is very interesting to note the detail of the small glass panes, due to the scarce use of glass, which in turn made it difficult to fully see the image. However, this situation coincides with the rarity and costliness of these luxurious elements that displayed wealth and splendor, such as the materials used in the creation of the urn for the Holy Burial procession. Furthermore, the iconography of the Lord in the Sepulcher from other old churches in Mexico and Guatemala also coincides with the detail of wrapping the body of the recumbent Christ in a shroud, leaving only the face, possibly the hands, and part of the feet visible. These details are still present in the image of the Lord in the Sepulcher of San Miguel de Huijotzingo and other churches in Mexico City, such as the Lord in the Sepulcher of the Santo Domingo temple. However, this custom was lost in Guatemala City due to the "Frenchification" of the presentation of the deceased. Since the second half of the 19th century, they have been dressed in ornate tunics embroidered in gold and silver, sometimes dazzling with pure,

mestizo, or gilded silver halos. This required larger glass panes to allow full view of the elaborate artistic integration, where the inclusion of an arrangement of striking cushions is noteworthy.

Dr. Martínez also mentioned the difficulty of photographing the image that belongs to the aforementioned urn, as it remains wrapped in the shroud. Indisputable proof of the ancient use of the urn is the presence of dowels on its sides, one of which is broken. These serve as support for the bearers during the Good Friday rituals.

The presentation of this piece enriches another idea of how the urn of the Holy Burial of Santo Domingo might have looked, which was used for the most important procession in the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala, with the difference that it may have been made of chased silver and tortoiseshell.

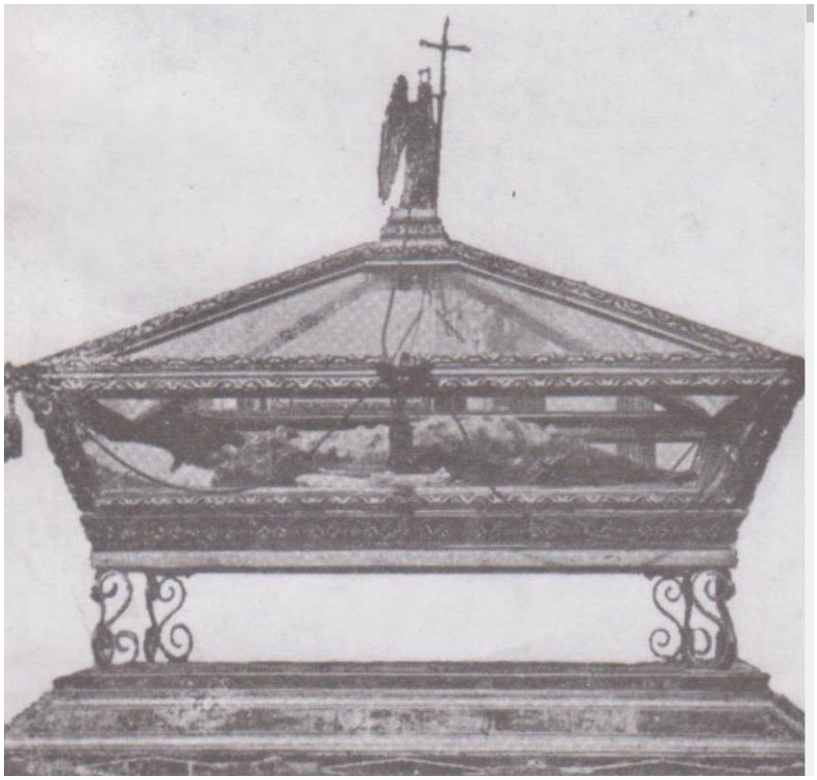


Illustration No. 12. Engraving of the urn of the Buried Lord of "La Escuela de Cristo" in Antigua Guatemala, imported from Spain. (Private collection).

In 1821, the political independence of the former Kingdom of Guatemala was promoted, and it was annexed to Mexico in 1823. Shortly thereafter, a new independence for Central America was declared, marking the beginning of the separation process from the so-called Central American Federation. After a series of disputes between conservatives and liberals, political stability was achieved with the founding of the Republic of Guatemala in 1847, under the government of General Rafael Carrera. This period also saw the country's first economic boom, thanks to the cultivation of cochineal, which also allowed for some social development. The power groups of the later Central American republics sought to continue living under a Spanish regime, though without Spain, while gradually adopting French bourgeois ideology.

Thus, the commemorations of Lent and Holy Week continued to be celebrated with great splendor in two ways: a liberal urban one that embraced changes in religious worship, emulating developed Catholic nations like France, and another of Hispanic ancestry that identified with the traditional church of the Spanish colonial period.

Within this framework, we find an engraving depicting the Hispanic-influenced worship in the Holy Burial procession in León, Nicaragua, in 1852. This image, published by historian Luis Luján in his work *La Semana Santa Tradicional en Guatemala* (1982, p. 160), (see Illustration 11), shows a neo-Gothic-style coffin that takes us back to old traditions that still shone in those days when the air of grandeur of the ancient kingdom was still palpable in the mid-

Illustration No. 13. Probable altar of the Friday of Sorrows or Holy Wednesday, where the urn of the Lord Entombed from the Santo Domingo temple in New Guatemala appears, which served as a model for the crafting of other urns. Taken in the first decade of the 20th century. (Anonymous devotional photograph).

Illustration No. 14. Urn of the Holy Burial of Santo Domingo, from the New Guatemala of the Assumption, in the traditional Holy Burial procession on Good Friday in 1908. (Photograph from the Collection of the National History Museum).

19th century. However, we must not forget that the Diocese of León, Nicaragua, had been under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Lima, from which it likely followed instructions, just as Guatemala did from the Archdiocese of New Spain.

This does not imply substantial differences in the worship, but there were minimal differences, such as the presence of the Weeping Angels on the tips of tall poles. Despite these differences and influences, religion likely continued to dominate much of the young Republic of Guatemala, whose remnants we have detected well into the 20th century in towns that were only recently connected to the capital by paved roads, which contributed to the survival of their traditions, such as in the case of San Juan Comalapa.

In 1847, the Republic of Guatemala was founded, separating from the Central American Federation, a situation that neoclassical temples and buildings in its capital. Among them stood out the Carrera Theater, inaugurated in 1861, which, according to reports and chronicles of the time, was an emulation of the Madeleine in Paris.

The rise of the bourgeois nation model, which identified France and the United States of America as perfect states, acted as a pattern for less developed nations. This circumstance led to the French influence in ideology, which was expressed in art and soon made its way into the country's processions. These gradually shed the participation of the former Spanish authorities, local councils, and artisan guilds that had once represented the involvement of former Hispanic power groups. Their place was increasingly taken by the more conservative families of the time, who participated in the processions but under the influence of a new culture that allowed them to display themselves as wealthy, intelligent, and devout individuals.

The procession most affected had to be that of the Holy Burial of Santo Domingo in New Guatemala, where the power groups of the old Spanish regime had significant participation. In order to ensure their continuity in the national Catholic religious scene, in 1852, they opted to replace the old confraternity of Our Lady of Solitude with a new religious association called the "Brotherhood of the Buried Lord" (Various authors, 1992, p. 31). This new brotherhood consisted of men, while the confraternity of Our Lady of Solitude was later assigned to women, who would accompany the veneration of this Virgin title and participate in the Holy Burial procession on Good Friday.

The newly formed Brotherhood of the Buried Lord, composed of men, initiated a series of drastic changes in the Holy Burial procession, including the replacement of the Buried Lord's image that had been carried in the procession on Good Friday (Fernández Concha, 1906, p. 22). As part of this transformation, a new urn was commissioned in the late 1860s, which is still used today because the image fits perfectly in it, with both works of art reflecting the French neoclassical style.

The new effigy of the Buried Lord was complemented with the addition and development of cushions embroidered in gold and silver, also of French manufacture, where the image of the Lord rests. The image was no longer dressed as a deceased wrapped in a white shroud but was instead adorned with colorful tunics embroidered with threads of the same metal and origin.

This new presentation of the Buried Lord of Santo Domingo reached new heights in its urn, as evidenced by the Brotherhood's expense reports presented in 1870, which state: "Article 3° - The Board agreed to approve the expense of five pesos that the brother Treasurer presented, which was spent reinforcing the new urn, reiterating that no expenses should be incurred without Board approval." (Various authors, 1992, p.124). This citation suggests that the urn was relatively new at that time and could not have been more than ten years old. The same document provides further information the following year when some broken glass was replaced.

However, the information is temporarily interrupted, probably due to the establishment of the Liberal Reform in 1871, which attacked the Catholic Church's economic and ideological power at its core, prohibiting public religious manifestations. This led to the suspension of most processions for a time, although the legislation was not fully enforced throughout the Republic due to the difficulty of immediate communication to all corners of the country, and the disobedience of religious associations who rebelled against such mandates, thus playing a fundamental role in the preservation of popular religious traditions.

In the last decade of the 19th century,

Holy Week commemorations were reorganized due to the enormous pressure exerted by Catholic religious groups and merchants on the liberal governments that succeeded one another in political power. These governments found in the Catholic Church a valuable ally to exert control over the large masses of people, despite the cultural differences between the various peoples inhabiting the country.

Thus, gradually, information begins to reveal the reappearance of processions in the streets, leading to the need for new urns for the Holy Burial processions. The most significant of these was undoubtedly the one imported for the Buried Lord of

the Church of the School of Christ in what is now Antigua Guatemala. Information about this urn can be inferred thanks to the diligence of historian Juan Alberto Sandoval Aldana (Manuscript identified as No. 1), who states: "The beautiful urn of the Buried Lord of the School of Christ is a true work of art with Baroque characteristics, made in Seville at the request of Mr. Juan Francisco Aguirre Asturias, designed by the artist from Antigua, Juan Francisco Álvarez, and ordered from Spain by the Spanish merchant Edgardo Vivas Fernández. It was inaugurated on Good Friday in 1892." (See illustration 12).

Thus, processions gradually returned to the streets of Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción and the main cities during the government of Licenciado Manuel Estrada Cabrera (1898-1920), whose administration was marked by the handing over of national interests to the expansion of North American capital. His government sought to ingratiate itself with all levels of power, finding in the Catholic Church a timely means to maintain popular support. This led him to bolster the recovery of religious traditions of Hispanic and conservative origin, despite being a liberal government.

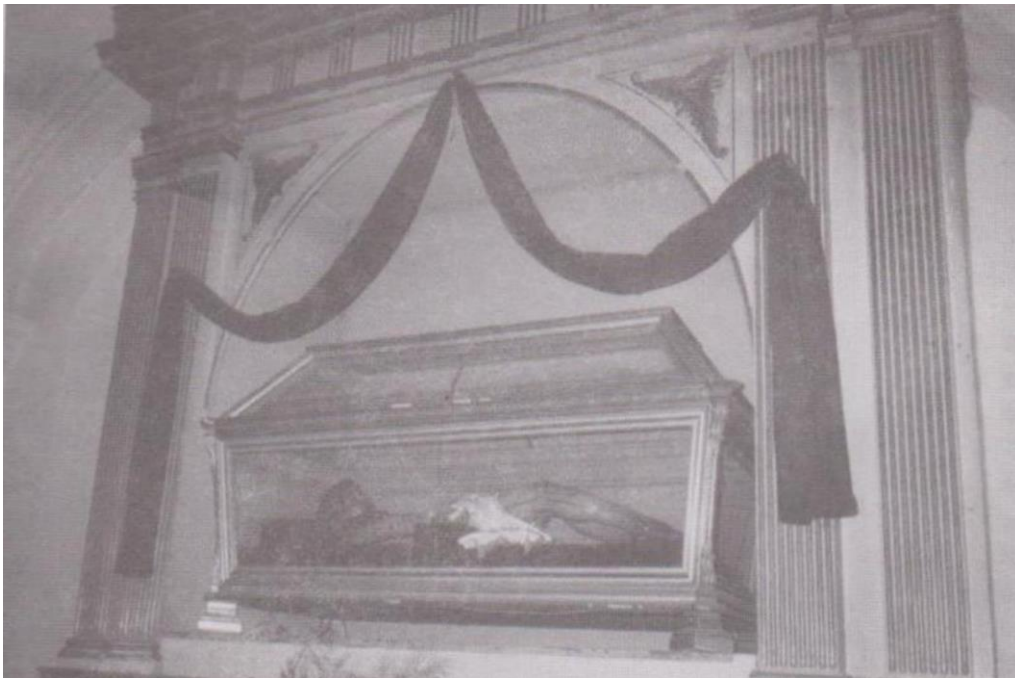


Illustration N° 15. Urn of the Lord Sepultado from the temple of La Merced in La Antigua Guatemala. This work was probably made in the country using foreign materials. (Photograph by Fernando Urquizú).

It was during this crucial stage for the country that the balance between Catholic religious commemorations and patriotic civic events was established, with similar purposes of providing the people with "bread and circus," detaching them, even if just for a few days, from a reality marked by a precarious economic situation and widespread political violence. Thus, the splendor of Lent and Holy Week in Guatemala alternated with the celebrations of national Independence and the equally famous Minervalias, which were school contests dedicated to the studious youth of the country.

The development of this grand pomp at the beginning of the 20th century can be observed in relation to the topic at hand: "the urn." In the photographs of an altar, probably from the Friday of Sorrows or Holy Wednesday, the magnificence with which the commemorations were held inside the temples is showcased, while in another, the procession of the Santo Entierro makes evident the external worship. Both are from the temple of Santo Domingo in Nueva Guatemala, where the use of the urn of the Lord Sepultado for both internal and external worship has continued to this day. (See Illustrations 12 and 13).

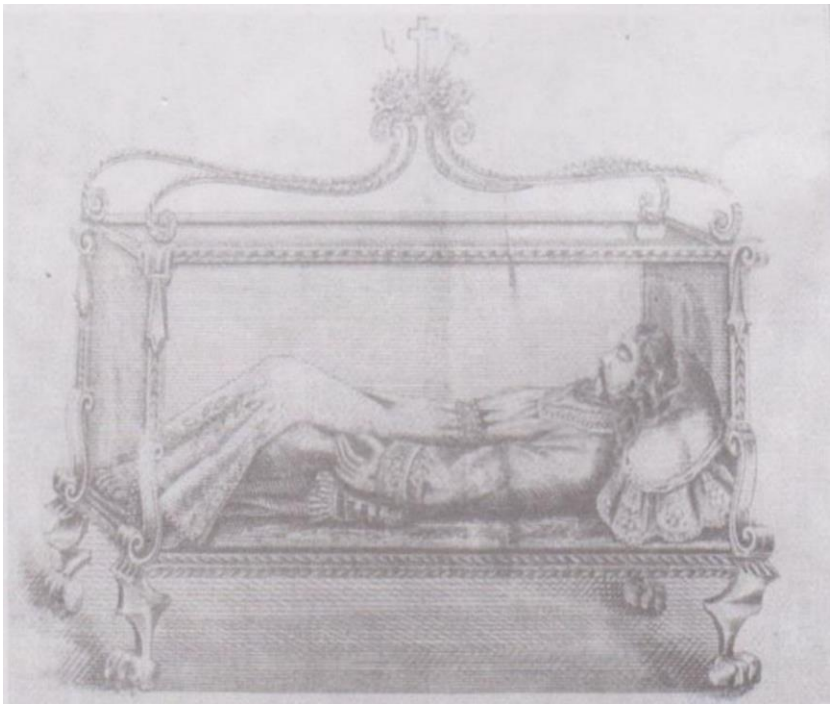


Illustration No. 16. First urn of the Lord Sepultado from El Calvario in Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, whose first Santo Entierro procession took place in 1896. Its design is similar to that of the Cristo Morto from Santo Domingo. (Illustration taken from the book La Semana Santa Tradicional Guatemalteca by Luis Luján Muñoz, Seviprensa Centroamericana, p. 177).

Illustration No. 17. Lithograph of the Señor Sepultado from the Parish of San Juan Bautista Amatitlán, Department of Guatemala, dated 1961. The urn shows a clear influence from the one belonging to the Señor Sepultado from the Temple of San Francisco in Nueva Guatemala; compare with Illustration No. 1. Note the use of continuous glass panes for better appreciation of the image, due to the increase in quality and availability of this material in the 20th century. (Devotional chromolithograph from historian Erick Blanco, a local resident).

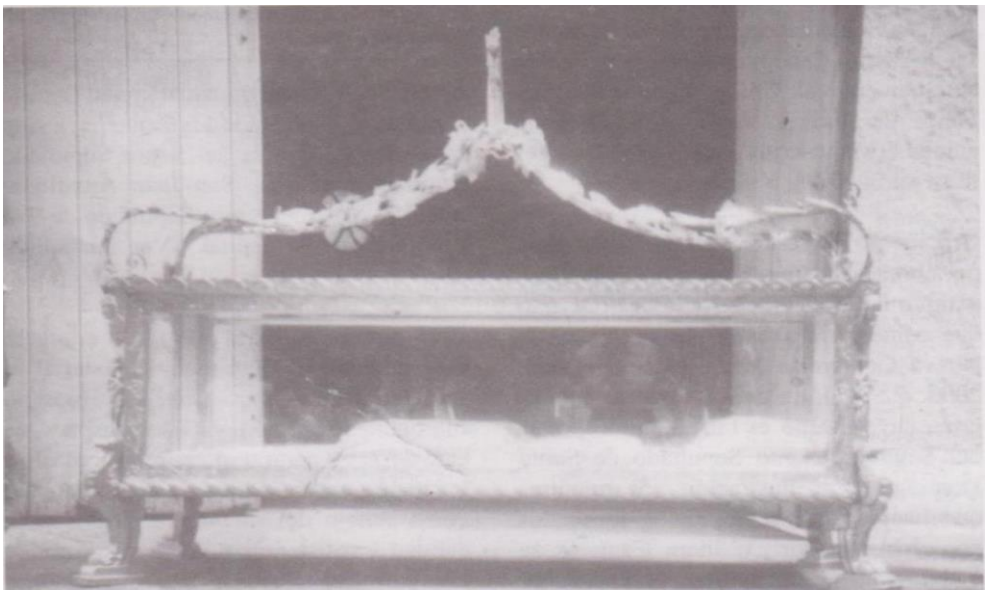


Illustration No. 18. Urn of the Señor Sepultado from El Calvario after a repair following the earthquake of 1917-18. (Photograph by historian Juan Alberto Sandoval Aldana).

The personality that this bronze urn gave to the Santo Entierro procession of Santo Domingo in the capital was joined by the Sevillian-style urn from the Church of the Escuela de Cristo in La Antigua Guatemala, reflecting since then the rise of new social groups in the leadership of the "Hermandades de Pasión." Both urns clearly demonstrate a spirit of admiration and preference for foreign elements, which would supposedly give them a "social hierarchy" that contrasted with the beauty and splendor of the old urn of the Sepultado from the Church of San Francisco in the capital. These attitudes of ostentatious acquisitions from abroad soon began to influence other brotherhoods of the same devotion to seek the purchase of new urns in the country. Sometimes, it is likely that new urns were made in the country with foreign materials, a possibility that might apply to the urn of the Señor Sepultado from the Temple of La Merced in La Antigua Guatemala, which, according to historian Juan Alberto Sandoval, once belonged to the Cristo Yacente of San Felipe de Jesús on the outskirts of that city. (Unpublished manuscript No. 2). (See illustration 15.)

An interesting source that illustrates the topic now at hand is an engraving from the old book of the Señor Sepultado from El Calvario, which began to leave its temple in Nueva Guatemala around 1896 (Urquizú, 2003, p. 141). It shows an urn whose design is heavily influenced by that of the Señor Sepultado from Santo Domingo (see Illustration 15). Meanwhile, around 1914, according to data collected by historian William Cameros, a similar urn was commissioned for the Señor Sepultado of the parish of Concepción Ciudad Vieja, a town located on the outskirts of La Antigua Guatemala. During this time, it is possible that the urn for the Señor Sepultado of the parish of San Juan Amatitlán, which imitates that of the Señor Sepultado of San Francisco in the capital, was also commissioned (see Illustration 16).

Illustration No. 19. The Church of San Felipe de Jesús on the outskirts of La Antigua Guatemala presents a neo-Gothic style that coincides with the urn and the image of the Lord Sepultado venerated in this temple, creating a sense of Artistic Totality between the architecture, sculpture, and urn as part of the sumptuous decorative arts. (Photograph by Fernando Urquizú).

The earthquake of 1917-18 severely affected the material and immaterial heritage of our country. The urns were no exception; after this natural disaster, larger glass panels were incorporated during restorations, reflecting the improved quality and durability of this material, allowing for greater visibility of the images. This situation is evident in Illustration 18, which shows the urn of

the Señor Sepultado from El Calvario after some repairs.

The urns used in urban processions began to feature larger glass panels, a trend that extended to the major departmental processions that reformed them as a result of advancements in glass, benefiting from the introduction of artificial lighting within them, which enhanced the visibility of the images at night. However, the urn of the Señor Sepultado from Santo Domingo continued to set an important standard as a model.

On Good Friday in 1923, the Señor Sepultado from the parish of San Nicolás in Xelajú appeared in a photograph in an urn evidently inspired by that of the Señor de Santo Domingo in the capital (Various Authors, 1997, p. 41). This gives us an idea of the national reach of this work. However, other churches opted for different designs that, due to their originality, coherence, and good taste, achieved particular forms of expression. One example is the Señor Sepultado from San Felipe on the outskirts of La Antigua Guatemala, whose temple was completed in 1923 through the efforts of the Catholic community led by the renowned Father Guitart (Juan Alberto Sandoval Aldana, unpublished document No. 2) (see Illustration 19).

In the church, a neogothic style urn was placed, made in France, as can be deduced from an inscription located on the left exterior head of the urn that reads: "Maurice Lenain, Farricant, 34 Rué St. Sulpice, Paris," in which the Señor Sepultado remains like a throne presiding over the temple of the town (see Illustration 20).

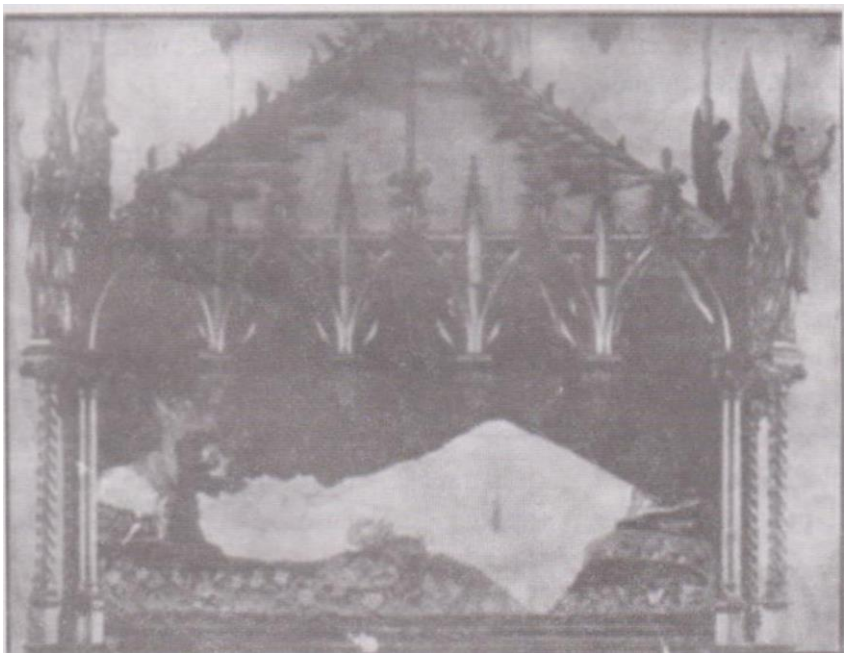


Illustration No. 20. Image of the Lord Sepultado of San Felipe displaying a new presentation given by its new urn and attire inspired by the neo-Gothic style, nuanced with Guatemalan taste, featuring Baroque hair and garments with French embroidery. This influence stems from the changes made to the image of the Lord Sepultado of Santo Domingo de la Nueva Guatemala, which considerably impacted the local public, extending beyond our borders as it inspired the model for the mass production of the wooden retablo "Jesús en el sepulero," as we can infer from the following photograph. (Printed with signature, unidentified, collection of Fernando Urquizú).

The style of the urn coincides with some features of the sculpture of the Lord Sepultado, which presents certain reminiscences of the elongation of the human figure characteristic of the Gothic style. The Lord's attire was enriched with a beautiful glow that framed his face, along with Baroque hair and garments embroidered with gold and silver. The Lord was delicately placed in his new urn on cushions also embroidered with the same materials.

The impact of this reinterpretation in the presentation of the Lord Sepultado of San Felipe de Jesús, following a specific neo-Gothic style nuanced with "chapín" flavor, even influenced the factory "El Arte Católico" of Francisco Bochaca in Barcelona, Spain, to the extent of creating new items for international sale, such as item No. 1585, described as “Rich retablo representing Jesus in the sepulcher, executed in carved wood.” In the graphic identifying the mentioned work, we can clearly notice the following detail: “S. Señor de S. Felipe Antigua G.” (See illustration 21). The face of the image of the Lord Sepultado of San Felipe de Jesús was noticeably altered, even changing the tilt of the neck forward, and the urn was also reinterpreted. The idea of impact prevails in the creation of the masterpiece present in illustration 20, which served as the basis for the industrial design of the cited religious object for subsequent mass production.

The acquisition of urns for the large Good Friday processions in La Antigua and La Nueva Guatemala significantly influenced smaller brotherhoods in the old neighborhoods of the capital to update their own. In this process, the urns of the churches of Santa Catalina and San Sebastián stood out.

In the process of researching the topic, a photograph identified as illustration 22 was located, stamped by the Photography Studio of Albertino Méndez. The back states that this urn was made in the workshop of Don Salvador Posadas in 1922 for the church of La Recolección, carved by the sculptor Don José Peralta and gilded by the painter and sculptor Julio Borrayo Luna. However, the testimony presented by the image corresponds to that which currently belongs to the Lord Sepultado of San Sebastián, which we can appreciate in illustration 23. It remains to verify the authenticity of the data provided on the back of illustration 22 regarding the existence of a probable cabinet-making workshop of Señor Posadas and the existence of two artists of painting and sculpture.

In the 1930s, the dissemination of the observances of Lent and Holy Week was reinforced by the emergence and development of broadcasting, which allowed devotees and the general public to be united through a new medium, resulting in the gathering of more people around these sacred parades in plazas and promenades, which transformed into the best venues for the gathering of large crowds visiting the country as a result of the tourism development that was strengthening at that time, forming a new audience for the processions that was not necessarily Catholic or national.

Illustration No. 21, Reproduction from the sales catalog of the factory El Arte Católico by Francisco Bochaca. Barcelona, 1929. Page 74, which presents the creation inspired by the photograph Tradiciones de Guatemala identified as No. 8. (Photograph by Fernando Urquizú).

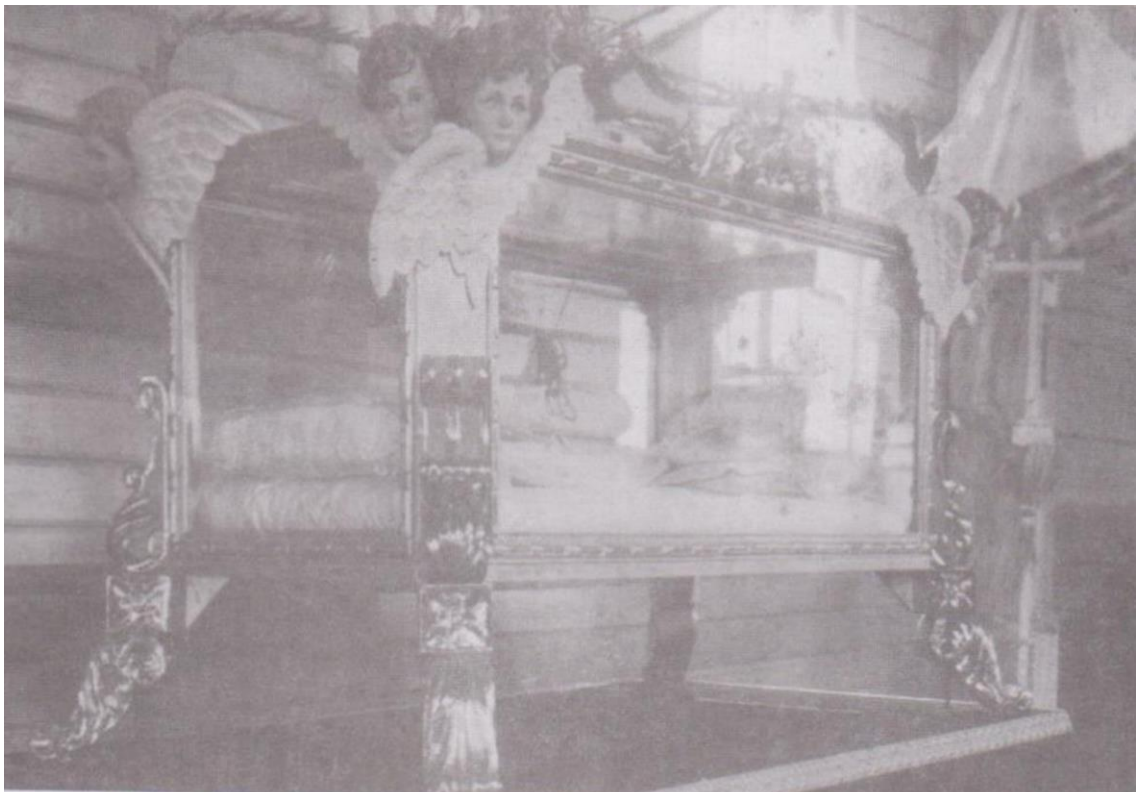


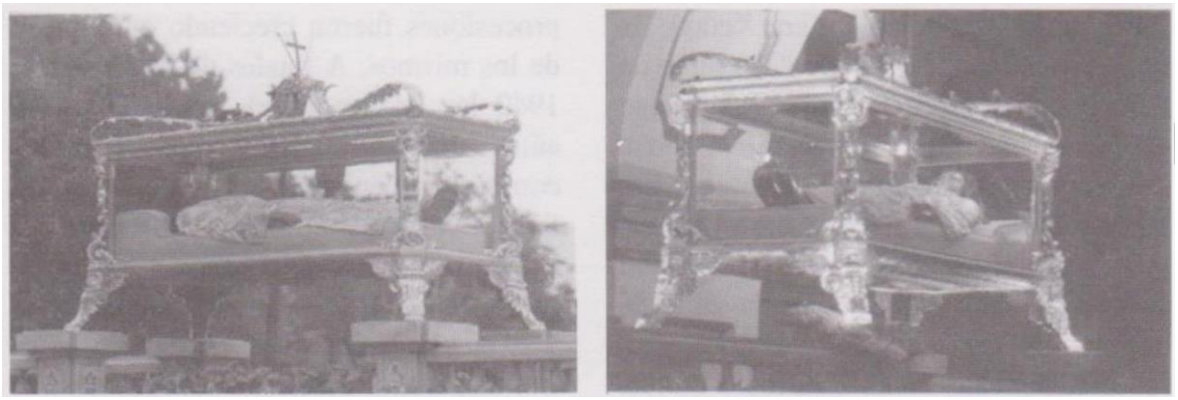
Illustration No.22. Photograph stamped by the studio of Albertino Méndez, which informs on the back that this "Urn was made in the workshop of Don Salvador Posadas in the year 1922 for the church of La Recolección, carved by the sculptor Don José Peralta and gilded by the painter and sculptor Julio Borrayo Luna." (Photograph from the collection of Fernando Urquizú).

These circumstances coincided with the economic recovery of the country based on the repression of the masses by the third coffee plantation dictatorship led by General Jorge Ubico. This stability allowed for the construction of colossal buildings in the capital, which had never before been dreamed of during that time, providing an increasingly grand backdrop for the processions and creating a vibrant artistic setting that framed the passage of the processions against monumental backgrounds such as the National Palace, the Post Office, the National Police, and others. Meanwhile, modern religious constructions were inaugurated, such as the Temple of El Calvario, which featured an elegant plaza.

La Antigua Guatemala was also the subject of serious studies during those days by prominent figures like Verle L. Annis, Wilson Popenoe, and the remembered Don Rafa de la Hoz, who constructed the first historiographical discourses prior to later declaring this city as a World Heritage Site. At the same time, most monuments were rescued from private hands thanks to the diligence of engineer Rafael Pérez de León with the support of General Ubico's government.

This material and intellectual movement around these two population centers was fundamental for the publication in 1934 of "Las Bellas Artes en Guatemala" by Víctor Miguel Díaz, under the auspices of the National Typography, which revisited the history of Passion images and processions within a new interpretive framework.

Illustration No. 23. Urn of the Lord Sepultado from the church of San Sebastián, very similar to the one identified as "made for the church of La Recolección." (Photograph by Jorge Fernando Urquizú).



Illustrations No. 24 and 25. Urn of the Holy Burial of Santo Domingo, from the New Guatemala of the Assumption, in the Holy Burial procession on Good Friday of the year 2004. Day and night views. (Photographs by historian Walter Gutiérrez).

The consolidation of these elements was reflected in the growth of the processions, with more participants and larger platforms, and the development of large-scale nighttime electric lighting on the processional platforms. This technology allowed for a new splendor at night, previously difficult to navigate. The nocturnal aspect of the urns changed forever since those days, as thrones and reliquaries for the buried were conveniently adapted for this purpose, achieving true artistic feats up to the present, as can be seen in illustrations 24 and 25.

In 1940, a committee was formed in the Church of San Felipe de Jesús to equip the Good Friday procession with a new processional urn. The design was commissioned to artist Rodrigo Coronado and crafted by master carvers Francisco Paz and Fidel Guerrero. It was inaugurated a year later, on the occasion of the extended procession route that reached the main square of La Antigua Guatemala for the first time. (Sandoval Aldana. Unpublished Document No. 2) (See illustration 26).

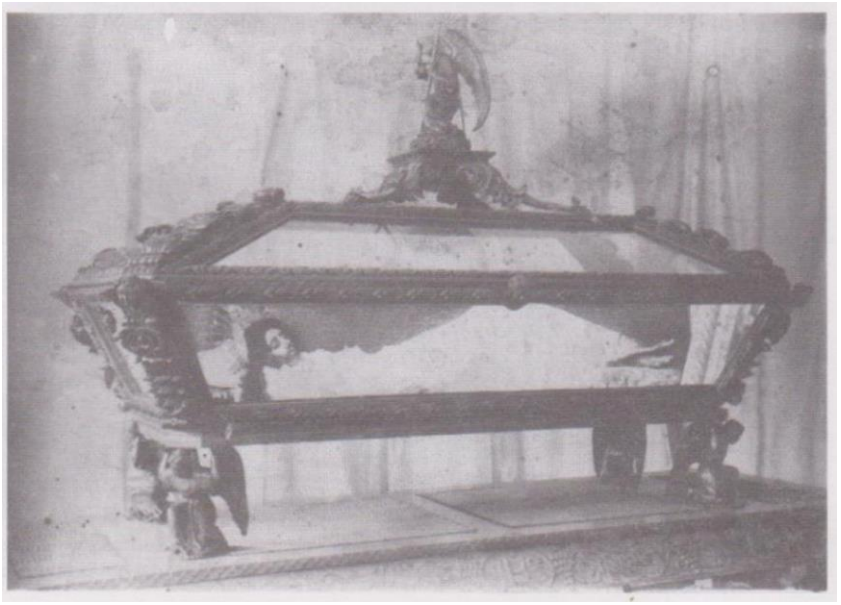


Illustration No. 26. Photocomposition postcard showing the Lord Entombed of San Felipe de Jesús on his platform and urn, inaugurated on Good Friday in 1941, on the occasion of the extended procession route reaching the main square of La Antigua Guatemala. (Postcard preserved by the devotee Juan A. Rodríguez).

In this decade, also in Xelajú, the image of the Lord Entombed from the temple of San Nicolás began to regularly process in a new urn, which gave the procession a distinctive character, reinforced by the sculptures commissioned from Julio Dubois, who had already enriched the procession for several years, contributing in a special way to give it a distinctly local flavor. (Various Authors, 1997, pp. 43-52.) (See Urn Photograph No. 27).

In most churches across the country, the full Good Friday ritual continued, which included: the Adoration of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Sermon of the Seven Last Words, the Descent, and the Procession of the Lord's Burial inside the temples. However, at La Recolección and El Calvario in Nueva Guatemala, the processions grew beyond the temple walls. By the late 1940s, the images of the Lord Entombed were still being carried in urns, as evidenced by the Holy Week supplement from Prensa Libre on April 4, 1998, pp. 12 and 14. These photographs were reproduced under numbers 28 and 29 in this exhibit to demonstrate the changes these processions underwent regarding the use of urns on Good Friday.

In 1946, the finest expression of urns made in Guatemala from metals was achieved, according to a reference found by historian Manuel Antonio Morales Montenegro. While extracting data from a local newspaper, he found that the urn of the Lord Entombed from El Calvario was made of bronze, aluminum, and silver, based on a drawing by J. Arnaldo Chavarri and a model by Carlos Enrique García, with sculptures by Miguel Hugo Álvarez, carving by Juan Ortiz López, casting by Timoteo Gómez S. and Son, polishing and finishing by Luis Rossi's workshops, ironwork by Agustín Sánchez & Son, silver decorations and jewelry by Julio Campos, painting and decoration by Carlos Badillo S.'s workshops,

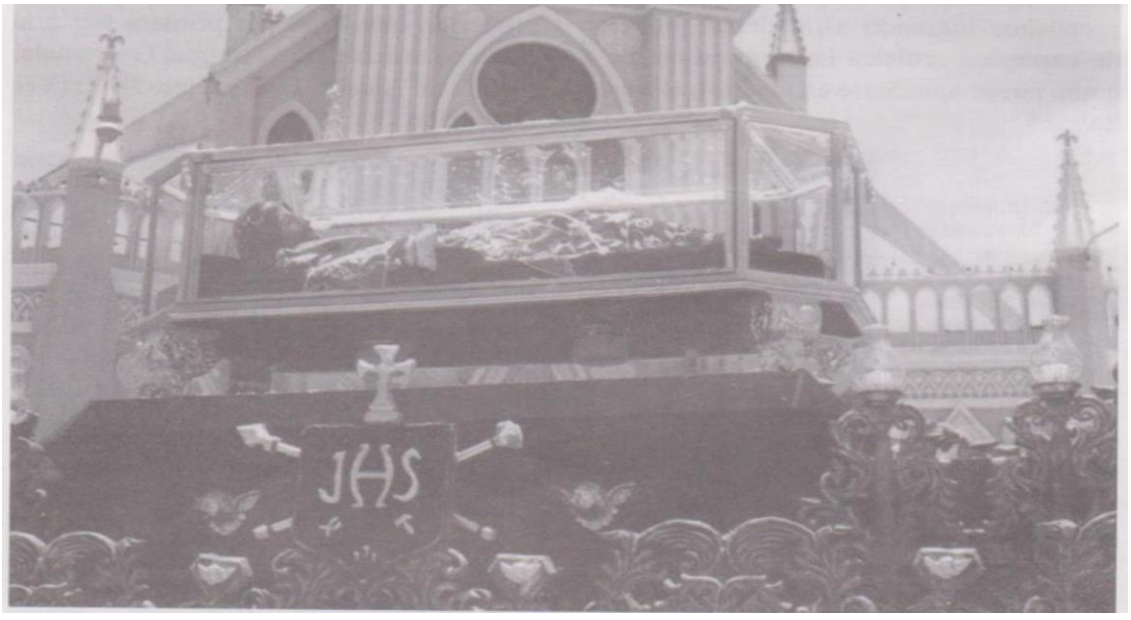


Illustration No. 27. Lord Entombed of San Nicolás of Xelajú in his urn, unveiled in 1947 on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of his brotherhood. (Photograph by historian Walter Gutiérrez).

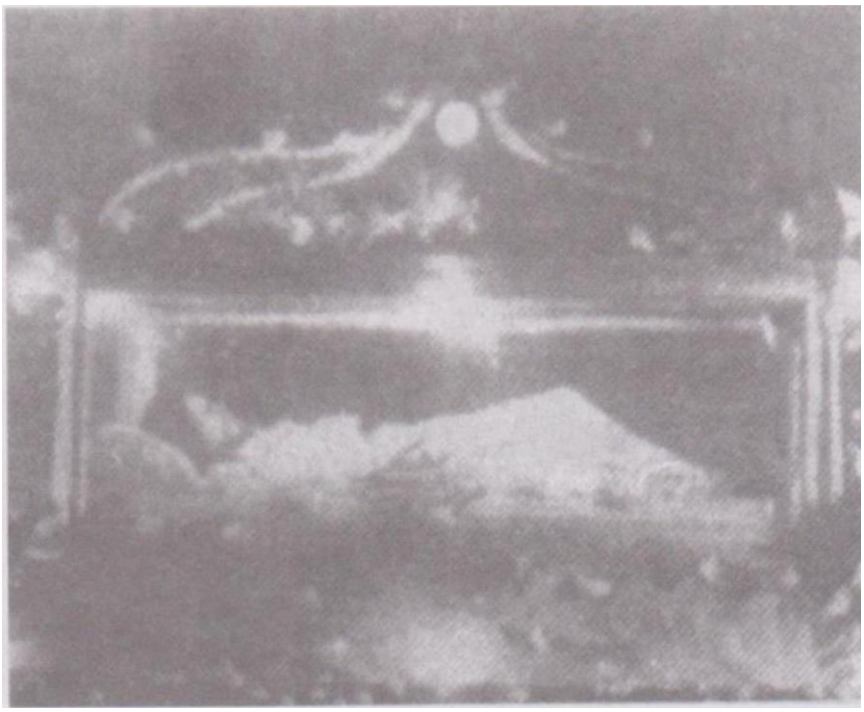


Illustration No. 28. Urn of the Holy Burial from La Recolección, showing some similarity with the photograph stamped by the Albertino Méndez studio, identified with number 22, likely crafted in the same workshop as that of San Sebastián. (Taken from the "Semana Santa" supplement of Prensa Libre, 1998 edition, p. 12.)

autogenous welding by J. M. Gutiérrez & Son, fitting and finishing by Fidel Mata, and glasswork by Vidriería de Lazo y Muñoz. (El Imparcial, Year XXIV, No. 8382, April 13, 1946).

In the mid-20th century, the idea of presenting the image of the Lord Entombed from the La Recolección temple without an urn began to mature, with the aim of attracting more public to its displays of faith. The image of the Lord was placed on His Good Friday platform as the focal point of a beautiful processional adornment themed "The Burial of Christ," clearly inspired by Fray Miguel A. Murcia's depiction in the "Paso" that leads the procession from the San Bartolomé temple in the city of Murcia.

The new presentation of the Lord on the platform was well received by devotees and the general public, who could appreciate in a novel way the magnificence and anatomical precision of the Cristo Morto sculpture. This left a lasting impression, inviting the repetition of this new way of displaying Him on Good Friday platforms, which continued year after year, though with different themes.

From an artistic standpoint, the use of this approach spread to other Lord Entombed processions, leading some of the main images of the processions to gradually become part of the adornments. This novelty drew crowds to see the decorations on the platforms as the main attraction of the external displays of faith, rather than the people's accompaniment of the Lord's burial procession. Over time, this shift fostered a sense of spectacle, which expanded the attending public, many of whom were not necessarily Catholic or attending out of devotion.

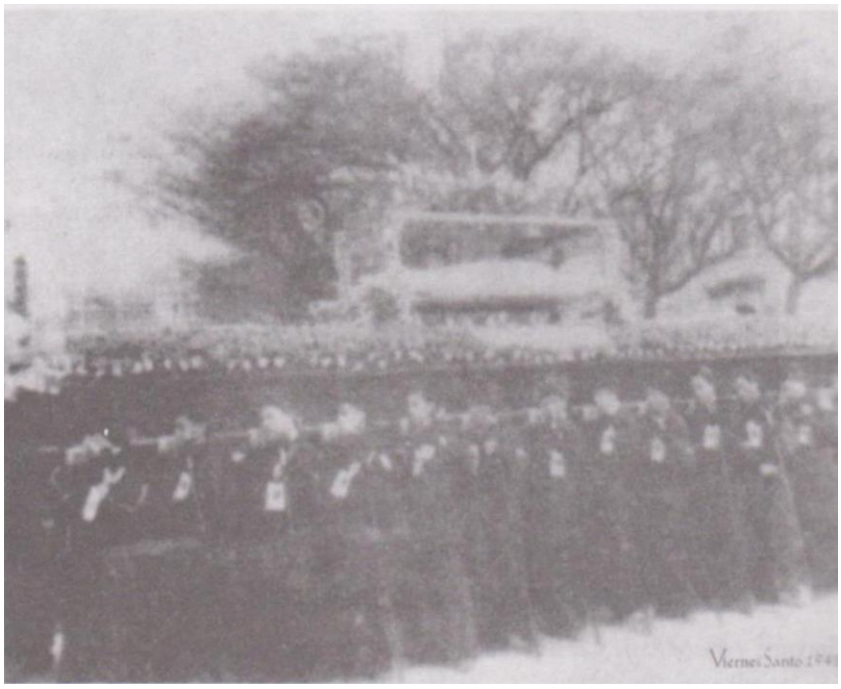


Illustration No. 29. Photograph of the urn of the Lord Sepultado from El Calvario in the year 1948. (Taken from the "Semana Santa" supplement of Prensa Libre, 1998, p. 14).

These situations were reinforced by the rapid advancement of science and the spread of materialist doctrines during the revolutionary period from 1944 to 1954, which accelerated with the arrival of long-playing acetate records, television, color photography, and the enhanced precision of color sound films. The epic and biblical genres of cinema were especially utilized by local distributors during Lent and Holy Week, renewing their influence on the decorations and use of urns.

The growth of processions continued to ascend, driven by another factor: the development of an "internal armed conflict from 1962 to 1996." The public attendance at these events increased due to internal migrations caused by the war. Processions became the last bastion of hope and comfort for all inhabitants of the country, who found in the Holy Burial processions a space to symbolically honor their martyrs and relatives who had physically disappeared, victims of the violence in a chaotic society.

In the 1960s, the images of the Reclining Christ from the Holy Burial processions of the temples of El Calvario and La Recolección were paraded without urns, placed on beautiful floats that captured the hearts of the capital's residents. This reached a special point in the last years of that decade and the early years of the next, when the artist Luis Alberto de León entered this field of Guatemalan traditional culture. He introduced new materials like duroport in the adornment of the processional floats, without abandoning their traditional character.

The new material significantly lightened the weight of the decorations and allowed for the presentation of new motifs, which contributed to a sense of spectacle in the use of space on the larger floats, while maintaining traditional altar-like features and the didactic objective expressed through the adornments of the processions.

In 1975, the Brotherhood of Christ Crusaders from the El Calvario temple commemorated the Third Centenary of their Good Friday procession. We will not enter into a discussion of whether that celebration had historical foundations or was just another way to attract the attention of the urban public, who once again experienced a new, yet unexplored, aspect of local Holy Week that year; instigated by several factors, including the massification of education, the appropriate manipulation of information media, and the relative ease of travel during that time for the country's affluent groups.

Illustration N° 30. Illustration taken from the Manifesto of the Brotherhood of the Holy Burial of Seville from 1992, p. 71, which shows a photograph of the urn of the Holy Burial from that city and served as a "model" for the Guatemalan artist Pedro Reyes Domínguez to create a new urn for the Good Friday procession of the Lord Sepultado of El Calvario in 1975.

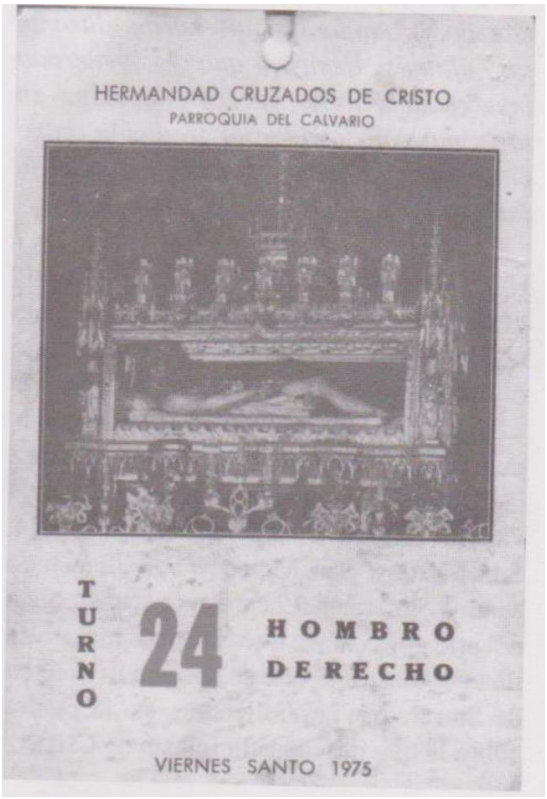


Illustration N° 31. Turn of the church of El Calvario from 1975, when a photograph similar to the previous one identified as Illustration N° 30 was used, probably because the urn had not been completed when the turns were printed. (Turn of the procession of the Holy Burial of El Calvario from 1975, collection of historian Juan Alberto Sandoval).

A Sevillian-style procession was presented, giving a new image to the traditional processions that had already been tried in other churches, but not with the pressure that reached the more precise details we must examine to understand its sense of "Artistic Totality" and the impact it had on the public.

The central decoration of the ensemble was a Gothic-style urn made by the master Pedro Reyes Domínguez, which is described in detail along with other adornments used that year by columnist Jorge Morrales in a March 1975 issue of the newspaper "El Imparcial." He cites: "Although it has been the norm in recent times for the venerated image of the Christ Yacente not to come out in an urn to not forget tradition, every five years the decoration of the float essentially includes an original urn. A few years ago, it came out in a simple urn, then in a Baroque style, later in a Roman style, and this year, as we said, it will be in fine Gothic style, like the Sevillian urn that is considered the most beautiful in the world. The ensemble signifies the institution of the church. At the ends are the four evangelists, St. Luke, St. Mark, St. Matthew, and St. John under their respective minarets.

The ascensionist character of Gothic art makes this urn culminate in a dome, on which the image of St. Peter stands out, symbolizing the rock on which Christ's church rests. The upper line of the urn is crowned by sixteen little angels in a meditative attitude, and as we said, the Gothic spires that resemble bell towers are made and finely finished in tin and with lightweight wooden frames, while the evangelists and the angels are made of plaster, all the work of the modest craftsman."

Illustration 32. Urn of the Lord Sepultado of the Calvary made by master Pedro Reyes Domínguez, debuted on Good Friday in 1975. (Turn of the procession of the Santo Entierro of the Calvary in 1977, Col. Juan Alberto Sandoval).

Referring to the complement of the decoration, the same source states: "Complementing the decoration of the float is a unique railing also in Gothic style and will have very special lighting in accordance with its style. The float of the Blessed Virgin of Sorrows will display a Gothic-style canopy that will harmonize with that of the Christ Yacente. The mantle that the Dolorosa will wear is a replica of one of the mantles of the Sevillian Virgin of La Macarena."

Devout individuals have made precious gifts, including a finely embroidered sheet donated by Miss Silvia Santeliz and family; the head pillows, a gift from Mr. Mario Guillén and his wife; and the fine tulle that will cover the Divine Martyr, a gift from Mr. Carlos Ovalle and his wife." (Idem).

The impressive ceremonies, the debuts, the Pasos, the crisp uniforms of Romans, Palestinians, and penitents, combined with this type of ornamentation and a well-managed publicity campaign, managed to gather large crowds in modern venues in the capital, particularly in the Civic Center, which surpassed the size of the Historic Center, providing a comfortable setting in the squares of its buildings for the public, transporting them on an imaginary journey to Seville.
The city of Seville in Spain was already widely known by an audience with basic education, fond of these local manifestations due to its traditional processions, which had been widely disseminated through films, magazines, and tourist pamphlets, facilitating the public's understanding of the message being presented. However, from an academic perspective, this artistic exhibition took on characteristics that art theory defines as kitsch, as it idealized the Sevillian splendor with tin, plaster, and other despicable materials that alternated with the original neoclassical sculptures of the Cristo Yacente and Nuestra Señora de la Soledad of that temple.

To illustrate the management of expectation among the faithful and the general public, let us compare an illustration taken from the Manifesto of the Brotherhood of the Santo Entierro of Seville from 1992, p. 71, which shows a photograph of the urn of the Santo Entierro of that city (See illustration 30). The urn is identified as neogothic because, according to that document, it was made around 1880 and gilded until 1948. In the turnouts of the Calvary church that year, a similar photograph was used, probably because the urn had not been finished when the turnouts were printed (see illustration 31). Finally, for Good Friday in 1975, the Lord Sepultado of the Calvary debuted the urn made by master Pedro Reyes Domínguez, which appears in illustration 32.

Ilustración N° 33. Urna nueva del Señor Sepultado de San Juan Comalapa en la que claramente se puede advertir la influencia de la Urna del Señor Sepultado de La Escuela de Cristo de La Antigua Guatemala. (Fotografía Anónima).

The simple graphic inspection of the elements cited here reveals the correct handling of information and culture dissemination in relation to the Good Friday procession at the Calvary, which created the proper expectation to gather large crowds around this manifestation of faith. By closely examining the turnouts, one can infer the role played by the creation of this neogothic urn as the center of an adornment that impacted the devotees.

Since then, the Good Friday afternoon processions have become, for the capital residents, a point of involuntary comparison, with three alternatives: Santo Domingo, featuring a false conservative tone enriched with series images; La Recolección, which over time turned the image of the Señor Sepultado into a complement of sophisticated and ornate adornments; and El Calvario, with a cosmopolitan influence.

In some churches in the city, the ritual of small neighborhood processions continued, which did not touch the main streets of the Civic and Historic Center, leaving these areas free for the three major city processions.

In the processions of La Antigua Guatemala from the churches of La Escuela de Cristo and San Felipe de Jesús, as well as in the procession of San Nicolás in Xelajú, the tradition of carrying the image of the Señor Sepultado in an urn continued.

On the morning of February 4, 1976, adversity struck again against the Tangible and Intangible Heritage of our country due to the earthquake known as San Gilberto, which affected much of the national territory. Many urns of the Santo Entierro, mainly from the highlands, were buried under the rubble of temples and brotherhood houses that collapsed.

In other cases, this opportunity was taken to create new urns that imitated those of the grand processions of New and Old Guatemala. A specific example is the urn of the Señor Sepultado from the town of San Juan Comalapa in the Department of Chimaltenango, which was replaced by one influenced by ancient Guatemalan styles (see illustration 33), leaving aside the previous one that identified with a sense of Hispanic ascendance.

This traditional spirit was captured by local artist Andrés Curuchich in a popular painting illustrated in illustration 34, where the artist interpreted the ancient urn of the Santo Entierro seen in photographs 2 and 3 but with a significant influence from the urn of the Santo Entierro of Santo Domingo in the capital, replacing the broken glass at the top, sides, and lower part of the urn with larger openings. These particularities reveal the candidness of his paintings, which highlight different perspectives, in this case, the urn from the Good Friday procession.

The natural disaster was followed by the escalation of the internal armed conflict, coupled with a similar situation in the neighboring country of El Salvador. These circumstances combined to cause an unprecedented increase in the population of Guatemala City, allowing the processions of the Santo Entierro to strengthen again, becoming the last refuge of spiritual relief for a people battered by violence.

These manifestations became a spiritual catharsis that allowed ordinary citizens to mourn the disappeared and the dead from the conflict, expressing their feelings of grief and sorrow. Alongside this sentiment, a new generation emerged, participating in the Good Friday processions without fully understanding the ideological religious connection. Instead, they tied their family, neighborhood, or city identity to these events, which, when mixed with other values, formed strong ties of national identity. It is here that the "icons of national unity" appear, represented by the images carried in the urns.

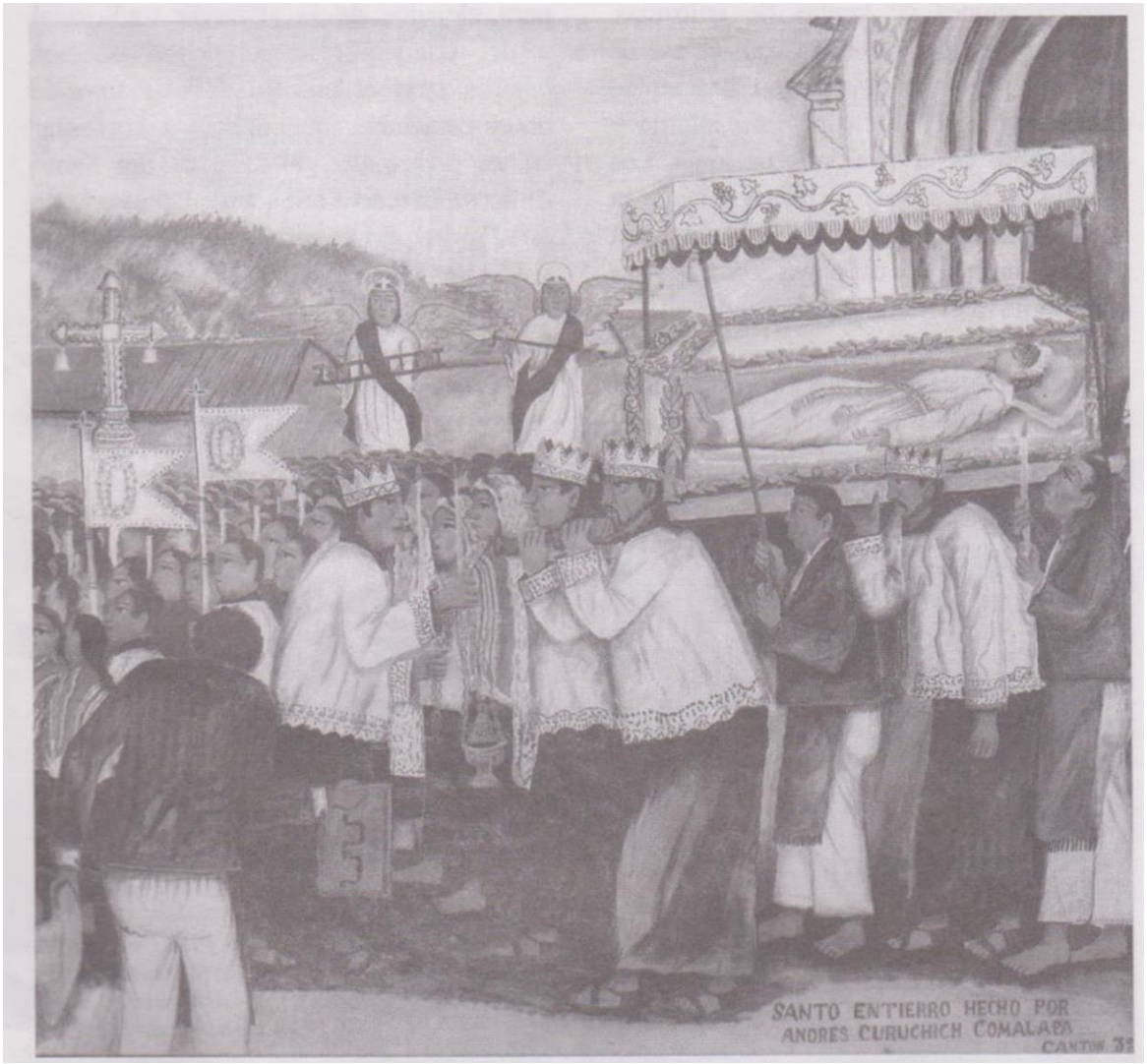
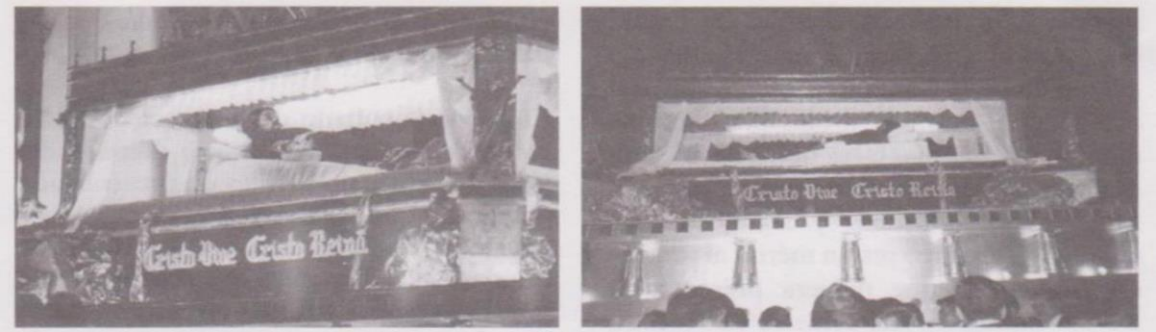


Illustration No. 34. Painting by the artist Andres Curruchich that captures the romantic spirit of the traditional essence, the ideological religious bond, but that linked its family, neighborhood, or city identity, having as a central axis these manifestations that, when mixed with other values, formed strong ties of national identity. It is here where the "icons of national unity" represented by the images carried by the urns are strengthened. The massive participation of the faithful and the public determined the influx of the large urn of the Lord Sepultado of San Juan Comalapa, note the omission of the crossbars that made the windows smaller. (Illustration taken from the 1994 calendar of the Ixchel Museum for the month of April).

The massive participation of the faithful and the public determined the influx of large crowds at the Good Friday processions, with both formal and informal commerce taking advantage of the occasion. This commerce has been updating to sell more in the shortest time possible or, in the case of large companies, to make their presence felt so as not to leave commercial spaces uncovered. These factors, combined with religious splendor, then developed a secular popular distraction around the processions, bolstered by the gradual growth of sales of sweets, toys, fast food, and all kinds of trinkets due to the unemployment generated by the internal armed conflict and the deterioration of the national economy. The grand sacred parades make our people forget, alongside their religiosity, the new alternatives of beaches and vacations that the globalized world promotes.

On the other hand, in the last two decades of the last century, the large urban Good Friday processions in Nueva and Antigua Guatemala have achieved self-financing. This has led the leaders of the brotherhoods to commit to maintaining this situation in front of an audience whose expectations grow each year, motivating the search for skilled labor to adorn the floats. Notably, professional hands from architects, graphic designers, interior designers, fashion experts, and others have emerged. These individuals are trained in their professions but are distanced from traditional arrogance and religious knowledge, which are basic aspects for managing this type of ornamentation that we must discuss in the main processions of the Santo Entierro, as they mark the state of this Material and Intangible Heritage and serve as a "model" for the rest of the country.

Illustration No. 35. Fine urn of the Lord Sepultado del Calvario premiered on Good Friday of 1946, created by various Guatemalan artists and craftsmen. (Photograph by Guillermo Vásquez).



Illustrations Nos. 36, 37. Urn made of synthetic materials created for the Good Friday procession of the Calvario Church in the year 2001. (Photographs by historian Walter Gutiérrez).

Decorative and Sumptuous Elements of Unique Character Present in the Good Friday Procession, as the "Pasos" of the procession are of series, though they form an interesting set that illustrates the faithful and the attending public about the Passion of Christ.

The importance that the urn has acquired as the throne of the Lord Sepultado can be inferred from when the image of the Lord was removed from its old chapel, located in the southern transept of the church, where it remained in a Carrara marble niche with glass windows. It was then moved to a new chapel to the north of the transept, situated on the right-hand side, where it remained in a wooden urn, a replica of the bronze one used for the Good Friday procession, enriched with a lavish gilded altarpiece, as a fleeting reminiscence of the adornments displayed on its processional platform.

The original bronze urn remains on the platform used by the Lord Sepultado on Good Friday. Names of some devotees have been engraved on it during the various reforms due to changes in the electrical system and security reinforcements of the urn on the platform. The alterations it may have undergone in recent years should be considered as a result of the devotion to the Lord Sepultado.

The urn of the Lord Sepultado of Santo Domingo, after almost one hundred and fifty years of being carried each Good Friday, remains the country's greatest neoclassical jewel, represented in the image of the Dead Christ, symbolizing a way of life and thinking that materialized into a work that embodies a first national identity. It blended the conservatism of Hispanic tradition with a French neoclassical liberal style, united in a message of death and hope, expressed in a procession that brings Guatemalans together each year in the Holy Burial of Christ, strengthening the foundations of the intangible heritage of our country. This heritage is reflected in the solemn mourning attire worn by its devotees and even in the scent of flowers offered as they honor His majestic procession through the old streets of the historic neighborhoods in the city's center.

The passage of the urn as the throne of the Lord is enriched by the rhythmic sound of drums and snare drums, or by the chords of procession marches, making attendance at the funeral cortege unforgettable. However, it must be noted that for the correct preservation of this as part of the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage of our country, there is a challenge when these works of art are alternated with fiberglass figurines representing Weeping Angels and some "Pasos" whose artistic value detracts from the sense of "totality" that should be present in the Divine Representation of the Burial of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the most prestigious procession in our country.

The Lord Sepultado of El Calvario remains throughout the year in a simple golden bronze urn, made in the Rossi workshops in 1946 (see illustration 35), which replaced an older urn similar to that of Santo Domingo, as shown in illustrations 16 and 18. Its chapel, located on the east side of the temple's transept, features a modern setting that completely contrasts with its neoclassical presentation. In its Good Friday processions, the Lord has been placed on platforms, sometimes as part of an adornment, on simple catafalques, under a canopy, or in elaborate urns made of various disposable materials like plastic and foam, as evident in illustrations 36 and 37.

The Lord Sepultado of La Recolección has undergone various forms of presentation during the last two decades of the 20th century, as it participates in more annual processions, with devotees trying to offer different ideas that range from placing Him as part of an ornament to placing Him in an urn that mimics the one presented by the Lord of El Calvario in 1975, as shown in illustration 38, which should be compared to illustrations 31 and 32.

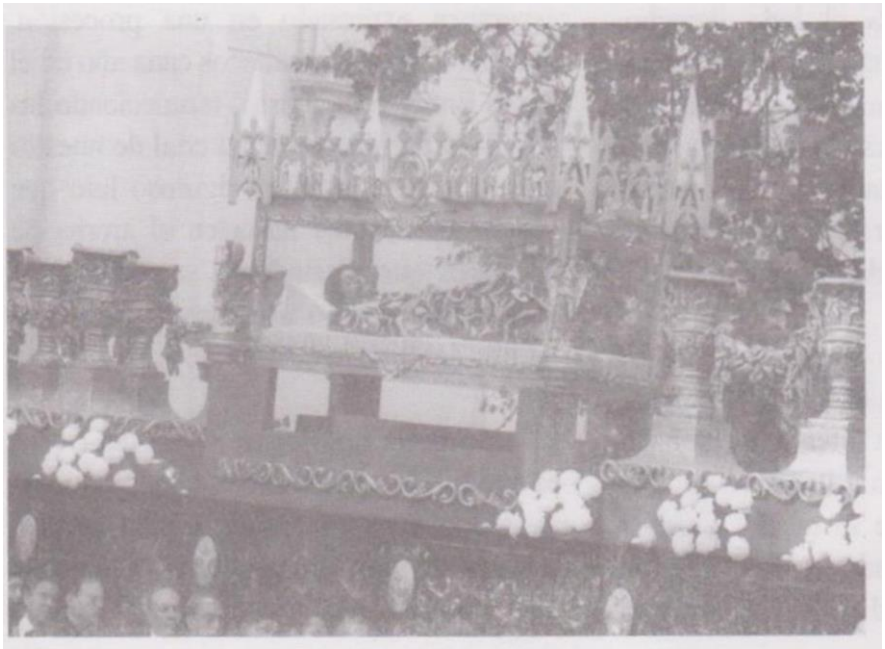


Illustration No. 238. Urn made of foam and plaster created for the vigil procession held in November 2001. It was crafted using as models the urns of the Lord Sepultado of Seville or the Lord Sepultado of El Calvario, which debuted in 1975. (Photograph by historian Walter Gutiérrez).

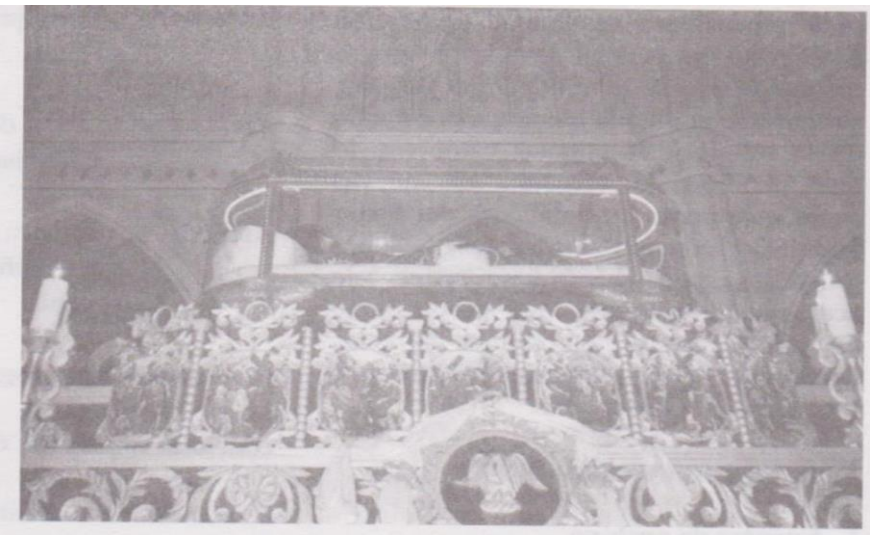


Photo 39. Urn of the Lord Sepultado from the Temple of San Nicolás de Xelajú. Its modern appearance does not break the traditional sense of the Holy Burial procession. (Photograph by historian Walter Gutiérrez).

In Antigua Guatemala, the use of the urn has been preserved for the Good Friday procession of La Escuela de Cristo, which bears some similarity to that of Santo Domingo in the capital, while in the Good Friday procession of San Felipe de Jesús, the urn has been set aside to showcase the image of Jesus, alternating with other images and ornaments of lesser artistic quality.

In the Good Friday procession of the Church of San Nicolás in Xelajú, the Lord Sepultado has been carried in a peculiar urn imported from Europe, which has given a unique touch to its Good Friday procession. Despite being modern, it has been alternated with modest ornamentations that do not completely break with the conservative atmosphere of the sacred space created when the procession passes through the streets of that city (see illustration 39).

The use of urns in these churches has set a model for the rest of the country, leading to an absolute transformation in the use of this relic, typical of the Good Friday Holy Burial processions. This transition is noticeable in illustration 40 from the town of San Antonio Huista, which shows two urns: an old one in Renaissance style, which can be related to the Lord Sepultado of San Juan Comalapa, Guatemala, that of San Miguel de Huijotzingo, or Santo Domingo of Puebla in Mexico. Over time, this urn transformed into a Baroque style, and later, a new Neoclassical style urn was commissioned, giving us an indication of the evolution of urns in the country.

This evidence can be enriched by observing other illustrations 41 and 42, which show the Holy Burial procession from the church of Santa María Cahabón. We can see the authorities of the Brotherhood of the Lord Sepultado carrying the *Arma Christi* and the *Cristo Morto* in an urn of the old Renaissance style previously mentioned.

The evidence analyzed in this exposition allows us to conclude that the use of urns for the Holy Burial had the same didactic purpose in New Spain and the old Kingdom of Guatemala. The presented proofs have allowed us to trace their stylistic evolution from Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassical, and other variants found in the grand Holy Burial processions of San Francisco and Santo Domingo in New Guatemala.

In the 19th century, the organization of the Holy Burial and the use of the urn expanded to the School of Christ in La Antigua Guatemala. Together with previous ones, these served as models for the development of other processions of similar devotion across the rest of the country, influencing the use of the urn with a similar message that unified ideology through popular Catholic religiosity. This led to the creation of new urns to carry the images of the Lord Sepultado, creating true artistic fusions, especially described in this study. This serves as a first contribution to the study of these details of Guatemala's valuable tangible and intangible heritage.

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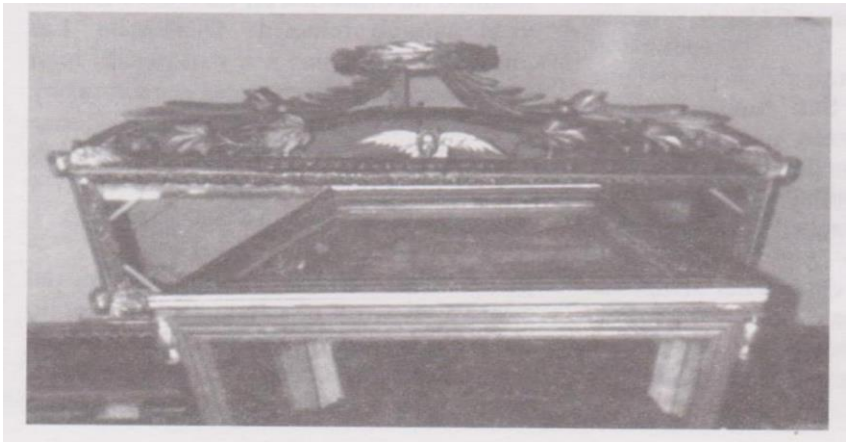

Illustration N° 40. Urns from San Antonio Huista, Department of Huehuetenango. This anonymous photograph shows us the evolution of the Renaissance urn to the Baroque style due to the influence of the great urban processions. (Anonymous photograph taken from the archive of the General History of Art course at the School of History, USAC).

Illustrations N° 41 and 42. Procession of the Lord Sepultado from the town of Santa María Cahabón in the Department of Alta Verapaz, on Good Friday of 1998. In them, the traditional sense of the Divine Simulacrum of the Burial of Christ is still appreciated. (Photographs from the collection of historian Juan Alberto Sandoval).

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Microhistory of Yepocapa, Chimaltenango

ARTURO FRANCISCO MATAS ORIA

INTRODUCTION

This essay reconstructs the microhistory of the municipality of Yepocapa, which belongs to the department of Chimaltenango. Ethnohistorical techniques have been used, which, through the multidisciplinary work of archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians, allow for the recovery of material evidence from pre-Hispanic and colonial cultures, the collective memory of its people, and historiographical and archival documentary sources. Once analyzed and interpreted, these sources enable the construction of its own history within a broader informational framework than what currently exists, which is limited to small descriptive monographs found in geographical information dictionaries and scattered data in some general histories of Guatemala and specific historiographies. Therefore, this work contributes to the formation of regional histories of Guatemalan populations. It helps strengthen the identities of its inhabitants in a multiethnic and multicultural society and reinforces the reconnection of its peoples with their sociocultural and historical origins.

During the year 2004, the author coordinated a project to reconstruct the microhistory of Yepocapa, which was funded by the General Directorate of Research of the University of San Carlos (DIGI) and the company Archaeology Ecotours, with the endorsement of the Center for Folkloric Studies. The project involved the participation of researchers such as anthropologist Ligia Archila Serrano, archaeologist José Benítez, and history student Abraham Solórzano Vega, who served as a research assistant. This is a summary of the results of that research.

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

Yepocapa is a municipality in the department of Chimaltenango. It borders to the north with the municipality of Acatenango (department of Chimaltenango); to the east with San Miguel Dueñas and Alotenango (Sacatepéquez); to the south with Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa (Escuintla); and to the west with Pochuta (Chimaltenango). The altitude of its municipal seat, Yepocapa, is 1,400 meters above sea level, with geographical coordinates of latitude 14°30'00", longitude 90°57'15". The municipality covers an area of 217 km² and consists of one town, which is the departmental capital, two villages, eleven hamlets, one colony, one site, four plots, two communities, 24 estates, 46 farms, two ranches, two guard stations, and two communities.

During the colonial period, and until the mid-19th century, it was known as San Pedro Yepocapa. Currently, it is simply referred to as Yepocapa, both for the municipality and its municipal seat. According to some local informants, the name Yepocapa means "they are castrating honey" or "place where honey is castrated," because, according to tradition, many beehives once existed in that region, and the inhabitants extracted honey to prepare food.

Climate:

According to the Thronthwaite classification system, the northern, central, and southeastern regions of the municipality of Yepocapa have a semi-warm climate. The northeastern region, which corresponds to the area of the Fuego Volcano, has a temperate climate. The southeastern and southwestern regions of the municipality, being located in the Bocacosta area, enjoy a warm climate. The rainy season in the municipality lasts from May to October.

Hydrology:

The municipality is irrigated by 26 rivers, including notable ones such as Las Victorias, Pantaleón, Nimayá, Quixayá, Xayá or Coyolate, Aguná, Argentina, Bramón, Cristóbal, Cucuyá, Chuarramos, and Popoyá, among others. There are also three streams: El Chagüite, El Nacimiento, and La Presa.

Geology:

Most of the municipality, except for a small region in its center and north, is composed of quaternary volcanic rock materials, including lava flows, lahar deposits, tuff, and volcanic structures.

A small region, located in the central-northern part of the municipality, consists of undivided volcanic rock materials, predominantly from the Pliocene, including tuff, lava flows, lahar deposits, and volcanic sediments.

The municipality contains the Barranca Seca and Santa María ravines, as well as the Chuachilil, Del Tarral, Las Brisas, Los Maxis, Xayá, Xocoyá, and Zapote creeks.

Population:

According to the XI National Population Census and VI Housing Census, conducted in 2002 by the National Institute of Statistics, the municipality of Yepocapa has a population of 23,509 inhabitants, of which 12,065 are men and 11,065 are women. Families are large, with an average of 5 to 9 children per household.

In terms of ethnic groups, the census records 16,224 Cakchiquel inhabitants and 7,285 non-indigenous people. The Cakchiquel language is predominant in the region, and Spanish is also spoken. The inhabitants of Yepocapa identify as "Sampedranos," despite the fact that in modern times the name of the town "San Pedro Yepocapa" was dropped, with only Yepocapa being used.

By 2003, the Health Census of the municipality reported a total of 25,799 inhabitants throughout the municipality, with an immigrant population of 2,350 individuals. There were a total of 773 births in the year 2003.

The municipality of Yepocapa is of the 3rd category. Its municipal seat is the town of Yepocapa, which is made up of five neighborhoods, now called zones, a district named San Cristóbal, and three colonies: San Carlos, Chicalvario, and Cabañas. All the neighborhoods are connected at the location where the Catholic church is situated. Its streets are paved with cobblestones and have sewer and public lighting services.

The center of the town of Yepocapa, where the Catholic church, plaza, and municipality are located, does not form a regular grid. The plaza is not oriented like in other towns of this region of the Central Highlands, where the usual layout has a north-south axis and the typical "plaza pattern" characteristic of Spanish colonial foundations. In this case, there is a variation of this pattern, with the church positioned laterally to the west of the plaza and the market building with its shops to the north. The municipal public restrooms are located underneath the plaza.

The orientation of the town runs from northwest to southeast, with the front of the church facing southeast, where a small atrium is located. The municipal building is located to the east, across the street from the plaza, and this is also the street where the market takes place daily.
According to the XI National Population Census and VI Housing Census of 2002, the municipality of Yepocapa had a total of 4,484 houses for 4,125 households, with the following services: 3,235 houses with installed water, 1,963 with drainage, and 3,602 with electricity.

PUBLIC SERVICES

In addition to sewer and public lighting services, Yepocapa has a substation of the National Civil Police, a Post and Telegraph Office, telephone services with limited coverage, an agency for collecting the Unified Property Tax (IUSI), and a municipal community hall. There is no fire station in the town.

The coverage of electricity service reaches 99% in the municipal seat, as well as public lighting, but it is deficient in rural areas.

It is worth mentioning that the residents complain about the electricity service, which is unstable due to frequent power outages that often last several hours, causing food spoilage in their refrigerators.

The municipality has four municipal slaughterhouses where livestock is processed on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.
The municipality has two aqueducts with water chlorination systems that supply the town of Yepocapa and its 45 communities. The potable water for the municipal seat of Yepocapa is provided by a water collection system originating from a spring located in the La Cabaña farm. Each "Sampedrano" household only pays Q18.00 per year for potable water service. There are no water meters in the homes or other controls over water consumption.

The municipality of Yepocapa has a garbage collection truck that provides this service twice a week in the municipal seat. The municipal landfill is located on the way to the El Recuerdo farm, in the community of Popoyá, where workers recycle waste.

Health Services:

Health services in the town of Yepocapa are provided by a Health Center, which includes a consultation room, emergency services, a laboratory, and a gynecology section. The Health Center is classified as type B. Additionally, there are two Health Posts located on the San Rafael Sumatán and Morelia farms. The municipality also has eight community health centers.
The town of Yepocapa has nine pharmacies, including one from the Medicine Access Program of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance. The other pharmacies are privately owned, one of which is the Community Pharmacy. There is also a Health Aid Center, which operates as a non-governmental organization (NGO).

Education:

According to the XI National Population Census and VI Housing Census of 2002, the municipality of Yepocapa had 11,989 literate individuals and 5,890 illiterate individuals. The municipality has 38 educational institutions, 35 of which are national, 2 private, and 1 municipal. Of these institutions, 26 are primary schools, 7 are preschools, 3 offer basic secondary education, and 2 provide diversified education.

Communication Media:

Yepocapa has its own communication media, including two local evangelical radio stations and one community radio station called "Flor del Café." There are also two cable television companies: Intercable and Unicable, which broadcast not only the usual cable programs but also announcements, news, and interviews.

Sports and Social Activities:

The favorite sports of the people of Yepocapa are soccer and basketball. There are courts in various locations in the town for practicing these sports.
Yepocapa has a municipal recreational center, located near the town's water spring, next to the Cabañas farm. It includes a swimming pool and dressing rooms. The surrounding area has barbecue facilities and eating areas. There are three basketball courts and a parking lot for vehicles.

Religion:

Both Catholicism and Evangelical Christianity have followers in the municipality of Yepocapa.

Catholic Church:

The town of Yepocapa has two Catholic churches. The main one is located on the west side of the central plaza and includes the church, the parish house, and a Catholic community hall. The other church is El Calvario, located on the northern side of the town, along the road.

The municipality currently has a resident parish priest, and the church organizes its parishioners through the residential districts, which are referred to as "cantones zonas."

There are several religious associations: brotherhoods, confraternities, and religious groups. The Brotherhood of Jesús Nazareno is responsible for organizing the Holy Week commemorations, particularly the ceremonies on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The Brotherhood of the Virgin of Sorrows is in charge of the Solemn Procession on Holy Saturday.

The confraternities in the town include those of San Pedro, celebrated on June 29; the Holy Cross, celebrated on May 3; and the Conception, celebrated on December 8. These confraternities have diminished over time and are now overseen by a single individual, who keeps the image of the confraternity in their home and holds the position for one year. In the past, each confraternity had a leader, four stewards, and four assistants (texeles), but this structure no longer exists.

Yepocapa's patronal festival is held from June 26 to 29 in honor of Saint Peter the Apostle, with the main day being June 29. During this time, the San Pedro Confraternity organizes the procession of the Apostle Saint Peter, who is carried on a feathered throne, accompanied by traditional dances such as "Los Enmascarados" and "Los Feos." The novena in honor of Saint Peter the Apostle is led by the Parish.

The town's religious organizations include Catholic Action, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the religious group "La Barca de San Pedro," and the Cursillistas, the latter being the most active in organizing the religious life of the municipal districts. However, each group has its own district organization. There are also youth groups that organize young people through ongoing catechesis activities.

Evangelical Churches:

The first evangelical church to arrive in Yepocapa was Monte Sinaí. Since 1950, Christianity has spread throughout the town. There are eight evangelical temples. Among the main churches are Monte Sinaí, the Primitive Methodist Church, and the Family Center. Informants estimate that 20% of the municipality's population, or approximately 4,500 people, are evangelical Christians.

Economy:

According to the XI National Population Census and VI Housing Census of 2002, the economically active population in Yepocapa is 5,616 men and 927 women.

The natural trade route for Yepocapa is the southern coast, mainly Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, located 20 km from Yepocapa, with which the majority of commercial exchange occurs. Trade with Acatenango, Chimaltenango, and San Miguel Dueñas is more difficult due to the distance from Yepocapa.

In the municipal seat of Yepocapa, there is a permanent market, with the main market days being Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday. On these days, the market extends to the streets surrounding the building where it is located.

In addition to the market, there are several stores and grocery shops, as well as a commercial establishment that functions like a supermarket. Yepocapa also has dining options, including eateries, two restaurants, several shops, a funeral home, legal and accounting offices, mechanical and bicycle repair shops, blacksmiths, a gas station, two hotels (Hotel Teresa and Hotel Chicago), and a branch of Corpobanco.

Handicrafts:

On a small scale, the town produces petates (woven mats) and "sopladores de sibaque" (fans made from a wild reed that grows along the riverbanks). These items are sold by local indigenous people at the market, and this is the oldest craft in the municipality. Additionally, cotton textiles, wooden furniture, and iron products are made.

Extra-Urban Transport:

There are four extra-urban transport routes that connect the municipal seat with Guatemala City:

1. The route passing through Escuintla, via Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa.
2. A route that goes through Antigua Guatemala, San Miguel Dueñas, and Yepocapa.
3. A route from Guatemala via Chimaltenango, passing through Parramos to Yepocapa.
4. The last route, from Guatemala through Chimaltenango, Patzicía, Acatenango, and Yepocapa. This last route is not heavily used due to its length and is only available on weekends and Mondays.

Since most of the economically active population works outside the municipality, buses are often overloaded with passengers on weekends and Mondays, with some even riding on the bus roof, making it difficult for villagers and people from nearby farms to find transport on those days. Some farm owners in Yepocapa use small buses to transport their agricultural workers.

Agriculture:

Coffee is the primary crop in the municipality, though there are smaller farms growing corn, beans, papayas, and bananas.
In Yepocapa, coffee is harvested at different times of the year. In the southern Bocacosta region, coffee is harvested between September and November, during the peak of the rainy season, making the harvest challenging. The roads leading to coffee farms become muddy, causing trucks to get stuck. Due to the lower altitude of this region, the coffee produced here is of lower quality and fetches a lower price on the market.

In the northern region of the municipality, coffee is harvested between December and January, allowing for easier collection due to the dry season. The roads in this region are more accessible, and the coffee's higher altitude results in better quality and higher prices.

Due to a decline in coffee prices both locally and internationally, many local landowners have sold their farms or shifted to other sources of income, such as raising cattle, tilapia, and mineral water at San Antonio El Encanto farm.

Some settlements, such as Paraíso Chua (formed by emigrants from Concepción Chiquirichapa), Comunidad Hermógenes López (from Aguacatán and Sololá), Las Victorias (refugees from the armed conflict), and agrarian settlements like Finca Miramar and La Estrellita, cultivate small areas of coffee, corn, and bananas primarily for subsistence, along with raising poultry and pigs. In the case of Paraíso Chua, located on what was once the Panajabal estate, cattle are raised to repay a bank loan taken out to purchase the farm.

Corn fields are located in the northwest of the municipality. Some indigenous residents of Yepocapa own small plots of land, ranging from two to three "cuerdas" (a local measure of land) or one to four "manzanas" in the southern or northwestern region, which allows them to produce coffee for their sustenance.

Archaeological History of Yepocapa

The entire territory of the Yepocapa municipality lies under the shadow of two colossi: the Acatenango and Fuego volcanoes. The latter has caused devastation with its eruptions that are unmatched in other studied municipalities. This is attributed, according to Benítez (Matas, Arturo 2004:31), to the proximity of Yepocapa to the Fuego volcano and the trade winds blowing from the northeast, carrying sand clouds and pyroclastic products from its eruptions toward the boundaries of the municipality.

According to Benitez (Matas, Arturo 2004:32), Yepocapa's geographical location is characterized by being situated on the southwestern slopes of the Fuego volcano. The area consists of mountains with narrow peaks and deep ravines through which rivers flow, most of which originate on the slopes of the Fuego volcano. The only river coming from the Altiplano is the Xayá River, which is also known as Coyolate when it descends to the southern coast and is joined by other tributaries like Cucuyá, Aguiná, Sibajá, Popoyá, and Panajabal. The town of Yepocapa obtains its water from the San Pedro River, which connects with the Pantaleón River in the south of the municipality.

As the mountains approach the southern coast, the slopes become gentler, and flatter lands can be observed. These lands are incorporated into agricultural production, with visible plantations of sugarcane, pineapples, and cattle farms. All the populations formed around the villages and estates are situated along the narrow ridges of these mountains. The town of Yepocapa occupies a small valley enclosed by very rugged mountains.

Despite the fact that deposits of volcanic sand, resulting from eruptions, have concealed most of the archaeological evidence in the area where the municipality of Yepocapa is located, it can be affirmed that indigenous groups inhabited this area in pre-Hispanic times. According to Benítez (Matas, Arturo 2004:23), experiences from previous observations indicate that ceramic and lithic remains are easily visible on the surface, especially when farmers work the land with hoes, removing the volcanic material that covers the possible evidence left by ancient inhabitants.

The ceramic sample observed generally comes from recent road openings that have cleared the volcanic material, exposing the lower soil levels and some ceramic remains. Collaboration was also achieved with farmers who found and possess some lithic objects as well as intact pots that they showed.

Northeast of the town of Yepocapa, where the former Cabañas estate is located, there is a colony that bears that name, and there is the "water spring" that supplies the population of Yepocapa. Here, a mound is situated that, according to measurements made by Benítez and Matas (Matas, Arturo 2004:33), is approximately 75 meters long, 15 meters wide, and 11 meters high, aligned on an east-west axis. At the western end, a prominence rises, giving the impression that there may have been another structure at that point. The proximity to the foot of the Fuego volcano and its direct orientation to the east, pointing towards the summit of the Acatenango volcano, along with the closeness to the water source and its dominant position, leads to the belief that this particular location may have had religious significance for the ancient inhabitants of this region, possibly related to the source of water.

As one walks through the streets of the town, it can be observed that some houses occupy elevations as if they were mounds that were leveled to make way for the current buildings. According to testimonies from residents, in the San Francisco neighborhood, located southeast of the municipal center, a mound was demolished with machinery to accommodate a small two-story building.

As eruptions have occurred, neighbors have cleared the sand deposited in their yards. In some yards, they have found small pieces of pre-Hispanic pottery. All this leads to the conclusion that the town of Yepocapa is situated over a pre-Hispanic settlement that, according to Benítez (Matas, Arturo 2004:34), can be dated from the classic period, using the mound found near the water source in the Cabañas colony as a reference, as well as the remains of Amatle-type pots found in various yards of houses by the town's residents.

Evidence of pre-Hispanic settlement can also be observed to the south of the town of Yepocapa on the plateau where the hamlet Monte de Los Olivos is located and on the slope descending from the plateau along the road leading to the La Conchita estate, about 200 meters south of the Ojo de Agua estate. Another site was observed 300 meters south of the point where the road diverts towards the El Recreo estate from the Las Victorias estate.

From the village of La Cruz, located 2 km before reaching the town of Yepocapa on National Route 10, a road leads to what was the Montellano estate, now known as the Hermógenes López parcel, with an approximate distance of 2.5 km separating these two points. Throughout this route, ceramic remains were found on both sides of the road, including parts of a Sacatépequez-type vessel, which connects this region to a settlement that may have existed since the Late Preclassic period.

The most spectacular finds were observed in Panajabal, an estate situated 12 km west of Yepocapa. Neighbors of this estate indicated that when they dug trenches to lay the foundations of houses or channel water, they found evidence of pre-Hispanic settlement, as well as buried objects when working their plots. Among these were observed two lithic pieces, instruments likely used as percussors, a polychrome bowl with three anthropomorphic heads as supports, and a rough-walled vase. The bowl is related to vessels characteristic of the Postclassic period, unlike the lithic material, which could be from the Early Classic due to its resemblance to other pieces found in Kaminaljuyú.

On Departmental Route No. 11 at kilometer 5 heading south, the El Recuerdo estate is located. From this point to near the guardian of the Nimayá estate, a distance of about 2 km, three points with evidence of pre-Hispanic settlement were observed on that ridge, corresponding to remains of micaceous ceramic vessels, placing the site in the Late Postclassic period.

According to Benítez (Matas, Arturo 2004:35), based on the evidence available, it can be assumed that this society was a chiefdom with hierarchy and dominion over the small villages that were settled in some of the current estates. This chiefdom may have had alliances with sites that have already been studied by other authors in previous works, such as Palo Verde, where six sculptures of the Cotzumalguapa culture were located, which is 6 km from the current municipal seat of Yepocapa. According to reports collected at the municipal mayor's office of Yepocapa, several stelae can be observed in the streets of the agrarian parcel Morelia, which belongs to the municipality of Yepocapa.

The ceramic evidence observed is not very different from that detected in previously studied sites such as San Andrés Jtzapa, Parramos, San Juan Alotenango, and San Miguel Dueñas. This evidence suggests that the settlement of these sites, including Yepocapa, occurred at the same time. The only region not mentioned in this case is the municipality of Acatenango, as its exploration and historical analysis are still pending.

It is important to mention that as a result of the explorations carried out so far in the southwestern Altiplano region, where the previously mentioned municipalities are located, it can be deduced that the area in the Late Postclassic period was under the dominion of the Cakchiqueles of Iximché and that there existed a network of roads that connected Iximché with the rest of the lordships. One road led to the coast through the Alotenango canyon, and the other, which interests us on this occasion, went through the Yepocapa region, heading towards Santa Lucía Cortzumalguapa, which during that period was under Cakchiquel control.

COLONIAL HISTORY

There are no bibliographic references, historiographical records, or documents in the General Archive of Central America that refer to the date of foundation of the town of San Pedro Yepocapa or its origins. However, archaeological evidence indicates that it is possible that this town emerged as a result of a "reduction" of the Cakchiquel indigenous people who inhabited the region near where the town of San Pedro Yepocapa is currently located, as there are several archaeological sites in that area. This foundation likely occurred after the enactment of the New Laws of 1542, as happened with all the towns of Cakchiquel origin in the Central Altiplano.

The Franciscan friar Francisco Vásquez reports that, by the end of the 16th century, in the town of San Antonio Acatenango, there was a convent of this order that was responsible for the visiting town of San Pedro Yepocapa, populated by Cakchiquel indigenous people. That town was in fertile lowland and mountainous territory, producing "good crops" of corn, beans, and vegetables. Additionally, the indigenous people produced mats and had beehives from which they extracted honey, which they considered medicinal.

17TH CENTURY:

There are also no written references during the first third of the 17th century. The first document is dated 1639, when a conflict arose between the indigenous people of the region and the encomenderos (landlords) due to the fact that the indigenous people were required to pay tribute according to the roster held by the encomendero, which was not updated. As a result, they had to pay tribute for the deceased, those who left the town (many did so to avoid payment), those who got married and decided to live elsewhere, and for all those who were not physically present in the town but appeared on the roster. The payment represented a heavy and difficult burden for the few taxpayers who remained in the town.

According to evidence found in documents from the General Archive of Central America (AGCA A1.316, Exp. 40556, Leg. 2804), another cause of the absence of indigenous people during that time was that some ladinos (mestizos) used them as servants in their homes and hid them to avoid being claimed, denying their existence if they were sought out.

At that time, there existed a series of towns that disappeared in the early 17th century, and there is little information about their locations. Among them, we can mention San Andrés Tapechapa, Santa Ana Perulapa, Santa Lucía Acatenango, and San Juan Aloteque. These towns disappeared for several reasons, such as the eruptions of the Fuego Volcano, which covered the farmland with ash and sand, forcing the inhabitants to abandon it; the flooding of rivers that damaged crops and made access to those areas difficult; and the gradual abandonment by their inhabitants who migrated to other regions in search of better living conditions.

In 1656, a land conflict arose between the indigenous people of the towns of San Pedro Yepocapa and San Andrés Tapechapa when the indigenous people of San Pedro Yepocapa reported that the indigenous people of San Andrés Tapechapa entered their lands, cut down their crops, and took the fruits of those crops (AGCA A.1.45, Exp. 17,571, Leg. 2,347).

The people of San Pedro claimed possession of the lands since 1646, which is why they requested a "viewing of the eye" to recognize the boundaries of the two towns and to compel the inhabitants of San Andrés to leave their lands and compensate them for the damages caused.

To carry out the "viewing of the eye," Lorenzo del Valle Corral was appointed, who ordered the leaders of each town to present their land titles, which took place on August 29, 1656. Following this, the "viewing of the eye" proceeded to verify the land that each town held. Lorenzo del Valle explained to the indigenous people of both towns that the boundary markers needed to be moved and the land remeasured, benefiting San Pedro Yepocapa because it had more taxpayers.

With the movement of the boundary marker, the cause of the conflict, all parties were satisfied, and the indigenous people of San Andrés were warned that if they crossed the established boundary, they "would be severely whipped," which was communicated to the mayors.

On October 1, 1658, another land conflict occurred with the inhabitants of San Andrés Tapechapa because the councilors and mayors of San Pedro Yepocapa reported that the indigenous people of San Andrés had entered the lands of San Pedro. While preparing the land for planting, the people of San Pedro arrived to defend their lands, leading to a confrontation, which prompted them to request another "viewing of the eyes." This "viewing of the eyes" took place, involving not only the appointed judge but also the mayors, councilors, and leading indigenous figures of Yepocapa and San Andrés, as well as four elders from the town of Alotepeque who remembered the boundaries between the towns.

The "viewing of the eyes" and the measurement of the boundaries determined that it was indeed the indigenous people of Yepocapa who had entered the lands of San Andrés, and the boundaries were redefined, reaching an agreement to avoid future invasions.

At the end of that century, in 1686, the Franciscan Francisco de Suaza mentioned in his work that the climate of the town of Yepocapa was "somewhat warm due to its proximity to the coast, its stormy sky," and that it had 430 people, both men and women, all indigenous Cakchiqueles, who cultivated cacao more than they farmed cornfields, and a religious arrived on the eve of feast days to say masses, preach, and teach them Christian doctrine.

18th Century:

There are no historical data or documents in the General Archive of Central America that provide information about what happened in San Pedro Yepocapa during the first half of the 18th century.

It is known that, at the end of the winter of 1749, there was a great storm. The indigenous people stated that it rained "like a deluge," which was likely a hurricane that struck the territory of Guatemala, causing the Quixayá River, which originates from the Fuego Volcano, to overflow, resulting in a current that swept away the lands around its banks and creating a deep ravine, which, due to the steepness of its edges, made it impossible to find a way through, even on foot, to reach the other side where the indigenous people of Yepocapa had their agricultural lands (ACGA A.1.45, Exp. 1,761, Leg. 2347).

The farmland extended up to the Ceniza River, which also flowed down from the Fuego Volcano, and in those lands, the indigenous people of Yepocapa cultivated corn, yuca, and bananas. The only way to access these fields was from the coastal side, which made it difficult to farm them and represented a significant expense due to the distance they had to travel, leading to their abandonment. Furthermore, the storm caused significant damage to the population of Yepocapa, and for its reconstruction, the neighbors incurred considerable expenses.

In 1750, the Spanish Crown detected the possibility of excessive land ownership by the "indigenous towns" in the region of Sacatepéquez. On February 3, 1750, the Subdelegated Judge of Measurements and Re-measurements of the Central Valley called upon the residents of San Pedro Yepocapa to present themselves with the corresponding property titles for all those who had property or usufruct of estates, farms, mills, etc., or who had belonged to them through common lands, which would be returned as long as they were legal. Those who did not have legal titles had to rectify their situation, either by purchasing them from the Crown through composition, or the lands would be taken from them to be sold to another person or the town, giving them three days to comply, and those who did not appear and had lands would lose them (ACGA A.1.45, Exp. 1761, Leg. 2347).

The people who owned land came forward with their titles, as did the mayors and justices of the town, who knew they had more land from common lands than what was validated by their property titles. They expressed their willingness to pay a modest price for any excess land through composition, due to having many unusable lands, which is why they had to usufruct lands that did not legally belong to them. Additionally, the constant eruptions of the Fuego Volcano, which released ash, sand, and stones, rendered the lands unsuitable for planting.

On February 6, 1750, three Spanish witnesses familiar with the region were called to determine the extent of the lands held by the indigenous people of Yepocapa. The witnesses estimated it at 150 caballerías, which was more than what should have been allotted as common lands to the indigenous people. Therefore, they considered that all excess lands belonged to His Majesty, and a "vista de ojos" (an inspection) was ordered to determine the boundaries of the common lands of San Pedro Yepocapa.

The inspection demonstrated that the lands of the disappeared towns were generally in the hands of Spaniards, who in some cases were using them without having acquired them from the Crown through composition.

In the case of San Andrés Tapechapa, which had been abandoned around 1720, there was a sugar mill owned by Don Pedro Baltazar de Letona. In the lands that had belonged to San Francisco Yohahuehue, three or four families remained, which had a contract approved by the mayoralty of San Pedro Yepocapa allowing Nicolás Jacinto to raise livestock there in exchange for the payment of certain tributes that the indigenous people were obligated to pay.

On the lands of the fading town of San Juan Aloteca, only three families lived. The lands of the lost town of Santa Lucía Pachup were awarded to Don Sancho Álvarez de Las Asturias; the lands of Tevlá to Father Juan Manuel Cárdenas; and those of Santa Ana to Don Sancho Asturias and Navas.

The lands that belonged to San Pedro, located between the rivers Quixayá and Ceniza, became inaccessible for the residents of San Pedro due to the ravines formed by those swollen rivers during the storm of 1749. It was requested that, due to their inability to farm them, they be left at the disposal of His Majesty to declare them royal lands and subject them to composition. Pedro Baltazar de Letona and Juan Basilio de Silva wished to purchase these lands. Silva was a freed mulatto who had occupied lands in the vanished town of Asumpción for over six years, where he raised livestock and collected firewood, claiming that he had the right of antiquity to acquire said lands.

After establishing the previous boundaries by placing markers and borders and recognizing the titles of the respective neighboring properties, the measurement of the polygon was carried out to establish the area of the common lands of San Pedro Yepocapa, which turned out to be 94.34 caballerías. This exceeded the square league that corresponded to them as common lands, equivalent to 37 caballerías, resulting in a surplus of 57 caballerías that became royal lands because the indigenous people of San Pedro Yepocapa had no titles to them and only usufructed them, needing to obtain them through composition.

The price for the caballería of land was set, for which three knowledgeable Spaniards were called to calculate the price, and they agreed in their statements. Half of the land they measured was fertile and produced all kinds of crops like beans, yuca, and chili, and this land was located towards the southern coast. The other half of the land was sandy and rocky, and because it was close to the volcano of Fuego, there were times when the harvests were lost due to the ash that it spewed, making the land unusable, and it was also a terrain of deep ravines. They determined that the price of the caballería of land could exceed 12 tostones.

The Crown decided that the 57.5 leagues of excess lands from the common lands of San Pedro be subjected to composition. Since half of the lands were infertile, they were to be sold at half of their "true value," which was 12 tostones, meaning His Majesty set the price of the caballería for the indigenous people of San Pedro at six tostones. There are no documents in the Archivo General de Centroamérica indicating whether the indigenous people of San Pedro Yepocapa made the payment for that composition.

When Archbishop Doctor Pedro Cortés y Larraz visited the diocese of Guatemala between 1768 and 1770 (Cortés y Larraz 1958: 291-295), he wrote about the town of Yepocapa, which at that time belonged to the parish of Nexapan. Its population consisted of 41 families with 252 individuals, and their harvests included corn, beans, chan grass, and chili. Its inhabitants were "dressed," and their greatest vice was drunkenness.

The local priest reported that the indigenous people did not confess or commune, nor did they attend mass, and there were cases in the town where both men and women had fled from their partners without any news of them. Moreover, the school had never been established due to the "repugnance" that the indigenous people felt towards attending it.

Cortés y Larraz found that the indigenous people kept two books for each brotherhood and only showed one to the priest, which was the "minicuenta" book, where they barely wrote down a third of the income. Because of this, he calculated that they kept the remaining two-thirds. He ordered that all the capital of the brotherhoods and their products be recorded in a single book, which should be presented during all visits to the diocesan.

19th Century: Colonial Era:

In 1803, a land conflict arose on the borders of San Pedro Yepocapa because the indigenous people of Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa wanted to appropriate the lands that were common lands of the lost town of San Juan Arcejo. Therefore, the Governor and Captain General of the Kingdom of Guatemala, Don Antonio González Mollinedo y Saravia, sent a land surveyor to recognize the boundaries, measure the area, and make the people of Cotzumalguapa understand that they could not and should not have rights to those lands as they were royal lands.

The lost town of San Juan Arcejo belonged to the parish of Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, and Don Isidro Pérez, a Spanish landowner of a cattle ranch, wanted to purchase its common lands from the Crown. He had reported them based on the laws of that time, which stated that the lands of the lost towns, by rights of the Crown, were royal lands.

INDEPENDENT PERIOD

To understand the policies related to land ownership after independence by the liberal governments in Central America, it is essential to know the ideas of the Bourbon Kings who ruled Spain and its colonies in the late 18th century.

For the Bourbon State, the criterion that private land ownership was more efficient for production than communal land was fundamental, and the division of common lands into individual parcels was seen as an indispensable condition for extended and accelerated progress. This idea was adopted by the liberals in the new independent states at the beginning of the 19th century.

After independence, a general land law issued in 1825 by the General Assembly set the parameters for land ownership and use. The new state reaffirmed the rights it assumed to have inherited from the Spanish Crown, particularly concerning claimed lands. It aimed to transfer these state-owned lands to private hands, understanding that one of the causes of agricultural backwardness in the country was the limited number of landowners. The towns would continue to retain their rights to common lands and pastures, and the state would add common lands to towns that needed them, which could involve using lands detached from wastelands, excesses from other communities, and even from private individuals.

It is known that as a result of these policies, an indigenous governor of Yepocapa took advantage of his position to accumulate seemingly communal lands.

By 1821, the town of San Pedro Yepocapa, according to the census conducted at that time, had 630 inhabitants. That same year, Thomas Arroyave denounced the lands of Los Yucales as wastelands because the few indigenous people present there had no property titles. In 1829, the Legislative Assembly legalized the denunciations of wasteland territories and ordered that no single individual could acquire more than 20 caballerías.

As a result of this policy, three denunciations were made in the Yepocapa region in 1830. María Supuy denounced the wasteland of Aquemeyá; Benedicto Castañeda denounced the land of Paxaché; and the indigenous people of San Pedro Yepocapa denounced the land of Los Yucales. These denunciations were approved, and the lands were measured for their respective sales. The denunciations continued, and more communal lands from Yepocapa were dismembered to pass into private ownership, ensuring that no more than 20 caballerías were granted, as mandated by law.

In October 1836, the authorities of San Pedro Yepocapa requested Don Manuel Gálvez, the Department Chief of Sololá, to allow the opening of a new road leading from the town of San Pedro Yepocapa to the southern coast. They asked that this chief authority compel all those who had not worked on the opening and construction of roads for the three days a year required by law to do so, and that those who worked more than the three days, which was their obligation, be paid the corresponding wages.

The purchase of the Los Yucales land in 1827 by the indigenous people of San Pedro once again created problems at the end of the 1830s, as the file was mistakenly transferred to Zaragoza, and the indigenous authorities there did not want to return it. In 1838, the indigenous people of San Pedro were asked to pay the remaining balance for the purchase of that land. In August 1839, the municipality of Zaragoza, which still held the titles, requested that the land of Los Yucales be awarded to them for sale to Quirino Beteta.

The Political Chief of Chimaltenango informed the authorities of Zaragoza that the indigenous people of San Pedro Yepocapa had already settled the value of the land and therefore owned it. Consequently, he requested that the file they held regarding the sale of that land be sent to extend the property titles to the indigenous people of San Pedro.

Despite the fact that, according to the authorities of Chimaltenango, the issue regarding the purchase of Los Yucales was resolved in 1839, a 30-day deadline was imposed on the indigenous people of San Pedro to settle the 50 pesos they still owed to the General Administration of the State. In January 1840, they were again required to pay the outstanding debt for the purchase of the land of Los Yucales. It was indicated that the land extended over 45 caballerías, priced at 12 pesos per caballería, and had been auctioned, granting the inhabitants of San Pedro Yepocapa 42 34 caballerías and a Spanish individual named Busiedo 3 4 caballerías.

To complete the payment for the land of Los Yucales, the indigenous people of San Pedro Yepocapa had taken a loan from the municipal treasury, but by April 11, 1842, they had only repaid 218 pesos and owed a total of 290 pesos.

In 1842, the visit of the Corregidor of Chimaltenango to the town of San Pedro Yepocapa was reported, finding that the indigenous inhabitants of that town spoke no Spanish, except for the municipal secretary. The Corregidor discovered that the municipal administration's documents were disorganized, and the important papers and records of the town were held by the municipal secretary in his home. There were also no property titles for the town, only lists arranged for community payments (AGCA B.119.1, Exp. 5576, Leg. 2504).

There were no books of records, trials, jails, or police; nor was there a cemetery, as the churchyard, next to the convent, which at that time consisted of straw huts, was used for that purpose. According to the Corregidor of Chimaltenango, the town had about 600 inhabitants and was mountainous, appearing more like an estate than a town. It also had a liquor store where the inhabitants would get drunk at night.

To try to remedy the many shortcomings in the town, the Corregidor ordered the construction of a jail and the establishment of a security system. He appointed a preventive judge, and since there was no one capable in the municipal corporation or in the town, he designated Don Estanislao Xirón, the only ladino living in the town at that time, as the Preventive Judge of San Pedro Yepocapa. He ordered him to coordinate with the town priest to communicate the agreements and regulations in the Cakchiquel language to punish and pursue crimes, as well as to establish some police force. He concluded that while there was no one to lead and manage the town, who needed to be firm and energetic, it would not be possible to suppress the vices to which the inhabitants were surrendering, and that any provision would be useless if that situation was not addressed.

To conclude that century, by Government Agreement on February 14, 1893, funds were allocated to San Pedro Yepocapa for the introduction of drinking water, and on August 5, 1896, also by Government Agreement, a telegraph office was established.

The German coffee plantations in the municipality of Yepocapa: A significant event in the history of Yepocapa, covering the final third of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, was the introduction of coffee in the southern region, particularly on the coastal front of the municipality, along with the presence of German coffee plantations that became highly productive and relevant.

According to Wagner (Wagner, Regina 1991:144), attracted by the incentives provided by the Guatemalan Liberal State to invest in agriculture and favored by the signing and ratification of the 1887 Trade Treaty, which facilitated obtaining credits from commercial and banking houses in Hamburg, some entrepreneurs and merchants from that area founded companies or branches of their commercial houses, based on the excellent quality of Guatemalan coffee.

Thus, the German firm Koch Hagman & Co., which owned the San Francisco Miramar farms in Colomba, Costa Cuca, Quetzaltenango, and later the El Reposo farm, expanded its rural properties by purchasing the Morelia farm, consisting of 26 caballerías, and the Santa Sofía farm in Yepocapa.

By the end of the 19th century, German rural property had become quite large and numerous in the southwestern region of Guatemala. Most of these farms were located in the coastal districts, which included the municipality of Yepocapa. The plantations produced coffee and, depending on the altitude, also sugar; only two or three had cacao trees. Most had pastures necessary to maintain riding, draft, and pack animals, as well as cattle for personal consumption. They also cultivated maize and bananas, the main food of the indigenous population. According to Wagner (Wagner, Regina 1991:166), these plantations could be classified as rural complexes with a mixed plantation economy.

Except for a few small farms, most coffee plantations operated as large-scale enterprises. While some had primitive facilities, others had modern and complete machinery for their time, including water channels, pulping washers, drying patios, and rakes for processing coffee and cardamom, as seen in the plantations of Yepocapa, or for producing refined sugar. The highest average coffee production was achieved, according to Wagner (Wagner, Regina 1991:166), by the plantations of the Osuna-Rochelu Company, with productions ranging from 19,000 to 20,000 quintales, and the Morelia farm in Yepocapa, owned by Schlubac, which produced between 12,000 and 13,000 quintales of coffee.

When World War I broke out, the Legislative Assembly of Guatemala authorized the Executive Branch to use extraordinary powers during its recess period, leading President Manuel Estrada Cabrera to declare on April 27, 1917, the breaking of diplomatic relations with the German Empire. German rural properties were seized and intervened, including those of the Central American Plantations Anonymous Society, among which were Morelia and Santa Sofía in Yepocapa.

In 1924, with the signing of the Trade Convention in October and the return of property seized from Germans during the war, Guatemalan-German commercial relations were reestablished. German rural properties continued to grow in Guatemala, and by the 1920s, the Hagman & Co. company, belonging to the CAPCO business group, included the Santa Sofía and Morelia farms in Yepocapa, which, according to Wagner (Wagner, Regina 1991:282), had an area of 30 caballerías and produced around 6,000 quintales of coffee. Additionally, other German-owned farms in the Yepocapa region included Panajabal, Sibajá, La Conchita, Peña Plata, and their annexes: Xonjal, Tonajuyú, and El Molino.

By the end of the 1930s, German coffee plantations produced approximately 60% of Guatemalan coffee, which was purchased by German companies. Therefore, the outbreak of World War II in Europe posed severe consequences and likely losses for the German community's economy in Guatemala. In 1939, Guatemala declared neutrality and broke off commercial relations with Germany. In December 1941, Guatemala declared war on Japan and Germany, proceeding with the intervention of German properties, restricting constitutional guarantees for naturalized Germans, and imposing war taxes on the exports of the seized farms owned by naturalized Germans.

According to Wagner (Wagner, Regina 1991:178), in the municipality of Yepocapa, the Sibaja farms and its annex La Conchita, owned by Federico Koper, and the Peña Plata farm and its annexes Xonjal, Tonajuyú, and El Molino, owned by Carlos Hegel, were intervened.

An important event for the German community residing in Yepocapa was the birth of a Prussian prince at the Santa Sofía estate, which has now become an agrarian community, on August 17, 1924. He was registered under the name of His Royal Highness Sigfrido Federico Ernesto Enrique Gonzalo de Prusia, according to birth certificate number 705, folio 258, book 17 of the Civil Registry of Yepocapa.

20th Century: At the beginning of the 20th century, Yepocapa was a small settlement, as described in 1843. It consisted of streets with houses that were cane ranchos with thatched roofs. The church and the convent were located in the same area and were still two cane ranches. The convent had a thatched roof, while the church had a metal roof covered with thatch to keep it cool. On December 30, 1910, the postal office in Yepocapa was upgraded to a second-class office.

In 1919, the town suffered a tragedy when a massive fire destroyed it. The fire, fueled by the winds prevalent in the area, spread rapidly through the houses, which were cane ranchos with thatched roofs made from a leaf known locally as "tapuc," which is said to resemble the leaf of pacaya. It was impossible to extinguish the fire, and the people could only flee their homes to save their lives while the town was consumed by flames. Everything was burned, including the church; however, since it had a metal roof covered with thatch, only the thatch on top burned, preventing its collapse. The image of the Patron Saint, San Pedro, was saved, which was considered a miracle by the surviving townspeople.

As a result of this fire, many neighbors abandoned the town and moved to Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa or other places on the southern coast, as they had lost all their belongings and felt it was not worth staying in San Pedro. Over time, some returned to their town and reestablished themselves there.

The town was rebuilt, and in 1920, don Hilario Rosales P. donated a water spring that supplies the population, located near the Cabañas estate. However, according to brothers Porfirio and José León Tax, this spring had belonged to their great-grandparents, Andrés Umul and Francisca Chirut, who were the landowners and allowed the town to use this water spring for its consumption. As the municipal secretary, don Hilario Rosales bought the land to donate the spring as property to the town.

By government agreement, in March 1921, a municipal market was built in the town center. Several religious events were significant for Yepocapa in the 20th century. The first of these was the introduction of Catholic Action by don Emilio Umul in 1938, who believed that only witchcraft existed in the town before Catholic Action arrived. One day, he knelt and asked God to help him uplift the town. He was accused of being a communist and of spreading political ideas. Questioned by several priests of the same Catholic Church, don Emilio preached throughout the town, in the fields, and on the estates until finally, Catholic Action thrived in Yepocapa. Don Emilio Umul became a successful man and was elected as mayor of Yepocapa.

In 1940, a government agreement approved the contract with Emilio Selle to supply electrical energy and light to the population, extending the company's transmission line to Yepocapa. The tariff for electricity was approved by government agreement in August 1942. In that same year, a new post and telecommunications office was opened to the public, also classified as a second-class office.

Another significant religious event for the municipality of Yepocapa in the 20th century was the introduction of evangelical groups. Brothers Porfirio Tax and José de León Tax recall that it began with the arrival of the Monte Sinai church, which held meetings in private homes, and its first leaders were Julio Méndez, Felipe Méndez, Estanislao Mejía, Teodoro Pérez, and Isabel de León.

Gradually, the number of Christians in the town began to increase. Currently, there are eight evangelical churches in Yepocapa, and it is believed that 20% of its inhabitants are evangelical. They do not go out to evangelize, but each Christian tries to attract people to their church. There is an evangelical school called Berea, which conducts medical outreach to attract people to its faith and is now focused on community work.

Currently, there are no confrontations between Catholics and evangelicals in the population, and both groups respect each other. In the past, when the evangelical church first arrived in the town, during the initial services in private homes and later in the first churches, they were pelted with stones on their roofs, and this continued for a long time. Later, charismatic Catholics also arrived and clashed with other religious groups, but over time, traditional Catholics and charismatic Catholics became tolerant of each other, and now there is no persecution or conflict between them.

In 1951, a government agreement introduced telephone service to connect the population with the city of Guatemala and neighboring estates. According to Gall (Gall, Francis 1983:307), in 1955, statistical data for the municipality of Yepocapa indicated that the municipal head had 2,243 inhabitants and the entire municipality had 8,235, with 73.3% of the population being indigenous and 79.4% illiterate. The municipal head had an abundant supply of potable water. There was no medical assistance, only a delegation of the Guatemalan Social Security Institute (IGSS) to care for its members in the accident program, which is why the sick had to go to the hospital in La Antigua Guatemala or Chimaltenango, both of which were very far away.

Two urban schools and 16 rural schools operated, and the market in the municipal head attracted sellers and buyers, especially on Saturdays and Sundays. The important industry reported was the production of mats by the indigenous people, who cultivated only coffee because the soil was not suitable for other crops due to its high volcanic sand content.

The municipality considered urgent problems at that time to be the construction of drainage systems, improvement of electric service, and a slaughterhouse for the processing of small livestock. According to the 1964 census, the population of the municipality was 11,016 inhabitants, and the municipal head had increased to 3,068 inhabitants.

Starting in 1970, renovations were made in the area where the Catholic temple is located. The first was the construction of the parish house to have a priest in the village, since the priest who provided religious services could only come once a month. Subsequently, a community hall was built on the west side of the church, and finally, the temple was expanded by lengthening its vault, for which a site located behind the church was purchased.

In 1971, a massive eruption of the Fuego volcano, which neighbors recalled as the largest they remembered in the town, covered the region with almost a meter of sand, damaging the crops. According to Gall (Gall, Francis 1983:304), the sand that fell on the town of Yepocapa was removed by the municipality and used to fill a ravine next to a sports complex, allowing for its expansion with the construction of several basketball courts.

Residents of Yepocapa report that during the eruption, there were very strong tremors, and the mountain and the Fuego volcano shook visibly. The crater ejected stones until it exploded. The population tried to flee, but they had no way out or anywhere to go, and they had no choice but to climb onto the roofs of their houses to clear the falling sand from the volcano to prevent the roofs from collapsing and to clean those made of straw. They spent the entire night doing this, and many people knelt down to pray and ask God to save them, and gradually the eruption subsided, lasting approximately 24 hours.

Before this eruption, corn was planted around the town, and only the slopes of the Fuego volcano had sand, but after that eruption, the cornfields near the town were covered in sand. It is now impossible to plant corn around Yepocapa because it is necessary to dig to find fertile soil, and the plants would be buried by the sand. A technician from the National Institute of Agrarian Transformation (INTA), who came to assess the damage, suggested to farmers that they could plant coffee since these plants could be spaced apart and the necessary holes could be dug to reach the farming land without being suffocated by the sand. From then on, coffee began to be planted in the northern region of the municipality and around Yepocapa.

The military, when they needed to mobilize, requisitioned vehicles and forced the owners to drive them, transporting soldiers. This put the owners at risk, and there is a known case where soldiers and the vehicle driver were killed by guerrillas.

According to the neighbors, the guerrillas were accustomed to coming down from the northeastern side of the town, from the slopes of the Fuego volcano, approaching the population from the hills to the east, near the water spring that supplies the town, in order to attack and challenge the soldiers using rifles and loudspeakers. When this occurred, the soldiers took refuge in their barracks and exchanged gunfire with the guerrillas while the frightened population sheltered in their homes.

Currently, both the parcel owners and the original residents of Yepocapa complain about the lack of job opportunities, which forces them to migrate in search of work to Guatemala City, La Antigua, and other places like Zacapa. The need to work outside the municipality forces the residents, both men and women, to leave their homes early on Mondays and return Friday nights. The jobs they find outside the municipality include maquila workers, vendors, construction workers, and mechanics, among others. The few jobs available in the municipal head are those offered by small business owners and convenience stores.

One of the major problems in Yepocapa is the organization of gangs that break into and rob homes, as well as assaults on extra-urban buses on the roads leading to the town, mainly during paydays for workers and holidays, particularly on routes leading to Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa and the route to Guatemala City via La Antigua Guatemala. Among the gang groups are those that make up Mara 18 and Salvatrucha. The areas where these gang groups are most concentrated are in the neighborhoods of Monte de los Olivos and San Francisco.

The coverage of health and public sanitation is very low to attend to the residents, and according to the XI National Population Census of 2002, the municipality registers a 34.94% illiteracy rate. The only abundant resource in the region is water, but due to the lack of environmental public policies in Guatemala, it is wasted. The population does not pay the true value of their service, there are no wastewater treatment plants, and all the rivers in the region are contaminated.

The immigrant population, whether as a result of the internal war at the end of the 20th century or for economic reasons, has been forced into agricultural parcels located on lands unsuitable for cultivation, without any technical assistance or economic incentives to improve their quality of life. The loans granted to communities for the payment of parcels ceded by the government are not in conditions for them to repay.

The identity crisis of these residents is serious, as individuals from different ethnic groups and regions of Guatemala have mixed in these agricultural parcels. They do not share the same cultural integration, nor do they have the same sense of belonging or blood ties among themselves or with the "original inhabitants" of Yepocapa, who are primarily settled in the municipal head and have been influenced by various religious incursions from Catholic groups, Catholic Action, charismatic movements, and different evangelical denominations and sects. This has transformed various popular and religious traditions, as well as their rituals, mainly affecting the discrimination and devaluation of the brotherhoods introduced by missionary priests during the colonial period to the indigenous towns.

It can be concluded that the indicators of human development—health, education, and employment—leave much to be desired in the municipality of Yepocapa, compounded by a lack of socio-economic progress opportunities characteristic of the region, which forces the residents to seek work in other areas outside the municipality, such as Guatemala City, La Antigua Guatemala, and Chimaltenango. Due to the low wages they earn, these workers cannot afford to move their families to live near their workplaces and are forced to travel weekly, returning on weekends with the little money they manage to earn as wages for the support of their households.

For the economic growth of the municipality, it is necessary to pave access roads and invest in development projects that allow for increased production and the introduction of new crops and livestock raising, primarily in the agricultural parcels. Additionally, it is important to promote the creation of tourist centers, such as the water spring park at the Cabañas estate and the coffee estates that still preserve installations from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, like Panajabal and La Ceiba Sumatán, which could be included in a tourist route about the history of coffee production in Yepocapa.

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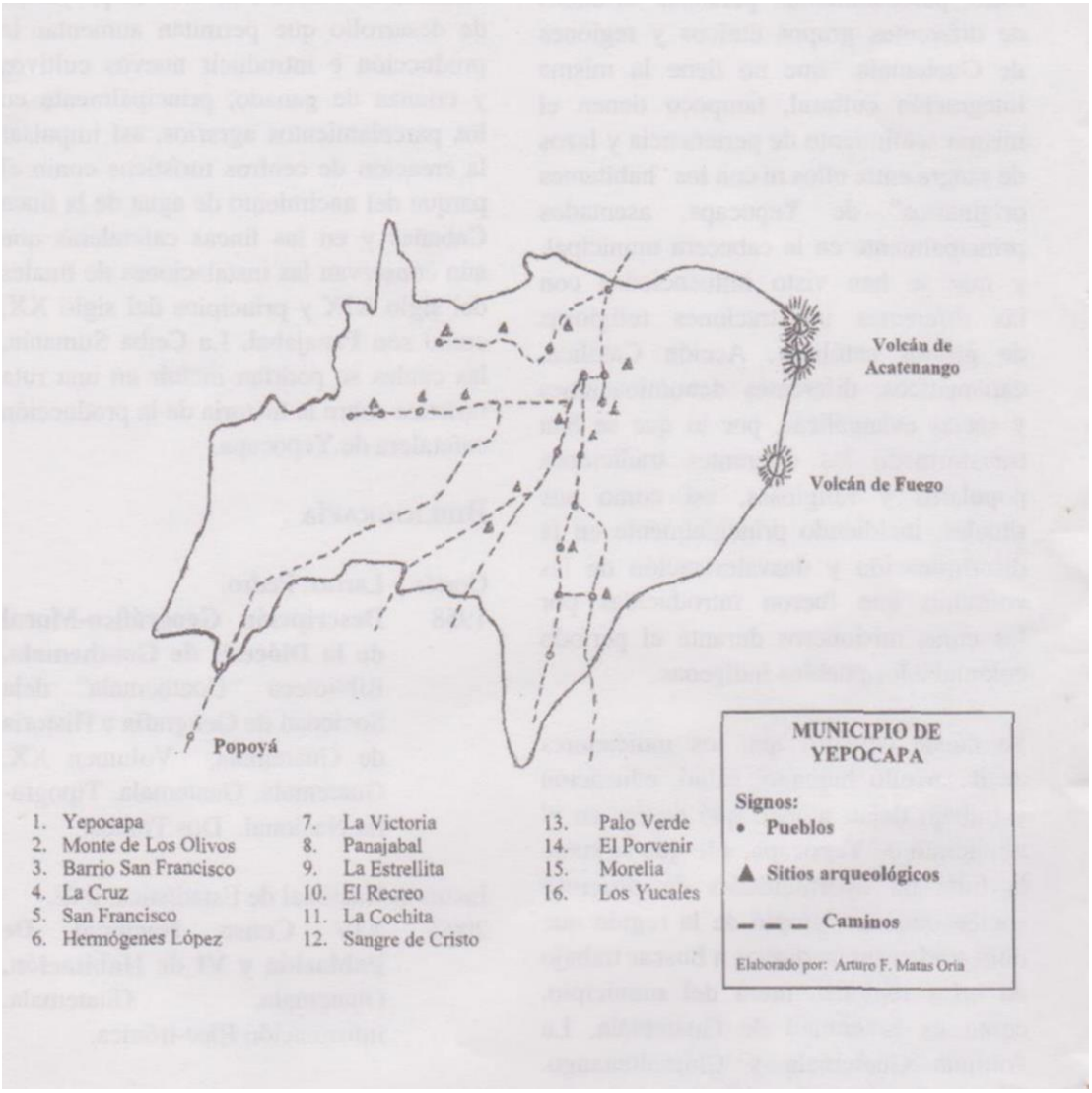
Volcán de Acatenango
Volcán de Fuego
Popoyá
MUNICIPIO DE YEPOCAPA
Signos:
• Pueblos
▲ Sitios arqueológicos
Caminos
Elaborado por: Arturo F. Matas Oria
1. Yepocapa
2. Monte de Los Olivos
3. Barrio San Francisco
4. La Cruz
5. San Francisco
6. Hermógenes López
7. La Victoria
8. Panajabal
9. La Estrellita
10. El Recreo
11. La Cochita
12. Sangre de Cristo
13. Palo Verde
14. El Porvenir
15. Morelia
16. Los Yucales

Iconology and Iconography of "The Triumph of the Eucharist" in the Cathedral of Guatemala.

RUTH IRENE KLEE CANCINOS
ANA CECILIA FLORES

INTRODUCTION

The colonization of the American continent brought about a series of events that changed the course of its history. One of these was the emergence of Christianity, which had to adapt to the idiosyncrasy and worldview of the inhabitants of the newly mixed world, leading to invaluable artistic expressions. From the 16th century onwards, the processes of evangelization and Christianization motivated the rise of great Hispano-American masters who extraordinarily captured the prevailing thought of the time. In this way, new generations have been able to experience wonderful artistic works, some of personal inspiration from the artist, as well as others that are reproductions of European artists.

Colonial Guatemalan artists left an extraordinary cultural legacy, which was enriched with works from various countries, including Mexico. The Viceroyalty of New Spain possesses an invaluable number of highly valuable pieces created during the 16th and 17th centuries. Among them, it is impossible not to mention the two oil paintings located at the side entrance of the Metropolitan Cathedral of New Guatemala of the Assumption: The Triumph of the Eucharist and The Eucharist and the Sacrifices of Paganism by the Mexican painter Pedro Ramírez, with the former being the subject of analysis in this article. The reason for the paintings' current location in Guatemala, the year they arrived, who was in charge of their transport, and whether it was a gift or a purchase remains unknown. Therefore, this work only includes the most general data that serve as a basis for iconological and iconographic study.

BACKGROUND

History

The Triumph of the Eucharist is a canvas that belongs to a series of 17 designs that were used to decorate the Convent of the Descalzas Reales in the city of Madrid. It was Doña Isabel Clara Eugenia, governor of the Netherlands and daughter of Philip II, who commissioned Pedro Pablo Rubens in 1625 to design a series of cartoons for tapestries intended to adorn the convent with the theme The Apotheosis of the Eucharist. The convent of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid was the former palace of Don Alonso Gutiérrez and was transformed into a convent of Clarisses at the initiative of Doña Juana of Austria in the year 1566.

In that cloister, women from the Spanish court voluntarily entered, contributing dowries in the form of artworks. Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia was no exception. She spent much of her childhood and youth in that sacred space, so it is not surprising that religiosity had a significant influence on the ladies of the royal family.

The convent carried out two significant activities during the year: the processions of the Octave of Corpus and those of Good Friday. For the latter commemoration, while the tabernacle remained empty, the image of Saint Gaspar Becerra was carried on a litter.

Don Felipe II arranged for tapestries to be gifted every year to adorn the cloister for this ceremony. While in Flanders, Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia ordered a new series to be made, as it was the region with the best weavers in the Old Continent, and in the city of Antwerp, she commissioned the incomparable master Pedro Pablo Rubens, who had the Infanta's approval.

The tapestries were completed in 1628; shortly after, Rubens ordered loose engravings of several of the compositions to be made. He insisted that 10 engravings of the 11 main creations be produced, leaving the ones he considered more personal for individual sale. Among this series, the works created by expert engravers Schelte a Bolswert and Nicolás Lauwers are considered masterpieces of Rubens's engraving.
The Triumph of the Church is one of the sketches characterized by the strength of the figures and violent movements. The Triumph of the Eucharist over Heresy and The Triumph of the Eucharist over Idolatry are also part of the series.

THE AUTHOR

Pedro Ramírez was born in Mexico during the third decade of the 17th century and died in the same city in 1679. His parents were Isabel de Contreras and Pedro Ramírez "the Elder," who was a sculptor and assembler by profession. The fact that they were relatives, bore the same name, and were artists in related fields led to numerous confusions that were clarified only in 1982 by Efraín Castro. Even in Mexico, few works by Pedro Ramírez are identified; however, he is considered one of the best painters of his time in New Spain. So much so that several art critics, such as the Spaniard José Moreno Villa, compared his works to those of Zurbarán.
In Guatemala, there are two paintings by Ramírez, located in the Metropolitan Cathedral. One of them is locally known as The Triumph of the Eucharist, and the other as Eucharistic Allegory, both created in New Spain and later sent to Guatemalan lands.

THE WORK

The Triumph of the Eucharist over Ignorance is signed “po Ramírez fat. year 1673” and is a transposition of Rubens's work called The Triumphal Eucharistic Car of the Church.

The engravings that served as models for this and other works were created based on Rubens's original designs, with Schelte a Bolswert producing the two that served as models for Ramírez, who designed a quite faithful transcription. The Triumphs by Pedro Pablo Rubens, in the form of large paintings, were very popular in Hispano-America, especially in New Spain, and served as ornamentation for churches. There is evidence that these paintings were indeed made based on

engravings; in Puebla, there is still a contract mandating the creation of the Triumphs for the Cathedral of the same city.

The task was not easy for the artist: Ramírez had to translate the engraved model, which was quite small and in black and white, into colors and a very large format, making his work all the more admirable to the viewer.

THE CURATOR

The Metropolitan Cathedral of New Guatemala of the Assumption was blessed and inaugurated on March 16, 1815, with a mass celebrated by Fray Ramón Casaus y Torres, the eighth bishop of Santiago de Guatemala, although it took several years to complete.
In 1847, it had the privilege of being named a Basilica, added to that of San Juan de Letrán, and it was the fourth Cathedral in the world, after those of the Vatican, Jerusalem, and Santiago de Compostela, to enjoy the Holy Year.
This church has become the curator of one of the richest religious heritages in imagery and cult pieces in Latin America, such as the work of Pedro Ramírez, which has been under its protection for a long time.
After the city was relocated, this painting was placed in a frame and glass in the Choir of the first provisional Cathedral (1779) and later was located on one of the walls of the side exit (or of the Tabernacle) in the current Metropolitan Cathedral, where it remains today.

ICONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

This is a transposition of a painting that features Greco-Roman motifs. It projects a purely ecclesiastical theme of triumphant Christianity with a Eucharistic religious theme.

The Eucharist is the main focus and is placed in the monstrance, which reflects the sun, representing Christ, and which was of great importance in antiquity. On a Roman triumphal chariot, surrounded by all the pomp of the Greco-Roman world, appears a woman representing the Church, adorned in a white tunic and blue mantle, symbolizing the purity and divinity she possesses for having been founded by Jesus Christ, while also holding the Eucharistic monstrance. In Greco-Roman antiquity, the monstrance was a symbol of honor, and in Christianity, it is the object that safeguards the body of Christ, the central point of the Christian faith, all adorned with cherubs that Ramírez represented with great care. A young angel carries the papal tiara, symbolizing the bond that unites divinity with humankind through the figure of the pope, the vicar of Christ and successor of Saint Peter throughout the ages, while a cherubic angel carries the train of the mantle to prevent it from touching the ground.

Above the monstrance hovers the Holy Spirit, symbolizing the omnipresence of God the Father. The triumphal chariot rolls over a specter representing evil, signifying the conquest of light over darkness. Alongside the chariot, two dark figures dressed in shades of brown and black strive to avoid falling under the wheels.

To the right of the painting, the chariot is driven by another angel with a whip who holds the reins of the horses, adorned with grand ornaments, and on which rides the Archangel Gabriel, dressed in red and carrying a parasol or canopy of the same color, a processional symbol for churches of basilica quality, representing the royalty and universality of the Christian Church, evoking the ancient kings and great state leaders of the East who used such parasols. The chariot is guided by women representing the three theological virtues; the one in the foreground is dressed in gold and red and carries a flaming sword, an object that only those close to the Trinity bear. This can be interpreted as the triumph of humanity through the Christian Church. Above the canopy, the keys cross, symbolizing papal dignity.

Additionally, it is accompanied by another young angel whose gaze is directed at the angel holding in his right hand the palm of martyrdom, the path to holiness, and in his left, a laurel crown symbolizing triumph in the Greco-Roman world, characteristic of celebration and joy.

On the ground and in the foreground, a sort of sprinkler is observed as a symbol of having eradicated evil. Then, blindness and ignorance, represented by figures with bandages over their eyes and long donkey ears, respectively, are the characters meant to be taught the light of the world, represented by a small lamp held by the Genius of Light, a woman emerging immediately behind them.

The entire painting is surrounded by angels, archangels, and seraphim, whose gazes are directed toward the monstrance with the Eucharist. An interesting detail is the garlands of fruit that symbolize joy and abundance in the Greco-Roman world and, once Christianized, represent the richness and purity of the soul acquired through the consecrated host.

The lateral angles are flanked by eclectic columns that frame the triumphant path of the Eucharist, symbolizing the union of the two worlds: the divine and the human, which only God unites through the coming of His Son. Another important detail is the musician angel at the front of the procession, sounding a trumpet that announces the arrival of God and the Triumph of the Church while expressing praises to the Lord.

These characters are dressed in the Florentine style of the 17th century, while others wear Greco-Roman attire reminiscent of classical Renaissance painting.

ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Dove

In ancient and Christian art, the dove symbolizes peace and purity. Christian art prominently depicts the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. This symbolism first appears in the story of Christ's baptism. And John bore witness of Him, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained upon Him" (John 1:32). The dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit and appears in paintings of the Trinity, the baptism, and the Annunciation to Mary.

Archangel Gabriel

Different apocryphal texts abound in teachings about the archangel Gabriel. He also serves as a guardian and shares with Saint Michael the task of protecting the doors of churches from the intrusion of demons. Gabriel is generally depicted as a young man without a beard. From the 5th and 6th centuries, he appears with wings and a halo (mosaics from the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, 5th century). From the 16th century in Italy, he has feminine features (this character trait persists until the 17th century). He wears a long tunic or liturgical vestments in The Annunciation (Melozzo da Forli, 15th century, Florence Uffizi). He also appears near Zechariah at the altar where incense burns. He is sometimes depicted as a hunter with two dogs chasing a unicorn that seeks refuge near the Virgin.

Attributes: Messenger's staff, lily, scepter (sometimes), scroll (bearing the angelic greeting "Ave Maria Gratia Plena"), unicorn (which he pursues).

Angels

Mentioned at various points in the biblical texts of both the Old and New Testaments, angels are beings created by God, possessing a completely spiritual essence. They ensure the relationship between God and humanity, between Heaven and Earth. They represent God and serve as His messengers. They also uphold the liturgy around God's throne, surrounding it with their praises. They protect simple mortals. In 1608, Pope Paul V extended the cult of guardian angels to the entire Church, which had originated in Spain during the 16th century; Clement IX fixed their feast on the first Sunday of September in 1667. The cultures of the Mediterranean basin, including the Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, knew of divine messengers comparable to angels.

Functions: Cherubim and seraphim generally perform cultural and liturgical functions around God's throne. Angels are often seen as "acolytes" swinging censers during various circumstances in the life of Jesus or the Virgin (Assumption). They also appear associated with various theophanies. The best-known example is the three winged figures who visit Abraham and Sarah at the oak of Mamre.

Musical Angels

Musical angels originate from biblical texts and also from the writings of the Church Fathers, who defined the music of the celestial spheres as the harmonious sounds of heavenly cohorts. Musical angels first appeared in art during the 11th century (in English manuscripts). The choirs of angels are often associated with various themes requiring orchestration, such as Christmas and the Coronation of the Virgin (as seen in the mosaic of the dome of the Baptistery of Saint Mark in Venice from the 13th century). The Last Judgment is generally accompanied by angels playing trumpets (the trumpets of the Last Judgment).

Light

Represents Christ according to His words in John 8:12: "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'"

Gold

This precious metal symbolizes pure light, the celestial element where God resides.

Monstrance

A receptacle for displaying sacred relics, it is also a transparent case where the sacred wafers are placed.

Tiara

An element of papal attire from the 14th century. It is a tall cap made of leather or cloth adorned with three crowns, topped with a small globe and a cross. The Pope wears it as a symbol of authority.

Fruits

Often represent the twelve gifts of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control, modesty, temperance, and chastity.

Palm

Among the Romans, it symbolized victory. In Christian symbolism, it evokes the martyr's triumph over death. Christ frequently carries a palm as a symbol of His victory over sin and death. It is more often associated with His triumphant entry into Jerusalem: "The next day, a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!'" (John 12:12-13).

Grapes

Like the Eucharistic wine, they represent the blood of Christ. The vine or its leaves are also emblems of the Savior, the true "vine."

Trumpet

The straight trumpet, with a conical tube and bell-shaped flare, appears in the hands of numerous angels in altarpieces, cornices, organs, etc., particularly in scenes of the Last Judgment. It is a typical aerophone, selected from a long iconographic tradition. Its typology is that of the Arabic straight trumpet or nafir, which was introduced in Spain around the 12th century and evolved in the late Middle Ages into a longer model with folded branches. The straight trumpet is considered an angelic instrument par

excellence due to its specific function: to announce plagues and apocalyptic catastrophes or to call the dead at the end of time. The straight trumpet was one of the pictorial formulas used by artists, along with horns, to visually translate the term tuba found in biblical texts. The tuba is the lowest and deepest wind instrument, and its sound is associated with the symbolic nature of God, as in the Apocalypse (1:10), where God's voice is compared to the sound of the tuba. Furthermore, the Church Fathers likened the tuba to the voices of angels, a tradition recounted by Cassiodorus in his exegesis of Psalm 46, stating that "the sound of the tuba represents the words of the angels, whose great noise filled the air and shook it."

Bell

The bell of the Blessed Sacrament announces the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Asperges Me

"Thou shalt sprinkle me..." is the opening phrase of the Miserere, Psalm 51. The hymn "Asperges me Domine Hyssopo" refers to the rite of pouring holy water over the altar, clergy, and the faithful. It symbolizes purification through the side of the Redeemer, from which water and blood flowed. It focuses on the dark region of sin with the aim of bringing the light of human repentance and divine forgiveness: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:9). The term refers both to the rite itself and the instrument used by the priest. The aspergillum is a brush or a perforated globe containing a sponge and is equipped with a handle. Due to its use, the aspergillum has acquired a special significance as an instrument for exorcising evil.

Laurel

It expresses triumph, eternity, and chastity. In ancient competitions, the victor was crowned with laurel. Saint Paul contrasts this crown with the imperishable one that the victorious Christian will receive (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Additionally, since the laurel never loses its green foliage, it symbolizes eternity. The association with chastity likely derives from pagan traditions, which used laurel to consecrate the Vestals.

Olive

This tree, frequently mentioned in the Bible, symbolizes divine Providence due to its abundant gifts. "The trees went forth to anoint a king over them; and they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us!' But the olive tree said to them, 'Should I cease giving my oil, with which they honor God and man, and go to sway over trees?'" (Judges 9:8-9).

Myrtle

This perennial plant has long symbolized love. In Roman mythology, it was dedicated to Venus. In Christian symbolism, it refers to the Gentiles who were converted by Christ. This interpretation is based on Zechariah: "I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in a hollow; and behind him were horses, red, sorrel, and white" (Zechariah 1:8). This passage is interpreted as an allusion to Jesus, the man riding on a red horse among the Gentiles, followed by the hierarchies of martyrs and the faithful.

Sword

The sword primarily symbolizes military status and its virtue, bravery, as well as its function, power. Power has a dual aspect: it can be destructive, but this destruction can be applied to justice and thus become positive; or it can be constructive, establishing and maintaining peace and justice. In Christian traditions, the sword is a noble weapon belonging to knights and Christian heroes.

Flaming Sword

The sword also represents light and lightning, as its blade shines. It is described by the Crusaders as a fragment of the Cross of Light. Thus, it symbolizes fire: the angels who expelled Adam and Eve from Paradise wield flaming swords to guard the way to the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:24).

Baldachin

Also known as a canopy or pallium, the baldachin is carried in processions to protect from sun and rain, originating from the East. In Christian processions, it serves to shield the priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament or an image from the elements. It is also used by heads of state, kings, the Pope, and some prelates. It acts like a nimbus over the person it protects, who appears as the sun due to their authority and dignity. Kings are surrounded by attendants, one of whom carries an umbrella or parasol. The umbrella directs attention not to the sun above, but to the person beneath it, emphasizing their importance. Thus, it is symbolically a protection.

Columns

As essential elements of architecture, columns serve as supports, representing the axis of construction and linking different levels. They guarantee solidity and symbolize the strength of a building, whether architectural, social, or personal. In Jewish and Christian traditions, columns have cosmic and spiritual symbolism. They connect the high with the low, akin to the cosmic tree, the tree of life, or the tree of worlds. Columns often flank the entrance to sanctuaries or the Holy of Holies, conceptually related to cosmic pillars (axis mundi). In the Bible (Job 9:6), only God has the power to topple the columns that support the world on Judgment Day. They indicate limits and generally flank doors, marking the transition from one world to another.

Sceptre

The sceptre is an emblem of royalty and authority. Sometimes it is a simple staff denoting the character of a messenger.

Attributes of Archangel Gabriel

Among the attributes of Archangel Gabriel is the staff or rod of the messenger, which later transformed into a scepter with a fleur-de-lis.

Chariot

Chariots have long been attributes of deities who present themselves majestically, primarily associated with sun gods (Helios/ Apollo, Zeus) but also with goddesses like Cybele and Freya. The Byzantine writer Dionysius the Areopagite interprets the chariots in Ezekiel's biblical vision as signifying the equality that unites beings of the same order.

Nuditas Virtualis (Virtual Nudity)

In contrast to "nudita criminalis," this symbolizes innocence, purity, and the virtue of human beings without original sin after receiving the sacrament of baptism.

Blue

Blue symbolizes the sky and celestial love. It represents the color of truth, as when the clouds part, it evokes the unveiling of truth. In painting, Christ and Mary wear blue mantles—Christ during His ministry on Earth and the Virgin when holding the Child Jesus or standing beside Him. In the Church, blue is used when commemorating moments in the life of the Virgin.

Red

Red indicates both love and hatred. It is the color of sovereign power among the Romans, a similar meaning reflected in the robes of cardinals. As the color of fire, it is used during Pentecost, commemorating the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Brown

Brown represents degradation and the death of the spirit. It also symbolizes renunciation of the world. In this sense, it has been adopted by the Franciscans and Capuchins.

Black

In Christian symbolism, black is the color of the Prince of Darkness. Generally, it suggests mourning, illness, denial, and death. However, alongside white, it indicates humility and purity, as seen in the habits of the Augustinians, Dominicans, and Benedictines.

White

White is the color par excellence that denotes virtue, chastity, and spiritual purity. Everything that comes from God radiates luminosity reflected in its whiteness.

Conclusions

Sources of information on Pedro Ramírez's work are very scarce and brief. "The Triumph of the Eucharist" is one of the pieces that has given the author the credit he deserves, as it is one of the few with a signature and date, which is uncommon for the period in which the artist lived. The painting presents a rather dark aspect, likely caused by patina and environmental contamination, which has hindered the analysis and interpretation of certain figurative elements within the artwork.

There are very few formal iconographic and iconological studies conducted on Guatemalan works from the colonial period. However, this analysis can serve to encourage new investigations that may gather more information on the topic.

Despite the fact that "The Triumph of the Eucharist" is practically a copy of Rubens' "The Triumph of the Church," it serves as palpable evidence of Ramírez's masterful command of pictorial technique. This underscores the importance of expressing feelings that humanity has conveyed through art since prehistory.

The quality of these artists allowed their work to transcend territorial and temporal boundaries, showcasing how they perceived the world at a specific moment and place.

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“The triumphant Eucharistic chariot of the Church” is the tapestry by Rubens that inspired the engravings that came into the hands of Pedro Ramírez.

"The Triumph of the Eucharist," a work by Pedro Ramírez in the Metropolitan Cathedral.

Facade of the entrance to the Convent of the Discalced in Madrid, Spain.

Guatemala, Land of Magical and Sacred Trees...

LUIS VILLAR ANLEU

PREAMBLE

For the history and traditions of Guatemalans, not all trees are the same. Some stand out over others for being part of a magical, sacred, or spiritual worldview, or because they have been incorporated into utilitarian needs or constitute key elements of social evolution itself. Utilitarianism can be identified with the most pressing spheres of man, such as the demands of eating, building homes or shelters, or expressing his inspiration through artisanal communications.

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Identifying which species are imbued with those values is a grand epic. Each one has its own chronicle, traversed by labyrinthine routes that are all the more complex as more substance can be described about them. Exploring them offers considerable opportunities to gain knowledge of their symbolisms, and thus to strengthen the foundations of cultural identity.

In general, trees have been connected to humanity since time immemorial. In Guatemala, the record of such a relationship is firmly inscribed in the Mayan hieroglyphic writing carved in stone, in wood lintels and codices, and in pieces of amate bark; also in the wonderful pictography known, and of course, in ancient indigenous texts that were written in Spanish. They symbolized so much for the ancient peoples of the country that the Memorial de Sololá gives them outstanding distinction by alluding to the origins of humanity: “When they made man, they made him from earth, and they fed him from trees, they fed him from leaves.” The Popol Vuh recounts that in one of the four formative trials, “the flesh of man was made from tzité.”

Just two quotes, taken from a true constellation of prototypes, help to see the significance of the symbolism provided by tree vegetation in the worldview and way of life of the ancient peoples of the country. Therefore, trees in general, and particular species, frequently appear in indigenous texts, but also in myths and legends maintained through centuries of oral tradition, in customs and traditions that have come from pre-Hispanic times, and later in chronicles of the first Spaniards in our lands. In this latter case, with unusual repetition, it happened that the European knowledge of the time, applied to a new, lush, and rich botanical

world, led more than one chronicler to make mistakes, including the identification of species. Consequently, inaccurate translations of terms, confusing interpretations of local customs related to said species, and, as one might expect, alterations in the magical, religious, or spiritual meaning that our ancestors attributed to them frequently occurred. Be that as it may, the fact is that there is a rich variety of sources to recognize the trees most closely linked to contemporary Guatemalans.

Many will remember that distant teaching from their primary school days when the benefits of trees for humanity were solemnly enumerated: the enrichment of the air with oxygen, the supply of wood, construction materials, and firewood, the provision of food, refreshing and benevolent shade, and the maintenance of springs. Simple statements, not devoid of unyielding truth, which, by adding a few details from collective reasoning, become part of the expanded universe of the greatness that connects man with trees, with their trees.

There are benefits that transcend fleeting utilitarianism if a model of social resource utilization is defined. When a society's lifestyle is based on part of its processes or procedures in the use of environmental elements that, as in the case of trees, ultimately imprint guidelines on its cultural development. It is easy to realize the existence of other benefits hinted at, beyond merely obtaining wood, firewood, construction materials, and edible fruits.

There are other types of connections between trees and man that elevate the benefits obtained to spheres that touch upon spirituality itself. We then recognize that this connection involves arts and crafts in all their dimensions, folk medicine, and traditional cooking and confectionery; the history of society, its myths and legends, its customs and traditions, and civic life even in the context of a modern state.

This is where many of Guatemala's trees are located, in that solemn and rich context that fills them with superlative values. In it, forgetting any hint of capitalist economy, they emerge as natural resources as they become intertwined with the social happenings of the homeland, whether viewed in its entirety or from each of its ethnicities. In the field of pure ethnobiology, they acquire the character of natural resources because they are part of the life of society, because they give identity to many aspects of traditional popular culture, and because some are found in the background of spiritual culture.

It is true that more than one, such as allspice or chicle from Petén, provides significant monetary benefits to those who exploit them, but beyond that, they also mark a social occurrence with deep roots in the past, an intrinsic value that is higher than the other because it is part of an identity forged step by step.

To maintain the same level of terminology, let us recall that classic nominal definition that conceives the tree as a perennial plant with a woody stem, elevated and with a highly branched crown. Under this concept, it constitutes the life form of many botanical species. Within this category, there are giant ferns, large palms, and the well-known pines, conacastes, and many more. Trees form a very varied set of plants, containing hundreds of species. Therefore, it is not surprising that their benefits are even more varied than the multitude of biological forms available to humanity.

ETHNODENDROLOGY: FROM THE BIOLOGICAL TO THE CULTURAL

A tree, any tree, is for man an element of Nature with meaning. It acquires this meaning from the moment it ceases to be an ordinary piece, when a bond stronger than simple coexistence in the same environment appears between it and man. Thus, it will soon be elevated to the unconscious category of symbol. Viewed from the perspective of D. Fontana, it becomes relatively easy to logically make sense of those "profound expressions of human nature" evoked by trees. Then, they come to us more intimately, because they affirm the roots of identity that connect us to them through history, legends, or art developed by our ancestors, preserved through generations and now practiced by us as traditions. In the relationship between man and tree, there are values that help to understand the meaning of the reverence with which they are regarded, which will be expressed with more or less intensity according to different cultural patterns or historical moments.

Fontana continues to recognize that "today, within its context, (the symbols) still have a strong evocative power for our intellect, our emotions, and our spirit." This is undoubtedly a fact that can be derived from another principle he argues: "the concepts of space and time (of the ancients), and of their own position in the universe, could only be understood in relation to the natural world, of which every aspect, it was thought, expressed a particular trait of divine energy..." Within such a framework, "plants represented the cycle of life (fertility, death, and rebirth). Many herbs were considered sacred, some due to their medicinal properties and others because their growth habits or appearance suggested some link with the gods or humanity..."

Trees are situated within that dimension. The divine energy or a link with the gods is more possible through a being that rises towards the sky, which springs from the same earth that supports us humans but ascends to the sacred spheres and thus becomes divine. It anchors and nourishes itself by sinking into mother earth but seeks the ethereal vastness through a vigorous and vertical trunk. The vigor and verticality are also elements of high symbolism. It is likely that a magical worldview preceded the discovery of their medicinal properties, strengthened by their nutritional, spiritual, or utilitarian qualities. It is possible that the development of evocations or otherworldly imaginations revolving around their most well-known or closest trees, or the everydayness of a brotherhood born from the frequency of conscious relationships, or the disturbing encounter before a specimen worthy of respect have forged situations that later generated significants and the significants later introduced symbolisms.

We must turn our eyes to the past to inquire about the reasons that led certain

species to be more firmly associated with worldviews that strengthened identities.

In search of traditional values, for this essay, we partially turn to the examination of some indigenous texts, as mentioned. They are a good source for obtaining references to our ancestors' relationship with trees, which allows for the interpretation of some issues related to the subject. Since these texts stem from the Maya worldview of the world, it is essential to place ourselves at least at the threshold of their spirituality to achieve a better understanding of the facts. The Maya Agenda 2005 states that "Maya spirituality is based on the existence of a divinity that is the Heart of the Sky and of the Earth - Uk'u'x Kaj Uk'u'x Ulew - which is present in each of the elements of Nature," and therefore, everything that exists in Nature and the Universe is considered sacred."

The field of study is so vast that it would be quixotic to attempt a complete view of the world of Guatemalan trees that forge identity through their integration into the traditional popular cultures of their peoples. This will only be an approach to the subject. Many species will be left out, and others may be treated excessively if we consider the relativity of the respective editorial spaces. Even so, wandering in the shadow of the lofty tree canopies, of us contemporary humans from such a homeland, may perhaps make us perceive the divine that the upright trees carry from heaven to earth.

Thus, in light of our history, let us look at examples of native trees that are very close to Guatemalans. Without delving into considerations of their natural history, the cultural facts that adorn them are the ideal complement to place them in seats of divinity, magic, and tradition.

THE ANCESTRAL CONIFERS

The Popol Vuh, which recounts astonishing milestones of creation, tells us that: "Like a mist, or like a cloud, it formed in its material state when mountains appeared over the water like crabs, and at one moment, the great mountains existed."
"Only a marvelous power and strength could accomplish what was resolved from the mountains and the valleys, and the creation of the forests of cypress and pine on the surface."
"First, the land, the mountains, and the valleys were formed. The course of the waters was divided. The streams began to wind between the mountains. In that order, the waters existed when the high mountains appeared."

Prodigious Parallelism

According to facts from the geological history of the country, there was a time when the territory was underwater. Colossal formative forces elevated it. What was once a seabed became land, which was subjected to incessant processes of adjustment and modeling of the external relief. Parallel to geological history, biological history shows that once it became a continent, this land was populated by primitive wild inhabitants arriving in waves of natural dispersions. Assisted by defined dispersion routes, some along mountain ranges and others following coastal lowlands, various tree genera arrived in Guatemalan territory from more boreal latitudes.

In the Miocene (23-5 million years ago), certain groups had already managed to establish themselves, such as the conifers Abies (fir, pinabete), Cupressus (cypress), and Pinus (pines), alongside Acer (maple, palo vinagre), Alnus (alder), Cornus, and

Engelhardtia (palo colorado). There were also non-conifers, such as Fraxinus (ash), Juglans (walnut), Liquidambar, Quercus (oaks), and Ulmus (elms). It is beautiful that it is precisely with these trees, of very ancient presence, that the greatest ethnodendrological links have been created.

What is wonderful about that text from the Popol Vuh is that, interpreting with great fidelity the origin of the territory and the identification of its first trees, it adds colossal knowledge. Now, when we talk about our pinabetes, cypresses, and pines, we refer to at least 20 species. One of them is pinabete and cypress, Abies guatemalensis and Cupressus lusitanica respectively, along with 18 pines, all grouped within the genus Pinus. Something exceptional in the interpreted odyssey is the fact that after the Pinus lineage reached us, there was an explosion of speciation, with the emergence of new forms and varieties through evolution.

F. Geilfus has identified three major zones of pine origin in the mountains of the world's intertropical regions: a Central American zone based on the mountain peaks of the area situated between Mexico and Nicaragua; a Caribbean zone (Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Belize, and Honduras); and an Asian zone (Burma, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and China).

Pines are the most conspicuous plant element in the mountains of Guatemala. Most pine forests develop at altitudes of 1,500 to 4,000 meters, being very dominant from 1,600 to 2,400 meters. The greatest frequency of species is found in the range of 2,000 to 2,200 meters above sea level. Common species from 1,600 to 2,400 meters in altitude include Pinus maximinoi, Pinus montezuma, and Pinus oocarpa, which show great adaptability to a wide range of conditions. From 2,400 to 2,800 meters, Pinus pseudostrobus predominates. Pinus rudis is usually found in the elevated zone between 2,300 and 4,000 meters. Even at such elevations, it can form pure stands above 3,200 meters.

Such conditions are of great importance when seeking to relate the biology of species to human development. Sometimes relationships depend on the coincidence of biological species in the same natural environment as human communities; other times, only certain species have the capacity to meet human requirements and traditions; and still others are particular species that have forged the ritual or spiritual bond.

When the Popol Vuh speaks of the arrival of Hunhun-Ahpú and Vukub-Hunahpú to Xibalbá and what happened to them there (part 2; ch. 2), it is said: "Go to your room, where your ocote and your cigar will be brought to you, to make you sleep, they were told." Then it describes their arrival at the House of Darkness, where only darkness reigned, while the inhabitants of Xibalbá deliberated. The ocote stick they were given was a tip from the pine called zakitok, the pine of Xibalbá, "very sharp," and it would soon come to an end, thus fueling the game of the Xibalbá inhabitants.

In a later passage, with Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué as the heroes, the same scenario appears (part 2; ch. 9): "That was the first test of Xibalbá. Upon entering, the youths were supposed to begin their defeat, according to the Xibalbá inhabitants. They entered the House of Darkness, and then their burning ocote

sticks were brought to them, and a cigar for each one, which were delivered by the messengers of Hun-Camé." Here, it is mentioned that the king said: "Here are their sticks of pine, but they must return them tomorrow morning, as well as the cigars that are not consumed."

These quotes unequivocally present us with evidence of a very ancient relationship with native pines. The ocote, which consists of sticks of pine wood naturally soaked in resins, is obtained from the so-called red pine or ocote pine. The botanical species is Pinus oocarpa. There are two other pines that are also referred to as "red" or ocote pines: Pinus montezuma and Pinus caribaea. In the market and in current kitchens, oocarpa remains by far the main ocote pine, occasionally montezuma and even less so caribaea (coastal pine) due to its lesser abundance and distribution in the Caribbean lowlands.

By naming a place in the kaqchikel mountains as Cutamchah, meaning "pine trunk," the Memorial of Sololá informs us that the species was already a particular reference. This opens the unsettling possibility of interpreting that the woods of the pines were identified as significant entities. Were they used for ritual, domestic, magical, or symbolic purposes? In a much later context, well into the Hispanic period, the parish priest and naturalist Fray Francisco Ximénez said of the pines: "This tree is very common in all these lands, especially in high mountains, and they grow to be enormous, there are pines that rise more than a hundred yards high. Among them, there are many differences; one is what they call ocote, and its wood is red due to the large amount of resin it has, and this is great wood, very durable. There is another pine that is white, and this is bad because it gets eaten by pests quickly. These two types are rough and knotty wood."

In general, tall-growing pines tend to have straight trunks and are not excessively thick. Two significant species in this regard are Pinus ayacahuite (sweet pine, pachá or tanning pine) and Pinus oocarpa. This, along with the characteristic of a very wide geographical distribution in the country, makes them the species most linked to the spirituality surrounding the dance-game of the Palo Volador. Secondarily, for availability reasons, Pinus maximinoi, Pinus montezuma, or Pinus pseudostrobus may also be used. This correlation rarely changes, and if it does occur, it is due to the absence of appropriate specimens in the forests. In those cases, one may have to resort to cypress trees, which may also carry a parallel symbolism.

And the Firs, as Ximénez would say: "There is another one called pinabete. Excellent wood for making anything from it, even very finely carved altarpieces. It is white, fragrant wood, with a beautiful grain, and very easy to work with... This pinabete is the reverse of other pines, because in the others, although the knots may be eaten by pests, the rest does not rot due to its hardness; but in the pinabete, the few knots it has are the ones that soon disappear, and the rest is incorruptible." It is a noble species that ancient peoples revered and took to their rites of higher spirituality. Therefore, the local fir was initially called Abies religiosa, until a botanist believed it to be a very different variety and renamed it Abies guatemalensis. It remains noble. From it, the tejamanil (shingle) of the most beautiful native houses in the Altos Cuchumatanes q'anjobales is obtained, the most seductive carvings, and the most

powerful expression of the newly incorporated custom of the Christmas Tree, with a dignity and aroma that have no equal.

Oaks and Beeches

When the lives of Guatemalans flowed more closely with Nature, the oak and beech trees were part of their daily world. One particular species, the chicharra, Quercus skinneri, known for its large acorns, satisfied playful and spiritual needs through its means. This was no more than 50 years ago.

It is one of the stoutest oaks, capable of reaching about 30 meters in height, standing on a magnificent, straight, thick trunk. The nuts it produces are notable acorns, distinguished by their large size and the fact that the cup that covers the base is very persistent. Even in the mid-20th century, it was not unusual to see children boring strategic holes in the apex, base, and sides. The holes in the apex and base were used to pass a piece of ocote (pine wood) through them, which would protrude from the tip somewhat equivalent to the length of the acorn. The hole in the base would be covered with black bee wax to hold the ocote firmly. A cord was tightly wrapped around the outer end of the stick, which would then be pulled with a vigorous tug through a hole made at the end of a segment of cane. And off goes the chicharra, spinning on its axis like a top, buzzing from the action of the side holes. A game, a toy, and a resource transformed into a miracle by the hands of a child.

The acorns from that same species were cleverly used by the ingenious inhabitants of the past to decorate nativity scenes, cribs, portals, and Christmas trees. Before the advent of "bombitas" (small decorations) and "bricho" (another decoration), chicharras were held in high esteem as part of the Christmas elements. They were hung alongside chamomile threads and pine worms, dangling from strings tied to the peduncle, the end of the cup. Sometimes they were painted gold or silver, but most often they were left as they were.

The oaks constitute a varied group of the oldest trees in Guatemala, which our ancestors knew well for living among them. In the section of the Popol Vuh that recounts the defeat of the princes of Xibalbá by Hunahpú and Xbalanqué (part 2: chapter 11), this is clear. It says: "- Well, I will do everything myself, Xbalanqué replied," / "Then he gave instructions to a rabbit:" / "- Go and position yourself above, over the ballgame court, and stay among the oaks, Xbalanqué told the rabbit." A little further on in the same chapter, this other quote is also suggestive: "And behold, the kings of Xibalbá threw the rubber ball. Xbalanqué went out to meet it. The ball was headed straight for the ring, but it stopped and immediately bounced, passing over the court, and with one bounce entered the branches of the oaks that adorned the cornice."

The Guatemalan oaks belong to the genus Quercus, a group of much diversity and great variability, which also includes the beeches. In reality, oak and beech are more figurative than formal distinctions, often depending only on differences in regional colloquial speech. Botanists still do not agree on the number of local species, although it is most likely around 28. It is a well-known fact among scholars how difficult it is to identify them in the field. The three main problems are, first, the overwhelming lack of ecological studies that prevent

updating and deepening the knowledge of their natural history and biogeography. Second, the different taxonomic treatment given to the group by various authors, a situation complicated by the abundant speciation that has occurred within the genus; and related to variability, perhaps of equal magnitude is the incredible polymorphism within a single species. The third is the comfortable position adopted by many authors to refuse to go beyond the genus level when describing the habitats in which they are found; the vast majority of "technical" reports content themselves with recording only Quercus spp. (a comfortable formula for saying "simply oaks").

In any case, the people have known how to live with oaks and beeches. They have made them part of their traditional trees. Since literally all species produce wood of great density and extreme hardness, they are preferred for firewood, according to woodcutters and cooks because "it gives a very strong and lasting flame." For the same reason, the artisanal charcoal produced, distributed, and consumed in mountainous populations, which are closest to the oak forests, is mostly made from them. Not to mention the marked preference for oak and beech branches and trunks in the construction of rural houses and in preparing handles and grips for work tools.

When there was artisanal tanning of cattle hides, coinciding with the time when children played with chicharras and Christmas was adorned with them, the tannin used was oak bark, which has a high tannin content. Once this chemical wealth was discovered, oak bark made its way into traditional folk pharmacopoeias and was prescribed for countless ailments. Today, alternative medicine still prescribes oak, in small pieces of wood, to obtain combined decoctions used in rinses, ablutions, and genital washes. Traditional medicine continues to have faith in its healing properties.

THE DIVINATION BEANS

"What to find out?" I asked my informant from the village of Chuimanzana, Sololá (interview on 20.12.2003 with Mr. Esteban Batz, born 18.07.1972), and his response was, "- Everything you want: for planting, deals, business, travels, illnesses, family problems..." And indeed, today, as hundreds of years ago, at least the Kaqchikel, Ki'che', and Tz'utujil communities still trust their characters chosen by the deities within a magical worldview to predict the future, acting in accordance with a deeply rooted ritual.

In Spanish, they are called frijolitos for their intense similarity to the popular bean, although they have nothing to do with it, except for the common fact of being seeds. The current Kaqchikeles call them tzite'n and the Ki'che' and Tz'utujil refer to them as tzité. They are the seeds of Erythrina berteroana, a not very tall tree that grows widely distributed throughout the country. In many places, it is planted to delineate rural properties, which is why it is common to see fences where the "palo de pito" (another Spanish name) is the predominant element. The flowers are elongated, thin, soft, red, and can be eaten. Due to their close similarity to a popular farming tool, they are called "machetillos" (little machetes). These flowers were highly valued in culinary terms and became popular dishes, especially in the cuisine of the eastern part of the country, which has been gradually declining. Among various preparation methods, one of the most common and exquisite has been the simple boiling with beans or a quicker

frying with eggs; the first is a pre-Hispanic recipe, while the latter depends on a typically Iberian procedure utilizing these flowers as native food incorporated into a mestizo diet.

An extensive passage from the Popol Vuh related to the creation of man mentions the use of tzité (part 1; chapter 2):

"- Cast lots with your corn, with your tzité, to know if it will happen and result in us carving and sculpting its mouth and its face in wood. Thus it was said to the diviners."

"The time came to cast lots and greet the rite of enchantment with the corns and tzité."

"- Good luck, creatures!" said then an old woman and an old man.

"Now, that old man was the master of the lots with tzité; his name was Xpiyacoc; but the old woman was the diviner, the Formative, whose name was Chirakán Xmucané."

"Thus, they spoke in this manner when the sun stopped at noon: 'It is time to come to an agreement. Speak; let us listen; let us speak and say if it is necessary for the wood to be carved and sculpted by the Formative and the Creator, and if this will be the sustainer and maintainer when the germination takes place and the day is born.'"

"- Oh, corn, oh, tzité, oh, sun, creatures, unite, join together! Thus it was said to the corn, to the tzité, to the sun, and to the creature."

A little further on (part 1; chapter 3), there appears a reference of great interest, which clarifies a fact that had barely been hinted at before and, surpassing the strictly divinatory function of its seeds, points to another destiny for the pito tree: 'From tzité was made the flesh of man; but when the woman was carved by the Formative and the Creator, the zibak entered into the flesh of the woman. It had to enter her constitution by order of the Formative and the Creator.'"

An important connection, because around 1987, Mr. Pascual Pérez, then owner of one of the last traditional tanneries in Joyabaj, said that in the village, on certain occasions, they resorted to pito wood for the making of some masks (interview on 16.07.1987 with master P. Pérez, born 13.02.1921). Despite the excitement of this coincidence, it is too early to attempt to establish a formal link between tzité as one of several elements brought to narrate stages in the formation of man and a possible underlying symbolism in its use as an extremely noble material for mask carving, products that attain their own significance in the expression of traditional popular dances and in popular arts and crafts.

The seeds, completely red grains, vivid and bright, have the shape and size of a bean but are not edible. Their meaning in Maya societies lies in the magical dimension, in an expression of elevated spirituality. They continue to be used, just as they were centuries ago, to reinforce decision-making that holds great importance for the individual, their family, or their community.

Little has changed since the time of the Popol Vuh; diviners are rarely called ahtzité, "the one of the tzité"; now they are preferred to be identified as Maya priests or shamans, and divination can be done without the participation of corn. Mr. Esteban Batz has also mentioned that

there is a symbolic transfer of tzite'n grains from one generation of Maya priests to another. Thus, when a new priest is to enter the scene, a part of the acceptance and recognition ceremony is the receipt of the appropriate provision of grains delivered to him by one or more older priests, generally one who was closest to his training. This is, therefore, a native tree that literally fulfills what the Agenda states, functioning as one of the elements of the 'set of beliefs, values, ideas, and mystical thoughts that govern and guide the patterns of conduct and the destiny of man.'

CACAO, THE TREE OF CHOCOLATE

The amazing Maya hieroglyphic writing, their figures carved in stone, the beautiful pictography on vessels and murals, and archaeological evidence in ceramics bring us face to face with another very ancient relationship of Guatemalans with a native forest species, cacao. Everything known about its presence and ancient uses tends to show that cacao, first eaten as just another fruit of the earth, and over time subjected to a complicated process of transformation of its seed that would turn it into a drink, into the chocolate par excellence, in its first consumption as such was a prerogative of rulers, priests, nobles, and privileged warriors. The exclusivity of consumption, it can be inferred, had the characteristics of a ritual, behavior sublimated by them in divine matters.

Therefore, it is curious that in 1753 the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus called it Theobroma cacao, a Latinized binomial designation that constitutes its scientific name and literally means "cacao, food of the gods" (gr. Theos = god; bromus = food, nourishment), a designation very appropriate to the spiritual context of the species. Whether Linnaeus knew it or not is a question that we may never determine.

It is commonly accepted by paleobiogeographers that before the arrival of Europeans, the lineage to which cacao belongs was wild throughout the tropical area of America, but that in cultivation it was only known from the region formed by Guatemala and the southern tip of Mexico, the heart of Mesoamerica. A combination of archaeological evidence and knowledge of current varieties of cacao has led to the belief that the so-called "lagarto cacao" is the type that, due to the smoothness of its shell and the flavor of its beans, could have been the first variety to be domesticated. There is a similar botanical form that comes from the eastern slopes of the Andes, in the upper basin of the Amazon River, which is believed to have been brought to Mesoamerica when the criollo form was already cultivated, cared for, and utilized. Both yield the prized chocolate, although the criollo produces chocolate of optimal quality. The main advantage of the other is the comparatively greater yield of seeds.

Our cacao is a small tree native to the humid forest ecosystems of the Atlantic slope of Mesoamerica, with abundant subsequent development in equivalent ecosystems on the Pacific Ocean slope, and today it is planted in all the humid tropics of the world. It is possible that the initial way of enjoying cacao was by consuming the sweet-and-sour pulp that surrounds the seeds in the fruit, eaten directly. It is therefore beautiful that at the popular market in Panajachel, during Holy Week in 2005, along with its "cousin" the pataxte (Theobroma bicolor), ripe cacao pods were sold, and

that older people bought them to eat them as they once did!

Within the archaeological evidence of Guatemala, of Maya origin, there are glyphs and figures that represent cacao and the drink obtained from its beans. Chocolate, the drink form, required the discovery of a complicated process of at least six stages: fermenting, drying, toasting, shelling, and grinding the seeds; and then reconstituting the product with boiling water. Fermentation removes the outer pulp and begins a chemical transformation that, among other results, gradually reduces the amount of astringent substances contained. Sun drying and toasting on a comal continue the modifications. Shelled and then ground, the almonds are transformed into a pasty substance that is then dried in the form of tablets. It has undergone enough changes to make chocolate, frothy as it seems to have been preferred in ancient times.

It was not only chocolate that was the mode of cacao consumption as a drink. Within several references, we transcribe this beautiful example taken from the "Title of the Lords of Totonicapán": "...and then Qotuhá sent four Ahpop-Camhá carrying painted yellow litters, a red petate, and some sandals. The young Hamai-Uleu arrived in Izmachí, bringing her nurse. The Lord of Malah sent pataxte and cacao shakes,...". It is also known that other types of shakes, typical for ceremonial occasions, were served made from maize and cacao. There was so much delicacy and honor in the consumption of chocolates and shakes that it is not surprising that they were sweetened with a very fine sweetener: honey from little maidens, as the ancient Mayans called some wild meliponid bees.

It should not be too surprising to know that they were also seasoned and flavored with essential oils from zapuyulo almond (from the seed of *Pouteria sapota*) and with petals of orejuela flower (*Cymbopetalum penduliflorum*), other trees linked by this route to traditional popular culture.

There is no doubt that Maya women played a prominent role in the cultural fact that connects us to chocolate, and by extension to the cacao tree. Several engravings are known in which they appear pouring it from one container to another. The transfer is depicted being done from above, in a deliberate act interpreted as a way to achieve the formation of foam. It is irrefutable that the liquid being transferred is chocolate, as chemical analysis of the remains found proves.

The pulp of the seed contained in a fruit that grows on the trunks of small trees in dark and humid undergrowth was discovered as food. A procedure was created to obtain a very exclusive drink, which was later allowed for the common people. The powerful modern industry made it so that chocolate, rather than being drunk, became more of a food item again. The incredible traditional popular cuisine of Guatemala incorporated it as a main seasoning in other dishes, among which black tamales and plantains in mole are worthy representatives; meanwhile, gourmet cuisine has turned it into delicate desserts, pastries, and ice creams. And as if all that were not enough, its curative properties have been discovered. A. Cáceres has summarized some of its attributes in the field of popular medicine. Citing more sources, he states that "the decoction of seeds and leaves is used to treat asthma, weakness, diarrhea, fever, fractures, malaise, loss of appetite, malaria, parasitism, pneumonia, cough, colic, and poisoning; it also serves

as a base for other remedies. The seed oil ('cocoa butter') is used to treat wounds, rashes, burns, chapped lips, skin conditions, toothache, fatigue, malaria, and rheumatism. The tender leaves are used to disinfect wounds." He adds that "it is attributed with aphrodisiac, antiseptic, astringent, cathartic, diaphoretic, diuretic, emmenagogue, galactagogue, and emollient properties." Its properties as a powerful stimulant of the central nervous system, cardiotonic, hypotensive, and relaxant of smooth muscle are well known.

It will be understood why cacao is one of the trees that form that exclusive group of forest species connected to Guatemalan identity. And given its vast current distribution and the intensity of its derivative use, it can undoubtedly be pointed out as a gift from Guatemala to the world.

IXIMCHE, THE TREE OF CORN

In the humid tropical ecosystems of the north of the country, a tree grows freely that has been related in various ways since the ancestral settlement of the territory by the Maya. So much so, that in the end, it became a spiritual symbol, as evidenced by the fact that it was associated with their dead. Scientists have called it Brosimum alicastrum, the Spanish name is ramón, the Nahuatl designation is ujushte, and as a Mayan legacy, it remained the enigmatic word iximché. This literally translates to "maize tree" (ixim = maize; ché = tree); and since this grain is a highly symbolic element, it proves the high esteem in which the tree must have been held, perhaps due to its proven food and nutritional properties.

Viewed this way, ramón appears to be a gift from Chac, that beneficial god of the Maya pantheon who influenced rain, the fertility of the land, and agriculture. As a divine gift, it became a very valuable, versatile, abundant, and accessible resource. In modern times, knowledge of its benefits has allowed academics and researchers to find more than one answer to the great question of how the Maya of Petén survived in agriculturally poor soil with a primarily grain-based diet. By exploring ramón, they have found that there was harvesting and consumption of its fruits. The pericarp is sweet and edible. Its direct consumption may have been one of the first forms of utilization. It is also permissible to believe that it may have stemmed from a beneficial observation of the behavior of wild animals in the same biome, particularly of the arboreal monkeys. In Petén, the howler monkeys and spider monkeys, the only two non-human primates in the jungles, have a strong preference for the food offered by the crowns of ramón. They eagerly consume large volumes of tender shoots and fruits. And there they go, the boisterous clans, using the jungle canopy in search of new crowns to enjoy.

But, probably, in the end, it was the seeds that were the most sought-after product. With a flavor very similar to that of potatoes, starchy and highly nutritious, they can be eaten raw, a discovery that undoubtedly followed closely after the consumption of the fruits. In slightly more elaborate forms, they are consumed boiled in water or roasted over a fire, the latter being a culinary method still practiced today. It is also possible to reduce them to flour and make tortillas with it, gastronomically speaking the Mayan equivalent of bread that came much later with the Europeans. Some authors have pointed out that the ancient

Maya made tortillas for consumption from flour made from iximché seeds, and there are those who believe that they were mixed with maize for the same purpose.

The abundant foliage is used as fodder for livestock. Given that the distances to be traveled in Petén can be as overwhelming as the load that must be carried, in the absence of mechanical vehicles, pack animals are frequently used. When this is done, they are fed with foliage that the cowboy must go up to cut, giving rise to the profession of "ramonero" (ramón gatherer). Due to the skill required, the ramonero is a highly valued individual among collectors of ornamental palm leaves, chicle, or chicozapote latex, and among pepper collectors. In this regard, ramón is tied to other regional socio-economic patterns, each of tremendous identity, such as the societies of xateros (palm collectors), chicleros (chicle collectors), and pimenteros (pepper collectors), for whom it is a resource as inexhaustible as their needs.

But there is even more. The tree produces a milky latex that can be obtained by appropriate incisions, without compromising its total integrity. Mixed with water, the exudate can be drunk as a substitute for milk. And in case such wonders are not enough to illustrate the tremendous versatility of iximché, in the past, as in the present, its strong, resistant, white wood, dense and with a fine grain, was used in house construction.

This remarkable heritage of ecosystems and cultural identity of Guatemalans is part of an incredibly varied natural environment, while also being ecologically fragile: the humid tropical rainforest. In the Petén region, it adopts two essential forms, called high forest and low forest. Each with its own characteristics, potentials, and rugged beauty, but both as part of the same complex and promising biological community. In the high forest, the trees can reach up to 40 meters in height, and there are relatively few shrubs in the understory. Mahogany, cedar, pucté, zapote, and ramón trees are common. In the low forest, trees rarely exceed 15 meters, and the understory is rich in thorny shrubs and climbing plants, with associations of corozo palms, small escobo palms, and inkwood trees; among these associations, the gigantic botán and ramón palms stand out.

chaeological sites, especially tombs, so strictly that an explorer can use the former to find the latter. It was initially believed that the growth habit of the species, colonizing disturbed areas, could be a good answer to the matter. However, another hypothesis, certainly very attractive, is to believe that the tomb builders planted ramón around their periphery as an extraordinary gift, perhaps positioned at the same symbolic height as maize to provide the deceased with sustenance for their long journey to the afterlife, but in the form of a perennial tree. Some think that they were also planted around houses.

THE ILAMO AND THE SAÚCO OF TOLGOM

In the Memorial de Sololá, in a passage of great content and ethnobiological richness, it speaks of when warriors from the Seven Kaqchikel Tribes captured and ritually sacrificed an enemy chief, Tolgom. It states: "the execution of Tolgom began. He dressed and adorned himself. Then he was tied with arms outstretched against an ilamo (sic.) to be shot with arrows. Immediately, all the

warriors began to dance. The music with which they danced is called the song of Tolgom." In the apotheosis of this part of the Memorial, it is narrated that part of the warriors had stayed at a distance, but when they gathered, “they finished distributing (his pieces) among all the warriors of the seven tribes who participated in the offering and sacrifice, and his death was commemorated later in the month of Uchum.” For they “gathered each year for their feasts and orgies and shot at the children, but instead of arrows, they threw them with branches of saúco (sic.), as if they were Tolgom.” Here, with the possible birth of a pre-Hispanic dance motif reproducing the "offering and sacrifice" that ended the existence of the enemy leader, the deliberate effort to indicate the change from arrows to soft saúco branches clarifies that it is not an immolation but a representation.

On a different occasion, we pointed out a gross error, carried over from the Annals and in which respected researchers and scientists have fallen, which is to confuse ilamo with álamo. According to the marginal notes of A. Recinos in the 1980 edition by the Fondo de Cultura Económica, he took it from the Diccionario Cakchiquel, so there this monumental misunderstanding may have begun. The case is that the biogeographical area inhabited by the Kaqchikels, primarily before their last expansion as deduced from cartographic analysis, is a zone of mountains, volcanoes, high plateaus, and deep ravines, where mountain forest ecosystems have developed since pre-human times. There have been no lack of firs, pines, cypresses, oaks, ilamos, and peach trees as trees typical of the ecological environment. They arrived in these mountains millions of years ago (as already mentioned) due to dispersions originating much farther north. Much later, other lineages would arrive during the Pleistocene, in waves favored by climates cooled by glaciations. However, there have never been poplars (botanical genus Populus), a forest population that is naturally distributed in America only in Canada, the United States, and some mountains in northern Mexico.

Ilamos are indeed part of the ancient tree flora found in mountains like those of the Kaqchikels. The term che’ lama that identifies it in the Memorial translates to “tree of lamá.” The current Kaqchikel language designates lamá to the trees that Spanish speakers call ilamo and botanists Alnus. Therefore, there is no way to confuse them, unless the structure of the words ilamo and álamo led the author of the Diccionario Cakchiquel to believe that they could designate the same thing when, in reality, they can only refer to two very distinct entities.

Without a doubt, the author was familiar with the term álamo and perhaps not ilamo, which is why he recorded the former and initiated the grave error. There are four species of wild ilamos in Guatemala, and none of álamo. They are primarily distributed in the mountains of the western half of the Volcanic Mountain Range, from the western slopes of the Guatemala Valley depression to the borders of the country, with less frequency in the Las Minas, Chamá, and Santa Cruz mountains, as well as in the ancient Merendón ranges, although not entirely absent from them. The species include Alnus acuminata (synonym: Alnus jorulensis), Alnus arguta, Alnus firmifolia, and Alnus ferruginea. All four are found in the mountains of the Kaqchikel area. The species A. firmifolia prefers to grow on peaks and higher elevation areas, while A. ferruginea is the

smallest, characterized by its typical brick-red leaf pubescence and is the rarest; the trees of A. arguta and A. acuminata are the most impressive in stature: tall, vigorous, with airy crowns and great overall appeal. If the original rite had taken place on a very high peak, we would dare to propose A. firmifolia as the ideal candidate; if on a not very elevated plateau, A. acuminata would be the best candidate; if in a small open valley with a stream, the chances that the chosen ilamo would be A. ferruginea would be very high; and if in a forest clearing with scattered trees and open areas, we would think it is A. arguta. The trees before the Kaqchikeles at the song of Tolgom are ilamos and not álamos.

The saúco, or sauco as it is commonly called in Guatemala, tzoloj in Kaqchikel, is the species Sambucus mexicana. It is distinguished by its "corymbiform inflorescences that gather many small, pleasantly aromatic white flowers. The fruits are small, black, juicy, and sweet berries, in high demand for the preparation of jellies and homemade jams, traditional sweets of a very particular taste that have been gradually disappearing, but as their delicacy is rediscovered, they are beginning to be prepared and enjoyed again. The plant is attributed with medicinal properties. The infusion of leaves and flowers is used for the oral treatment of gastrointestinal ailments, also as an appetizer, stimulating milk production, having a diaphoretic, hypotensive, diuretic, and anti-inflammatory effect; poultices of leaves are used to treat wounds, ringworm, athlete's foot, and "evil eye"; decoctions of the bark are used as a diuretic and for gout. It is a small tree, 8–12 meters tall, that grows easily in sunny, open fields in mountainous plateaus. Its trunk and branches are not very dense, and therefore its wood does not have significant practical applications. However, it has a high capacity for producing regrowth. Thus, it is often used to delimit rural properties, where it can form quickly growing live fences. It is common to leave isolated trees in the middle of maize fields, giving a distinctive image; it is not uncommon for it to be planted in the yards of houses, even in large cities, as an ornamental species. Traditional popular cuisine uses its leaves and fruits for some preparations and special uses. It is attributed with having given its name to Sololá (tzoloj = saúco, ha' = water; "water of saúco").

Its leaves add freshness to a certain type of bread, in addition to imparting a special flavor and aroma. This is usual in many towns of the western highlands, coincidentally where saúco is abundant. By transforming the Spanish procedures for the preparation of this food, breads of strange originality have been obtained, including shecas and pan de granillo, although the latter is very rare today. It is an age-old custom to trade it among neighboring towns, carrying it from one to another. The most traditional commerce involves transporting it in baskets, covering it with abundant saúco leaves to keep it fresh and more pleasant to the palate, distributing it in popular markets, and calling it pan de tzoloj. This custom perhaps began in the colonial era, as the bread was known here as part of the Spanish food legacy; however, the knowledge and use of saúco leaves are undoubtedly pre-Hispanic.

JÍCAROS AND MORROS

Two brother trees grow in the country, so similar that they appear to be twins. They live in the same habitats of semi-arid interior valleys and dry plains, embraced

by the relentless sun among thorns and robust vegetation. They are found in the valleys of the Cuilco, Selegua, Negro, Motagua, and Grande de Zacapa rivers, as well as in the southern regions of the Pacific coastal savanna. They are commonly called jícaro and morro. They correspond to the botanical species Crecentia cujete and Crecentia alata, respectively.

For various reasons, they have been linked to the social life of Guatemalans for a long time. A well-documented reference to them is found in the Popol Vuh (part 2; chapter 2): "- Well, today will be the end of your days. You will die. You will be destroyed. You will be torn apart, and your memory will remain hidden in these places. You will be sacrificed, said Hun-Camé and Vukub-Camé." / "Then they were sacrificed and buried... They cut off the head of Hunhún-Ahpú..." / "Let them go put his head in the tree that is in the middle of the road, added Hun-Camé and Vukub-Camé." / "When they placed the head in the middle of the tree, it became covered with fruits, for it had no fruits before they put the head of Hunhún-Ahpú in the middle of the tree. Now, that was the jícara that we still call 'head of Hunhún-Ahpú,' as it is said.

Hun-Camé and Vukub-Camé then looked on in amazement at the fruits of that wonderful tree. The fruit was equally round in all its parts; but they could not see where the head of Hunhún-Ahpú was, as it appeared to be just another fruit of the same kind as the other fruits of the jícaro. This was what the inhabitants of Xibalbá saw when they went to contemplate it." / "Great was their judgment of the nature of that tree, because of what had occurred so suddenly when they placed the head of Hunhún-Ahpú among its branches. Then the people of Xibalbá said to each other: / - Let none dare to sit at the foot of the tree, mutually preventing and prohibiting each other." / Since then, the head of Hunhún-Ahpú did not reappear, as it had joined the other fruits of the tree called jícaro, as it is named…"

An obligatory clarification: not everyone relates the jícaro tree to this passage from the Popol Vuh. Coe and Coe, for example, point out that "...the first pair of twins, children of the elderly couple that had created the universe, meet their premature end in Xibalbá, the Maya underworld, where they are decapitated by the sinister lords of that fearsome place. The head of one of those unfortunate brothers (now known as the God of Maize) hangs from a tree, which in the story is said to be a jícaro tree, but which in a classic Maya vessel is represented as a cacao tree..." At this point, the controversy may lie in equating Hunhún-Ahpú with the young God of Maize.

These trees are native to America, with a wide distribution, particularly in tropical areas. Under optimal conditions, they can reach up to 10 meters tall, usually between 6 and 8. The crown is broad, open, and occasionally with many extended branches, allowing them to provide some shade in otherwise scorching environments. Due to the ecological conditions of their habitat, they are found as isolated trees that alternate with other types of xeric vegetation. The fruits are surrounded by a hard, smooth shell and can range from 40 to about 10 centimeters in diameter. The fruits of the jícaro, known as jícaras, tend to be smaller and somewhat elongated, in contrast to the morros, which are rounder and larger.

Guatemala has developed incredible craftsmanship based on the utilization of these fruits, so varied and rich that a treatise would be needed to discuss it alone. It is so typical of certain places that it comes to constitute very distinguishable styles, such as the brightly colored guacales and unique designs from San Miguel Chicaj or the lacquered jícaras with nieve wax from Rabinal. Literally, there are no limits to the artisans' imagination in the use of jícaras and morros, from which guacales, kitchen and dining utensils, cups, decorations, chinchines and maracas, piggy banks, toys, various containers, etc., are made. As if all this were not enough, the pulp of the fruits has many applications in folk medicine, which has reached industrial pharmacopoeias in numerous preparations and formulations. Thus, jícaras and morros remain intertwined with the folklore of the Guatemalans.

EL GIGANTÓN INUP

So large and vigorous is it that ancient Maya beliefs narrate that it holds up the sky with its branches. With its roots buried in the underworld and its apex united with the upper world, it is undoubtedly a formidable means of connecting the profane with the sacred. It is the ceiba, that illustrious tree that embodies so many symbols for Guatemalan identity.

If unambiguous translations could be given to indigenous words, inup would mean "I, swollen." However, the cultural spirit behind the morpheme transcends mere semantics. This is true for Ceiba pentandra, an imposing plant more than 50 meters tall with a trunk 2 meters in diameter, resembling a gigantic stylized bottle. This peculiar shape can convey the sensation of an edematous human body part, which explains part of the designation. The other part, equating it to oneself, "I am that tree," perhaps arises from the magical status it occupies in the collective mind of these societies.

Equipped with short but thickened thorns, vigorous horizontal branches forming a firm elevated crown, and strong buttresses at the base of the trunk, the ceiba imposes its presence. When the historical significance surrounding it is understood, carried from very ancient times by the Maya people, the image of this unique species grows even greater.

The vision that Father F. Ximénez had of it was that of a tree "...of enormous size... the trunk... so thick that six men holding hands cannot encircle it, its crown is beautiful and large in proportion, thus it provides great shade, and beneath it, much cattle and many people from the villages gather for the coolness of its shade. It is a soft tree,... the leaves fall all at once, and it is without them for a short time, and on the same day, it sprouts all new leaves, because all the buds that will bloom grow in the month it is leafless, inside two capsules... and in one day all these capsules fall off, and it appears all red because that is how the tender bud comes out and then turns green. It bears a fruit like an apple, which at its time opens, and what is inside is a soft fiber, like very soft cotton... It is a tree of hot and very humid land."

The fiber, "like very soft cotton," is a well-known product of the fruit called kapoc. In certain towns, it is used for stuffing pillows and similar items, a usage that may have been practiced for hundreds of years, as noted by S. D. Coe and M. D. Coe.

Ximénez captured another observation of great interest for the symbolic significance it holds: “In the hot land towns, the Indians plant them in the plaza for shade. It is said that some Indians have their sorcery in these ceibas, and so a certain hawk that a Senior Minister sent who was for Greater Justice in a Province,... among the unheard-of modes of pillaging he used was that by conceiving, and ordering them to be cut down, the Indians would redeem them for money. He commanded it thus, and either because they were not given anything for the ceiba, or because they no longer had anything to redeem it with as they were already exhausted from so many abuses, they cut it down in two villages, and seeing that they were not understood in redeeming them, he left them to continue in their superstitions if they had them, which was what he pretexted.

The Memorial of Sololá, with its unparalleled style and informative richness, can help us see other details in the long-standing connection of Guatemalans with this gigantic species. One of many is the enjoyment of its fresh shade and the resting facilities offered by the extensive buttresses formed at the base of the trunk. It is written: “Afterwards our grandparents arrived at the city of Ochal and were well-received by the akajales. The four factions arrived there. The nation of the akajales had not divided, but they all shared there and the tribe of the akajales was divided. They then left the city of Ochal, in the hot land and burning valleys; then the sons of Señor Ychalkán arrived at Xepakay. They sat under the roots of a ceiba... and ate fish, game meat, and ground chili.”

There are many repeated actions in the Memorial, such as the vast, continuous, and permanent movements that people used to make across mountains, ravines, and plateaus. They undoubtedly frequently demanded places and resources to rest, eat, and even sleep. Because of their shape, ceibas could offer them such opportunities and a very good natural refuge at the base. This possibility is hinted at in another rich passage found in the Anales: “They left from there and arrived at Cecic Ynup, so called, and they went rowing across the lake. There was not a single ceiba standing nor did they go bathing in the waters at the foot of any ceiba. For this reason, they call it the Hidden Ceiba...”

We can imagine groups of people like those, forming hunting parties, troops of warriors, messengers, families in transit, or any similar gathering, chatting animatedly under a giant tree like this.

In the mid-20th century, the Guatemalan botanist Don Ulises Rojas proposed to the state government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, that it be declared the national tree. Thus, on March 8, 1955, Carlos Castillo Armas, then president of the Republic, issued the respective agreement, which states: “Considering that the initiative presented by the Guatemalan botanist Ulises Rojas, to designate one of the forest species in the country as ‘national tree,’ is acceptable, and that such designation should fall on the ceiba, scientifically classified under the name Ceiba pentandra (L) Gaertn. Considering that according to the indigenous tradition of the country, the ceiba held special importance, as the natives used to celebrate their rites under its foliage, considering it a sacred tree, and throughout the centuries, it is found not only in the jungles but also continues to appear in public squares and other promenades, being generally appreciated. Therefore, the president of the republic

agrees that the Ceiba pentandra is to be regarded as the national tree, deserving to be honored in the annual celebration of Tree Day."

In these times, the symbolic value and utility of the ceiba have led to a renewed appreciation of its virtues. For this reason, recalling the past, it is planted in popular markets and public squares. In the former, to carry out the necessary transactions under its enormous canopy, of which the famous Ceiba of Palín is a beautiful example, so monumental that it literally shelters the crowd that regularly gathers there.

THE AMATES

Under their dense and shady canopies, especially on the darkest nights, the devil takes refuge. If not him, then the duende, the bultos, and the siguanaba. And other apparitions, in other towns, find beneath the amates the most suitable places for their peculiar lifestyle—the Guatemalan oral popular tradition!

These colossal trees, whose powerful branches lead to dark environments, prone to evocations saturated with mysteries, have also been present in Guatemala's material cultural history since pre-Hispanic times. Our ancestors discovered that, after certain treatment, their bark could be used to trace figures on its surface. This turned it into the ancestral equivalent of the paper we know today. Sheets of amate bark became the medium in which the ancient Mayans recorded stories and narrated significant events in their lives. From a modern perspective, they would be the first books made in the country by one of the continent's most formidable civilizations.

Identifying the species involved in this manifestation is not so simple. There are so many, and most are so similar that the common people call the whole set by the same names: amates or matapalos. The second of these popular names, matapalo, comes from its unique growth mechanism. It starts when a seed germinates high on the trunk of another tree. The roots, embracing it, eventually cover and kill it. From then on, the matapalo will form its own support structure and continue its development. Now, given its relative abundance, its adaptability to occupy diverse habitats, and the bulk of the tree, it is not too far-fetched to identify Ficus velutina as the species most associated with Guatemalan tradition.

In its primary growth area, between Guatemala and Venezuela, Ficus velutina thrives in a multitude of environments. The trees easily reach 30 meters in height and are quite leafy. At the base, the trunk forms many buttresses, some of which merge with the more superficial roots. Particularly in older individuals, the buttresses constitute well-protected shelters that can be extremely welcoming on countryside days.

This description closely resembles the one left by Father Ximénez: "There are two types of these trees, one with large leaves, like those of a citron, and another with small leaves, like those of a lemon. And this other one is called capul amate. Both produce small fruits that resemble figs but are only suitable for deer, which eat them, and for fish, which consume those that fall into the water. This tree usually grows along the banks of rivers, close to rocky outcrops, and can grow very large. They also often sprout from the seeds that birds carry onto another tree."

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As with the ceiba, although with less intensity, until recently it was not uncommon to find developed popular markets under the shade of amates. The fact that they are also found in oral popular literature, integrated into local variations and those of large cities (La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción is particularly rich) of legends about apparitions and fears, where they play important roles, suggests that this relationship may be due to certain characteristics of the tree, but especially to the increased darkness under its branches and the hiding places formed by the buttresses. For reasons like these, there are clear references to identity between the Guatemalan people and their trees.

POM, COPAL, ESTORAQUE, INCIENSE, AND MYRRH

Since time immemorial, sacramental incense made with aromatic resins has been an important part of the spiritual practices of many peoples. Guatemala, from which it has been said that this custom dates back to the time of the ancient Mayans, does not escape this condition. Between the pre-Hispanic and contemporary periods, a rich sequence of historical periods bears witness to its ritual use in a wide range of circumstances and scenarios: religious events most often, such as masses, processions, exhibitions, supplications, prayers, novenas, alternation of brotherhoods, etc.; also during the wake of masks associated with the practice of traditional popular dances, when there is a divinatory act of the type of “tzite,” in the mesabales during the celebration of a particular rite... In short, whenever it is necessary to achieve a certain degree of spiritual purification.

The obtaining and preparation of resin to present it in the well-known forms of estoraque, pom, copal, incense, or even myrrh, which is locally referred to as “auna,” remain artisanal. Once obtained and processed, there must be a defined path to reach the popular market or store, its center of commercial distribution. A diversity of resins comes from a diversity of species. Always trees, biological forms revered that, by virtue of being providers of sacred balms, acquire particular symbolism in the eyes of their users. Age-old uses in rituals of extreme social permanence.

An approach to the antiquity of the local relationship with these trees can be glimpsed in the work of Father Ximénez, written in the town of Sacapulas in 1722, who writes about one of them: "Balsam. This tree, which is very large and of very hard wood, grows in the Province of San Salvador, in some towns along the southern coast, and from there they call it the coast of balsam. It is extracted with fire, moistening cloths in what it sweats. It remains like a dark honey, or what is called myrrh in Spain... Our Holy Mother Church has declared that this balsam from these parts is genuine, and it can be used for the preparation of the Holy Chrism. This balsam is taken to Spain, where it is highly valued."

Of the liquidambar, Ximénez said: "This liquidambar tree abounds greatly throughout the province of Verapaz, from the town of Rabinal and its mountains onward. It is a tree that grows tall and has a trunk that can become as thick as a large man. They puncture the trunk and extract the gum, which becomes a very thick, sticky honey. Its fragrance is so strong

that it can be overwhelming. It is also taken to Spain for various uses."

The singular friar said of copal: "There are many of these trees, which are quite large and have small leaves, in all the warm lands of America, especially in rocky areas where they grow best on cliffs. A gum is extracted by puncturing the trunk, which was its incense in the time of its paganism. It was used to incense their idols, and today it is used for the Saints, as they do not have other incense. It has a very penetrating smell, to the point that it can become bothersome. The indigenous women also chew it to make their mouths smell good."

And of the palo-jiote: "This tree is called by this name, which in these languages is known as Muliche, and others as caliche, which is the same as palo xiote, because its bark is removed, and it has little hollows as if it had xiote. It is a very refreshing tree. The decoction of its bark in water is remarkable for washing wounds in the intimate parts caused by heat... It also produces a resin that resembles copal."

Among the trees mentioned by Ximénez, balsam refers to the known botanical species Myroxilon balsamum, from the legume family, a large tree with a broadly branched canopy and small leaves that grows well in the coastal plains of the Pacific Ocean, where it is sometimes confused with conacaste trees. Along with these and ceibas and palo-blancos, it is one of the forest species that give an unmistakable savanna appearance to the ecosystem they help form.

The liquidambar, technically Liquidambar styraciflua, is a very distinctive specimen of the Mountain Rainforest biome, a complex and humid natural community that develops over the sierras of Las Minas, Chamá, and the northern slope of the Sierra de los Cuchumatanes. It is also found in the Sierra del Merendón. It is a beautiful tree with a straight, thick trunk that can reach up to about 35 meters. It is often planted outside its natural habitat for ornamental purposes.

Copal, copal pom, or pom te' are Protium copal and Bursera excelsa, from the same family as palo-jiote (Burseraceae). The first can reach up to 30 meters tall and is native to the area between southern Mexico and Guatemala. Most of the incense used in the country is obtained from it, primarily produced in Alta Verapaz and southern Petén. Its resin is also attributed with medicinal properties, as is its bark. The wood is used in rural constructions.

Palo-jiote (Bursera simaruba) is also known by other names, as it is a very popular tree for its countless medicinal attributes and is planted to delineate rural properties; its wood is used in limited artisan applications but carries symbolism, such as in the making of masks. It is called chacaj, indio desnudo, mulato, or simply jiote, among other names. Its natural distribution area extends from southern Mexico to northern South America, showing significant morphological and ecological variability. Average heights range from 18 to 25 meters.

Ximénez mentions two other important trees in this section, whose botanical identities we have not yet been able to clarify: estoraque and salsafrás. He states about the first, "There are here in the rivers of the warm lands some very large trees called estoraque, whose gum, and burnt bark in ashes, cannot be

distinguished from estoraque. It may be the same, and here they do not know how to give it the benefit that they give it in the East." A potential source of confusion in trying to identify it is that liquidambar is also called estoraque. However, Ximénez's description of its habitat is unequivocal and suggests that it is not liquidambar.

Regarding the second tree, he said: "In this town of Zacapulas, there is another tree so common that they use it to make the fences around their houses, which some call salsafrás... It seems to me that it is of the same species as copal, because it only differs in having larger leaves, but everything else is the same, and it produces the same resin as copal."

WOODS OF COMBS AND COMBS TEC PANECOS

In the late 20th century, the unfortunate anthropologist Alfredo Gómez Davis wrote: "During the first half of this century, Tecpán Guatemala supplied the national market with delicately carved combs and hair combs made from hard woods sourced from the forests located in the 'temperate lands' of the Chimaltenango department." He noted, "The work of the Tecpaneco 'peineros' enjoyed high demand due to the excellence of the product. These fine articles prevented dandruff and the hair breakage commonly referred to as 'flor.' Their secret lay in a mixture of cooking oil and achiote applied to the pieces, whose surface rivaled that of tortoiseshell." He pointed out that "in the 1960s, the aforementioned industry declined in the face of the overwhelming advance of plastic combs and hair combs. Numerous workshops closed their doors, unable to compete with the new product. The final ruin came in February 1976 when a violent earthquake devastated Tecpán Guatemala. The seismic blow virtually extinguished this venerable artisanal tradition."

When consulted on another occasion, the artisans who shared their experiences with Gómez Davis expressed that the raw material came from guachipilín, taray, ikiec or guayabo, madroño, and pata de venado trees (interview with Don Juan Rodas Hernández, n. 24.06.1931, on 26.01.1989). According to them, not just any board can achieve "lining the wood grain in the body and the teeth of the combs." The grain "has to run lengthwise so that it does not break in two," but at the same time, the grain "must have a little entanglement so that the teeth do not break, as they do not catch 'the grain' because they run in another direction." The grain, or arrangement of the thousands of fibers and vessels in the trunk, must be precise for specific needs, such as here to prevent the thin and delicate teeth or the body of the comb from breaking.

It is common among artisans, as in this case, that they collect their raw materials themselves. Behind this behavior lies the bond between a human community and its immediate ecological environment, where the incorporation of natural resources into their traditional popular culture subordinates them to it. Consequently, much of the greatness of this craftsmanship lies in the fact that the trees producing the appropriate wood grow wild in the same biome where the comb makers live.

While these trees grow in an altitudinal range of 600 to 2,800 meters above sea level, they prefer higher ecosystems, those that Guatemalans identify as "temperate lands."

The guachipilín, literally "chipilín tree," is a relatively common plant, belonging to the legume family, with yellow flowers in clusters that cover the crown in spring, replacing the fallen leaves. These tall trees can reach up to 20 meters, but most are between 8 and 14 meters. Native to Mesoamerica, they have been planted in gardens, parks, and land boundaries, as they make excellent markers. The wood is yellow or yellow-green, changing to brown or reddish-brown when dry; it is hard, dense, strong, and durable. It is closely linked to humans due to the multitude of uses it serves, both in crafts and in medicine and daily tasks.

It is recognized for its healing, antiseptic, diaphoretic, antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, and anticonvulsant properties, as well as its effectiveness in treating gastrointestinal, respiratory ailments, headaches, anemia, malaria, and others. The posts and beams in rural constructions are greatly valued for being resistant to fungal and insect attacks, thus ensuring durability. The wood is also in high demand for making handles for picks, axes, or hoes. Guachipilín firewood and charcoal are commonly used. There are five existing species in the country, but two are preferred: Diphysa floribunda and Diphysa robinioides.

Ikiec and guayabo are common terms for the tree that scientists call Psidium guajaba. Other names include cak, ch'amxuy, pata', p'ox, guava, and guayaba. Its aromatic fruits, with juicy pulp, are abundant and contain many seeds; they are eaten directly or prepared in various ways. Although it is a native species in the country, with a rich variety of botanical forms that are widely distributed, its origin is uncertain. Some believe it is from Mesoamerica, while others think it is from northern Amazonia. In Guatemala, 13 species are described. The Mesoamerican variability gives good reason to believe in a center of origin here.

It has medicinal applications; the leaves and bark, whether combined or alone, are boiled to obtain infusions for treating amoebas, worms, vomiting, anemia, diabetes, malaria, fevers, diarrhea, and stomach cramps, as well as "mal de orín." Baths are used to heal the skin, rinses for oral inflammations, and ablutions for treating venereal diseases. The small trees are valued for providing shade in domestic coffee plantations, but since they are not very tall—normally under 10 meters—they do not yield much usable wood, except for firewood and tool handles. The Tecpaneco artisans said they do not use it much because their combs warp and fray. However, there are more connections with ikiec through traditional sweets, such as "colochos de guayaba," jellies, and jams made from boiling the fruits with sugar.

The madroño (also called madróno guayabo) is the species Arbutus xalapensis, an unmistakable tree of mountainous ecosystems, whose reddish, twisted trunk resembles a corkscrew and stands out among pines, oaks, willows, and cypresses, which are its unavoidable companions in the temperate forests it forms. While still relatively abundant, the forest habitats located between 1,300 and 2,800 meters in altitude are among the most threatened by humans. There, with sizes barely ranging from 4 to 9 meters, it occupies the middle strata, beneath the crowns of conifers, just below those of oaks and willows, and slightly above the shrubs of the understory. It has rare, round white or softly pink flowers, rich in nectar, that attract numerous

hummingbirds—small, swift birds that significantly contribute to maintaining the ecosystem. The wood is dense, heavy, and strong, with a terribly entangled grain that makes it of little use for purposes other than firewood collection and comb and hairpin crafting. When this craft flourished, the wood was very delicate and appreciated.

The taray is another small tree, not very large, belonging to the legume family. Eysenhardtia adenostilys is the scientific name. It is an elegant plant, slightly less than 12 meters tall, that grows in dry mountain ecosystems. It is a common species in lands undergoing natural recovery, serving as a pioneer in the forest trying to reestablish itself. Thus, it is not unfamiliar to humans, who coexist with it in semi-wild lands around the towns. It has applications in the construction of rural housing, fencing posts, tool handles, and firewood. Its strong, heavy, and dense wood is highly valued in crafts, used for turning tops and carving figurines. It has been mentioned as useful in making combs and hairpins, where it yields exceptional results. The decoctions of its wood, which result in a strange and beautifully multicolored opalescence, are assigned medicinal properties in the treatment of liver diseases.

There are many trees referred to as "pie de venado," "pata de venado," or "pata de cabra." These are common ornamental legumes of the genus Bauhinia, named for the shape of their leaves, which resemble hoofprints. Despite being named by comb makers, their wood is not widely used due to its softness. They are excluded from this essay because almost the entire group consists of imported species from many years ago. In contrast, the other species mentioned—guachipilín, ikiec, madroño, and taray—are well-known trees that have integrated into the traditions of the Guatemalan people through material culture.

FROM THE JUNGLE TO THE BALL GAME

Another species from Guatemala's wild flora that was highly valued for the product it yielded is rubber, used by the ancient Maya for their bouncy ritual balls. This tree is known as the rubber tree, scientifically called Castilloa elastica, a truly large tree with a leafy crown. Its leaves are also prominent as they are large, quite thick, and slightly round. The rubber tree belongs to the mulberry family, which is why it contains latex, obtained through incisions in the trunk.

In regions like Petén, Izabal, northern Alta Verapaz, and Quiché, it is a characteristic tree of the warm, humid jungles; it can also be found at the foot of the volcanic mountain range, where it transitions into the coastal plains of the Pacific. It grows well as secondary vegetation and spontaneously thrives in cleared land, provided natural recovery is allowed. Under these conditions, it is one of the first species to appear, competing with guarumos and capulines for the status of pioneer species. Once established, if not cut, it can grow nearly 30 meters tall at a relatively fast rate. Its enormous crown can quickly cover a considerable area due to the wide spread of its branches and leaves.

The extraction of latex is a straightforward manual process involving cuts made in the trunk. Through a series of manual steps, latex is transformed into rubber—a raw material discovered in pre-Hispanic times that was tied to one of the most ingrained activities among the

Maya: the ball game. Archaeological sites reveal ball courts that coincide with temples, palaces, and other significant structures, demonstrating the prominence given to the space and the activity, which was both ritualistic and symbolic. The Popol Vuh contains many references to the game, identifying the ball as "made of rubber." These two circumstances suggest that the tree providing rubber must have held special symbolism, as it also grows in the same ecosystems where the ancestral Maya established their splendor, facilitating the discovery of both the tree and its divine latex.

It is surprising that many years later, particularly throughout the 20th century, various artisanal branches using native rubber thrived. Although they have been shaken by the advent of plastics, synthetic rubbers, and cultivated rubber from Brazilian species, these crafts teeter between glory and precariousness. In one of these crafts, the objects created were toys—balls!—following an ancient procedure that, fortunately, remains in the hands and knowledge of some artisans. The multicolored balls, carried in full nets, have mainly been sold at local fairs. They can still be found today, as artisans strive to preserve this age-old tradition.

The following short transcriptions refer to current details of art: "The Agustín Lucas family has been dedicated to the manufacture of traditional rubber balls for 25 years. The raw material they use is a milky substance obtained from a tree that can only be found in San Andrés Villa Seca." The process is described as follows: "After the latex has been collected from the rubber tree, boric acid is added to keep it in good condition, and oxalic acid to turn it white." "For making balls, a thin layer of liquid rubber is applied to a board, and it is left to dry in the sun to obtain the bands. With this same material, bladders are made that, when inflated, serve as a base to shape the ball with the bands." It concludes: "Many people believe that these balls are made from car guts; but that is not the case; they are made from native rubber. Agustín explained that this tree is not the same as the one from which industrial rubber is extracted."

The setting is the department of Retalhuleu, on the Pacific Ocean coast. It is extremely important to recognize the differentiation that the truly traditional artisan makes between the rubber of the Mayan ball and "industrial rubber," the planted rubber (Hevea brasilensis) that was introduced from the Amazon last century. Because the native rubber also sustains other artisanal lines, particularly the manufacturing of mallets that evoke melodic sighs from the wood of hormigo (Platymiscium dimorphandrum) during musical performances on the marimba.

EDIBLE FRUITS AND SPICES

Avocado. Guatemala is located in the center of the area of origin of Persea americana, a very unique species among trees. Its relationship with humans is of astonishing antiquity. They have been linked through the fruits, with delicate edible pulp, but also through the wood, which is good for burning, construction, and crafts. Originally, it was a species of forest. Being in its center of origin, it could greatly diversify, leading to the existence of many varieties, sometimes so dependent on the habitat that there are exclusive forms of highlands and lowlands. Persea schiedana is the chucte, Persea tolimanensis is the monkey avocado, and Persea nubigena and Persea steyermarkii are very primitive wild

avocados confined to the Cerro Miramundo in Jalapa. The edible part is the fruit. In a very original way, it is eaten as is, with tortillas, "tamalitos," or bread ("avocado in its shell"); mashed pulp is used to make guacamole, a very widespread preparation that can accompany many dishes; it is consumed in salads; the pulp in pieces accompanies soups, meats, and other dishes; it is sometimes used to prepare refreshments and ice creams and also has industrial and medicinal applications; the tree is used as shade for coffee. Biologists believe that the tolimanensis, nubigena, and steyermarkii forms are endangered. Due to ingratitude arising from ignorance, the Guatemalan varieties, among the best in the world, have diminished due to abusive and mass commercialization of fruits obtained through genetic improvement procedures, later identified as "foreign avocado" (not to mention the neighboring country to which it is attributed). Canoes and cayucos have been made from the trunks since time immemorial. In some communities, they have been surrounded by magical, supernatural, or spiritual character. There were times when they were highly respected for that.

Soursop. This complex group of fruit trees is native to the Americas. The species Annona diversifolia and Annona purpurea are Mesoamerican. The first is originally restricted to the area between Mexico and El Salvador, while the second ranges from Mexico to Panama. They grow in forest ecosystems as medium-sized trees. A. diversifolia is found in lowlands and has smaller fruits with green skin. A. purpurea is the highland soursop, with larger fruit and dark, soft skin. The edible part of the fruit is the pulp, which is white, creamy, aromatic, very juicy, and has a sweet flavor. With the exception of the guanabana, which is Annona muricata, the only one with an exclusive common name, all others are generically known by the same common name: soursops. Other common species in the country include Annona squamosa, Annona reticulata, and Annona cherimolla, which are recognized as pre-Hispanic introductions from South America. There is no doubt that Mesoamerican species are among the native trees related to our cultural identity, but, however it may have been, the achievement of successfully introducing them over half a millennium ago can place the others in an equivalent dimension.

Caimito. The species botanists know as Chrysophyllum cainito is tree-like and native to Mesoamerica, growing in tropical lowland rainforest ecosystems with an unmistakable appearance. They are large trees, with a densely covered crown and distinctive copper-colored leaves on the underside. When they bear fruit, they become populated with numerous fruits that seem small for a tree of their size. Green at first, as they mature, they take on a strong purple color, almost black when seen from a distance. From the sapodilla family, it shares with others the production of a fruit that is highly prized. The pulp is sweet, purple, and the juiciest of all in its family; if the caimito is not sufficiently ripe, it is milky due to the large amount of latex it contains. It is cultivated in very low-intensity farming due to its large size. Most of the fruits are harvested from the wild. It is among the species of edible fruits used since pre-Hispanic times.

Cherry. Prunus capuli. A tree of temperate forests in highlands. Native from southern Mexico to Bolivia, always in high mountains, but it is appreciated more in Guatemala and Mexico. It is a

tree that can grow up to 10 meters tall, with a very beautiful stature, a uniquely green crown, and deciduous leaves in autumn, with new shoots and blooming in spring. In Guatemala, it is common to see it growing alongside oak or pine forests and is currently even planted in large urban centers if the climate allows it to develop. It produces small berry-like fruits that can be green, red, or very dark purple, almost black, with a very unique flavor. The production is seasonal. Father Ximénez said of it: “This is what they call a little fruit very similar to the cherry, only it is somewhat darker. It grows on very large trees, in cold land, and when well-ripened, it is like cherries. There are also some that are very bitter, which only animals eat.” Besides being enjoyed as a juicy and delicate fruit, its high pectin content makes it sought after for jellies and jams. There is a homemade dessert that is very popular and highly valued, made of peaches in syrup and cherries, a specialty of traditional Guatemalan cuisine. A homemade wine of extreme exquisiteness is also made from it.

Chicozapote. The mention of chicozapote here is merely a matter of editorial organization because chicozapote, or "mui," the species Manilkara achras, has such broad utilitarian versatility that any thematic placement is somewhat unsatisfactory. It has strong historical ties to the cultural development of the Maya, produces a highly valued fruit, yields high-quality wood, and its latex has industrial applications and several medicinal uses. This tree is native to the tropical lowland rainforests of Mesoamerica. In buildings at Maya archaeological sites, there are still parts made of chicozapote that, having endured the passage of centuries, have persisted in an aggressive environment for construction materials. The ancient use of its wood, which is very hard, durable, and possesses high aesthetic properties, is well-known for carving lintels that narrate pivotal moments in its history. The wood's great resistance to decay makes it highly sought after for contemporary construction, especially where environmental water is a critical factor. Here, chicozapote wood gains unusual strength. The fruit, which has a delicate and appreciated flavor, is widely consumed and brought to almost all popular markets in the country. The latex, or chicle, is obtained from cuts in the trunk; it is the raw material in various industrial processes, especially in the production of chewing gum. This use is so vigorous that in Petén, the art of chiclero, a skillful craft, emerged, and the activity is so intense that every chicozapote tree in the jungle exhibits precise cuts made by collectors.

In these types of jungles, there are various risks, such as acquiring colmoyote, a subcutaneous larva from the fly Dermatobia hominis, transmitted by the bite of another insect. The perfect cure in the middle of the jungle is to cover the affected area with chicle latex, which suffocates the parasite. Decoctions of the bark are used to combat fevers and stomach disorders, including diarrhea.

Jocotes. Sometimes, despite advances in the study of the origin of plant species, jocotes remain at the center of a controversy regarding their relation to the Caribbean insular zone or the continental Mesoamerican area. Some authors firmly believe they originate from the Antilles, a criterion that becomes unsustainable when consulting primary sources, along with an incontrovertible fact: the enormous variability found on the continent, especially in Guatemala, where the varieties derived from the original

lineage number in the dozens and the existence of primitive forms can be found in forest ecosystems as a normal and spontaneously growing component. There is no doubt that the genus Spondias is native to our lands, particularly Spondias mombin, the most wild form (the well-known jocote jobo). Most of the better-known varieties (such as corona, tamalito, chicha, costa, petapa, río bravo, tronador, and others) belong to the group Spondias purpurea. The discussion of origin becomes relevant when linked to more archaic uses, and if we believe that such archaicism may reference an identity forged through human coexistence with jocote trees.

Matasano. This is Casimiroa edulis, a native tree of Mesoamerica that can reach up to 20 meters in height, thriving at altitudes between 600 and 3,000 meters. Its use as an edible fruit dates back to pre-Hispanic times. The Popol Vuh mentions it in this context (see the quote transcribed in the epilogue, which identifies it among "the best foods" of this land). The round fruits, about the size of an apple, have a green or yellow skin and abundant pulp, consumed raw and regarded as a true delicacy. The pulp is yellowish, creamy, with a strong medicinal aroma but very delicious. It is the tree that gives its name to the town of Panajachel (where "pa" is a locative particle and "ahachel" means matasano).

Nance. This is a very special small tree, which, although it grows wild from Mexico to Brazil, is in the Mesoamerican area where the fruits—the edible part—are consumed most intensively. Found in various ecosystems, both lowland and mountainous, it prefers those that are naturally drier. There, it grows between 5 and 8 meters tall, often in the shade of other trees in sparse forests or savannas. It corresponds to the species Byrsonima crassifolia, which has extensive natural variability in the country as it is one of the primary centers of origin and diversification. It produces clusters of yellow flowers that later develop into fruits, which are berries measuring between one and two centimeters in diameter. These round berries can range in color from yellowish green to yellow or even purple, are highly aromatic, have juicy pulp, and contain a large seed. The tip of the berry has a small apex from which three remnants of the floral structure emerge, resembling semi-soft hairs, popularly known as "pelitos de nance." Medicinal properties are attributed to it, and all parts have more than one prescription. The knowledge and use of nance date back to pre-Hispanic times, as indicated by the Popol Vuh, which recounts the story of the blowgun shot made against Vukub Cakix by the Two Young Men (Part 1; Chapter 6).

“This same Vukub Cakix had a large tree, and its fruit was the food of Vukub Cakix, who went to the nance tree and climbed to the top every day to see the seeds of the fruits that Hunahpú and Xbalanqué had eaten.” / “So they spied on Vukub Cakix at the foot of the tree. The two young men hid among the foliage while Vukub Cakix approached to throw himself onto the nances, his food.” / “At that moment, he was struck by a blowgun shot from Hunhún-Ahpú, which hit him on the cheek; he let out loud cries as he fell to the ground from the top of the tree.”

Finally, it is worth mentioning the importance of the nance in oral popular tradition as well. In Guatemala, if a man is proud to show off his budding beard, usually sparse and scant on the chin, he is

humorously called “pelos de nance” (nance hairs).

Orejuela, mu'c (q'eqchi’), mountain custard apple. It is a relative of the custard apples, but it does not have edible fruits like them. The long, drooping, intensely aromatic flowers are utilized; their scent can be perceived from a distance. The petals resemble human ears, from which it derives one of its most popular Spanish names. Normally, the petals are also called “orejuelas” (little ears). They are dried in the sun and sold in large quantities in some markets, such as in Cobán, a city that serves as a hub for its trade and distribution. However, since it is a species native to humid tropical lowland rainforests, the city lies outside its growth altitude range of less than 800 meters above sea level. The persistence of orejuela commercialization is a result of its use to flavor beverages and foods, especially in Alta Verapaz, where some women use it to season pinol (a traditional drink). It was one of the favorite spices of the ancient peoples of northern Mesoamerica for flavoring ritual chocolate drinks. Scientists have named the species Cymbopetalum penduliflorum and have determined that it grows natively in southern Mexico, Belize, Petén, Izabal, and northern Huehuetenango, Quiché, and Alta Verapaz. Results published in 1996 from an ethnobotanical study conducted by Herrera, Murray, and Johnson confirm that, at that time, it was still used by Mam, K'iche’, Q'eqchi’, and Pogom’chi’ communities to season traditional drinks and foods, including atol blanco (white corn beverage), pinol, batido (cacao), atol con súchiles (corn beverage with herbs), and recado negro (a type of sauce).

Pataxte. The species botanists call Theobroma bicolor is a small tree native to the humid tropical rainforests of the Americas. In Guatemala, it grows very well in the lowlands of the north and south, particularly in the latter and is particularly abundant on the slopes of the Volcanic Mountain Range. It produces a fruit known since ancient times, resembling a cacao pod, its cousin in the phylogeny of the group. Large, ovoid, with a hard shell and many incised marks, the edible pulp is yellow, fragrant, and sweet. It grows similarly to cacao and has many of its characteristics. Sometimes the seeds undergo the same process as those of cacao, resulting in a chocolate substitute that is consumed in a similar way and also has applications in baking. It is a fairly traditional fruit found in the markets of coastal plain towns or those closest to the southern edge of the highlands. Furthermore, fruits are sacred, representing an important element in gardens, paths, and arches during Lent and Holy Week.

Allspice. It grows in the Caribbean tropical rainforests, primarily in Petén and Izabal, as a tree of regular dimensions, reaching 8 to 12 meters in height. Known since pre-Hispanic times, it still maintains an intense relationship with humans. Its botanical name is Pimenta dioica. In English, it is called allspice, a term that conveys the meaning of “all spices,” as its flavor resembles a combination of cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg. Together with chiles and vanilla, allspice is one of the most important spices that Mesoamerica has given to the world. The fruits, small round berries measuring between 3 and 6 millimeters in diameter, undergo a simple sun-drying process. From there, the use depends on the cuisine: dried, ground, or as an extracted oil. It is an ancient and permanent spice in Guatemalan culinary traditions, included in countless recipes.

The leaves, very aromatic and high in essential oils, have applications in the perfume industry and are reputed to have medicinal properties. While it has a wide natural distribution in the lands surrounding the Caribbean basin, the local form is native to southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras, where it is not unusual to find enormous trees, up to 30 meters tall, in humid jungles (with annual rainfall between 1,000-2,500 millimeters) and warm climates. In Guatemala, an art of allspice collectors has developed in its natural habitat, but there are also production programs in cultivation. Thus, this tree continues to be among the species linked to humans, despite retaining its ability to survive as a wild plant. (Note: sometimes allspice is confused with black pepper; the latter, from the same family (Myrtaceae), is the species Piper nigrum, native to the Malabar Coast of southwestern India.)

Zapote. Pouteria sapota. This tree, native to Mesoamerica, is well known for its fruit, which has a sweet and delicate edible pulp, traditionally consumed locally and now spread around the world. It is an imposing, tall tree typical of tropical rainforests. It belongs to the Sapotaceae family, rich in latex-producing species, which has recognized genetic variability in Guatemala. The genus Pouteria includes many trees with edible fruits, including canistel (Pouteria campechiana), zapotillos (Pouteria durlandii and Pouteria amygdalina), bread of life (Pouteria hypoglauca), and grafted sapote (Pouteria viridis). However, the zapote is a tree well known since pre-Hispanic times, valued, widely used, and revered. Not only were fruits and wood exploited, but also the seeds, which were highly valued. Large, with a strong, smooth, and very shiny hard shell, the toasted interior was a widely used flavoring for chocolate drinks (its oils now have many industrial and medicinal applications). The seed is so valuable and its use so traditional that it adopted a proper name: zapuyul. Undoubtedly, a tree with a rich history.

TREES OF SONOROUS WOODS

Musicality is a gift of humanity. The quest for means to express it is a talent of the peoples, and the discovery and use of trees and woods to achieve this is a marvel of art and popular craftsmanship. For the sake of brevity, we assign preeminence in this matter to a species of Guatemalan flora linked for many years to the most famous musical instrument in national folklore: the marimba. Regardless of the discussions surrounding its origin, it is commonly accepted that Guatemala made it its own with a substantial improvement over the prototype, transforming it into more than just an instrument, but a true orchestra condensed into a set of harmonically assembled wooden pieces.

This miracle was achieved both through the tremendous skill of the craftsmen who managed to obtain the proper finishes and assemblies, through the spirit of the music it was meant to produce, and through the raw materials that should go into its composition. The woods had to provide the perfect tone, and beyond them, the trees from which they could be sourced. In this context rises, distinguished and regal, the hormigo or marimba wood, botanically known as Platymiscium dimorphandrum. It is the source of wood for the keys, rich, sonorous, and sweet. It is a classic tropical tree, which still leaves scientists uncertain about whether it is found interchangeably in the lowlands of the north and the south. It is more

common and abundant in the latter, while from the former, it is said that the species is Platymiscium yucatanum, very similar and closely related.

The name hormigo comes from the intimate ecological relationship that these trees maintain with certain ant populations that inhabit their trunks, taking advantage of the deep irregularities of the bark. The process of obtaining the wood intended for marimba keys requires a complex ritual that must be followed according to tradition. It involves fasting, both sexual and dietary, the veiling and purification of the tools with the burning of aromatic resins, lighting candles around the chosen tree, and carefully storing the wood for eight years to achieve the perfection of timbre. The mere existence of a ritual demonstrates the high spiritual status attributed to the tree.

As is often the case in life and production processes, the craftsmanship of the marimba makes use of other woods as substitutes for hormigo. Master craftsmen agree that these other marimbas are cheaper and of lower quality; some are even made as toy marimbas. In this case, the keys are usually made from cedar (Cedrela odorata or Cedrela tonduzii), rosul (Dalbergia and Dalbergia stevensonii), granadillo (Dalbergia tucurensis), and sometimes even mahogany (Swietenia humilis and Swietenia macrophyla).

It is not the intention to discuss the craftsmanship of the marimba as such, but to highlight the existence of hormigo as one of the trees linked to Guatemalan spirituality and tradition. However, the essay may limp if we fail to mention that, in marimbas, cypress can be found in their tables, frames, and resonance boxes. Pine is used in tables, frames, and inferior quality mallet handles. Woods such as fir, cedar, and white wood can be used for tables and frames; twigs of guachipilín and roots of red mangrove for mallet handles; and resonance boxes made of cedar, with hard woods, usually oak or beech, used for the pegs that hold the keys.

EPITOME

Sometimes I don't know whether to laugh or close my eyes at the cloud of ignominy that hides the irrenounceable value of the magical trees, of the sacred trees... of our traditional trees! This is particularly true when I see the fierce vehemence with which the officials of my homeland strive to make citizens follow their singular zeal for reforesting with casuarinas, eucalyptus, flamboyants, and any foreign tree that comes their way. Frustration, sometimes even bordering on depression, pours out in torrents as I observe how an oak grove is annihilated to be replaced by a monoculture of trees foreign to the site, the ecosystem, and Guatemalan cultural identity. Or when a fresh and fragrant pine forest succumbs to fire or the deadly chainsaw that robs it of life, making way for a gridded field that will be covered by "housing development."

If we had koalas and kangaroos living among us, then eucalyptus and casuarinas would be welcome. But no. We have ga'ntzuyes (a type of edible mushroom) and with them dozens of other fungi that, before nourishing traditional Guatemalan cuisine, adorn the forest floor and complete the rich and irreplaceable biodiversity that is anchored there. Anyone wishing to break traditions regarding trees should start by disregarding the value of what is native and valuing the foreign. Why do large

metropolises insist on "decorating" us with what is inappropriate?

It is also not about demonizing exotic species, some of which have become such an intimate part of Guatemalan traditions that their foreign character is lost. Such is the case with jacarandas and gravileas, the former with their explosion of violet flowers evoking spring during Lent and the latter with their beautiful red and yellow flowers, both of which have been incorporated into Lenten religious elements. Or the breadfruit tree (Artocarpus altilis), which, coming from Southeast Asia, is now part of tropical landscapes and the diet of many people. Then there's the almond tree (Terminalia catappa), which rises from the seashore to the immediate coasts as a source of shade and ornament, and which, through years of coexistence with local people, producing edible fruits and being highly valued, makes us forget that it arrived in America in 1790 (brought in from Jamaica) but that its homeland is Malaysia.

I reiterate, it is not a matter of belittling the species that have come from beyond our borders. No. What I insist on highlighting is the elevated value of our species, a value abundantly confirmed in the Sacred Book*: "Thus they rejoiced (The One Who Gives Birth and The One Who Gives Being, The Creator and The Formulator, named Tepeu and Gucumatz) to have finally arrived at that excellent country, so abundant in tasty things, where yellow corn and white corn abounded, where pataxte and cacao were also plentiful; where countless trees of zapote, anonos, jocotes, nances, matasanos, and honey abounded. In short, the best foods were plentiful in that town of Paxil, of Cayalá..."

Just under forty species of trees have been named here. Many more were left out simply because editorial space ran out with astonishing rapidity. They are no less culturally significant than those chosen. It would also have been a valuable complement to highlight some individual trees that have, by themselves, a high cultural valuation, such as the ceiba tree of Palín, or the sacred Palo de Esquisúchil from the Calvary of Antigua Guatemala, whose presence in the temple courtyard is attributed to the hand of the Holy Brother Pedro. Or perhaps El Matasano of the Cerrito del Carmen, noted by history as a witness to the hanging, in its branches, of a colorful character from the everyday life of another era in Guatemala.

There are countless ways to discover the latent value of native trees like those highlighted on this occasion. They have nothing to do with economic valuations or similar matters. The value expressed in board feet of the wood that can be obtained from them is very little when contrasted with any cultural, ecological, or ethnodendrological value.

Because they are surrounded by a magical aura that can be perceived by open minds, because people are inspired to sanctify them in their eternal quest and maintenance of their ancestral worldview, because they are embedded in the unconscious of their own spiritual universe, because they are part of the myths and legends exclusive to their society, being key elements in their historical development, because they constitute the soul of other aspects of their material culture; in short, they are valuable because they give cultural identity to Guatemalan nationality. And that is what the most distinguished trees of "that town of Paxil, of Cayalá, its

name" represent: Guatemala by allegorical extension.

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Table 1: Summary of characteristics mentioned in the text for the trees most closely linked to the social history, nationality, and cultural identity of Guatemalans.

Tree Name (Spanish)	Tree Name (Scientific)	Crafts	Traditional Cuisine	Constructions	Traditional Candy	Fruits	History	Domestic Tasks	Firewood	Wood	Folk Medicine	Myths and Legends	Traditions
Abeto, Pinabete	Abies guatemalensis	X								X			
Aguacate	Persea americana	X	X		X	X							
Amate	Ficus velutina							X	X				
Anona	Annona diversifolia and Annona purpurea					X					X		
Bálsamo	Myroxylon balsamum								X				
Cacao	Theobroma cacao				X	X							
Caimito	Chrysophyllum cainito	X				X							
Ceiba, inup.	Ceiba pentandra			X			X		X	X	X	X	X
Cereza	Prunus capuli					X					X		
Chicozapote	Manilkara achras					X					X		
Ciprés	Cupressus lusitanica			X					X	X			
Copal	Protium copal and Bursera excelsa	X					X		X	X	X	X	X
Encinas, Robles	Quercus skinneri and others							X	X	X	X		
Guachipilín	Diphysa floribunda and Diplysa robinioides	X					X		X	X			
Guayabo, Ikiec.	Psidium guajava					X							
Hormigo, Palo de Mar	Platymiscium dimorphandrum	X					X		X	X			
Ilamos	Alnus arguta and Alnus acuminata (other)								X	X			
Injerto	Pouteria viridis	X				X					X		
Iximché, Ramón, Ujus	Brosimum alicastrum	X				X							
Jícaro y Morro	Crescentia cujete and Crescentia alata	X	X										
Jocote	Spondias purpurea and Spondias mombin					X					X		
Kanak	Chiranthodendron pentadactylon										X	X	
Liquidámbar	Liquidambar styraciflua								X	X			
Madroño	Arbutus xalapensis						X		X				
Manzanilla	Crataegus pubescens								X	X			
Matasano	Casimiroa edulis	X				X							
Nance	Byrsonima crassifolia					X							
Orejuela	Cymbopetalum penduliflorum	X				X							
Palo de Hule	Castilla elastica			X					X	X			
Palo-Jiote	Bursera simaruba						X		X	X			
Pataxte	Theobroma bicolor					X							
Pimienta Gorda	Pimenta dioica					X							
Pino Blanco	Pinus ayacahuite			X					X	X			
Pino Colorado, Pino d	Pinus oocarpa			X					X	X			
Pino Colorado	Pinus montezumae			X					X	X			
Sauco, Sauco Tzolaj	Sambucus mexicana								X	X			
Tary	Eysenhardtia adenostylis								X	X			
Tzité, Pito, Machetilo	Erythrina berteroana	X									X		
Zapote	Pouteria sapota					X							

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Obituary

Marco Tulio Aguilar Barrondo

2005 was the year that took to the universal spaces of infinity our former colleague, former director of this Center for Studies from 1994 to 1998, Licenciado Marco Tulio Aguilar Barrondo, who passed away at the age of 72 on May 22. He was born in Santa Cruz, El Quiché, on January 16, 1933.

Maco, as we his friends called him, had a youth energized by a series of concerns that led him to become an Urban Primary Education Teacher, graduating from "La Normal" and practicing this vocation in various rural areas of the country, especially in Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, and Chichicastenango, El Quiché. He also ventured into theater in the 1960s and even into professional wrestling during that same period. Maco was also part of teachers' associations, and for a long time, he actively participated in struggles for the welfare of the majority of teachers in the country, to the point of facing dangers and risks of persecution and death. He also achieved intense cultural and sports activity, presiding over fair committees in those departments, promoting national radio by founding TGTU in Totonicapán, and organizing basketball teams in those areas. He had completed studies in Rural Social Work at CUNOC in Quetzaltenango.

After graduating as a Pedagogue from the Faculty of Humanities, one day in 1978, he entered the School of History at the University of San Carlos to study a new career that strongly attracted his attention: Anthropology. That was when we met him as classmates. Due to his numerous teaching responsibilities, his studies continued over several years, and he graduated in 1992.

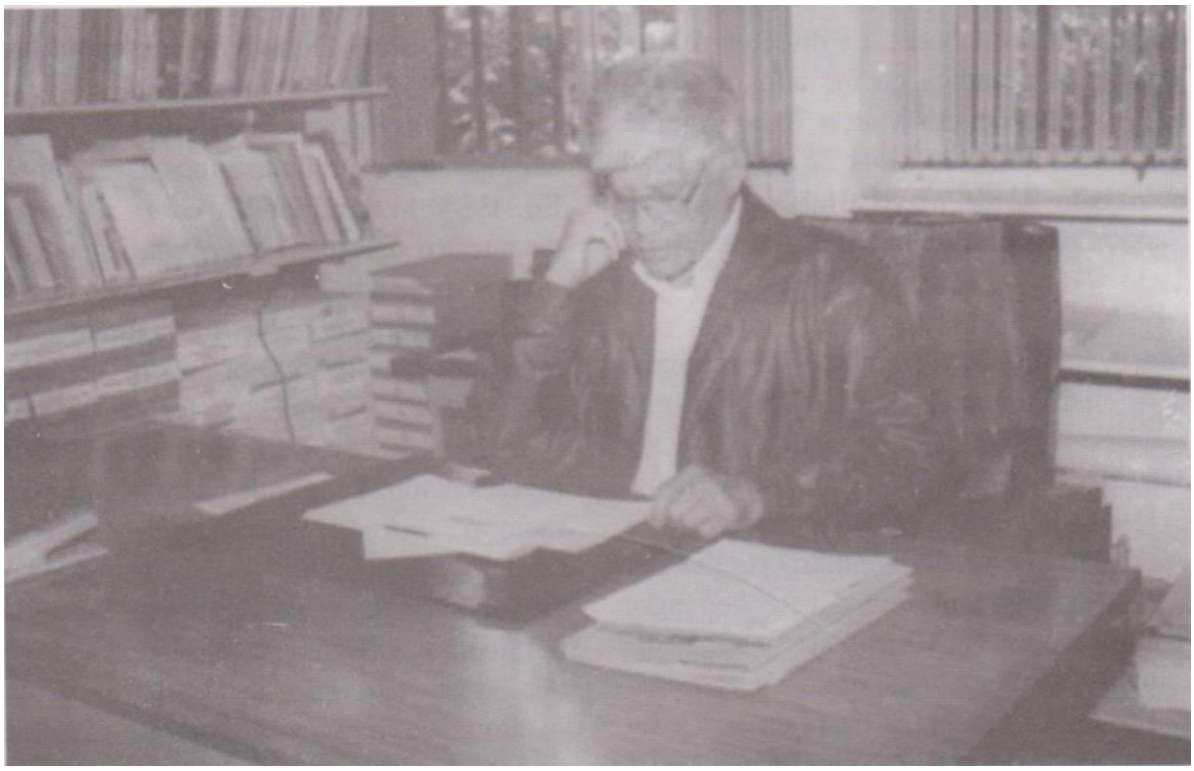
In 1994, he became the Director of our research center. His interest in anthropological studies of traditional popular culture was more than evident, and he always supported us researchers in many ways in our investigative endeavors. So much so that he also promoted infrastructural improvements to our building, negotiating with university authorities for its expansion and remodeling. Additionally, he had been an English professor, having graduated from CALUSAC, teaching in capital city institutes, and taught courses in Linguistics and English at the School of History. By then, he had published in 1984 the text: "Programmed English for the Basic Cycle."

As part of his concern for the development of Guatemala's indigenous communities, he prepared a study on Guatemalan linguistics, published in...

1997 by this center and titled: *Maya-Spanish Bilingualism in Guatemala. A Historical Anthropological Study*, advocating among other things for the defense, promotion, and support of Mayan languages.

We will always remember him for his booming voice and his hearty laughter, for his kindness and courtesy in dealing with others, especially with us, his colleagues. He never had personal conflicts with anyone and always asked for advice when decision-making situations warranted it. As a great conversationalist, he knew how to entertain with a large number of anecdotes and jokes that, undoubtedly, helped make our daily work in this university research unit more bearable.

May his journey into infinity be fulfilling.



Director of the Center for Folkloric Studies 1994-1997